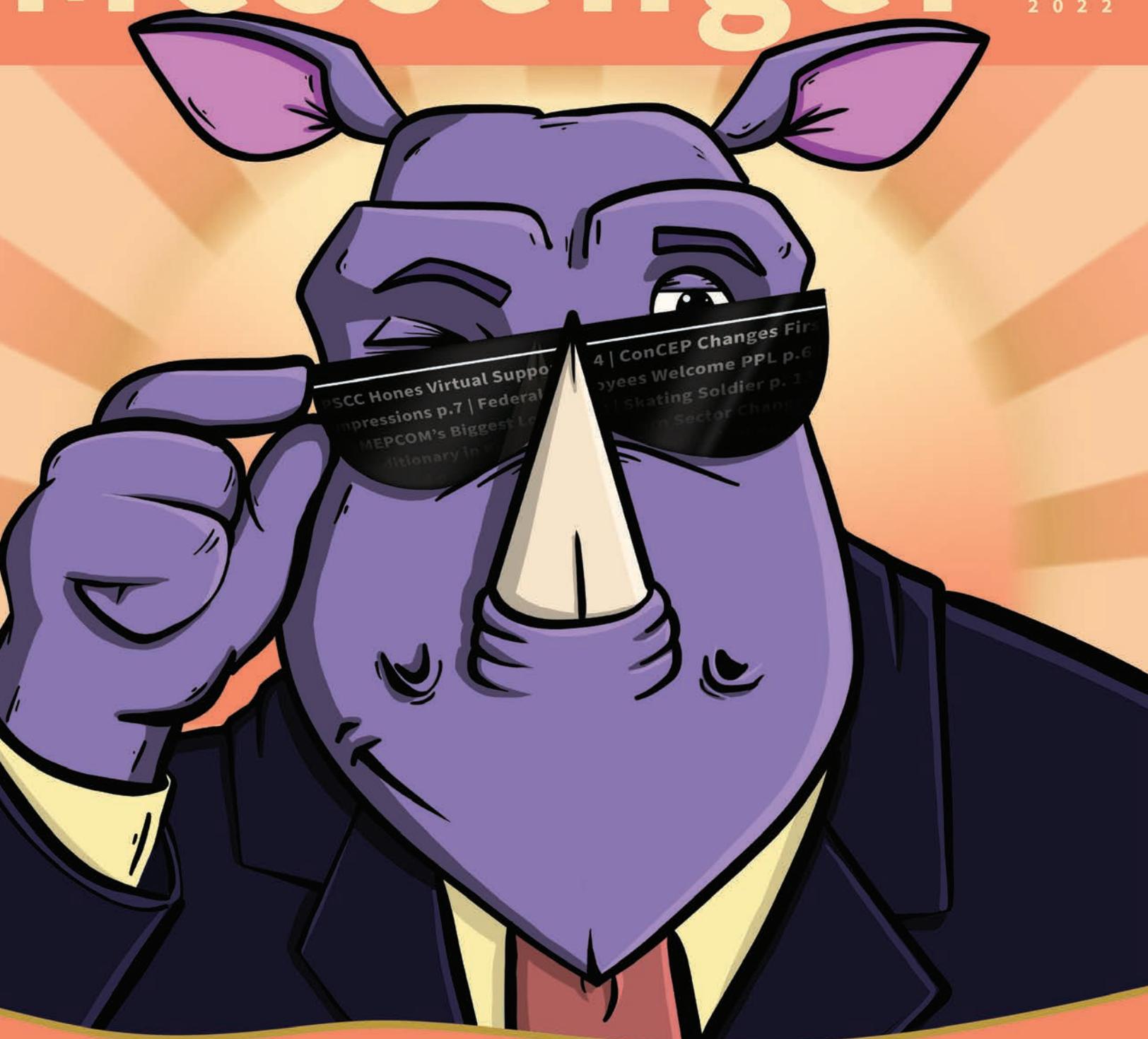


# Messenger

SUMMER  
2022



## *Surging* *Into Summer*

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Greetings Teammates,

It's been almost a year since I took command, and I continue to be inspired by your dedication and teamwork. The collective effort to achieve our mission and embrace change makes me proud to be on this team with you. There have been challenges and successes this year, all of which you tackled with tenacity. I want to thank everyone for their contributions, especially now during the first summer surge since the launch of MHS GENESIS.

We have been in the throes of modernization for well over a year, and that train is not stopping. Although there are no major system changes in the near future, we must continue to build upon and improve the modernization foundations we've set. As we push forward, remain flexible and let go of "old ways" that no longer serve us.

This issue covers some of the ways we are fully realizing the potential of our modernization efforts, including stories about the new Prescreen Support Coordination Cell (page four) and the launch of ConCEP (page seven), a cloud-based testing database. In addition, we are well into our Frontlines effort of J-6 personnel visiting MEPS to get a firsthand view of IT needs (page 24). This issue also includes articles from the field and stories about personnel fulfilling goals outside of the organization.

Lastly, we've released two issues of our new monthly newsletter, "Insights at a Glance." It's also available on the command's intranet, SPEAR. Look for it to gain quick snippets about what's going on in the command.

It's hard to believe we're more than halfway through the year. You have shown strength and resilience, so let's keep it going. And, while you're at it – take breaks, enjoy the summer months and – always – protect our most important resource ... our people!

Megan B. Stallings  
Colonel, USA  
Commanding

*Megan B. Stallings*

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United States Military Entrance  
Processing Command



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Cover Design by Amy Gregorski

**ON THE COVER:**  
*Rex the Safety Rhino models for our summer edition of the Messenger. Check out his summer safety tips on page 28.*

# PSCC HONES

By Derrick Noack

After years of work, MHS Genesis finally launched at all of USMEPCOM's 67 processing stations in March. Although the official implementation of the new system has passed, personnel at USMEPCOM are still optimizing its capabilities to process applicants even more efficiently.

"As with any new system, you are going to have bugs that have to be worked out, but it was extraordinarily successful," said U.S. Army Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander. "One of the great capabilities of MHS Genesis is its virtual capabilities. We have MEPS in New Mexico that are supporting and doing work for MEPS in North Carolina. That capability alone is helping us be greater teammates across our force."

During the MHS Genesis soft go-live at 12 of the command's 67 processing stations, medical prescreen backlogs began to develop. The backlog continued to build after launch due to a 150-200% increase in prescreen submissions.

USMEPCOM personnel quickly began developing a solution to the issue. The solution was the Prescreen Support Coordination Center (PSCC). The PSCC was designed to streamline the prescreen review process by leveraging physicians with low floor counts against prescreen requirements in MEPS with high workloads and/or minimal doctor staffing.

"We were looking for solutions to address prescreen backlogs that had developed at some of the 12 MHS Genesis soft go-live MEPS," said Will Reinhart, director, J-3/5/7 operations. "Knowing that Genesis offered the ability to remotely log into a MEPS business from another location, the concept of using healthy Fee Basis Provider (FBP) pools in some locations to remotely support MEPS without those assets seemed like a promising concept."

The PSCC allows Sector medical doctors and representatives to coordinate, task and track FBPs USMEPCOM wide. A provider at a MEPS with fewer applicant prescreens can now remotely assist MEPS with more prescreens. This allows local MEPS to use all available resources throughout USMEPCOM, not just those local to their own MEPS.

"The PSCC is open to all MEPS/RPS," said PSCC Officer in Charge U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Milton, processing chief, J-3/5/7 operations. "There is no limit to who can request assistance and who can utilize the resource. The PSCC assigns extra FBPs from their home MEPS to sign into another MEPS virtually through MHS Genesis and adjudicate complex prescreens in the review process."

Those complex prescreens, meaning an applicant has had moderate to significant medical treatment or pre-existing conditions, are divided into two bins. A moderate prescreen is placed in a five-day bin, and a significant prescreen is placed in a 10-day bin. This process is designed to decrease the amount of time spent in the physical exam room, with doctors using prescreen outcomes to facilitate their questioning and visual examinations. It is also an improvement in the prescreen review process timeline, which is now expected to take place within 10 days, vice 30 days as it was prior to MHS Genesis deployment.

