

UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

# Messenger

SHARING INFORMATION TO REACH A VISION

VOL. 29, No. 1



# Messenger

*Sharing information to reach a vision*

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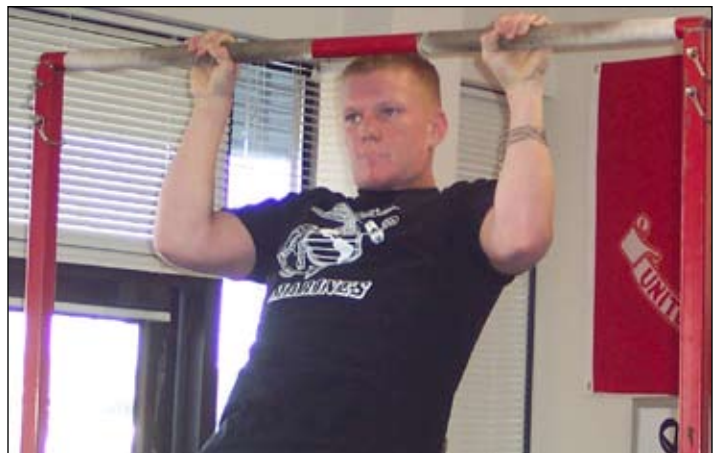
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## U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

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### Messenger

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# Commander's Commentary

Despite the complexity and specialization of our post-industrial age, basic leadership principles are as relevant to accomplishing the MEPS mission today as at any time in the past.

Accountability, taking personal responsibility for your actions, is one of those principles.

It's not a modern idea. When we say that our justice system is predicated on the principle that alleged transgressors will be "called to account" for their actions, we follow a line of thinking all the way back to Hammurabi's Code, written nearly 4,000 years ago.

In USMEPCOM, as in any military or civilian organizational setting, accountability is an inherent element of leadership. The leader is always responsible for everything he and his subordinates do and fail to do. He is accountable. The buck stops at the leader's doorstep.

Accountability is not, however, just for those with oak leaves or bars on their collars or chevrons on their sleeves. After all, we're all someone's subordinate, all accountable to someone for the successful execution of our responsibilities, which in turn contribute to the accomplishment of our mission. Properly led, subordinates are leaders in training.

Good leaders establish a climate within their organization that fosters accountability, improvement, and excellence. They develop a sense of responsibility in their subordinates. Leaders who hold themselves and their personnel accountable for their actions make positive change in their organization.

A leader doesn't rationalize a shortcoming. Instead, he accepts it, takes responsibility for it and sets out to make things right.

As with most things in life, the tasks we perform well are those things we "personalize," those that we accept as a personal challenge and for which we feel personally responsible. In that way, accountability is more than just action—it's action with attitude.

I recently saw that action with attitude during a MEPS visit on a Saturday opening. The MEPS personnel were not only accomplishing the mission, they were doing it with a spring in their step and a smile.

Action with attitude motivates us to meet and overcome challenges by taking the initiative, and seeking innovative solutions.

I see it in the way MEPS with huge Student Testing Program challenges figure out how to "improvise, adapt, and overcome" to get it done, rather than fall back on rationalizations to explain why they can't make it.

I also see it in our Point of Sale-Centralized Test Scoring (POS-CTS) initiative. It's a pilot program we're currently running in Vermont and Wisconsin aimed at providing same-day, verified test score results that in turn allow recruiters to perform on-site job classification so that applicant job offers can be made in near real time.



In this regard, the transition to the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) will require an increased level of accountability on all levels.

As we look at the rest of 2007 and beyond, let's hold ourselves more accountable. What is your role? Do you lead by example? Can you combine attitude and action to overcome obstacles and solve problems? What value do you add to the process?

Thank you for all you do to ensure we accomplish our mission.

**Lon M. Yeary**  
**Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps**  
**Commanding**

# Command Picks 6

The six people selected as the outstanding military members and civilian employees of the year represent the best USMEPCOM has to offer. After spirited contests with other nominees at all levels of competition – MEPS, clusters, sectors and, finally, command – these six people distinguished themselves as the cream of the crop from more than 700 military and more than 1,900 civilians assigned to the command.

## Captain Nicole Holloway USMEPCOM Company Grade Officer of the Year

Capt. Nicole Holloway is the USMEPCOM Company Grade Officer of the Year. She is the operations officer at the San Diego MEPS.

Holloway led her section to an excellent rating during a USMEPCOM Inspector General inspection. She energetically and enthusiastically supervised 12 military members and 18 civilians while promoting goal setting and professional development. Her leadership resulted in two military and two civilian promotions in addition to one person being selected for Officer Candidate School. Captain Holloway oversaw 5,704 accessions, 5,362 Delayed Entry Program contracts and more than 8,000 full physicals to support recruiters from all services.

In addition to her regular duties, Holloway frequently served as acting commander. She conducted enlistment ceremonies designed to help applicants and their families reflect on the significance of the event. Holloway supervised the Hometown Shipping pilot program, which allowed Navy applicants to ship from their home town of Las Vegas, rather than make a second trip to San Diego. She was hand-picked as one of four experts to design



USMEPCOM's first standardized training plan for key MEPS billets. Holloway led the ARMS—or Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength—research study at the San Diego MEPS, one of six sites to test the program and then successfully transferred responsibility for the program to the MEPS staff from contractors when the program was adopted command-wide. She coordinated hiring more than 20 civilian employees due to Program Budget Decision 712 and high turnover in the high-cost San Diego area. She supervised control of a \$2.5 million equipment account and was the responsible officer for a travel account of more than \$1 million. Senior officers including Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, commander of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, praised her enthusiasm and dedication.

Holloway conducted disaster preparedness training and registered all MEPS personnel in the “America’s Most Prepared Military Community Program.” She served as the readiness support group coordinator and executed service birthday and cultural celebrations and team building activities in addition to producing a quarterly newsletter and writing the MEPS’ wellness program guidelines. Holloway counseled pregnant military members on nutrition, fitness, parental responsibility and military standards. She also taught Sunday school classes for 3 to 5 year olds at her church.

She completed Phase I of Electronic Warfare School and is currently enrolled in Phase II.

“Captain Holloway demonstrates the highest levels of professionalism and leadership,” Lt. Cmdr. Cheryl Stolze, San Diego MEPS commander, said. “Her in-depth knowledge of policies and procedures, and her enthusiasm and willingness to go above and beyond sets her above her peers. In addition to her competence, she shows genuine caring and loyalty to the MEPS staff, applicants and family members.”

**Master Sergeant Jorge Galloza-Santiago**  
**USMEPCOM**  
**Senior Enlisted Military Member of the Year**

**M**aster Sgt. Jorge Galloza-Santiago is the USMEPCOM Senior Enlisted Member of the Year. He is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Medical Section at the San Juan MEPS.

Galloza-Santiago was the driving force behind his section receiving an excellent rating in its last USMEPCOM Inspector General inspection. His leadership and oversight ensured the completion of 3,435 full physicals in fiscal 2006, a 21 percent increase over the previous year, despite personnel turnover and shortages. He willingly filled in for the station first sergeant in his absence and took time to mentor junior NCOs from other sections. MEPS staff and recruiters seek his advice because they regard Galloza-Santiago as an expert in the medical field. He leads a mobile training team that provides on-site training to recruiting commands in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. He started a program to conduct medical consultations in the Virgin Islands by contacting on-site service providers.



He was one of six people selected as a subject matter expert in USMEPCOM's 30/60/90-day training program initiatives. He led a partnership with Rodriguez Army Health Clinic to conduct refresher training for the MEPS' medical staff. Galloza-Santiago's oversight and management of the quality control program led to same-day processing and initial qualification rates among the best in the command. Additionally, he proctored three high school testing sessions in support of the ASVAB Student Testing Program.

Galloza-Santiago volunteered to help renovate the San Juan MEPS' aging facility and helped save more than \$7,000. He was recognized by recruiting commands for his customer service and training efforts, and by the Fort Buchanan commander for his support of the "Make A Difference" campaign.

He volunteered to support the readiness support group and was instrumental in planning the MEPS holiday party. As a member of the amusement vending machine fund he coordinated the annual organization day. He coordinated and led a car wash that raised \$650 for the readiness support group. Galloza-Santiago volunteered more than 10 hours to renovate a volleyball court in his community and he is an active member of his church's community outreach program. He is also pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in business administration through the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico.

"Without a doubt, Master Sergeant Galloza-Santiago has been the inspiration for the performance of the medical section," Major Eric A. Martinez, San Juan MEPS commander, said. "His personal involvement has set the tone for success not only in his section, but for our entire operation. Master Sergeant Galloza-Santiago is an accomplished and competent senior NCO with a proven performance record."

**Petty Officer 1st Class Deborah Katz**  
**USMEPCOM**  
**Enlisted Military Member of the Year**

**P**etty Officer 1st Class Deborah Katz is the USMEPCOM Enlisted Military Member of the Year. She is the leading petty officer in the Medical Section at the Baltimore MEPS.

Katz assumed duties as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the medical section for nine months, supervising civilians and military members from all branches of service. Under her leadership, the section completed more than 9,000 physicals. She managed \$200,000 in equipment, \$200,000 in fee-basis physician salaries and \$20,000 worth of supplies. Charged by her commander to fix "broken" same-day processing rates, the section improved from less than 75 percent to more than 90 percent in three months. She co-wrote comprehensive standard operating procedures that the Interservice Recruitment Committee approved in less than an hour.



