

UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

# Messenger

SHARING INFORMATION TO REACH A VISION

VOL. 29, No. 2



The Moving Parts of Moving a MEPS

Carr Interview, Page 4

# Messenger

*Sharing information to reach a vision*

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## U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

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# Commander's Commentary

This issue of the Messenger tells two “stories” with a similar theme: a small group of people accomplishing a vital mission.

On pages 4 and 5, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, Mr. Bill Carr reflects on USMEPCOM’s important role in the accession process as well as other, more far-reaching subjects. Mr. Carr oversees recruiting, retention, compensation, and related human resource management for 1.4 million active duty members in the U.S. armed services. During a recent visit to our headquarters, he described USMEPCOM’s role in the accession community as “disproportionate to its size.”

I wholeheartedly agree that USMEPCOM is a relatively small force — less than 3,000 people — responsible for a major task — enlisting 262,000 young men and women into the armed forces last year. I also believe that our command has a substantial impact on the defense of the nation. Every member of this command has the ability to influence the personal and/or professional lives of the young men and women who walk through MEPS’ doors. Daily, military applicants are at a turning point in their lives and we are a major part of their experience.

And just as USMEPCOM is a small force with a vital mission, so too is our command’s Facilities Directorate. You may or may not know that their directorate is the smallest in the command — only 8 positions — responsible for the broad, complex responsibility of maintaining 66 locations — 65 MEPS across the nation, and the headquarters and Eastern and Western Sectors, now all

in the same building as tenants at Naval Station Great Lakes in Illinois.

Our facilities are critical to what we do and the facilities mission is extensive and becoming more challenging. The Facilities Director, Mr. Andy Minicz is on the road visiting MEPS as much as anyone at headquarters. He and his staff deal with countless issues — from the big picture, like analysis to achieve effective MEPS standardization, to the specific, unique pieces like how each MEPS ties into water, sewer and garbage.

Of 65 MEPS, 34 are in leased facilities, 17 are on military installations, and 14 are in federal buildings (there’s a complete list on page 11). This variance adds another dimension. We’ve found that MEPS in leased facilities have a lot of flexibility and autonomy. Federal buildings have a lot of rules, especially those governing security, but those buildings are very secure. MEPS on military installations must also follow rules and regulations as well as the extra challenges inherent in military information technology security, but MEPS personnel also have the perks of being there. So, it’s a mixed bag of pros and cons — and tricks.

You can read about the multifaceted facilities mission, beginning on page 6. This spotlight takes place during a time of great change within their directorate as four longtime employees — two thirds of the current staff — have or will soon move on. We will miss their knowledge and skills, but look



Col. Lon M. Yeary

forward to seeing talented people follow in their footsteps.

The last observation I would like to make is about the people at MEPS who have made a difference in their facilities. I have seen some folks who have gone to great lengths to improve their MEPS — from taking the initiative and time to push for building improvements to redecorating. Some have created unique displays that honor others and serve to inspire and motivate MEPS visitors. I want you to know that your efforts make a difference!

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

# A chat with the Boss

## Bill Carr discusses topics from USMEPCOM's role to misperceptions of the quality of the armed forces

By Skip Wiseman  
Messenger Associate Editor

Extraordinary. That's how Bill Carr, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, describes United States Military Entrance Processing Command's position in the Department of Defense.



“Greater decentralization allows applicants to do more things remotely and still have an exposure to the MEPS.”

Bill Carr  
on VIPS

Carr was confirmed to his position July 9 after serving as the acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense of Military Personnel Policy.

“MEPCOM plays directly in helping one move from ‘Gee, I might be interested.’ to ‘I’m in basic training now.’” Carr said. “That’s no small transaction because the exposure that’s happening excites them, frustrates them or some other emotion plays directly on their decision to enlist.”