"Virtual processing decreases the amount of time spent in the MEPS per applicant and overall for each service," said Milton. "The PSCC decreases the need

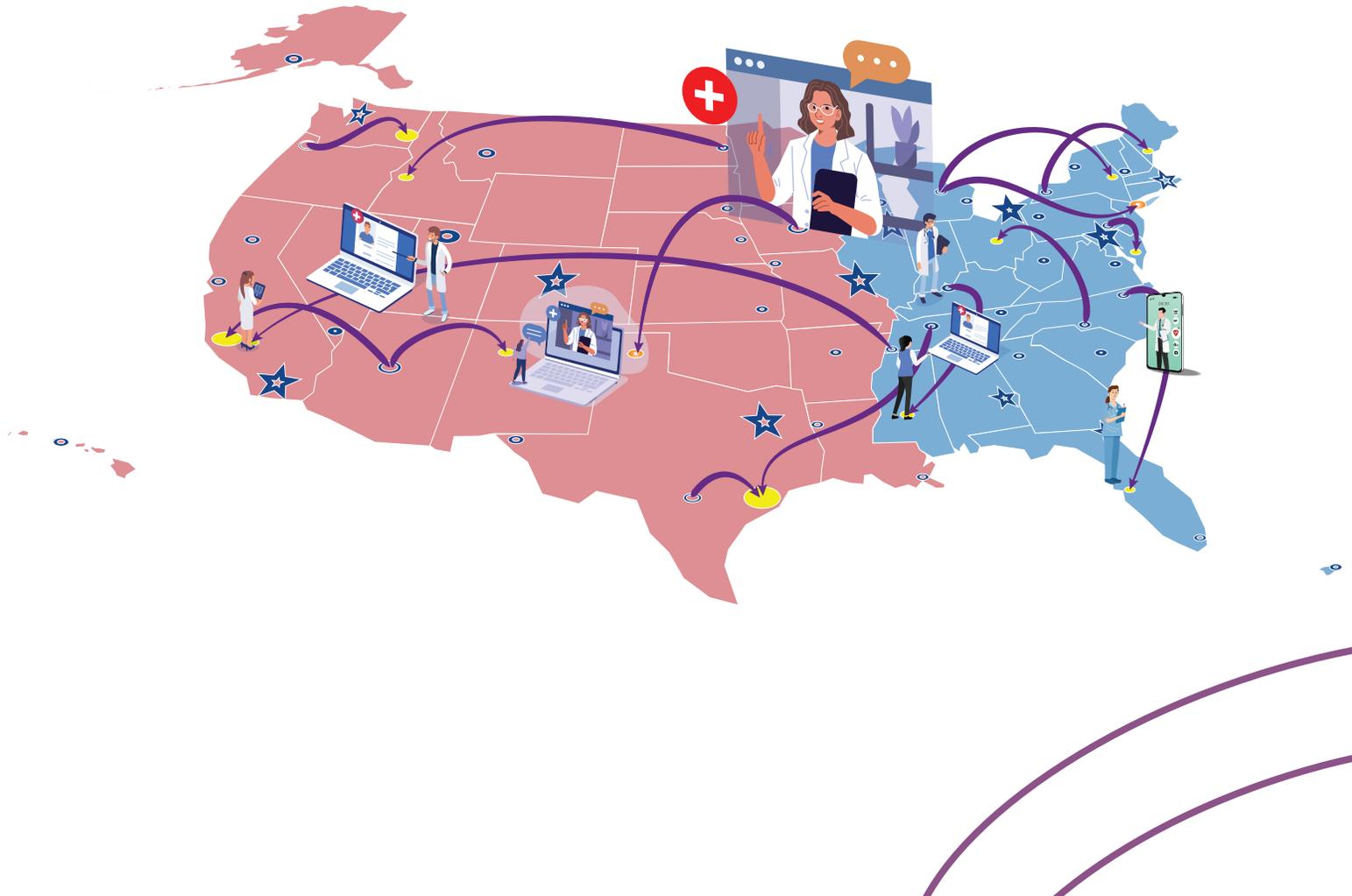
# VIRTUAL SUPPORT

for traveling to MEPS from remote locations and shortens the amount of time in between when an applicant makes the decision to join and when they raise their right hand.”

The PSCC is another step in USMEPCOM’s modernization efforts, and supports the move to paperless processing. The PSCC was successful in clearing up the initial prescreen backlog, which went from 1,231

prescreens awaiting initial HRA registration on March 14 to 175 on April 5. The virtual support has already helped process 15,317 applicants as of June 17, and now averages more than 200 a day. As capacity of the PSCC increases, USMEPCOM plans to have remote providers with a sole responsibility of ensuring applicants are qualified for joining the armed forces.

“As technology and our understanding of MHS Genesis capabilities improves, we can expand remote processing support to other points in the prescreen workflow to gain even greater time efficiencies,” said Reinhart. ■



# Federal Employees Welcome PPL

By Marshall Smith

I am the third of three boys. When I was born, my father took two days off and went back to work. Shortly after that, he moved out of state to start a new job and prepare for the rest of the family to join him later that summer. Whenever asked about those months alone with three boys under five and a house on the market, my mother doesn't even try to answer with words, opting instead for a still-exhausted sigh.

Here I am, having started my own family, lucky enough to have twelve weeks of paid leave following the birth of my son in February. My mother has mixed feelings. She is happy to see this kind of progress in work-life balance but also can't help but feel some twangs of jealousy. I definitely understand where she is coming from.

Twelve weeks of paid leave, known as Paid Parental Leave, or PPL, is a relatively new entitlement for federal employees. It was part of the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act (FEPLA), signed in 2019, and applies to births or adoption placements of children after Oct. 1, 2020. Prior to this law, federal employees were guaranteed up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

I worked with my supervisor on a plan to take eight weeks straight and use the remainder over the rest of the year as needed. PPL provided me a way to focus on family during a period of transition and healing. Not only was I able to care for my wife after a tough birth, but I was there for eight straight weeks to bond with the baby and make sure big sister had a less abrupt transition to second fiddle.

I consider myself fortunate to have had access to this leave program and proud to work for an organization that honors its commitment to its people. I hope this article reaches some future parents and helps them more fully savor the joy (and mitigate the chaos) of welcoming a new family member.

To learn more about the program, reach out to J-1 Civilian Personnel Division and visit:

<https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/sites/default/files/DoD%20PPL%20Policy.pdf>



## Eligibility:

- Completed 12 months of federal service
- Have a full or part-time work schedule
- Have an appointment of a year or longer
- Employee cannot use PPL in probationary period

## Rules:

- Employees must agree to a 12-week work obligation following the conclusion of PPL
- Employees must use PPL within 12 months of the date of birth or placement
- PPL can be used following a birth or placement, not prior

## How to request it:

- Talk to your supervisor early
- Submit WH-380-F, Form 508 agreement to 12-week obligation and PPL Request to CSR
- Upon birth, adoption or placement, provide documents or foster care placement record to CSR



# CONCEP CHANGES FIRST IMPRESSIONS

By Derrick Noack

Back to school season means brand new backpacks, crisp clothes and a fresh start for students. For J-3/5/7 Operations Directorate's Testing Division, the upcoming back to school season brings with it a different variety of new and exciting changes.

In an effort to modernize the ASVAB Career Exploration Program (CEP), Testing Division along with contractors, performed a needs assessment from 2016 to 2018. The key areas of needed improvement were communication, scheduling, report access and a uniformed cloud-based database.

Set to launch this fall is the Communicating, organizing and networking Career Exploration Program, or ConCEP. The first phase of the minimal viable product, scheduling, communications, and reporting will launch in July 2022. Additional phases, shipping and mapping, is scheduled to launch October 2022.

ConCEP will replace Schools 2001, a Microsoft Access database that requires each MEPS to maintain their own testing data. All forms and reports will now be organized and maintained in the cloud based ConCEP, standardizing and streamlining data collection, analytics, and program organization.

The new testing inventory program, Defense Property Accountability System (DPAS), already launched this January, is a supplemental component of ConCEP. DPAS, created to replace outdated organization capabilities, gives personnel the capability to scan test materials instead of entering information manually.

ConCEP will greatly improve how testing personnel communicate and network with schools. There are also enhancements to the ASVAB

website, [www.asvabprogram.com](http://www.asvabprogram.com), with redesigned dashboards and articles for students, parents and community partners.

"With this new initiative, there is a communications function that makes everything more efficient," said Tabitha Jefferies, Career Exploration National Program Manager. "Now, it's easier for a test coordinator to contact a school and schedule a test date. They'll be able to send blast messages to all their schools."

Less time spent organizing and communicating behind the computer means more time networking in communities. The pandemic put a pause on those

important interchanges and altered testing goals. Now, Jefferies believes they can soon reach one million students and leave a better first impression with their new modernized tools.

"There will now be more time to go out in communities and have important conversations with stakeholders and recruiters," said Jefferies. "Before the pandemic, we tested approximately 800,000 students. I believe with this new system we can get to one million."