When the Baltimore MEPS was selected on short notice to host an Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength—ARMS—Test training conference, Katz organized the event to host 10 MEPS, including coordinating hotel and car rental reservations, and setting up visual aids and audiovisual equipment for the instructor. She used the training she received at the conference to certify her entire staff and others to conduct the test. She served as the unit's Navy Personnel Support Detachment representative, ran the physical readiness test program and ensured all Navy fitness reports were submitted on time. She was one of three Baltimore MEPS staff members who conducted the search for a new hotel, which resulted in a \$9.2 million contract that will provide service to more than 14,000 applicants a year.

Katz planned and conducted the MEPS change of command ceremony and reception. She was the co-chair for the MEPS adult holiday party and headed the Fort Meade Thanksgiving basket program which collected more than three tons of food and distributed more than 900 baskets. Post first sergeants praised her efforts and she received the post commander's highest award during the Fort Meade volunteer luncheon.

Katz earned a bachelor's degree in health administration and is currently pursuing a master's degree in management. In addition to ARMS training, she completed equal employment opportunity training on line, which allowed her to conduct classes on two training days.

"Petty Officer Katz stands alone in a MEPS of superstars," Lt. Col. Robert Larsen, Baltimore MEPS commander, said. "She has earned everyone's respect and admiration. She has the profound strength of character, integrity and leadership we need in today's enlisted community."

**Dr. Diane Rubin**  
**USMEPCOM Civilian of the Year**  
**GS-10 and Above**

**D**r. Diane Rubin is the USMEPCOM Civilian of the Year, GS-10 and above. Rubin is the chief medical officer at the Spokane MEPS.

Rubin developed a chief medical officer/fee-basis physician workbook that has all the pertinent regulations and instructions for medical processing, recommendations for waiting periods, a pictorial reference for tattoos, and critical messages from the Western Sector surgeon. She also created a chief medical officer logbook, which reviews her predecessor's files, summarizes credentialing records and organizes training records for fee-basis physicians and the medical section staff. The inspector general praised the two books and cited them as initiatives that should be adopted command-wide.

She created "mirror image" examination rooms for heavy processing days when two doctors are working. Each room is fully equipped and has references needed for medical histories and physicals, which eliminated the need to leave the room to look for tools or references. This initiative, along with looking at every aspect of medical processing, saves time and has streamlined processing. As a result, medical processing can be completed by 3:30 p.m., even on the busiest days, which allows applicants more time with their service liaisons. Rubin created the CMO report that keeps MEPS and interservice recruitment leaders abreast of applicant problems that surface during medical processing and serves as a record of how or why applicants are disqualified.

Rubin maintains positive working relationships with recruiters, improving them when possible. She speaks with recruiters frequently and briefs the quarterly new recruiter orientation sessions. She has an open door policy with service liaisons which provides a clear communication channel to discuss applicant medical issues. Rubin introduces herself to applicants at the start of each day and tells them what to expect during the examination. This puts the applicants at ease and provides a better MEPS experience.

In addition to her regular duties, Rubin is a medical consultant at the Social Security Administration. She does disability evaluations, reviews medical charts and data, and determines if people are eligible for disability pensions. She is board certified in internal medicine and endocrinology and is a member of the Fellow of the American College of Clinical Endocrinologists.

Rubin is active in many MEPS volunteer projects, including constructing a new home for Habitat for Humanity and helping senior citizens and the disabled by participating in the annual "Leaf Rake Blitz." She also volunteers to serve meals at a local mission and trained MEPS members on suicide prevention and depression.

"Dr. Rubin is a warm, caring and extremely talented person," Lt. Cmdr. Yolanda Kern, Spokane MEPS commander, said. "She took the initiative to develop tools that streamline processing and benefit her co-workers. She is the glue that holds the medical section together."



**Diane Simard**  
**USMEPCOM Civilian of the Year**  
**GS-7 – 9**

**D**iane Simard is the USMEPCOM Civilian of the Year, GS-7 – 9. Simard is the information technology specialist for the Portland, Maine, MEPS.

Zero discrepancies were noted during the first command inspection of information technology thanks to Simard's dedication and attention to detail. She installed 16 new MIRS terminals and 14 printers. Simard completed the Army Gold Overlays on 24 computers with no adverse impact on operations or administration.

She assumed the telecommunication control officer duties when the MEPS changed telephone services. Simard stayed late during the switch to the new system, personally inspected every phone and made sure the system worked before signing off on the paperwork. Simard is readily available for problem solving whenever there are problems with the server, MIRS or fingerprint machine. She wrote standard operating procedures on the new telephone system, MIRS and software installation. She checked the alternate site designated by the emergency management action plan to determine information technology and systems availability to support the MEPS mission if it had to use the location. She communicates often with sister MEPS and the networking between information technology specialists and their problem solving abilities have benefited several MEPS and helped solve information technology issues sooner.



Simard completed training in A+; Net+; advanced troubleshooting, maintenance, and personal computer troubleshooting; information architecture security officer; and security awareness. She assumed duties as president of the family readiness support group and her leadership resulted in no discrepancies during the last command inspection. Simard raised funds for the group by involving the MEPS in a recycling drive and helped organize silent auctions, bake sales, cookie swaps and cook-off events. She rallied support for the family of a health technician who was called to active duty and made sure someone from the MEPS contacted them regularly. She created displays including historical information for Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday and Women's History Month.

She is her church's secretary, designs its newsletter and created its web site. She also volunteers to repair personal computers for single mothers and low-income families. During the holidays, Simard was her church's point of contact for Operation Christmas Child Drop, which collected and distributed items to underprivileged children. She is an active member for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and a life member of the Disabled American Veterans.

"Ms. Simard is a loyal and dedicated employee," Maj. Eric Warner, Portland, Maine, MEPS commander, said. "She is the reason the Portland, Maine, MEPS continually fosters a family-oriented environment that gives each employee a sense of belonging."

**Todd Held**  
**USMEPCOM Civilian of the Year**  
**GS-6 and Below**

**T**odd Held is the USMEPCOM Civilian of the Year, GS-6 and Below. Held is the lead human resources assistant at the Minneapolis MEPS.

Although primarily assigned as the files room manager, Held is acknowledged as the “go-to guy” for almost every unusual situation, whether it deals with processing, testing or medical issues. He is also the source for many ideas for processing and facilities improvements and has been a force in making positive changes and upgrades for the whole organization. Upon assuming the files room manager duties in 2005, Held took immediate steps to improve the condition and organization of the records. He removed every record from the shelves, verified that each was current, checked the contents, ensured that it was checked in and returned it to the proper place. In the process, he discovered dozens of files that had been requested by other MEPS and never sent, and many more that should have been purged. He established a standard for the duration of packet checkout and set about tracking down overdue files. His hard work and attention to detail rapidly set the files room in order.

Early in 2006, the operations supervisor resigned his position and, shortly thereafter, a long-time lead human resources assistant



left, too. Held assumed duties as the operations supervisor in addition to his regular duties. He was the section supervisor for three months leading up to the heaviest shipping period of the year. He made assignments, coordinated activities and managed employees and pay issues while still meeting his normal responsibilities. When a new operations supervisor was hired, Held became a trainer and advisor to his new supervisor. Held’s reputation as a subject matter expert extends far beyond the MEPS. Western Sector and the USMEPCOM staff both use his knowledge as a resource. He has served as a member of the Western Sector staff assistance visit team, participating in visits to the San Diego, El Paso and Houston MEPS.

Held installed a new overhead projector in the briefing room, significantly improving the facility and saving the command hundreds of dollars by completing the project himself. He framed and installed large versions of key medical forms in the room, enhancing the morning in-brief. He installed a large national map in the lobby that shows the locations of all 65 MEPS and the various basic training sites. It has become a popular reference for shippers and their families.

Held completed an on-line effective communications course, attended a week-long leadership and development course and completed two web-based personal management courses on the Army’s distance learning web site. Co-workers often ask him for information and advice. Even when he knows the answer offhand, he pulls down the reference and walks the other person through the process, which encourages other employees to do the same and increases their knowledge.

“Mr. Held’s performance is nothing short of outstanding,” Maj. Michael Tayman, Minneapolis MEPS commander, said. “He stepped up to a leadership position during a very difficult period of personnel difficulties and kept the processing section operating smoothly. No one has been more responsible for the MEPS’ success than Todd Held.”

## Runners-up

### Company Grade Officer of the Year

**Capt. Nicolas Bellenbaum**

USMEPCOM Headquarters  
 J-6 (Information Technology Directorate)

**Lt.j.g. Scott Korljan**

Eastern Sector  
 Chicago MEPS

### Senior NCO of the Year

**Sgt. 1st Class Demetric Davis**

USMEPCOM Headquarters  
 J-3 (Operations Directorate)

**Sgt. 1st Class Zandra Parker**

Western Sector  
 Houston MEPS

### Military Member of the Year

**Sgt. Casey J. Garcia**

Western Sector  
 Fargo MEPS

### Civilian of the Year GS-10 and above

**Kathryn Browning-Callen**

USMEPCOM Headquarters  
 J-3 (Operations Directorate)

**Faith Durden**

Eastern Sector  
 Buffalo MEPS

### Civilian of the Year GS-7 – 9

**Leaf Rich**

Western Sector  
 Spokane MEPS

### Civilian of the Year GS-6 and Below

**Traci Payton**

USMEPCOM Headquarters  
 J-3 (Operations Directorate)

**Olubunmi Yoloye**

Eastern Sector  
 Baltimore MEPS

# Pursuing Excellence

By Skip Wiseman  
Messenger Associate Editor

Nine military entrance processing stations earned recognitions as MEPS of excellence for the first quarter of fiscal 2007.