Carr, who oversees recruiting, retention, compensation and related human resource management for the active duty military, reinforced how vital the command is in maintaining the all volunteer force. He said Dr. David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel Readiness, stresses maintaining the AVF and that USMEPCOM plays a far larger role than its size would suggest.

“I think its importance is disproportionate to its size,” he said. “Dr. Chu has said that the key imperative of personnel and readiness is sustainment of the AVF. “We do lots of things in terms of family support, health care delivery and reserve component management, but sustainment of the AVF is job one. That’s the lifeblood.”

“MEPCOM allows the flow into the AVF and generates readiness,” he said. “Without it, we’re stopped. MEPCOM can constrain that flow or enrich that flow and the way it behaves, it enriches the flow as much as can be done. It pumps up readiness in value disproportionate to its size.”

Decentralization will play a key role in streamlining processing, Carr said. Examples include System to Standard and the Virtual Interactive Processing System.

VIPS, when fully implemented, will allow applicants to complete the enlistment test, medical pre-screening, background checks and waiver pre-screening on-line. It



“It pumps up readiness in value disproportionate to its size.”

on USMEPCOM's role in DoD

will reduce the number of processing steps applicants must complete in a MEPS from six to three and cut applicant processing days in half.

“Greater decentralization allows applicants to do more things remotely and still have an exposure to the MEPS,” Carr said, “but with an ability to do more things closer to home. That’s good for the MEPS; it’s good for the recruiter. It just takes some work to put those things in place.”

“The key is to control and quality assure the applicants flowing through to the force,” he said. “VIPS allows one to schedule, track, optimize, retain information and share

information. That makes for a more vibrant process.”

Carr also said Program Budget Decision 712, under which the command has converted about 900 positions from military to civilian is yielding the results DoD sought.

“The benefit DoD was looking for is a capacity to return military to jobs that are inherently military functions,” he said. “It is difficult to make change one way or the other, but it was the right thing to do to get the most from the limited military manpower we have.

“We’ve been fortunate that an extraordinary group of civilians have joined the enterprise to take up where those absences have occurred and integrated so well,” Carr said.

Carr also touched on how the increased recruiting missions for the Army and Marine Corps, adding 65,000 and 27,000 people respectively, would affect the command’s workload and how it would impact recruiters.

“The Army would grow by 7,000 a year, of which 3,000 would be recruits,” he said. “Three thousand on top of an 80,000 mission might not be noticed greatly in the MEPS.



**MEPCOM allows the flow into the AVF and generates readiness. Without it we’re stopped.**

on what USMEPCOM means to the All Volunteer Force

“I do think it’s going to be noticed by recruiters,” Carr said, “because they’re operating far closer to capacity and margin and point of difficulty as manifest by low achievement in high school diploma grads this year. That says they’re stretched and even 3,000 more can be tough on recruiters.”

Carr said the phased program is the right approach to increasing the size of the military.

“The nation has to square up its appetite for engagement with its capacity for same,” he said. “So far, so good. Strength growth is not always the answer, because what goes up fast sometimes goes down fast. The last thing the military wants to do is grow capriciously and then have to pink slip people years later.”

He also debunked the myth that the military is not attracting the quality of recruits it needs because of current conditions and the demand for greater numbers.

“Unemployment levels at 4 ½ percent and the difficult deployment schedule for those serving would suggest things should be much worse than they are, yet we’re achieving recruiting and retention objectives,” Carr said.

The services are still attracting good people, Carr said, and reports to the contrary are “hype.”

“An example of hype is when a journalist reports an eight-fold increase in Cat IVs without mention that it only sums to 4 percent for what is 30 percent of the population (at large),” he said, “and against a recognition that the Army, as recently as the 70s was recruiting over half Cat IVs and took that Army to war 10 years later.

“So the facts are hyped to the point — the negative facts are hyped to the point — that it’s hard for America to understand or appreciate the successes we’re achieving with the AVF and this (low) unemployment in this time of stress.