ConCEP training for all of MEPS Education Services Specialists and Testing Coordinators is scheduled to occur throughout the summer. With testing being the first impression of the armed forces for many applicants, this modernization effort is a step forward for all employees in the accessions pipeline, from Freedom's Front Door to all 67 processing stations.

"This is going to help how we support America's youth," said Jefferies. "With the ASVAB being the first step for anyone trying to enlist, this impacts everyone." ■

"BEFORE THE PANDEMIC,  
WE TESTED APPROXIMATELY  
800,000 STUDENTS. I BELIEVE  
WITH THIS NEW SYSTEM WE CAN  
GET TO ONE MILLION."

# USMEPCOM welcomes new

By Christine Parker

Army Col. Janelle V. Kutter assumed command of Eastern Sector, USMEPCOM, succeeding Army Col. Joe Ratliff, who will next serve at the Pentagon as the Chief, Officer Policy and Promotions, G-1 Director of Military Personnel Management.

Army Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander, officiated the event. She commended Ratliff for leading Eastern Sector through the pandemic and other challenges since 2020.

“Leading this team through the deployment of MIRS 1.1 and MHS GENESIS was a feat no one could have imagined, and Joe did it with ease. His common-sense approach

made it seem simple, like an everyday walk,” said Stallings. “His team was extremely fortunate to have him at the helm during what was an exciting, eventful and difficult leadership time.”

To Ratliff, she said, “You successfully safeguarded, led and pushed Eastern Sector and the 34 MEPS through these past two years, leaving them stronger, more productive and more resilient than when you arrived.”

Stallings then turned her attention to Col. Kutter saying, “Many of you know that just slightly less than one year ago, Colonel Kutter finished her tour as 11th Battalion and St. Louis MEPS commander. She left quite a mark there.”

Ratliff talked about how “lucky” he was to have served as Eastern Sector commander.

I’ve been lucky my family has remained safe and healthy; lucky to have great bosses, the same great senior enlisted advisor by my side, two great deputies, a resilient sector staff, great MEPS commanders and senior enlisted advisors, a great sector counterpart, and a higher headquarters that cares, said Ratliff.

Kutter greeted those in attendance and said, “I’m beyond excited for being back to MEPCOM.”

“This mission is a team effort. Recruiting partners have some challenges ahead of them and I believe in this accessions triad. This is my third time here at

▼Col. Janelle Kutter, incoming Eastern Sector commander, Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander, and Col. Joe Ratliff, outgoing Eastern Sector commander, take part in the Eastern Sector change of command ceremony June 23 at USMEPCOM. (Photo by Israel Molina)



# Eastern Sector Commander

MEPCOM,” said Kutter. “I pledge my commitment to the entire team because together we are building the nation’s might with enthusiasm, accountability, support and teamwork.”

The command has two sector commanders; Eastern Sector and Western Sector. Sector commanders implement command policies, review procedures and recommend changes to the USMEPCOM commander for ongoing improvement of MEPS operations. Sector commanders also maintain liaison with both active duty and reserve Armed Forces recruiting commanders, regional Office of Personnel Management Directors and other federal agencies. ■



▲ Col. Janelle Kutter, incoming Eastern Sector commander, holds the unit flag during the change of command ceremony at USMEPCOM headquarters. (Photo by Israel Molina)



▲ Col. Joe Ratliff, outgoing Eastern Sector commander, receives the Defense Superior Service Medal from Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander. (Photo by Israel Molina)



# HQ USMEPCOM'S BIGGEST LOSER

By Derrick Noack

USMEPCOM headquarters announced the winner of its 2022 “Biggest Loser” program at an awards ceremony, May 17. Erika Mumphord, financial management analyst, J-8, received a trophy and a certificate for shedding the most weight during the competition.

USMEPCOM first launched the “Biggest Loser” program in 2012. Since its inception 10 years ago, Mumphord has claimed the title of USMEPCOM’s Biggest Loser three times now. She previously won in 2019 and 2020.

“When you look great, you feel great,” said Mumphord. “I definitely have more energy after losing the weight. It’s been fun to go shopping and get new clothes.”

Mumphord kept her approach simple, eat better and exercise more. COVID restrictions lifted at gyms helped her get back to a consistent routine, and even try new workouts.

“I changed how I eat by incorporating more protein and vegetables,” she said. “I’ve been working out more thanks to gyms opening back up. I started high-intensity workouts, instead of just lifting weights or walking on the treadmill. I still have just a little to go until I reach my goal, so I am going to keep at it.”

Another contestant who successfully lost weight during the competition said even the smallest changes in your day can make a big impact on your quality of life.

“It really is the little things you do throughout the day, nothing major,” said Steve Weller, information technology specialist, J-6. “I started getting up and moving every hour, taking the stairs instead of the elevator. Just moving around has helped.”

“Biggest Loser” coordinator and headquarters battalion senior enlisted advisor Air Force Senior

Master Sgt. Marc Ascher, who arrived at USMEPCOM in October, said he enjoyed running the program. Ascher said it provided him a unique way to learn more about USMEPCOM operations and its people.

“This has been a great opportunity to learn more about the people here and what they do,” said Ascher. “I got to meet people in person who I would normally interact with virtually. It helped me put many faces to names.”

Ascher said the program is not meant to be competitive, but to motivate personnel to reach their best potential. Individuals are encouraged to achieve personal goals year-round by utilizing the USMEPCOM Wellness and Readiness Program. The program authorizes civilians three hours of administrative leave per week, with no more than one hour per day. Physical fitness activities, preventative health events, education on health promotion topics (such as nutrition) are examples of activities covered by the program. Those who want to participate will sign a contract with their supervisor then log their hours in ATAAPS. ■

**“When you look great, you feel great. I definitely have more energy after losing the weight.”**

**-Erika Mumphord**

► Erika Mumphord exercises on an elliptical machine in the USMEPCOM gym. (Photo by Derrick Noack)



# MEET ME AT THE FAIR

By Derrick Noack

The birds are singing, flowers are blooming and the sun is setting much later. It is summertime in America and some of our greatest traditions are in full swing. The season is not complete without baseball, apple pie and a trip to the local fair.

Michael Snell, Albany MEPS administrative supply technician, helps many people who live on the upper East Coast check off two items from their summer to-do list when they visit his fair booth. Snell bakes blueberry, strawberry, fruit of the forest and apple pies for guests of the Washington County and Schaghticoke fairs in New York.

Snell, who served 28 years in the Army, first experienced fair vending while home on leave from active duty. His aunt started the booth 38 years ago selling her homemade pies. The popularity of the booth grew and during a short-staffed emergency one summer, Snell jumped in. The booth was passed onto Snell's cousin who eventually offered the business to Snell in 2020.

His various roles as a Soldier proved to be helpful as Snell took ownership of the business. The financial management tools he obtained in the Army led him make immediate changes to save him both time and money.

"Set up and tear down of the booth took four days at each fair," said Snell. "Thanks to my budgeting NCO past, I knew where to save money. I built a trailer so I could just pull into the fair, plug it in, and be set."

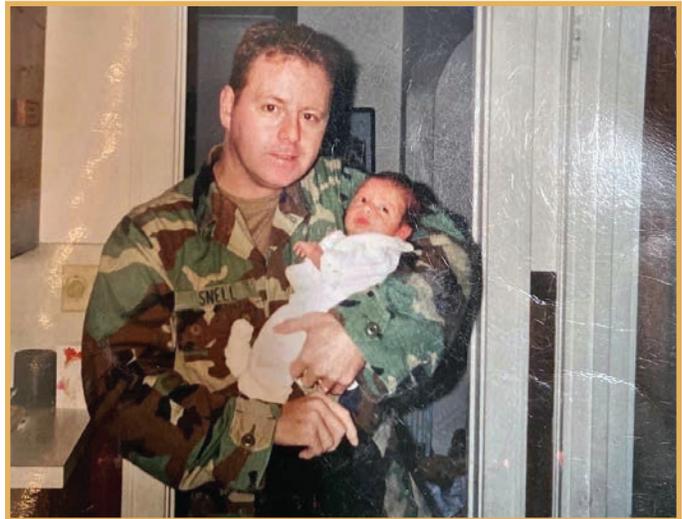
Snell said he enjoys using his military experience at the fair. He provides feedback to his personnel after the fair season is complete with an after action review (AAR), based off what he learned by doing Army AARs.

"I sit down with my wife and come up with awards for our employees," said Snell. "We present them at a big dinner after the fairs where we debrief with an AAR. Everyone gets involved in sharing lessons and learning how to improve next season."