To win the honor, MEPS must meet or exceed the criteria in 12 areas representing the core processes of medical, testing and processing, and general military readiness.

Rebecca Porinsky of the Programs, Analysis and Evaluation Directorate, is the coordinator for the MEPS of Excellence program.

Porinsky explained that determining who qualifies is strictly mathematical. "The data is sent to me and I have a chart I fill in," she said.

MEPS that don't qualify can appeal to a reclama board chaired by David O'Brien, USMEPCOM deputy commander and chief of staff. Each director is a voting member. A reclama is a request to an authority to reconsider its decision or



proposed action. The sectors are responsible for forwarding the waiver request.

"Sometimes the argument is that it was a little mistake," Porinsky said. "For instance, one of the criteria is Bank of America Travel Card delinquency rates. Often, they'll have people who are no longer at the MEPS who are delinquent. They'll often get waivers for that."

Porinsky said the program not only recognizes superior performance, it helps MEPS' performances improve. HIV/DAT rates have improved dramatically since the program started, she said.

"We're also constantly looking at ways to improve the program, including making it fairer to all the MEPS regardless of size," Porinsky said. She cited the number of HIV/DAT tests the larger MEPS perform. Mistakes are more likely just because of the large volume.

The criteria are:

## Timeliness of military evaluations, awards

Award submissions and evaluations must reach Sector headquarters on or before the deadline. Sectors track the submissions.

## Recruiter leads goals

Measured in the third quarter only, the MEPS must obtain 100 percent or more of its goal. The Operations Directorate conducts the program.



## Medical same day processing

MEPS must either qualify or disqualify 86 percent of applicants in one day of medical processing. The data is derived from QuICR.

## Drug/HIV specimen processing

Specimen cancellations for reasons other than a broken seal disqualifies a MEPS for that quarter's award. The Medical Directorate monitors the program.

## Clinical lab improvement program

Submissions for the program must be made on time with no errors. MEPS medical sections are tested three times a year to ensure they are proficient in three areas of lab testing. The Medical Directorate reviews



a summary from the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and provides a list of MEPS that meet the criteria.

### Practitioner credentialing timeliness

Credential renewals must be submitted to the Medical Directorate at least two months but no more than four months before the credentials expire.



### Bank of America travel card delinquency

No accounts more than 60 days overdue are allowed. The Resource Management Directorate tracks the data.

### Physical fitness readiness

All service members must pass their physical fitness tests. Sectors compile the results.

### Height and weight standards

All service members must meet their services' height and weight standards. Service members who report out of standards have 180 days to meet them standard before they count against the command.



### Unclassifiable fingerprints

More than 98 percent of electronic fingerprints must be classifiable. The Office of Personnel Management provides the error rates.

### Incidents of serious misconduct

Zero tolerance for serious misconduct by military members or civilian employees. For military members that means any act of misconduct for which the Uniform Code of Military Justice authorizes a punitive discharge. For civilians, it applies to misconduct which authorizes termination for a first offense. The USMEPCOM Staff Judge Advocate tracks the statistics.

### Test loss compromise

Any loss or compromise of Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery testing material directly attributed to MEPS personnel. The Operations Directorate makes determinations and recommendations.

Inputs from the field are welcome, Porinsky said. MEPS should submit suggestions through sector. Eastern Sector MEPS should contact John Butler and Western sector should contact Kathleen Murphy. Butler and Murphy are the chiefs of the sector's respective operations groups.

Editor's note: This is the first time the *Messenger* has published the results of the quarterly MEPS of Excellence program. We plan to recognize future MEPS of Excellence honorees.

# MEPS of Excellence

First Quarter  
Fiscal Year 2007

Baltimore

Boise

Chicago

El Paso

Fargo

Jacksonville

Louisville

Nashville

Sacramento

# The Army Ideas for Excellence Program

**M**ichele Chambers, USMEPCOM's Army Ideas for Excellence program coordinator, will introduce the program and answer some of the most frequently asked questions about the program.

## What is the intent of the Army Ideas for Excellence Program?



The AIEP is intended to encourage employees to improve present policy, practices and regulatory constraints which don't facilitate good management, and are not needed in time of war. AIEP is designed to improve morale by giving military members and civilian employees a chance to voluntarily take part in improving management in the government.

## Who decides whether or not to adopt a decision?



The Army is committed to administering the program fairly and consistently. The decision to adopt or not adopt an idea, or to grant or not grant an award, is a commander's prerogative within the limits of his or her authority.

## How long does it take for an idea to be adopted?



An idea may be immediately adopted and a full award (less than \$10,000) paid if the idea can be fully implemented within one year of adoption.

## Who is eligible to participate in the AIEP?



All members of the Army community and others concerned with the welfare of both the Army and the nation are eligible to submit ideas. However, payment of awards is limited to Soldiers and certain categories of civilian employees.

## Are you saying, a person can submit and excellent idea and not receive a cash award?



Yes. If the idea from a person not eligible for a cash award is adopted, the local commander may choose to present appropriate non-cash recognition such as a medal, plaque or locally produced certificate.

## Who is eligible for cash awards?



Active duty military personnel, including reservists and military technicians, ROTC cadets, and United States Military Academy cadets; direct hire civilians who are paid from appropriated funds; National Guard members in federal service under 10 United States Code orders; and retired military or separated employees whose ideas were entered in the AIEP system while they were in an eligible status.



Michele Chambers

## How can people submit ideas?



People can access the Army Ideas of Excellence Program, also known as the Army Suggestion Program, by logging into the ASP website using their Army Knowledge Online user name and password through the AKO website or by using the web address:

[https://armysuggestions.army.mil/services/asp/asp\\_home.cfm](https://armysuggestions.army.mil/services/asp/asp_home.cfm)

## Is there anything else people should know before submitting an idea?



You can submit a suggestion as a group or individually. Include in your submission the current practice, the proposed change, an explanation of why the present practice is deficient and why the change would be beneficial.

[https://armysuggestions.army.mil/services/asp/asp\\_home.cfm](https://armysuggestions.army.mil/services/asp/asp_home.cfm)



Army applicants take the Oath of Enlistment.



Navy applicants march into Raymond James Stadium.

## All-pro enlistment ceremony

Each year veterans, past and present, are honored on Veteran's Day. Their contributions and sacrifices are highlighted, while their lives are celebrated.

This year the Tampa Bay military community and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers honored veterans by designating a Military Appreciation Day.

Some of the activities included a moment of silence, Purple Heart recognition, honorary captains and military families, and a flyover by an Air Force B-2 Spirit from the 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

During halftime, 195 applicants enlisted into the armed forces. The 53,000 fans cheered and applauded the nation's newest military members for their courage and patriotism.

Maj. Gen. Michael Diamond, deputy director of logistics, U.S. Central Command, conducted the ceremony.

Two Iraq veterans, Army Staff Sgt. Lee Jones and Marine Corps Lance Cpl. John McClellan met with the new service members after the ceremony and encouraged the new recruits to stay focused.



Army Maj. Gen. Michael Diamond swears in applicants.

## Oklahoma City nearly doubles its CFC goal; earns awards



Cpl. Angela Alfonso and Mary Riley hold the Eagle Award presented to the Oklahoma City MEPS

The Oklahoma City MEPS had another successful Combined Federal Campaign culminating in the MEPS' receipt of the Early Bird Award and the Eagle Award.

The military and civilian employees contributed more than \$5,100 to make 178 percent of the station's goal.

Additionally, Marine Cpl. Angela Alfonso excelled as the station coordinator and earned the campaign Platinum Keyworker Award.

Air Force 1st Lt. Richard Fowle, the executive officer on loan from Tinker Air Force Base, attributed the MEPS' success

enthusiastic command support and a pervasive sense of giving among the MEPS staff.

Some of the activities and events contributing to the MEPS success included raffles of Oklahoma University football and Oklahoma City Hornets basketball tickets, a campaign breakfast and an activity-filled rally that solidified the giving spirit in the office.

The Oklahoma City MEPS has a proud tradition of giving to CFC and has high hopes of capitalizing on this year's success this and excelling again next year.

# Along for the Ride

## Program helps new staffers understand how recruiting works

By Capt. Morgan J. O'Brien III  
Albuquerque MEPS

Among new Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates' proposals for adding 92,000 new troops to the U.S. armed forces are provisions for a permanent increase of 27,000 Marines over the next five years, increasing the active-duty Marine Corps to 202,000.

The mandate has been set, and Marine recruiters are working as hard as ever to fill the ranks. The personnel at Marine Corps Recruiting Substation Albuquerque—whether in the mall or speaking to high school classes or talking to parents—prove that to fill the ranks with the best possible candidates, recruiters must represent the core values of their service: honor, courage and commitment.

To bolster the image of the world's most fearsome fighting force—and help

immeasurably with their sales pitch—the Marines are equipped with two incredibly powerful and priceless recruiting tools: sharp uniforms and a reputation for toughness.