“All the active components, year to date, are above 100 percent,” he said. “The Reserves are doing great with a couple of recent exceptions. The central thrust of recruiting is achieving numbers and quality.”

Carr credits a wide variety of initiatives for helping the services attain their recruiting and retention goals.

“When recruiting and retention are both ‘green’ with unemployment at 4 ½ percent and a war ongoing, there are a lot



**We have carefully tried to put in place the ingredients to produce retention and recruiting success.**

on military pay and benefits

of programs that have been put in place and made it that way,” he said.

“Take military pay,” Carr said. “In the past seven years, the private sector is up 30 percent in pay. The military is up 40 percent and NCOs and petty officers are up 50 percent. We have carefully tried to put in place the ingredients to produce recruiting and retention success. That and the support of families is letting us achieve All Volunteer Force objectives.”

Carr also foresees Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates addressing more quality of life issues.

“I think one of the biggest ones is the secretary’s announcement to try to give predictability to deployment schedules,” he said. “He’s determined to do that.”

*Note: Mr. Carr assumed duties as the acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense of Military Personnel Policy in August 2002. He was confirmed to his present position July 9.*



# The physical part of moving a MEPS lasts a weekend

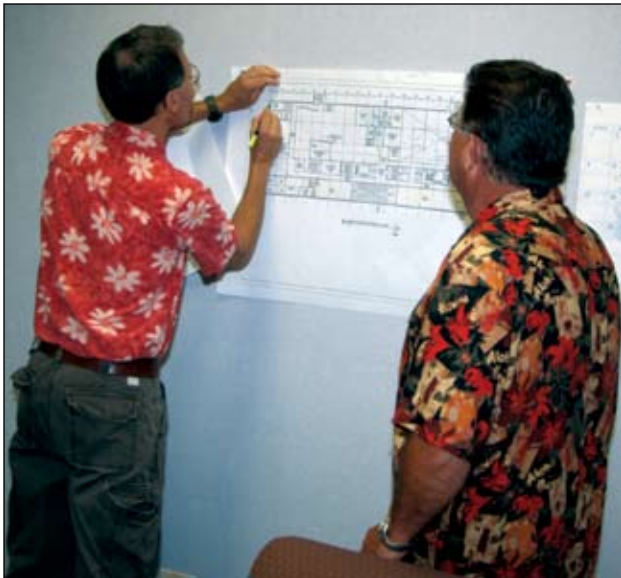
## Laying the groundwork for a new facility takes years

# The long view

By Skip Wiseman  
*Messenger Associate Editor*

Moving a MEPS usually means a weekend of controlled chaos. Everything has to be relocated, set up and operational so the station can open for business Monday.

Most people don't realize that, although the actual move is fast-paced, the process of relocating a MEPS really begins two to three years before.



Greg Sielepkowski and Don Warnock mark a floorplan.

The Facilities Directorate, led by Andy Minicz, manages all 66 USMEPCOM locations — whether on a military installation, in a federal building or commercially leased space. Gary Hinder, the command's realty officer, is responsible for acquiring and maintaining all MEPS locations and relinquishing the site at the end of the lease.

"We go out and visit the MEPS, take

a look at the site, the neighborhood, the building, to see what's changed and whether or not it would be smart to move them or just do some renovations in place and leave them alone," Hinder said.

### Military installations preferred

Moving a MEPS to a military installation is preferred when space is available.

The Army Corps of Engineers, USMEPCOM's executive agent for space, is required by law to look for space on a military installation before it considers other options. Facilities became more aggressive in looking for military space more than 10 years ago.

"We were told that we either needed to start closing MEPS or moving to military installations because they were cutting our rent budget," Hinder said. "Military space doesn't charge us rent. They charge us operating expenses, which are typically considerably less than a commercial lease.

"For instance," he explained, "when Oakland MEPS moved from downtown Oakland to San Jose, we went from paying over \$1 million a year to \$200,000 in operating expenses at the federal air station. It's a considerable savings.