Most of the staff working booth operations are family, including his sisters and kids. Local teens also jump at the opportunity to hawk popcorn from the booth in the stands during events, like the tractor pull. Snell said he enjoys teaching leadership to his kids and junior staff, sometimes sharing stories and lessons from his time in the Army. Snell is proud to say that one of his young personnel is set to ship out to Navy boot camp in August after intently listening to his military praise.

Snell hopes to keep pleasing fairgoers for many years with delectable fruit pies and fresh popcorn until it is his turn to pass the booth down. For now, he enjoys the opportunities to run into old friends and the memories it brings him.

"I'm glad that county fairs still exist," said Snell. "I love them; these fairs are where I grew up." ■



▲Michael Snell, while serving in the U.S. Army, poses for a photo with his daughter. (Courtesy photo)



▲Michael Snell, Albany MEPS administrative supply technician, poses for a photo at his fair booth with his future daughter-in-law, his son and his wife. (Courtesy photo)



# Skating Soldier

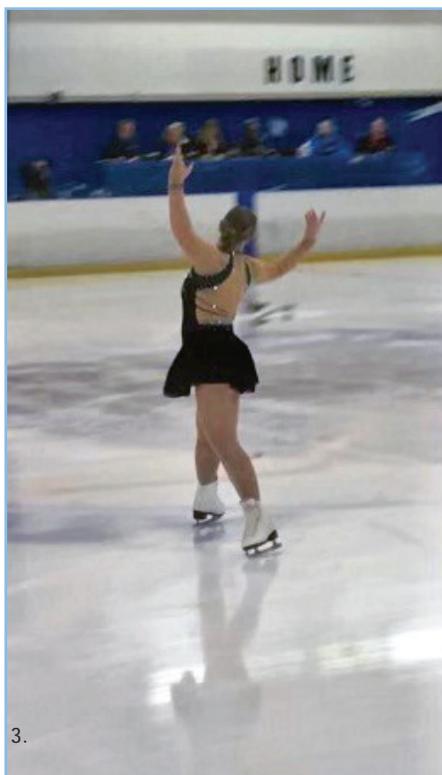
By Derrick Noack

Whether it be soaking in the aroma of salty french fries during shifts at a fast food restaurant, or the notes of zinc from sunscreen while lifeguarding at a pool, nearly all of us share a common adolescent memory of our first job. Even though we do not pay it much thought at the time, saving up for your first car or some expensive concert tickets from that job could set the trajectory for the rest of your life. For U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Milton, J-3/5/7 processing chief, that life-changing purchase was a \$1400 pair of figure skates. The splinters endured while working amongst the scents of cedar on her very first job in construction to pay for them proved to be worth it.



U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Milton, J-3/5/7 processing chief, smiles as she takes a selfie after becoming a 2022 US Synchronized Skating National Silver Medalist.

## Skating Soldier



▲1. Scott Hamilton, 1984 Olympic gold medalist, U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Milton and Sandy Lenz-Jackson, 1980 Olympian and Milton's skating coach, pose for a photo at the 2020 U.S. Figure Skating Nationals.

2. Milton, along with her husband and their two children, pose for a photo at her daughter's first skating competition.

3. Milton skates to "Diamonds" by Hawk Nelson at the 2019 Peach Classic competition in Atlanta. (All photos courtesy of U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Milton)

Little did Milton know that a basic pair of kid's ice skates under the Christmas tree in 1998 would sow the seeds for a life-long love of the sport. Growing up in Windham, Maine, Milton explored the snowy terrain with those skates in hand. She would find frozen ponds to practice and strengthen her skills. After saving enough for a pair of figure skates, she began hitting the rink for an hour every day before school and meeting with a coach once a week. This hard work resulted in her entry into the juvenile level in the United States Figure Skating Association as a young teen.

Finishing home schooling at the age of 16, Milton promptly enrolled in college and earned an associate degree by 18. By the age of 21, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion. From there, she decided to join the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Liberty University.

"My grandfather was a Paratrooper, my dad was in the Army and my brother had joined the Marines," said Milton. "I wanted to honor that legacy but the main reason I joined was to travel."

Not only did Liberty University have a ROTC program, it had a competitive synchronized skating team. Milton auditioned for the team, LU Radiance, and joined the roster. LU Radiance competed against other colleges with complex routines that incorporated up to 16 figure skaters on the ice at once.

"It wasn't so nerve-racking skating as a team," said Milton. "Like the battle buddy system in the Army, you're not just out there by yourself. You work as a team to accomplish the mission."

After commissioning in 2011, Milton branched medical service officer, first serving on active duty from 2012 to 2016. She married her husband Jonathan in 2011 and together they welcomed daughters in 2013 and 2015. As she began her military career and started a family, her figure skating took a pause.

"I didn't skate much from 2012 to 2016, except for a couple days here and there," she said. "I decided to get back on the ice with my oldest daughter when she was about 18 months old. Since then, I have always made it a priority to find a rink nearby. It's not only great exercise, but a stress reliever for me."



Milton said after two kids, skating became an important time for herself. She began working on solo routines again and practicing for competition sans LU Radiance.

“This transition was like riding a bike,” she said. “Muscle memory was still there but getting back my balance and strength took a little bit of time and consistent practice.”

In 2019, Milton skated solo in the Peach Classic competition in Atlanta. Her most difficult jumps accomplished were the double salchow, which includes two full rotations (starting backward), and an axel, which is 1.5 rotations (starting forward).

“I skated to “Diamonds” by Hawk Nelson,” said Milton. “I like to choose music that portrays elegance, power and strength... music that has highs and lows, something I can relate to.”

The following year Milton took leave to volunteer at the figure skating nationals in Greensboro, N.C. She got to rub elbows with Olympians like Scott Hamilton and Johnny Weir while taking on various roles throughout the week including music monitor, announcer and anti-doping supervisor.

“I wanted to give back to the sport,” she said. “I’m glad I did because it was right before COVID hit hard and forced shutdowns across the country.”

Milton, who arrived at USMEPCOM in September 2020 on active duty orders, now hits the rink a couple times a week. She is a member of the masters level skating team, the Starlights. Like her college team, the Starlights compete regionally in hopes of making it to nationals. This year, they narrowly placed second during the 2022 U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships, finishing only .02 points behind the team that claimed gold. She also hits the rink at least one day a week after work for some “me” time and has begun coaching kids on the weekends.

“I never thought I would coach skating,” she said. “I enjoy sharing the joy and passion for the sport with the younger generation.”

The senses engaged while skating are unmatched for Milton. Her latest pair of skates were a hefty investment, at \$1550, but to her they are worth every cent.

“When I’m skating, sometimes I feel like I am flying,” she said. “Sounds cliché but that’s how I feel. There are days where I am struggling to find balance but skating helps me re-focus. Whether I have had a bad day at home or work, the ice resets my mind and lets me focus back on reality.” ■



▲4. Johnny Weir, two-time Olympian, and Milton take a break while working the 2020 U.S. Figure Skating Nationals.

5. Milton, U.S. Army 1st Lt. Marlana Johnson, J-3/5/7 Processing Division operations officer, and U.S. Army Capt. Doreen Misiorek, J-3/5/7 Processing Division operations officer, take a group photo at USMEPCOM.

6. Milton and her daughter pose for a photo with champion pair skaters, Brandon Frazier and Haven Denney, at a Holiday on Ice show in South Carolina. (All photos courtesy of U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Milton)

# Town Hall Addresses Unfinished Business

By Derrick Noack

USMEPCOM hosted a town hall to discuss major achievements and plans moving forward for headquarters and all 67 processing stations, May 24.

Although there are not any major upcoming system implementations, the work remains to fine tune the huge steps recently taken toward modernization.

“We’ve done a lot of modernization,” said Col. Megan Stallings, USMEPCOM commander. She then explained that while there are currently no major changes on the horizon, the command must focus on bringing recent initiatives to their full potential.

Stallings thanked everyone’s team efforts and dedication to the mission as they navigate through the transitional period. She also highlighted some of the assistance provided by the U.S. Army, especially in regards to MHS GENESIS.

“The Army has provided a lot of support to USMEPCOM as we’re going through transformation and modernization,” said Stallings. “They increased their Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS) dollars for the guard and reserve field to come on active duty. The Army also provided up to five providers from the Medical Center of Excellence in San Antonio to become trained in MHS GENESIS and our prescreen process to help support the Prescreen Support Coordination Center (PSCC).”