“All the services have virtually the same pay and benefits. As Marine recruiters, we have to offer benefits beyond the paycheck and have our recruits consider things like the pride of joining our organization,” said Master Sgt. Charles Walters, the recruiting substation commander. “We promote the pride of wearing the uniform more than the pride of earning a paycheck.”

Most recruits are attracted to the Corps' rock-hard image, and seek to tackle head on the challenges posed by the Marines' notorious drill instructors at the Marine Corps recruiting depots at Camp Pendleton, Calif., and Parris Island, S.C. Upon graduation from basic, the much romanticized concept of the Marines and their rifles provides an

interesting contrast to the equally important weapons of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

“When you think of the other branches, you think of their equipment and weapons. With the Marines, you think of the people,” said Pfc. Toni Fastenau, a newly minted Marine who had just completed training at Parris Island and was visiting her recruiters before the next phase of her training where she would learn to become an administration Marine.

There is no archetypical Marine. The recruiters simply look for good Americans seeking to serve. Marines were looking for the same type of people as any other service.

“You need to go past their shell,” Walters said. “You need to ignore how people appear and find out about their personal future goals.”

The recruiters take this notion seriously, and travel in a 40-mile radius to meet potential recruits. During a typical day, recruiters spend their time doing everything from speaking to high school Junior ROTC classes, walking around malls seeking target audiences and conducting house visits to meet family members. Recruiters are also known to attend high school athletic events to cheer on their recruits and provide information to anyone interested. Before going home at the end of the day, each recruiter makes up to 60 calls per night between 6 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. calling lists of potential Marines culled from local high schools.

“You never know who might be the next Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps or the next commandant,” Sgt. Mike Serna said. “They might even be the next governor or even the next Drew Carey,” Serna said, referring to the Marine-turned-comedian.

Finding the next generation of Marines (and comedians) requires true devotion to the mission. The recruiters are often working seven-day weeks, typically consisting of 12-hour days.

“Good recruiters must believe in what they're selling,” Walters said. “Loving and believing in what you do is crucial to our success, because of the demands of the jobs and the hours.”

One must master a number of skills to master military recruiting. The role requires a skill set that calls for part guidance counselor, part big brother and part salesman. As a rule, recruiters must have integrity and a penchant for hard work.

“We have to be good listeners,” Staff Sgt. Guadalupe Romero said. “You have to make sure that the recruit is not just saying



Sgt. Mirna Ramos prepares Christopher Cortez for processing through the MEPS.



Justin Davis works on pull-ups, part of the Marine fitness test, at the Marine Corps Recruiting Substation Albuquerque.

what you want to hear, we want them to be attentive and ask questions.”

The recruiters are all trained to provide expert advice in career planning, and can assist anyone in doing so. This remains true when a person may not be a good fit for the Corps.

“The Marine Corps is not right for everyone, but we’re here to help people plan nonetheless,” Romero said. “We help them along and can provide advice if we find flaws in their planning.”

Additionally, the recruiters look to create a family environment. “The Marine Corps is small and we’re always looking out for each other,” Staff Sgt. Elijah Dee, an Albuquerque recruiter, said.

Walters’ team fosters this family environment early in the recruiting process, building a pool of trainees that conduct physical training a few times each week in addition to monthly weekend activities. The training is designed to prepare the recruits for the rigors of basic training as well as establish camaraderie.

Walters also makes sure that the recruits all present themselves in a professional

manner once they contract with the Corps. This means no Mohawks or piercings.

If caught with any faddish accessory that belies the professionalism of the Corps, Walters snaps a picture to send to the recruit’s drill instructor. This is normally an excellent motivational tool.

“This process is much more than ‘contract and forget,’” Walters said, noting that family and friends of Marines are always welcome to call him while their loved ones are in training or at a duty station away from Albuquerque.

Elva Vasquez had just seen her son, Robert Lee Graziano, off to Camp Pendleton to begin his training, and was asking when she could expect to next hear from her son. Vasquez was nervous about Robert potentially having to go to war, but was quick to add, “I can’t wait to see a picture of him in his uniform.”

While the dangers of war certainly stand as the main topic of conversation, requiring explanation to recruits and their families, “We don’t sugarcoat anything,” Walters said.

“You have to show them the bigger picture,” Serna said. “The military is for defending our country and our families, and we’re a big part of that. We’re usually the first ones to go in when the country needs us.”

In showing commitment to their jobs, the recruiters of Marine Corps Recruiting Substation Albuquerque show commitment to their Corps. They all begin by seeing themselves as representatives of an organization they are proud to serve. They sell something they treasure and take tremendous pride in owning: the title of U.S. Marine.

This is why Fastenau beamed with pride when Walters greeted her with her newly earned title. The private’s face lit up and her posture straightened when the 18-year veteran of the Corps asked her, “How are you doing, Marine?”

## Why the Marines?

I asked to complete my ride along with the Marines rather than the Air Force because I was interested in seeing another service in action. The Corps has a proud tradition in this region. I’ve sworn in more two-and-a-half times the amount of future Marines to future Airmen and I wanted to better understand the steps they took before they stood in front of me in the oath room.

I initially thought there would be a “Marine type” — that the recruiters would walk into a school and know almost immediately which kids were the ones they wanted to talk to. That could not have been further from the truth.

The fact of the matter was that the Marine recruits were no different than Air Force, Navy or Army recruits. They were all great Americans — wartime volunteers who want to serve their country. Marines, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Coast Guardsmen are all interested in the “challenge,” and being “the best of the best.” They all find their niche to tackle those obstacles and achieve those goals.

— Capt. Morgan J. O’Brien III

# This one's a Lifetime Hitch

By Lt. Martin Zeller  
Kansas City MEPS

When Petty Officer 2nd Class Aaron Wilson of the Kansas City MEPS told his co-workers he and Whitney Taylor planned to get married on the Navy's Birthday, they suggested having the ceremony in the MEPS to double the celebration.

Wilson, a boatswain's mate, is a traditional Sailor with exceptional pride in his service and rating. He can proudly whistle any call from his boatswain's pipe and has a crossed anchor tattoo on his forearm. So getting married in his "Cracker Jacks" on the Navy Birthday in the MEPS seemed very appropriate for Wilson and his bride.

The wedding became a joint affair when Master Sgt. Carl Alexander, the senior Air Force guidance counselor and an ordained minister, volunteered to conduct the ceremony.

Flowers decorated the MEPS ceremony room and guests from all of the military branches, family members, liaisons and the MEPS staff gathered to witness one of our own tie the knot. Wilson and Taylor tied the knot at noon Oct. 13, the Navy's 231st Birthday. Since "Boats" and his bride are both from Arkansas, only three hours south of Kansas City, his parents and Whitney's parents, as well as Whitney's little sister attended.

Whitney's mother and father, Debbie and Brad Taylor, from Rodgers, Ark., said they would not have missed the wedding. Debbie appreciated the MEPS hosting the ceremony and believed that it was definitely more special than if they had gone to a justice of the peace. Little sister Kelly, was happy her sister was getting married and anxious to take over a bigger bedroom.

Mike and Judy Wilson, Boats' parents from Fayetteville, Ark., also made the trip to Kansas City for the wedding. Mickey, as his father goes by, was also in the Navy, during the Vietnam era, and is proud that his son is serving in the Navy.

"It's an honor that Aaron is getting married on the Navy's Birthday and since Aaron loves

the Navy so much it is only fitting," Judy Wilson said.

The families have known each other for about 15 years.

Boats thought that the whole thing was cool and was very pleased to have had a nice ceremony in the MEPS with his military family. Many of the MEPS members dressed up in their Class A uniforms to honor the couple and help celebrate their big day.

The Taylor's held a formal wedding in December, in Bentonville, Ark., for the benefit of the rest of their families. But the ceremony here in Kansas City was quite appropriate and definitely made the Navy birthday a memorable one at the MEPS.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Aaron Wilson, Whitney Taylor and Carl Alexander.



The bride and groom with their families.



The couple had a formal ceremony in December, but the one at the Kansas City MEPS did the job.

# Childhood illness inspires woman to pursue dream

By Skip Wiseman  
 Messenger Associate Editor

Someday, when a young doctor opens her practice, a child's medical bag will be prominently displayed. And she'll be happy to explain why.

A childhood illness, along with encouragement from a series of mentors, led to Johneca Edwards' lifelong interest in science in general and medicine in particular.

When Johneca was five she developed a fever of 105 degrees that "wouldn't break no matter what they did," said her mother, June DeLaney. "They couldn't find out what was causing it. I didn't know what to think. I just wanted them to save my baby."

Doctors suspected she had an illness called Kawasaki Disease, but weren't sure because the malady rarely strikes children who are five or older. Finally, a team of specialists flew in from Japan and confirmed the diagnosis.

Kawasaki Disease involves the skin, mouth and lymph nodes. There are fewer than 20 cases per 100,000 children annually in the United States. Ethnicity doesn't matter, although it is most common among children of Japanese and Korean descent. Symptoms include fever lasting more than five days, red eyes, rash, and very chapped lips and mouth. If not treated promptly, it can cause permanent damage to the child's heart.

Fortunately, the visiting doctors realized it was Kawasaki Disease and immediately began treatment with intravenous doses of gamma globulin, a blood ingredient that helps fight off the infection.