"Some MEPS, like Beckley, we didn't save as much money because it was a relatively low cost lease anyway," Hinder said. "We still saved maybe \$100,000 a year."

Security issues also make locating MEPS on military installations more attractive.

"When the anti-terrorism force protection act came out a couple of years ago, it had a new requirement that set standards for DoD facilities as to what level of security protection they require," Hinder said. "One of the best places to be if you want to meet all those standards is on a military base where you have the secure perimeter, gate guards, etc.

"You get double bang for the buck because you get cheaper rent and you get a more secure environment," he said.

### Federal buildings

The second option is a federal building. The General Services Administration operates all federal buildings.

"We cannot just say, 'I don't want to be in this federal building, I want to move down the street,'" Hinder said. "GSA has to give us approval to do that because they have to do a leasing action to move us, be it to a federal building or to commercial leased space.

"There is no lease in a federal building," he said. "We are there by an agreement with GSA that we are going to occupy space as a fellow federal tenant. We do pay rent, though. We pay rent on fair market value.

"GSA used to just charge us what their operating costs were in federal buildings," Hinder said. "When Congress said that GSA had to start following best business practices, they now have to charge us whatever the appraised rate is for similar properties in the same geographic business area."

GSA surveys the area, gets appraisals and looks at the commerce business journals to determine the going rate for office space in the area.

"That's what they charge the federal tenants in the building," Hinder said. "We can end up in some fairly pricy space in some of the federal buildings in the larger cities that have a good business base."

It is possible to move from a federal building to leased space, but the planets have to be aligned just right. The Milwaukee MEPS recently moved from the Royce Federal Plaza into leased space.

“The security costs after 9/11 were going through the roof — hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in cost share to try to secure that building,” Hinder said. “The rent was fairly high because it’s in downtown Milwaukee. And it was at the end of the 20-year lease cycle. GSA was taking the opportunity to start moving federal tenants out of the building and reduce the federal footprint in the building.”

The command considered moving the MEPS to General Mitchell Airport, where there were Guard and Reserve units, but there weren’t any suitable buildings or space to build a MEPS. Leased space was the only option.

### Right size facilities

Regardless of where a MEPS moves, the first step is getting the right size facility.

Hinder puts together a package that outlines the space requirements and uses a space allocation standard that determines how many square feet are needed based on the number of people on the staff and in which size category the MEPS falls.

“It’s a simple calculation once you go to the chart,” Hinder said. “Every MEPS has so many rooms that are standard size. For instance, the commander’s office is the same, regardless of what size MEPS you are.”

Facilities uses categories one through five to classify MEPS when considering space requirements. Every category, with five being the smallest, has a base size of about 17,000 square feet. The largest stations, category one, can range as high as more than 30,000 square feet, once all the variables are taken into account.

“Every person gets so many square feet,” he said. “That number is factored in and gives me my baseline number for space. Then we’re allowed to increase the number by 15 percent to give us what’s called inter-office circulation space.

“If I build a 100-square-foot cubicle, you still have to have a hallway to get to it, so you have to factor that into the space acquisition,” Hinder said. “Then GSA acquires space on top of that called general circulation building support where they add on another 10 or 15, sometimes 20 percent, depending on the building, that’s used for the public hallways, corridors, the lobby, elevators, etc.

“I actually look at three numbers when we look at space,” he said. “The net space is the minimum office size. The rental space is how much we actually need — minimum — to occupy. The gross space is the entire space from wall to wall in the building and that the amount of space GSA builds it on.”

### Security a major factor

Security is always a consideration when a MEPS is built.

“Milwaukee was the first MEPS built under the new anti-terrorism standards,”

Hinder said, “which is one of the reasons it sits on so much property. You have to have an 82-foot stand-off from the edge of the building to the edge of the parking lot or major city street. That takes at least four plus acres to build.