That PSCC, a new cell added to MHS GENESIS, utilizes excess capability to review prescreens virtually. With ongoing assistance from the Army, USMEPCOM plans to build the PSCC out into an even more robust network. The Army, at their own expense, has put out a call to retired medical providers to return and assist with those prescreens.

“It’s probably frustrating at times,” said Stallings. “Changes are going to continue because what we’re trying to do is optimize those processes, trying to make them the best they can be.”

Amy Ramirez, Medical Modernization Team director, briefed attendees on the

MMT’s next steps for MHS GENESIS post deployment.

“The biggest thing on the MMT plate right now is preparing to hand off GENESIS to the J-3/5/7 team,” Ramirez said. “We are preparing the communication, outlining all of the steps that we need to write to hand this over so a brand new employee can arrive in J-3/5/7 and know exactly how to access MHS GENESIS.”

As far as MHS GENESIS connecting with USMIRS 1.1, the new cloud-based applicant processing system, the work is still being done.

“When are GENESIS and USMIRS 1.1 going to exchange data?” said Matt Lince,

J-6 director, “It’s very complex. The reality is that it is going to take a couple years.”

Will Reinhart, director of J-3/5/7 operations, addressed how they are cutting back on administrative processing times with the REAL ID enforcement deadline pushed back. The addition of a student ID will assist in decreasing the Exception-to-Policy submission volume during the summer surge.

“To alleviate administrative burden on the MEPS, we’re publishing the policy that will permit usable or serviceable school or work IDs as a photo ID,” said Reinhart. “As we get deeper into the year, we’ll start getting ready for REAL ID Act that is coming in May 2023.” ■

▼ 1. Amy Ramirez, Medical Modernization Team director, U.S. Army Col. Kevin Cummings, USMEPCOM command surgeon, and Will Reinhart, director of J-3/5/7 operations (on screen) brief attendees on upcoming command changes. (Photo by Derrick Noack)

2. Matt Lince, J-6 director addresses the complexities of connecting MHS GENESIS and USMIRS 1.1. (Photo by Derrick Noack)





# SPEAR's Main Landing Page is Receiving a Visual Overhaul

(A) Directly beneath the SPEAR logo are dark gray buttons providing links to USMEPCOM's web-based apps hosted outside of SPEAR.

(B) Beneath the cut line you'll find a column of purple buttons labeled "Items You're Looking For." This section contains links to key pages hosted on SPEAR.

(C) Beside the purple buttons you'll find a five-paned news feature updated daily. If you see something you think should be featured, email PAO with a link.

(D) Beneath the news you'll find a section of light gray buttons with links to key HQ SPEAR pages.

(E) Finally, in the footer of the page you'll find a list of frequently used external website links and webmaster contact information.

We welcome your feedback, you can contact PAO with suggestions at:

[osd.north-chicago.usmepcom.list.hq-ca-meca-pa@army.mil](mailto:osd.north-chicago.usmepcom.list.hq-ca-meca-pa@army.mil)

**A** Navigation bar with buttons: ETMS2, Service Desk/MOC, STARNet, UBIS 1.1, Public Website.

**B** Items You're Looking For sidebar with buttons: Regulations and Forms, Taskers, Info Messages and Policy Memos, Command Calendar, Operating Schedule, Correspondence Templates, Military Professional Development, Quarterly Training Requirements, HQ Telephone Directory.

**C** News feature with five panels:
 

- ARMY CIVILIANS: HOW FEVS LEADS TO CHANGE. Includes text: "You spoke. We listened. Here's a short list of some of the recent changes that were inspired by FEVS response data." and "Let your VOICE be HEARD! The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey is under way, let your voice be heard!"
- USSF announces Interservice Transfer Opportunities
- Facing headwinds, military recruiters seek to make cultural connections
- HPCON BRAVO MODERATE RISK. Effective June 16, 2022, personnel at HQ USMEPCOM, building 3400, will follow HPCON level B guidance for COVID-19 risk mitigation.
- Photo of the Day

**D** Command Leadership and Staff Pages:
 

- Commander: CDL Megan B. Stallings
- CoS: Donovan D. Phillips
- SEA: CSM Lorenzo Woodson
- Commander's Philosophy
- Commander's Suggestion Box
- Directorate Pages: J-1 Human Resources, J-3/5/7 Operations, J-4 Facilities, Physical Security & Logistics, J-6 Information Technology, J-8 Resource Management
- Personal Staff Pages: Command Surgeon, Inspector General, Staff Judge Advocate
- Special Staff Pages: Command Group, Acquisitions and Contracting, Command Advisory Group, Internal Review and Audit Compliance, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Medical Modernization Team

**E** Frequently Used External Websites footer:
 

- ACT (Army Career Tracker)
- Army Benefits Center - Civilian
- ATAAPS (Automated Time and Attendance Production System)
- BENEFITS
- DCPDS (Defense Civilian Personnel Data System)
- Defense Ready
- DTS (Defense Travel System)
- JKD (Joint Knowledge Online)
- MICconnect
- MySuite
- MyArmyBenefits
- MyPay
- USA Jobs
- Safe Helpline: Call 1-800-273-4255 and Press 1, chat live, or text 832255. A caring, qualified responder will listen and help.
- Safe Helpline provides free, confidential help over the phone — just call 877-995-5247. The phone number is the same in the U.S. and worldwide via USN.
- Email the Webmaster: By call the webmaster: Primary Line: (847) 686-3686 ext. 7227, Alternate Line: (847) 686-4874.
- Find us on facebook
- Messenger Online



▲A CH-47 chinook helicopter lands at Moorhead airport to pick up educators for a trip to Camp Ripley. (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Clark Eggen)



▲Educators work together to overcome the log jam obstacle on the confidence course while being coached by IRC partners and MEPS personnel. (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Clark Eggen)



▲Educators, ITAs, IRC partners and Fargo MEPS staff pose for a photo at Camp Ripley (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Clark Eggen)

# FARGO MEPS LIFTS LOCAL EDUCATORS

By U.S. Army Capt. Clark Eggen  
Fargo MEPS   
operations officer

With the arrival of spring, Fargo MEPS began brainstorming how to build on partnerships with intermittent test administrators (ITAs), Inter-service Recruiting Committee (IRC) partners and educators in the local school area. Fargo MEPS's unique area of coverage includes a large portion of northwestern Minnesota, which can be a challenge to cover for testing due to the rural location.

Planning a unique educator orientation visit began in frigid February, when Minnesota Air National Guard 1st Sgt. Richard Wenschlag, recruiter, Mike Bellows, Minneapolis MEPS ITA, and Chuck Aldrich, Fargo MEPS education services specialist, collaborated in an effort to reach at least a dozen schools. Throughout the next three months, they planned a great connection opportunity that would both educate and excite local educators about opportunities the military offers their students.