"She was in the hospital for two weeks," Delaney said. "She started coming out of it right after they gave her the gamma globulin. By the time she came out of the hospital, she was walking."

Delaney is the lead health technician at the Houston MEPS, where she has worked for 19 years. Johneca is now in her first year of medical school at Oklahoma State University after graduating Summa Cum Laude from Prairie View A&M University with a 3.9 grade point average while earning a bachelor of science degree in biology.

Although Johneca has only vague memories of her illness, she decided a few years later that she wanted to be able to do the same thing for others that the Japanese doctors had done for her. She got the doctor's

bag when she was about six, but her love of science led to her career choice, not the other way around.

"At first, I thought she was going to be a horticulturist," her mother said. "She was always growing things. When we lived in an apartment, she grew stuff behind the hedges."

Johneca says the plants behind the shrubs were "just me being me. I wondered what would happen if I did this, what would happen if I did that."

By about the fourth grade, she was watching "Bill Nye, the Science Guy" and was doing science fair projects in school.

"Watching his show about the basic sciences taught me experiments. I took two plastic foam cups and filled each one with salt water. Then I took one string of yarn and put one end in each cup. The water soaked up into the yarn and made a crystal. I did that as a leisure activity."

In elementary and middle school, her science fair projects involved the earth and the atmosphere, with botany making a comeback.

"I grew bean plants in different soils at varying light levels," she said. "I used sand, mud and dirt as my different soils. Then I observed which plants grew the fastest, which ones looked the best and so forth."

On her own time, her interests skewed toward observing nature.

"I was a big fan of the magnifying glass," Johneca said. "I used to go out in the yard and find different things. I would look at the fine details, just studying nature. That was what was most interesting to me. I'd look closely at bugs and things like that."

"My love for science was a feeder for me being a doctor," she said. "My teachers saw my love for science and said I should think about being a doctor. They suggested I go that way, and I didn't think that was a bad idea at all."

She intensified her efforts in high school when she volunteered at a hospital where she got to shadow doctors from a number of specialties and talk with patients.



Johneca Edwards, left, and her mother, June DeLaney

"I mostly just shadowed physicians on the same floor I was assigned to and got to see them interact with patients," Johneca said. "I would take snacks to the patients. I changed dirty linens. I got a wide variety of experience and really got to see behind the scenes as a volunteer."

As an undergraduate at Prairie View A&M, which she attended on an academic scholarship from the Jesse H. Jones and Mary Jones Gibbs Scholarship Program, she continued to volunteer at the hospital and also logged time as a volunteer in the Houston MEPS medical section. Summers were dedicated to attending medical education programs that show potential doctors what they might see as a physician.

"It shows you what you'd be up against if you decide to go into medicine," she said. "We shadowed physicians in different areas. I did one rotation in the emergency room and we took the Medical College Admissions Test. Mostly it was to expose you to the different aspects to see if that's what you wanted to do with your life."

After graduating from Prairie View A&M, Johneca did research at the Baylor College of Medicine on retinal development in fruit flies. The researchers use fruit flies because their genome is, interestingly enough, very similar to those of humans.

"Medicine and research will be a lifetime calling for me," Johneca said, "and not just a trophy that will be put up on a shelf. The disease I contracted as a child directed me to my career choice. My disease was not a setback, but a key that unlocked my future."

Besides, if she put all that on the shelf, Dr. Edwards might not have room for that cherished medical bag.

## Identical twins join Army for exactly the same reasons

By Lt. j.g. Graham Lanz  
Assistant Operations Officer  
Cleveland MEPS

It has often been said that everybody looks pretty much the same at basic training—the same haircut, the same uniform, the same physical training gear, even the same deer in headlights expression.

Two applicants who recently shipped out from the Cleveland MEPS looked pretty much the same before they even got to the airport.

Twin brothers Justin Hastings Geen and Darren Hastings Geen are identical, right down to the reason they joined the Army.

“I am here to learn to be a leader,” Darren said.

When asked why he enlisted, Justin said “I would have to say the exact same thing he did.”

The pair is from Lagrange, Ohio, a small town an hour southwest of Cleveland. Graduates of Keystone High School and The Ohio State University, they are both devout Buckeye fans.

They both served two years in the Ohio National Guard and are now attending Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga.

This should come as no surprise, but they even have the same career goal: to be Apache helicopter pilots.



Instructors will have a hard time telling Justin (left) and Darren Geen apart.

## It's true: His mother really does wear combat boots

By Lt. j.g. Graham Lanz  
Assistant Operations Officer  
Cleveland MEPS

Applicants commonly say they were inspired to join the military so they could follow in the footsteps of a family member.

Usually, the family member is older—a grandfather who served in World War II, an uncle who fought in Vietnam or maybe a big sister currently on active duty.

For Ohio National Guard Applicant Melissa Janouskovec, though, it was a younger family member who was her inspiration—her only son, Clifford.

“When Clifford was going through the enlistment process for the Navy, I got really interested in the military” said Janouskovec, 38. “Lucky for me, the National Guard raised its

age limit, and I was in the right place at the right time.”

Less than three months after her son took the oath of enlistment in the same ceremony room, Janouskovec swore in.

After basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., she will drill in Newton Falls, Ohio, with an engineering unit.

She lives in the Cleveland suburb of Fairport Harbor. In civilian life, she is a welder.



Melissa Janouskovec



### Continuing a family tradition

Evangeline Reyes, secretary at the Portland, Maine, MEPS watches Maj. Timothy Merriott, MEPS commander, enlist her son, Reivan Alen Buenaobra, into the Air Force. “I was really proud of him,” she said as she held back tears. Reyes is married to Navy Master Chief Miguel Juan Reyes who is assigned to Brunswick Naval Air Station, Maine. With a son joining the Air Force and husband in the Navy, Reyes can truthfully say her family has contributed its fair share to our nation’s freedom.



## Family continues tradition, changes the guard

By Capt. Jason Sopko  
Shreveport MEPS

As he finishes his 22nd year of active duty, Army Master Sgt. Gary L. Wilson and his son, Gary D. Wilson, are changing the guard. The younger Wilson recently enlisted in the Army to continue what is becoming a family tradition.

Master Sgt. Wilson is a senior Army liaison at Shreveport MEPS. His son said it's been a "lifelong dream" to wear the uniform that his father has worn for many years.

Maj. Steven Downey, Shreveport MEPS commander, swore in the younger Wilson March 1. After the ceremony, the newly enlisted member said, "all I want is to have a rich and rewarding Army career like my father and pass him up in rank."

The younger Wilson will attend nine weeks of basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., and then 12 weeks of advanced instruction in the 92A career field of automated logistical specialist at Fort Lee, Va.

Master Sgt. Wilson said he is a very proud father and Soldier and that he's honored his son has chosen this profession to continue what is becoming an honored family tradition.

In today's world where traditions have fallen by the wayside, it is good to know that there are American families like the Wilsons who continue to support their country in its time of need.



(Left to right) Master Sgt. Gary L. Wilson, Lillian Wilson, Gary D. Wilson, and Maj. Steven Downey, Shreveport MEPS commander. The younger Wilson recently enlisted in the Army, just like dad did 22 years ago.

## Albuquerque opens new applicant screening room

In an effort to ensure the safety of employees and applicants, the Albuquerque MEPS completed construction on a state-of-the-art applicant screening room.

In a ribbon-cutting ceremony hosted by Capt. Keith Barton, Western Sector commander, the construction was praised as a necessary force protection measure. Barton emphasized the importance of protecting USMEPCOM's people in uncertain times and the efficiency with which the room was built.

The screening room is fully operational and acts as a front door to all applicants entering the Albuquerque MEPS. Each day, applicants' bags are x-rayed in the screening room before they begin processing.

The project was completed early and at budget by a New Mexico-based construction company.



(Above and left) Sgt. Carlos Canales inspects the contents of applicants' personal bags before they enter the Albuquerque MEPS.



## New Orleans speaker exemplifies this year's Women's History Month theme



Bridgette Frick, principal of Eleanor McMain High School in New Orleans, captivates the crowd as the guest speaker at the New Orleans MEPS Women's History Month Celebration.

by Capt. Olivia Zimmerman  
New Orleans MEPS

New Orleans MEPS acknowledged this year's Women's History Month theme, "Generations of Women Moving History Forward" and topped off the month with a program that highlighted a dynamic local speaker.

During March, MEPS employees received daily e-mails with facts about female firsts, accomplishments and achievements, as a buildup to a late March program. Bridgette Frick was the program's guest speaker. She is the principal of Eleanor McMain High School. Following Hurricane Katrina, Frick was appointed to open the first public high schools in one of the hardest hit areas of New Orleans.

Interestingly, Frick's high school was named after Eleanor Laura McMain, a legendary social worker in New Orleans. Born in 1868, McMain worked to prevent yellow fever and tuberculosis through community education. She taught social work training classes, trained Red Cross workers, and helped pass laws regulating child labor, tenement housing, and vocational trade and evening schools.

As a public servant in a city struggling to rebuild, Frick is a fine example of "Moving History Forward" as she imparts wisdom and knowledge to the future leaders of our world.

A member of the U.S. Navy Band New Orleans performed the National Anthem at the program. Since New Orleans is a city known for its cuisine, the program included a potluck luncheon. New Orleans MEPS was host to the celebration that included service liaisons and recruiters.