“We put Milwaukee on seven acres, because at the time we thought that’s how big the MEPS needed to be based on the new Fort Lee acquisition that was being built at the time,” he said. “That’s what the Corps determined the site needed to be for Fort Lee.

“Subsequent to that, based on our building the new MEPS at Buffalo when we moved to Niagara (Air Reserve Base), Andy was able to consolidate the parking down and reposition things so we could get by with four acres,” Hinder said. “So our new standard for new buildings is four acres. It’s still a big chunk of space.”

Security concerns will force the Chicago MEPS to move when its lease is up in a couple of years.

“Security is going to drive it,” Hinder said. “We wanted to stay in Chicago (MEPS). We’ve stayed on multiple two- or three-year extensions, whatever the GSA will allow us. We can’t remain in place because the anti-terrorism rules will force us out. The building can’t be adapted to meet the standard, so it will force us to move.

“There is no stand-off for parking,” he said. “You’d have to close off most of the parking. It’s a multi-tenant building, so you can’t secure the rest of the building. Whether or not we’d love to stay, we’re going to have to go.”

### Leasing tightly regulated

Leasing a MEPS is always the third choice. The command averages two or three leases a year, but there are peaks and valleys, Hinder said.

“At times, we’ve done like seven a year, which is insanity,” he said. “Other years you won’t do any leases or moves. We’re always in the process of doing something but it might not happen that year.

“This year has been relatively slow,” he said. “There will be a couple of moves. We moved Syracuse. We’ll move Nashville toward the end of the fiscal year. We’ll move Cleveland this fall and Des Moines the first of the year. Then there will be a gap for a while before there’ll be another move. There’s always something churning. I’ve got 16 actions ongoing at some level.”

When the decision is made to move a station into a leased facility, the MEPS commander and staff set boundaries where they want the MEPS to be located.



Greg Sielepkowski and Don Warnock review the color schemes for a MEPS.

“It’s just street boundaries within the city as to where they think they need to be, by the airport, etc.,” Hinder said.

“We put together the package, get the commander’s approval, and I send a letter to the Corps requesting space,” he said. “I give them the area of town we’d like to be in, the parking, that kind of background information and a list of area requirements.”

“We have a list of location requirements,” he said. “We want to be in a one story space. We want to be a stand-alone tenant. We don’t want to be in high crime areas. We want to be in office space.”

### Location, location, location

The GSA advertises in the local papers and business journals and interested parties offer properties. Then Minicz or Hinder goes out to look at the properties.

“It’s called a market survey,” Hinder said. “It takes a day or two. Then we pick and choose which locations would be acceptable for the new MEPS.”

“If there are several competing properties, GSA goes to the least cost to the government for acceptable space,” he said. “We do a pecking order from first choice to last choice. When we put an address on the accepted list, that’s what it means. It’s an acceptable site. You might get your first choice, you might get your last choice, we always have to be careful as to what we agree to accept.

“GSA, on the converse, is protecting the government’s interests. They have rules as to what they can or can’t negotiate or accept or reject for a site,” Hinder said. “Just because I don’t like the lay of the land is not a reason to reject a site. You can move dirt, you can remove trees, you can put in roads. That’s what developers do. It’s always a negotiation.

“I coordinate with the GSA to get the lease awarded as far as all the paperwork, the review, what the requirements are, the estimated rents, etc. We come to an agreement and they make the final offer on a site, they sign a lease and we’ve got our new home, as far as the paperwork and the location.”

The typical lease for a MEPS is 10 years and is nearly all inclusive. The owner of the building provides the cleaning and utilities as part of the rental agreement. USMEPCOM pays for extra costs incurred, such as those associated with Saturday openings.

Lease costs run from the low \$200,000 range to more than \$1 million per year, depending on the location, size of the facility and how long ago the lease was signed.



Gary Hinder reviews a proposal.