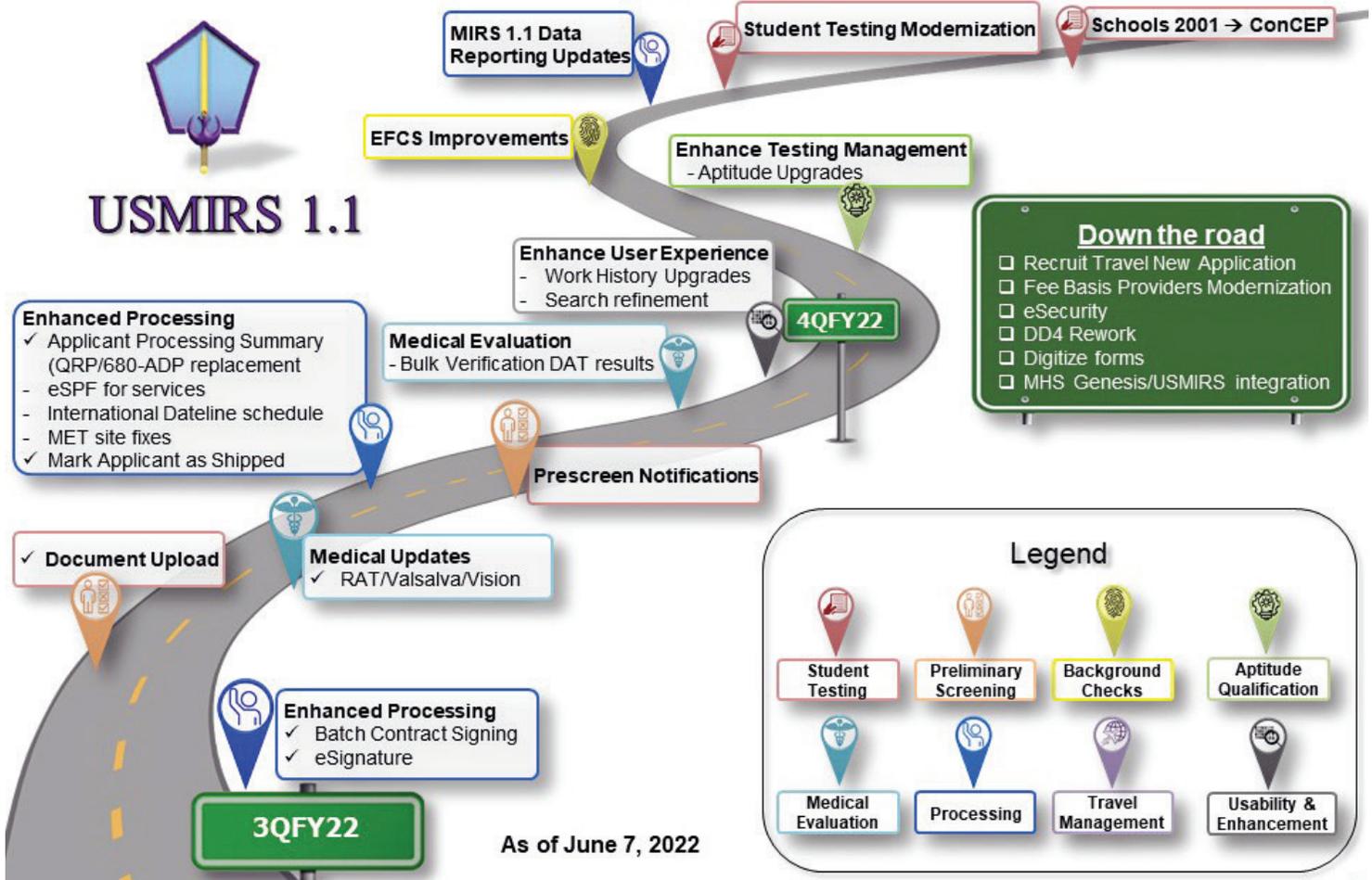
Fargo MEPS student testing worked with the Minnesota National Guard to send 19 educators from 12 different schools, along with three military members, to Camp Ripley training center on a CH-47 chinook helicopter, May 4. The morning flight consisted of a tour by air of the 53,000-acre camp and a ground tour of small arms repair rooms, armor vehicle bays and shooting ranges at Camp Ripley. IRC members showed the educators many great training opportunities for future applicants who would want to join the service.

At noon, the group had a hearty lunch at the newly renovated Camp Ripley dining facility. After the meal, educators were briefed on the ASVAB Career Exploration Program. They learned how the ASVAB could academically qualify students for military service and provide world-class career exploration for all students. By analyzing ASVAB results and the Holland Code Assessment, students can explore many career options and avenues to pursue their ambitions.

Attendees then tackled the confidence course, where they traversed through different obstacles using teamwork. A number of the teachers were also high school coaches for various sports, and the National Guard told the coaches about additional fitness activities available to high school students and teams. The information about these opportunities was well received and opened the door for future events and continued partnerships. The afternoon concluded with a tour of the military museum. The educators were able to see and even climb on various military vehicles, tanks and aircraft from many eras in our nation's history. Assuredly, all gained a deeper appreciation for the actions and sacrifices of those who served.

The last step of the educator orientation visit was the return flight from Camp Ripley to the Fargo area on the CH-47 Chinook helicopter. The action-packed day concluded with a presentation of MEPS unit coins to the flight crew and certificates of appreciation to the educators. Through this presentation and future events, the Fargo MEPS seeks to continue expanding its assistance to the students and educators in Minnesota and throughout the Fargo MEPS area of operation. ■

# USMEPCOM INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ROADMAP



As of June 7, 2022

As of 6/6/2022												FY 2022						FY 2023					
Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			Q1			Q2			Q3					
Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun			
ConCEP Development (Schools 2001 replacement)						Schools 2001 Sunset																	
Student Testing/CEP* (timeline tentative)												Label Printing Service*											
WinTIP (Replaced by DPAS)						Fee Basis Providers*																	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Recruit Travel*</b></p> <p>Travel Central (formerly 'Shipping Register')*</p> <p>*POC* Meal Payment Management (Debit Cards)*</p> <p>Travel Orders Generation*</p> <p>Expect/Onward Travel*</p> <p>Meal Payment Management (cont)*</p> <p>DFAS Interface*</p> <p>CI Travel Interface*</p> </div>																							
StarNet (Replaced by ServiceNow)												EPTS*											
CA Unicenter (Replaced by ServiceNow)												eRecords*						Joint Personnel System					
PTC (Replaced by ServiceNow)																		MACTS*					
												Power BI into cloud (UBIS Modernization)											

■ Outside agency implementation    ■ Implementation TBD  
■ Planned implementation    ■ Planned deprecation

\* Actual timeline will depend on system design and planning

(contract exp '22. Replace with AWS native analytic tool)

# Expeditionary in Kosovo



▲ Matthew Kiger, IT specialist, Denver MEPS, and Stephen Boyd, IT specialist, J-6, pose for a photo in front of their office in Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. (Courtesy photo)

By Matthew Kiger  
Denver MEPS   
IT specialist

**E**xtra money! New experiences! Free professional development! What person does not like to hear these words? In any organization, it is all too easy to get into a rut, but what is someone to do? There is a program that is high-priority for the Army and consequently, if you have a plan to mitigate your temporary absence, can provide positive outcomes to anyone who is selected – the Expeditionary Civilian Workforce (ECW) program.

The ECW program gives Department of the Army Civilians (DACs) with at least an active secret security clearance a unique opportunity to serve in a temporary duty status at locations from Europe to the Middle East and beyond for periods from six months to a year.

It goes without saying that it takes a certain kind of employee to not only work in this environment, but succeed. According to Paul Iliff, Deputy G-6 of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command in Wiesbaden, Germany, who has helped the ECW program fill IT slots in Europe, “Previous deployments on active duty in OEF or OIF are the best ECW teammates. Those that meet this criteria are solid as a rock and a huge benefit for an organization, not just for DACs, but Soldiers as well.”

In the summer of 2021, two USMEPCOM information technology specialists, Stephen Boyd, from the headquarters J-6 Directorate, and me – Matthew Kiger, IT Specialist, Denver MEPS, were selected for the program. It is worth noting that we both have deployed before, either in the military, with the ECW program or as a contractor, or both.

Assigned to Area Support Group-Balkans in Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, Boyd and I served as IT specialists, with duties similar to those accomplished by IT specialists at MEPS. However, personnel shortages prior to our arrival forced us to accomplish duties far beyond what is expected from a typical unit IT specialist. For example, we both found ourselves building a functioning unit IT program from the ground up and establishing systems so follow-on IT specialists could build upon those.

Additionally, taking a cue from the military’s focus on near-peer competitors and the increasing emphasis on cyber attacks by rogue state actors, we were also tasked with working with Regional Cyber Command-Europe to organize an unannounced phishing



▲ U.S. and NATO personnel start the Danish Contingent (DANCON) 15-mile ruck march at Camp Novo Selo on April 9, 2022. The DANCON March has been a tradition with the Danish Defense since 1972. (Photo by Matthew Kiger)

exercise against the unit. The intent was to test how well employees recognized a phishing attempt that came across their government e-mails and reinforced the annual training they received during cyber awareness training. We also assumed Sustainment Automation Support Management Office (SASMO) duties, serving as administrators and maintainers of the rotational units’ tactical computer systems, something that was completely outside of our job description.

Taking on extra duties and living in expeditionary environments without our families in Kosovo was not without benefits, however. Since we were working far beyond our normal duties, we averaged four hours of overtime daily and both received post differential at 25% of base pay with locality, which is among the highest rates in the ECW program, starting on our 31st day in the country. Not all expeditionary locations offer the same financial incentives, but they do provide opportunities to do exciting work while supporting our deployed U.S. forces.

Furthermore, while on duty at an ECW assignment, it is also possible to take part in professional development activities. While in Kosovo, USAEUR-AF (U.S. Army Europe-Africa) has a program that, with the supervisor’s approval, allows employees to take part in virtual training and certifications at no cost to the unit, including Security+, Cisco Certified Network Administrator (CCNA), Project Management Professional (PMP) and Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH).

Needless to say, the program is not for everyone. Even if you have a security clearance, can work long hours, and are ready to be proactive, having an employee come into the program without being honest with themselves will cause problems for everyone. According to Iliff, “Some just don’t understand what ‘expeditionary’ means. This is a deployment, not some temporary duty. Beds are hard (and the) food is not great, but you earn a badge of honor by actually deploying.”