## Former Steeler helps Shreveport celebrate Black History Month

By Ensign Louis Jackson  
Shreveport MEPS

Shreveport MEPS observed Black History month Feb. 21.

The theme for this year, "Overcoming Obstacles to Succeed," was the foundation for planning.

The program enlightened and reminded personnel of the courage required by some noteworthy African-Americans who overcame obstacles to succeed.

The guest speaker was Larry Anderson. Anderson starred at Neville High School in Monroe, La., before playing college football at Louisiana Tech University. He was drafted in the fourth round as a defensive back by the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1978. He played on the "Steel Curtain Defense" that won back-to-back Super Bowls, XIII and XIV.

Anderson enlightened attendees with his words of wisdom about our theme and his personal perspective on the significance of this month.



Maj. Steven Downey, Shreveport MEPS commander, presents a token of appreciation to Larry Anderson.

# Amarillo MEPS to the running fields of America

by Charles Skipper  
Amarillo MEPS

A quickened stroll through the rugged terrain of Palo Duro Canyon, running, walking, dodging boulders and potholes along the trail, Petty Officer 1st Class Ramiro Pena heads toward the Lighthouse for a round about 10 kilometers that caps a day of training.

Amarillo, Texas, is a premier place for Pena, an avid marathon runner assigned to the Amarillo MEPS testing section, to practice his favorite hobby—running.

The nearby canyon provides the rugged adventure he seeks, while the long flat stretches near farmland offer a serene, tamer course that gives Pena, 33, a chance to reflect on life's pleasures and enjoy the adrenaline rush that only a distance runner can experience.

Pena has participated in 10Ks, half marathons and marathons around the country including the famed Marine Corp Marathon



Petty Officer 1st Class Ramiro Pena

in Washington, D.C. He doesn't worry about a first place finish but enjoys the sheer thrill of being part of an activity that many people would rather not think about—26.2 grueling miles.

When asked why he does it, he simply said, "For the challenge ... I was diagnosed with a medical condition many years ago that prevents me from doing certain physical activities. I wanted to prove to myself that I still had the ability to accomplish what most people can't.

"I enjoy the travel and other opportunities that these races entail," he said. "That spark that compels artists to create is the same one that tasks me to complete these feats of physical endurance."

His running resume includes the Gate River Run (15K), Jacksonville, Fla.; Cooper River Bridge Run (10K), Charleston, S.C.; Runner's World Half-Marathon, Allentown, Pa.; the 2005 and 2006 Marine Corps Marathons; Rock 'N' Roll Marathon, San Diego, Calif.; Philadelphia Distance Run; Rock 'N' Roll Arizona Marathon; and hundreds of training runs.

In Phoenix, Pena's last marathon, he wound through the main roads in 30 degree weather thinking of only one thing: "I can't fail this one."

His determination to complete this particular run was stronger than ever for the simple reason his parents were waiting for him at the finish line. This was the only marathon they had watched their son run.

Pena has sent many photos of previous races to them but they never got to see their son complete such a daunting physical task in person.



His future running plans include four more marathons and a half marathon this year. The grand finale will be in Athens, Greece, in November along the same track that was used by past Olympians.

Pena's work ethic in the Amarillo MEPS testing section is very similar to his accomplishments in the running world. He has received accolades from Capt. Keith Barton, Western Sector commander, on several occasions and also led his section to achieve excellence ratings during the last two Inspector General inspections.

## BIRTHS

### HOUSTON MEPS

Lt. Miguel Macias and his wife, Melissa, a son, Matteo Samuel Macias, 8 pounds, 13.6 ounces.

### LANSING MEPS

Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Tyanna and David Coleman, a son, Joseph Edward Coleman, 7 pounds, 12 ounces, 21 inches long.

Capt. Robert Baker II and his wife, Erin, a daughter, Ellynn, 5 pounds, 4 ounces, 18 inches. She joins big sisters Madilynn and Katlynn.

Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class David Phipps and his wife, Phiang, a son, Daniel William, 7 pounds 10 3/4 ounces, 20 inches long.

### OMAHA MEPS

Christopher and Michaiiah Anderson, a son, Nathan Alan, 7 pounds, 13 ounces, 21 inches long.

Stacy Dufault, and her husband, Brent, a son, Collin, 8 pounds, 6 ounces, 20 inches long.



**Honolulu**  
Lt. Cmdr. Carla Vivar

**Hometown:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. “My dad was an American businessman and did work for various companies. I lived in South America most of my young life. I guess I’m an overseas brat, not a military brat.”

**What was it like growing up overseas?** “Even though I never lived in the States, I had a very strong sense of being an American. In my time in (Peru, Guatemala, Venezuela, Chile and Uruguay) the governments were dictatorships. Some countries didn’t like Christmas trees, so you had to pretend you had one.”

**Education:** Her family moved back to the United States when she was 16. She later earned bachelor’s degrees in political science and economics from Wellesley College, Mass., and was commissioned through the ROTC program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1990.

**Why the Navy?** “My dad was in the Navy for four years. My grandfathers and brothers were all in the Navy, so it seemed like the right service for me.”

**Favorite assignment:** Recruiting in Miami. “It was fun to interact with people in the community. Talking to kids, selling something I believed in—serving your country. Patriotism is important to me. It was also about changing peoples lives.

You’re not just selling a piece of equipment, you’re selling a lifestyle.”

**Best thing about being a commander:** Having the power to make a difference.

**Leadership motto:** Adapt and overcome.

**Something nobody knows about her:** “I like to play piano. I have a piano in my house and play whenever I feel like it.” She started taking lessons when she was 7 and still does when her schedule permits.

**Three things on her desk:** A cup of coffee, her husband’s photo and “one of those green Navy memo books you learn to carry when you’re an ensign.”

**Last book she read:** The Alchemist, by a Brazilian author named Coelho. “It’s about a guy that travels around the world.”

**Ideal vacation:** Going to the beach. “Hawaii is a permanent vacation. I love this island. It’s the best place to be in the United States. It has low humidity and the people are great.”

**What do you order when you go out?** “I like sushi. I also like Malasada.” (Portuguese doughnuts)



**Portland, Maine**  
Maj. Eric Warner

**Hometown:** “I was born in Philly, but I’m an Air Force brat. One of my most memorable places was Duluth, Minn. It was really, really

cold. I grew up in England, Germany, California and Alabama.”

**Why the Army?** I joined the Army, I guess, because they sort of made it easy for you with a lot of the marketing they did. I walked into the ROTC building and they had all the Ranger posters. It’s real flattering to the male ego. I got hooked.”

**First assignment?** “Alaska, I drove from Fort Benning, Ga., to Alaska. Then I drove back after my tour was over because I was assigned to Fort Benning.”

**How is the view different as a MEPS commander than as a recruiting operations officer?** “It’s an entirely different perspective. When I was in San Antonio, I didn’t see the recruits, because I was dealing with numbers. As a commander, I see the faces and who we’re putting in the services.”

**Favorite assignment:** Every one has been great. You take what you have and make the best of it. I’m having a great time right now. It’s a nice break from being deployed and being around the kids. I like doing what I get paid to do and deploying and all that, but being around the next generation is good, too.”

**What do you do when you’re not a commander?** “Read books. I’m a big Tom Clancy fan. The Splinter Cell editions are my favorites. When I was at Fort Campbell, I got into woodworking. I’m a big home improvement, ‘This Old House’ kind of guy. When I was at Fort Campbell, I’d spend all weekend in the woodshop. I’d be there when it opened and when it closed. It was kind of rough on my wife.”

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** “Before you become an intelligence officer they do an investigation on you and then they’ll come back and tell you

the results. They came back to me and said, “You’re a pretty boring guy.”

**Three things on his desk.** A talking Staples Easy Button, a desk-side briefer for VIP visitors and wooden cup from Poland. “I got the cup when I was on assignment for the Army lessons learned. I went to Poland to write an article on operations we were doing over there.”

**What are you reading?** “Blind into Baghdad” by James Fellows. “It’s about America in Iraq. He talks about the buildup and what things different media correspondents wrote about and how things that were predicted were happening or have happened.”

**Ideal vacation:** “Probably two weeks in Australia. I haven’t been that far south before and it just looks attractive.”

**What do you order when you eat out?** “Usually Chinese food.”



**Pittsburgh**  
Maj. Jeffrey Gunn

**Hometown:** “I’m originally from Miami, but I haven’t been back there since I joined the Army. I call El Paso, Texas, home.”

**Why the Army?** “I thought it would be a little more challenging for me personally. It gave me the opportunity to pick my job and go overseas to Germany. It was a good time for me to enlist in the Army. I kind of wanted to start at the

bottom. I was a private with a bachelor's degree. I was actually only going to stay in three years, but then I re-enlisted and went to OCS and stayed on active duty."

**Last assignment?** G-1 (Human Resources Officer) for the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. "It was good for me at the time because my wife was in Iraq and I had my two kids with me. She was in the Individual Ready Reserve and got called up to deploy. It was totally unexpected."

**Favorite assignment?** "When I was an enlisted Soldier in Germany because I learned so much about Soldiers and the Army."

**Best way to inspire the troops:** "Do the right thing. Set the example and do what's right."

**Leadership Motto:** "Do the right thing. It sounds easy to tell these young people when they're shipping, but in our environment it's not always easy."

**What do you do when you're not a commander?** "Spend time with my family." In his spare time, he coaches his daughter's basketball team. "It started out when my wife was deployed. I wanted to keep my daughter busy. She was 5. She enjoyed it. She's 7 now."

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** "I like getting up early because you can get a lot done. It's quiet. Everywhere I've been I've always liked getting in early and I don't seem like the type of person who's a morning person."

**One thing always on his desk:** The Eastern Sector flag. "It represents why we do what we do."

**Ideal vacation:** "Disneyworld with my family."

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "It's weird, I came in the Army for

three years and never planned on staying. I've been in 18 years and I still don't know how long I'm going to stay in. I'll probably be a teacher. I did that for a year before I came in but I didn't want to do that without knowing what life was all about."



**New York**  
**Cmdr. Ellen Emerson**

**Hometown:** I'm a Navy Junior. The East Coast is my home town.

**What was it like growing up Navy?** "It was pretty good. Just as soon as you got settled in you could count on moving and starting over again. At one point we lived in a house that had been a hospital. It was all connected by a hallway called 'spook hallway.' One day some other kids and I went exploring and discovered the old operating room."

**Education:** College of Charleston, S.C.; bachelor of arts degree in history and Spanish. "We lived in Puerto Rico when I was a kid. I started learning languages there."

**Why Navy?** "I knew I could combine my academic background and having a job where I could be serving instead of just earning a living. I hoped to use my Spanish degree, so the first place they sent me to was South Korea."

**Previous assignment:** Washington, D.C., for five years. "I was a program

analyst in the program that the Navy uses to build its budget. Then I ran the Navy desk at the family assistance center that the Secretary of Defense set up after Sept. 11. It started out as a place for families to get information right after the attack. After a time, as the bodies were identified, we became counselors. One of the cool things about it was Therapy Dogs International. There was a local therapy dog group that came every day. They were wonderful. They let the dogs commute on the train. They had all kinds of dogs from this great big Newfoundland to a tiny little Yorkie."

**Favorite assignment:** "I was there when they had the Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. I did a story with Bob Costas and Ahmad Rashad. We had reporters from all over the world. I even took reporters to the DMZ."

**What was most memorable about the Demilitarized Zone?** "I attended some Armistice Commission meetings in Panmunjom. I remember the difference in size between the North Koreans and South Koreans. I can't imagine what the difference is like now."

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "That's a tough question. It's really unfair to ask. I want to do something in philanthropy where I feel a connection to the organization mission, doing good in the community—maybe in the arts or helping cancer patients or maybe combining all of it."

**What do you like best about your job?** "I'm at the best MEPS. I love that we have a bunch of really committed people here and that we're focused on taking care of the applicants. The applicants are incredible. I have been so impressed with the young men and women from New York who are joining. I love it when

I get to be the oath officer." **What do you order when you eat out.** "I'll debate two or three items. When the waiter comes I order something out of left field. The answer is I don't order what I thought I would."

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** "I graduated from clown school in 1996 or '97. It was something I always wanted to do. I was in recruiting and I went to school." Her clown name is Little Bird. "One day Little Bird went to the Jacksonville MEPS. Somewhere I have her enlistment contract. I don't remember the rating. It was something like smile master." **What's your ideal vacation?** "To go somewhere in the mountains or the beach. See this is where I have that problem deciding. Either to the mountains or the beach and read and hang out with friends or explore a city. I'm pretty much happy wherever I go."



**Lansing**  
**Lt. Cmdr.**  
**Vicky Cummings**

**Hometown:** Zanesville, Ohio. **Childhood memories:** "Going to my dad's farm every weekend. That's what we did. It was an old rock quarry that had a lake. We spent most of our weekends there."

**Education:** Bachelor of science degree in mathematics from the Naval Academy.

“That’s one of the few things I was actually good in when I was growing up. I like math.”

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** “I was an enlisted Marine for three years. I saw it as a good opportunity before I went to college. I knew I was going to college, but I wasn’t quite ready. A college education is very important in my family.”

**Previous assignment:** Executive officer and assistant to J-1 (Human Resources) director at USTRANSCOM.  
**Favorite assignment:** “The one I’m in right now. I was an enlisted programs officer two tours ago and this was the first job I ever had a clue what I was getting into. I worked with

MEPS for three years. I have the best staff in the world. That makes a huge difference.”

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** “A stay at home mom who teaches part time at the university level. I’ll get back into the work force when my kids are grown.”

**Hobbies:** “Scrap booking, taking pictures, reading and volleyball when I have time to do any of the above.”

**Best way to inspire the troops:** “The thing that has worked here is truly taking an interest in who they are and letting them know who I am. I try to let each person know he or she is important in doing what we do.”

**Leadership motto:** “People first and customer service. Whether it’s the customer or the people who work for you or who you work for.”

**What do you order when you eat out?** “I love PF Chang Chinese Restaurant. They have chicken lettuce wraps that are just to die for.”

**Three things on her desk:** A bottle of water, a really good peanut butter brownie and a cute pink Disney mug that the first sergeant brought from Disney at Christmas. “I picked the pink one just to remind people that I’m something of a girlie girl, on occasion.”

**Last book read:** “The proper care and feeding of marriage,” by Dr. Laura Schlesinger.



**San Jose**  
**Maj. Sula Irish**

**Hometown:** “Maple Hill, N.C. It’s a small community near Jacksonville, N.C. Everybody knows everybody. Everybody takes care of

## NEW FACES

### ALBUQUERQUE MEPS

**Michael Renfro**  
Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 4 active Air Force and 14 civil service as a firefighter  
**Civilian education:** 2 ½ years of college  
**Diversions:** Basketball, creative writing, family-oriented activities  
**First impression:** Very clean and extremely professional.

**Eric Beard**  
Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 4 years active duty Marine Corps, 1 Army Reserve and 1 Inactive Reserve  
**Civilian education:** Some college  
**Diversions:** Surfing, golf, running  
**First impression:** Clean, quiet, and friendly. An overall personality-filled environment.

**Typana Bruton**  
Human Resources Assistant  
**Years of service:** 10 active duty Army, 2 Army Reserve  
**Civilian education:** Associate degree in sociology, enrolled in last semester for bachelor of science degree in psychology  
**Diversions:** Spending time with her two sons.  
**First impression:** Warm atmosphere.

### HOUSTON MEPS

**Cathy Carter**  
Test Clerk  
**Years of service:** 16  
**Last assignment:** New Orleans MEPS  
**First impression:** Friendly people.

**Sheila Deleon**  
Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 1  
**Last assignment:** DeBakey, Va.

**Alex Jimenez**  
Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 10  
**Last assignment:** Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany  
**First impression:** Great.

**David Johnston**  
Health Technician and Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength  
**Years of service:** 9  
**Last assignment:** New Orleans MEPS  
**Diversions:** Reading  
**First impression:** Nice.

**Jim Parzych**  
Budget Technician  
**Years of service:** 25  
**Last Assignment:** Springfield MEPS  
**First Impression:** Awesome!

**Lorenzo Webber**  
Supervisory Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 24  
**Last assignment:** Jackson MEPS  
**First impression:** Nice place to work.

**Richard Williams**  
Test Control Officer  
**Years of service:** Air Force retiree, 2 civil service  
**Last Assignment:** Fort Dix/McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.  
**First Impression:** Good.

**Evangeline Gilbert**  
Human Resource Assistant  
**Years of service:** 19  
**Last assignment:** New Orleans MEPS  
**First impression:** Everyone was very pleasant. Mrs. Burkley was my inspiration; always pleasant when I spoke with her. The building is very clean.

### LANSING MEPS

**Tyrell Banks**  
Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 4 Army  
**Last assignment:** Fort Sill, Okla.  
**Diversions:** Basketball, poetry and video gaming  
**First impression:** Love the atmosphere and the people.

**Bernard (Ben) Persondek**  
Test Administrator  
**Years of service:** 18 (Air Force retiree)  
**Last assignment:** Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho  
**Diversions:** Hunting, fishing and snowmobiling.  
**First impression:** Friendly folks.

**Susan Smith**  
Budget Technician  
**Years of service:** 7 (Navy)  
**Last assignment:** Navy and Marine Corps Reserve Center  
**Diversions:** Traveling  
**First impression:** Nice environment to work in. Good people.

### OMAHA MEPS

**Capt. Julio Medina**  
Executive Officer  
**Years of service:** 4  
**Last assignment:** A Company, Training Support Battalion, Fort Jackson, S.C.  
**Diversions:** Family, bowling  
**First impression:** Friendly place to work and a professional environment.

**Chief Petty Officer Stanley Wofford**  
Medical NCOIC  
**Years of service:** 22  
**Last assignment:** Naval Hospital Guam  
**Education:** Bachelor of science degree in health care management; currently pursuing a master of business administration degree in health care administration  
**Diversions:** Family, running, golf, woodworking.  
**First impression:** Very impressed with the warm, friendly welcome by the staff.

everybody. I lived there until I left for basic training and then college in Columbus, Ohio.”

**Education:** Bachelor’s degree in computer information from DeVry Institute of Technology. Commissioned through the ROTC program at Franklin University.

**Why the Army?** “I was in Junior ROTC in high school. When I joined I was looking for money for college and the Reserve seemed to fit. It was my plan to become an officer. I felt by being enlisted first I’d be more prepared to be an officer.”

**Favorite assignment:** “I was the detachment commander at Kitzengen, Germany. It was one of my first overseas assignments. We had a lot of different experiences. It was

a very enriching assignment. I got to see how to do the job from a different angle and I liked the area. It had a small community feel and I’m from a small town.”