In conclusion, the ECW program has provided Boyd and I with a unique opportunity to make extra money and receive new experiences, all while getting out of the day-to-day grind. If you think this might be a good fit for you and you are ready to try something new, apply to the ECW program and serve on the front lines of America’s foreign policy. For more information, contact the Army’s Expeditionary Civilian Workforce office: [usarmy.belvoir.ag1cp.list.ecw-deployments@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.belvoir.ag1cp.list.ecw-deployments@army.mil) ■

# USMEPCOM IG Surprised with Hamby Award



By David Sears  
J-8 deputy director

▲ Donovan Phillips, USMEPCOM Chief of Staff, reads the citation for an honorary Hamby award presented to David Hamby, USMEPCOM inspector general, during a command and staff meeting. (Photo by Israel Molina)

In October 2019, David Hamby, USMEPCOM inspector general, attended a ceremony to induct his late father, U.S. Army Col. Jerrell Hamby, into the Arkansas Military Veteran's Hall of Fame. Upon his return from the ceremony, David Hamby discussed his father's military service and last assignment at Fort Irwin.

Colonel Hamby was killed during a training exercise at Fort Irwin in 1985. Before serving as the opposing force commander at the base, Col. Hamby served as an enlisted Marine during the Korean War and then as a commissioned officer for two tours in Vietnam. The Order of Hamby, or Hamby Award, presented to opposing force (OPFOR) Soldiers, was created in memory of him.

David commented that he thought a previous commander at Fort Irwin stopped awarding The Order of Hamby to OPFOR Soldiers. As a career armor/cavalry officer, and a veteran of multiple Fort Irwin rotations, I was familiar with the Hamby Award. It was while talking with David Hamby that I realized it was named after his father. In an attempt to verify that the award is still presented, I reached out to friends in the armor/cavalry community.



With the help of retired U.S. Army Col. Michael Kirkpatrick, a former OPFOR operations officer, I was put in touch with the current squadron commanders at Fort Irwin. After learning that David Hamby was Col. Hamby's son, and of his own achievements in Army aviation with operational and combat tours that include Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Somalia, the squadron commanders presented The Order of Hamby to recognize David Hamby's contributions to the Army and Armed Forces.

Many in the command may not realize that the current command inspector general is a former Army Airborne Ranger and Blackhawk pilot with an exceptional career. David Hamby is very humble, but he has done a lot. I thought this would be a great way to honor his own contributions to the Army.

David Hamby was surprised with the honorary Hamby award during a command and staff meeting at USMEPCOM, May 6. The award presentation was a special moment for him, and he joked that his father left shoes impossible to fill.

"He was a great role model for me," said David Hamby. "Funny thing is he had 11 Air Medals. That's more than I got and I was the aviator."

Colonel Hamby was a highly decorated officer with numerous awards including a Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for valor, two Bronze Star Medals for exceptionally meritorious combat achievements, six Purple Heart Medals for wounds suffered in combat, two Meritorious Service Medals, 11 Air Medals (1 with "V" device)

and the Army Commendation Medal. His highest award, the Silver Star, was awarded for his actions during combat operations in Vietnam.

On April 29, 1970, Col. Hamby's platoon made contact with an enemy force in Vietnam. Col. Hamby led the platoon, coming under intense automatic weapons fire. He persevered forward and single-handedly assaulted the enemy bunker with just a pistol and two hand grenades. An enemy grenade wounded him, but he refused medical evacuation. He would continue to lead the assault until the complex was taken and his platoon was victorious. The coveted Hamby Award is a reminder to OPFOR Soldiers of the loyalty and personal courage shown by Col. Hamby. ■

◀U.S. Army Col. Jerrell Hamby served from 1951 to 1985 and is honored in the Arkansas Military Veterans' Hall of Fame for actions in Vietnam that earned him the Silver Star. (Fair use photo)

▼David Hamby, USMEPCOM inspector general, poses for a photo with his wife, Anne, following a surprise award presentation during a command and staff meeting. David Hamby was presented with an honorary Hamby award, named after his late father, the highly decorated U.S. Army Col. Jerrell Hamby. (Photo by Israel Molina)



# IT ON THE FRONTLINES

By Darrin McDufford

The term “frontlines” is nearly as old as war itself and means the foremost part of the Army. For USMEPCOM, the Military Entrance Processing Stations are at the frontlines for applicant processing.

Recently, the J-6 Information Technology Directorate began its Frontlines Initiative to send personnel to the MEPS on missions to see first-hand what is happening at the MEPS, learn how to improve the directorate’s services and even solve problems on the fly.

“The J-6 mission is to provide IT support and services to the MEPS so they can fulfill their operational mission,” said Matt Lince, director, J-6. “No one in J-6 actively processes applicants; we support the MEPS who do MEPCOM’s mission. What J-6 does every day is important to the work done at the MEPS.”

Many people working at USMEPCOM have not seen a MEPS since they enlisted, or during an onboarding tour. Visiting a MEPS gives them a familiarity with the functions and operations since various modernization tools have recently been implemented.

“The last month MEPS have been asking who, why and what are these headquarters people doing around here,” said Davis Gray, Frontlines lead, Information Technology project manager, Program Management Office.

Staff at all levels have made appearances so far at more than 20 locations and the plan is to hit all 67 locations by the end of September. More than anything, just listening and getting input from the field leads to a successful visit. The main intent is to listen to the MEPS to help them be heard. The Frontlines Initiative is not an inspection program, such as the



▲ Ebin Regi, computer assistant, J-6, briefs U.S. Army Maj. Patrick Zebrowski, Beckley MEPS commander, and U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Juan Osuna, Beckley MEPS senior enlisted advisor, during a visit as part of the Frontlines Initiative. (Courtesy photo)

Inspector General would conduct or a Sector Staff Assistance Visit.

Gray added, it can be tempting from HQ to “cookie cutter” everything and create one process to fit all situations and in reality it doesn’t work that way.

Each MEPS is different. Asking for their input helps make Frontlines more beneficial for the MEPS, gets their voices heard and shows how effective or not effective the processes are we are implementing.

After the trip, travelers write up a trip report and brief J-6 leadership on any areas of interest, technical issues and questions the MEPS personnel and liaisons may have. The information is then compiled and addressed by the J-6 leaders.

This information is used to help J-6 understand MEPS issues, adjust support and identify patterns so they can meet the needs of their customers.

However, they are not just there to just shake hands and take notes. They have been able to provide on-the-job training and jump in to solve crucial issues that arise.

“The advantage of sending a tech support person is that they can actually do work,” said Gray. “If they find an issue with a router or a switch or a help ticket caught in the cue, they can get the issue resolved.”

The headquarters is always striving to modernize and improve software, but rarely sees the effects on the customer. This gives the J-6 staff a chance to see what is going on and see the results in action.

Each J-6 employee who make a Frontlines visit comes back with ideas and energized of how staff can improve support provided to MEPS.

“The Frontlines initiative has produced beneficial effects for both the visiting employee, and the hosting MEPS employees,” said Lince. “The J-6 employee really sees the importance of the support provided by J-6 to MEPS, and the MEPS employees get to connect with the J-6 support provider “way up” at HQ.”

For example, the Baltimore MEPS had three old tickets and the support specialist called back to check the status. They were stuck in the cue, then addressed and closed.

We’re a geographically dispersed command; spending time at the Frontlines goes a long way towards closing the gap between the field and HQ.

“MEPS give better feedback, are more willing to share and ask for help with the enactment of Frontlines,” Gray said, “J-6 is going to the last inch and doing whatever it takes to help the MEPS succeed.” ■

# MARP

## Medical Pilot Takes Flight



By Derrick Noack

USMEPCOM implemented a pilot program June 15 to reconsider the timeframe for disqualification for some medical conditions that were previously disqualifying for one's lifetime. The Medical Accession Records Pilot (MARP) uses revised time limitations for 38 disqualifying medical conditions found in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6130.03, Volume 1, "Medical Standards for Appointment, Enlistment, or Induction in the Military Service." This pilot will run to Dec. 31, 2022, when it will be assessed and analyzed to inform potential recommendations for changes to DoDI 6130.03.

Using the verifiable medical information available in MHS GENESIS, the intent of the MARP is to qualify applicants for military service while limiting the need for supplemental paper records. The main conditions from DoDI 6130.03 Volume 1 included in the pilot were conditions that typically occur during childhood and would not affect the current readiness of a service member.

"In our regulation that states medical disqualifications, there are 201 conditions listed," said U.S. Army Col. Kevin Cummings, USMEPCOM command surgeon. "We reviewed those and asked ourselves three questions: Does the risk from that medical condition remain constant throughout one's entire life? Is there something about service in the military that can worsen the condition? Is there a chance the condition can improve over time?"

From those three questions, 46 medical conditions were highlighted for inclusion in the MARP program. Those 46 were presented to the military services for feedback. If two services had issues with a condition on the list, for example both the Navy and Air Force, then it was dropped. This eliminated eight, bringing the revised time limitations list down to 38. If just one service disagreed with the addition of a medical condition, then its modified timeline increased in the pilot. Timelines vary depending on condition, and can be six months, three, five or seven years. One medical condition that had no objections from any of the services was attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

"Of those 38 conditions, ADHD will impact us the most," said Cummings. "ADHD was put on the list with a timeframe of three years. We left the medication component at two years. ADHD will probably have a larger impact than all other 37 conditions combined."

USMEPCOM will assess pilot performance by tracking disqualification rates, requests for additional medical records and outcomes at Basic Training.

"Providers will note in MHS GENESIS if a recruit was permitted to enlist by MARP," said Cummings. "Upfront, we will know how often this occurs. Data on whether recruits brought in from MARP were later separated from service will take time and is a long-term aspect of it."

Stallings said the intent of MARP is to maintain military readiness while being more efficient with records requests. Medical providers are to use their judgement to make a decision with sufficient and accurate information provided by MHS GENESIS, rather than wanting all the paperwork associated with the condition.

"What we're trying to do is eliminate the need to continue to collect some records for some conditions all the way back to birth," said Stallings. "Our medical providers are going to ask for fewer records so that's less times that recruiters and applicants have to go back and get additional records."

The current list of 38 conditions are subject to change during tenure of the pilot. Any changes and updates will be announced via Information Message Updates. By Nov. 30, 2022, USMEPCOM will provide a recommendation on extending the use of alternative time standards for other disqualifying conditions into 2023 and a determination as to whether permanent changes to DoDI 6130.03, Volume 1 are warranted to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Accession and Retention Medical Standards Working Group. ■

# USMIEPCOM AWARDS



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## FY22 2ND QUARTER MEPS OF EXCELLENCE

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### **CATEGORY 1**

**Fort Lee  
Dallas  
Jacksonville**

### **CATEGORY 2**

**Oklahoma City  
Boston  
Louisville**

### **CATEGORY 3**

**Amarillo  
Beckley  
Butte  
Fargo  
Spokane**



**As we move toward transitioning the TSP to a new service provider, we are sharing upcoming changes to help prepare participants and beneficiaries with what's to come.**

We're all about helping you reach your financial goals. That's why we're excited to tell you about these **new features coming later this year**:



**A mobile app that puts account management at your fingertips:**

- Access to your account from anywhere, anytime
- Year-to-date fund performance, balance history, and current investment mix
- Online transactions to move money between funds, and more



**A new My Account interface** designed with you in mind



**Additional layers of security** to enhance your account protections



**Secure logins with the option to use your device biometrics**, such as fingerprint or facial recognition



**More investment options**



**Convenient support** how you want it, when you need it:

- Online chat function to connect with a ThriftLine Representative
- 24/7 virtual assistant on our website
- Phone access to speak with a ThriftLine Representative



**Personalized support** to roll over money to your TSP from eligible accounts



**Electronic signatures and online payment options** that reduce paperwork and save time

We designed these tools to help you map out your retirement and align your TSP experience with how you access your bank or other financial institutions.



For more information, visit [tsp.gov/changes](https://tsp.gov/changes)



SCAN ME

# Summer Safety Brief with Surfin Rex

Summer is a great time to enjoy outdoor activities like swimming and cookouts, but it is also the time of year with the most safety mishaps. Whatever your favorite seasonal activity, remember to maintain an active risk management mindset to ensure an enjoyable and safe summer. Here are some simple guidelines from Rex the Safety Rhino to keep you cool for the summer.

## HEAT & SUN SAFETY

- Check local news for extreme heat alerts
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose fitting clothing, sunglasses and a hat
- Wear sunscreen and reapply after being in the sun more than two hours, after swimming, sweating or toweling off
- Avoid outdoor activities during peak hours of sun exposure
- Make sure pets have shady areas to rest
- Stay hydrated with water
- Check on elderly, disabled and/or homebound people

## WEATHER – RELATED SAFETY

- Before tornado and hurricane season, create an emergency plan for family and pets
- Prepare an emergency supply kit with food, water and medicine for at least three days
- Know where and how to shut off utilities
- If the power is out, use flashlights instead of candles

## FIRE SAFETY

- Provide a preventative maintenance check before using grills and always turn off gas at the source prior to inspecting parts
- Grill outside at a safe distance from house
- Use appropriate length grilling utensils to protect yourself from burns
- Keep a fire extinguisher nearby
- Only light fireworks outside and maintain a safe distance
- Never allow young children to handle fireworks and supervise older children
- Do not re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks

## WATER RELATED SAFETY

- Never swim alone or leave swimmers unattended
- When possible, swim at a lifeguard-protected beach or pool
- Do not swim during inclement weather
- Avoid consuming alcohol, drugs or medication while swimming
- Ensure all family members are aware of the dangers associated with water
- Have an emergency action plan in place, including what to do or who to call in an emergency
- Never allow running or horseplay around a pool
- Wear a personal flotation device/life jacket when boating
- Stay alert and avoid crowded areas when boating
- Ensure cell phone is charged and in a waterproof case in case you need to call for help



# MEPS MENTION

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



**Name:** Sharon Walters

**Position at the MEPS:** Administrative Support Technician

**Time at Detroit MEPS :** 43 years

**Contribution :** Sharon Walters consistently demonstrates her care, devotion and concern for the accomplishment of the USMEPCOM mission. She goes above and beyond to ensure completion of all assigned tasks with a smile and positive attitude. She is an expert in all aspects of personnel matters and administrative processing. Ms. Walters is proud of the fact that in working with 17 different commanders, she has been able to keep them all out of jail, "Which means I must be doing my job right."

**Plans after retirement :** Camping with her family, gardening, enjoying new grandchildren and volunteering at animal shelters.



**Name:** Constance Thompson

**Position at the MEPS:** Information Technology Specialist

**Time at Detroit MEPS :** 42 years

**Contribution :** Constance Thompson is an invaluable asset to Detroit MEPS. She continues to serve as a subject matter expert in all IT matters throughout the organization. Ms. Thompson consistently displays "Red Carpet Treatment" by showing care and compassion for all employees. She was one of the first employees to volunteer to help with the hotel screenings during the outbreak of COVID-19.

**Resilience :** After being diagnosed with stage 4 cancer in April 2021, and completing her first phase of chemotherapy in September, within two weeks she contracted COVID-19. Her compromised immune system from chemotherapy caused her to develop sepsis: which caused gangrene in both of her feet. Ultimately, she had bi-lateral below knee amputations. After months of physical therapy and strong faith, she was able to learn to walk and drive again. Despite Ms. Thompson's complications and personal challenges, she continues to exceptionally serve the Detroit MEPS with the utmost dedication and loyalty.



# InstaMEPS



1. Lisa Kalfin, Albany MEPS test coordinator and Coast Guard Auxiliant, speaks at a press conference during National Boating Week to raise awareness for boating safety. (Photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Taylor Schulte)
2. Boise MEPS military personnel observe a Joint Tactical Air Control exercise by the Idaho Air National Guard. (Courtesy photo)
3. U.S. Army Lt. Gen Maria Gervais, deputy commanding general/chief of staff, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine speaks with U.S. Navy Cmdr. Quintrell McCreary, commander, 10th Battalion and MEPS Jacksonville, during a visit to Atlanta MEPS (Courtesy photo)
4. Lisa Kalfin, Albany MEPS test coordinator, Kevin Sullivan, Queensbury High School guidance counselor, and U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Jacob Partin, Albany MEPS commanding officer pose for a photo at Queensbury High School. Albany MEPS presented a certificate of appreciation to Sullivan for his efforts in aiding 175 of his students in utilizing the ASVAB Career Exploration Program. (Photo by Bill Morris)
5. Kansas City MEPS personnel and family pose for a photo during an event recognizing Month of the Military Child. (Courtesy photo)





**WE WANT YOUR PHOTOS**  
InstaMEPS is a brand new spread, highlighting pics of MEPS/RPS events or personnel. Email submissions to: [derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil](mailto:derrik.l.noack.civ@army.mil)



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