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** “I’m pretty grown up right now. After my military career is done, I’d like to still be in government service. I don’t plan to end my career any time soon.”

**What’s the best way to inspire the troops?** “I believe in telling them what I see in their performance and how I see their strengths. I believe in empowerment. I believe in getting people to buy into their jobs.”

**Leadership Motto:** “If I can conceive it and believe I can

do it, I will do it. I tell the people who work for me and my kids that once you get your arms around what you want to do, you can achieve it. You’ll have to put the work in, but you can do it.”

**Hobbies:** Reading and video games. “One of my favorites is Tetris, old school. Those are stress relievers. I spend time with my family.”

**What would people be surprised to know about**

## APPLAUSE

### EL PASO MEPS

**Sgt. Jessica Valdez**, Cluster 4 Military Member of the Year.

### HOUSTON MEPS

**Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Zandra Parker**, Cluster 4 and Houston MEPS Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year; **Loretta Drummer**, Houston MEPS Civilian Member of the Year; **Joey Alvaro** and **Sylvester Gordon**, Civilians of the Quarter; **Carolyn Wilson** retired with 16 years of service.

### LANSING MEPS

**Dr. Patricia Rodgers**, Civilian of the Year (GS-10 and above); **Eric**

**you?** “That I like classical music. Or that I like country music.”

**Three things on her desk:** A bottle of Gatorade, pictures of my family, and a stone that says ‘Real leaders are ordinary people with extraordinary determination.’”

**Last book read:** “We Were Soldiers.”

**Ideal Vacation:** “The ocean, sand and very warm weather, like the Bahamas.”

**Crawford**, Civilian of the Year (GS-7 - 9); **Jolanda Rose**, Civilian of the Year (GS-6 and below); **Sgt. Darla Crawford** and **Staff Sgt Carol Ruch**, Military Member of the Quarter; **Jerry Foland**, Civilian of the Quarter; **Capt. Robert E. Baker II**, and **Sgts. Darla Crawford** and **Kevin Wonderly**, selected for promotion.

### PHOENIX MEPS

Promotions: **Karen Thomas** to commander’s secretary, **Dean Puttonen** to lead human resources assistant, **Paul Sexton** to operations NCOIC.

## FOND FAREWELLS

### LANSING MEPS

**Sgt. Kevin Wonderly** Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 8  
**Departing for:** Overseas  
**Departing comments:** “My tour with USMEPCOM has been rewarding and memorable.”  
**Most remembered for:** His selfless service at the Lansing MEPS and his contributions to the Lansing community.

### Staff Sgt. Darla Crawford

NCOIC, Operations  
**Years of service:** 13 1/2  
**Departing for:** Hawaii  
**Departing comments:** “It was a pleasure working with all branches of service along with the civilians. Being here in Michigan with all the snow was really nice, but it’s now time to enjoy the sun in Hawaii.”

**Most remembered for:** Inventing the new packet breakdown system, making it more organized and efficient. Being meticulous all the time. She made a difference that will last a long time.

### OMAHA MEPS

**Chief Petty Officer Edward McLaughlin** Medical NCOIC  
**Years of service:** 20  
**Departing for:** Retirement in the local area  
**Award:** Defense Meritorious Service Medal  
**Most remembered for:** Being “firm but fair.”

### Andrea Blowers

Medical Health Technician  
**Next assignment:** Germany  
**Most remembered for:** Early morning smiles and sunny personality.

### Terri Lonowski

Education Service Specialist  
**Years of service:** 16  
**Next assignment:** U.S. Department of Labor, Atlanta

### SHREVEPORT MEPS

**Billy Haggerty** Human Resources Assistant  
**Years of Service:** 20 active duty, retired Navy chief petty officer  
**Departing for:** U.S. Navy Liaison Office, Shreveport MEPS  
**Departing comments:** One of the best experiences I ever had. Lucky for me I’m only going down the hall.

### Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class

**Jacob Wooldridge**  
Control Desk, Processing Specialist  
**Years of service:** 5  
**Last assignment:** USS Ogden

### Edith Bruno

Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 9  
**Last assignment:** Commissary, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.  
**Diversions:** Bicycle and motorcycle riding, and hiking.  
**First impression:** Great people.

### Mary Beth Ehlers

Human Resources Assistant  
**Years of service:** 4 1/2  
**Last assignment:** Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.  
**Diversions:** Cooking, crocheting, hiking and cycling.  
**First impression:** Great people! It feels good to see such teamwork and camaraderie.

### Elizabeth Greenwalt

Medical Health Technician  
**Years of service:** 9  
**Last assignment:** Physical Examinations and Flight Medicine Division, 55th Medical Group, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.  
**First impression:** A relaxed, welcoming atmosphere.

### PHOENIX MEPS

**1st Sgt. Paul George**  
Senior Enlisted Advisor  
**Years of service:** 17  
**Last assignment:** Heidelberg, Germany

**Diversions:** Family, racquetball, all aspects of fitness

**First impression:** Extremely proficient, professional and friendly organization. It made my transition to the team both smooth and enjoyable.

### Gail Horace

Test Administrator  
**Years of service:** 5  
**Last assignment:** Air Force Academy, Cadet Dining Hall  
**Diversions:** Cooking.  
**First impression:** Everyone I met really made me feel welcome.

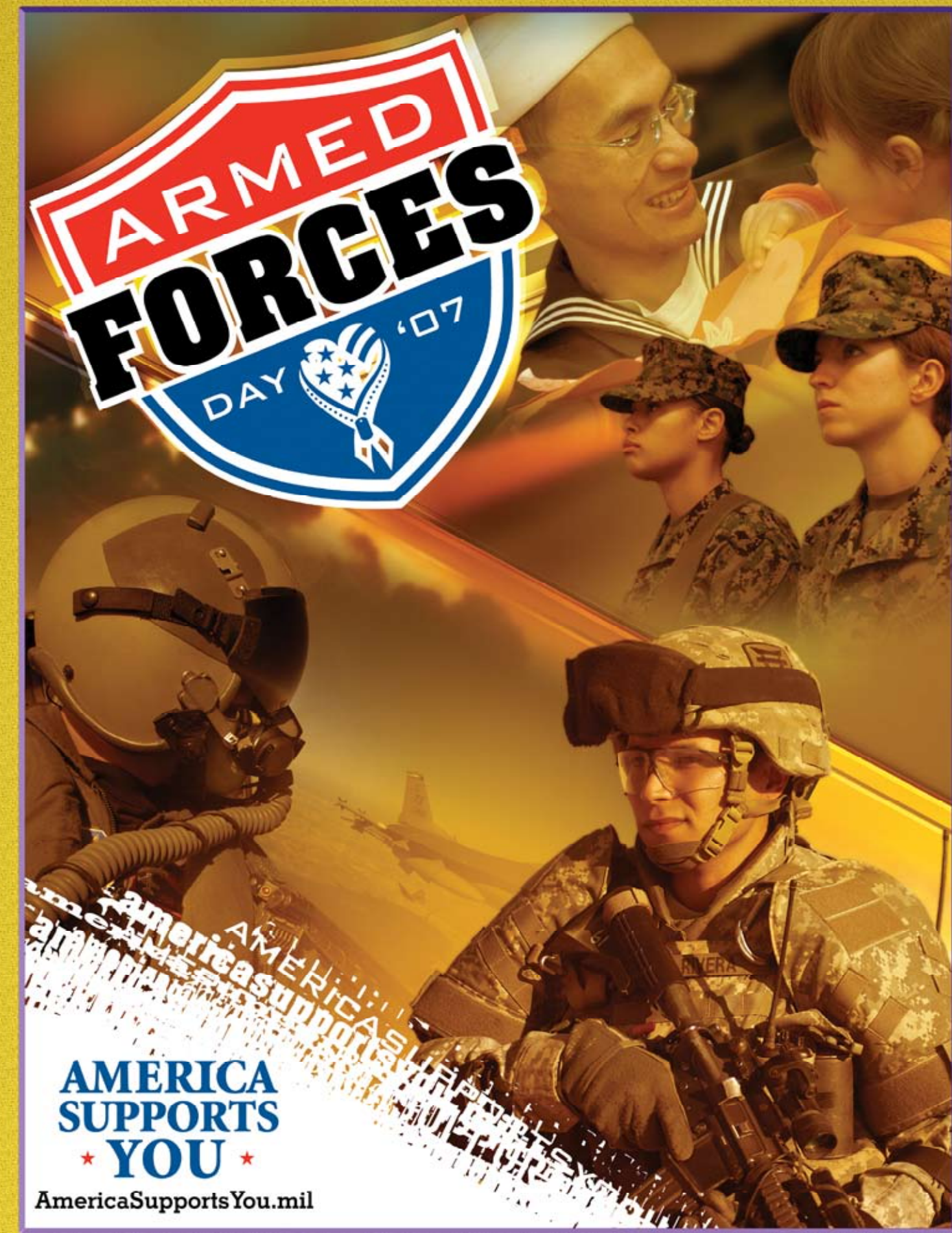
### Jennifer Phillips

Medical Health Technician  
**Last assignment:** Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.

### Jessica Hobbs, Operations

**Years of service:** 5  
**Last assignment:** USS New Orleans  
**Diversions:** Water sports.

# ARMED FORCES DAY '07



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