### Design and construction

After the site has been chosen, Minicz designs the space based on the command’s standards for MEPS. The design phase usually takes three to six months. Minicz works with the MEPS staff and the people who will build the MEPS to attain the optimum design.

After the plans are completed, there is a design review, generally another 90 days, when the construction documents are re-examined to ensure that the command’s requirements are addressed.

Depending on whether the MEPS is being built on a military installation, in a federal building or in leased space, the construction itself can take anywhere from nine months to two years.

While the construction is going on, the relocation project officer steps to the front. Until recently that was Dennis Evans, who just moved to Hawaii. He monitored construction throughout the process and coordinated with all the headquarters proponents to ensure all requirements for the move are met. They include furniture, audiometric booths, new information technology equipment and security equipment.

“All the non-building items that are required to make the new MEPS a functioning part of the inventory must be in their little racetracks to ensure they arrive just at the point where the construction is completed,” Evans said. “These items are scheduled to go in during the four- to six-week period between the time construction is complete until the MEPS relocates and opens.

“The MEPS can transition on a weekend from their existing building to the new one,”

Evans said. “It is completely transparent to the processing mission.”

Sometimes a MEPS has to move, even if the command would prefer it stayed put. The Competition in Contracting Act may dictate a move.

“You can’t just arbitrarily walk in and make a handshake deal with the owner,” Hinder said. “Everything has to be competed now, even if I want to stay in place. I really love the site, the MEPS likes the site, good location, good building. I can’t just tell GSA to award a follow-on lease.

“They have to officially go on the market as if they’re going to compete for a new lease and a new location,” he said. “They have to do the boundaries and the solicitation package and run an ad. They do all the steps of negotiation. The days of succeeding leases went away with CICA.”

The owner may no longer want the MEPS as a tenant, either.

“We have no control over that,” Hinder said. “If the owner of the building decides he no longer wants the MEPS as a tenant, he just refuses to renew the lease and we have to move on, whether we want to or not.”

The long, involved process of acquiring space for a new MEPS and the upheaval and chaos of the move itself are polar opposites, time-wise, but they are all aimed at the same target.

“We want to give the MEPS a quality environment to work in,” Hinder said. “It’s been a goal over the years to get them from some of the less desirable locations and into first-class office space. We’ve been fairly successful.”



## The work has just begun when a MEPS relocates; Headquarters renovation adds to staff's workload

# Maintaining and renovating

The work has just begun for Don Warnock and Greg Sielepkowski once a MEPS moves to its new home.

The two engineering technicians oversee the annual work plan for the MEPS which involves any project up to \$200,000. Warnock works with Western Sector MEPS while Sielepkowski handled the Eastern Sector until he retired from civil service in early August. The two also shared responsibility for the renovation of USMEPCOM Headquarters.

Each project begins with a work request and includes any type of renovation.

"You want the door changed, you want a wall put up, carpeting," Warnock said. "The MEPS commander has a limit on the charge card and only has authorization to spend up to \$1,000 a quarter. Anything over a grand has to come up here. First it goes through sector for approval and comes to us. We don't approve it, we just work by direction."



Don Warnock coordinates a MEPS work request

Sielepkowski explained how projects done by other directorates can lead MEPS to make requests for upgrades, such as when the Information Technology Directorate installed new servers in the MEPS.

"They went to the MEPS and started putting in new servers that generated a lot of heat," he said. "Now they're generating heat and it's getting to be 80 or 90 degrees in there and we're getting requests from MEPS for air conditioning. We never programmed money for that."

The sectors get involved because they decide which projects to fund if the budget is tight.

"We don't decide that," Sielepkowski said. "When we have unlimited amounts of money, we pretty much check it when it comes in and fund it. If it's under \$25K, the whole process takes about two days. We get it, sign off on it, take it upstairs and they send the MEPS the money and the MEPS pays for it."

If the cost is more than \$25,000, it has to be approved by Andy Minicz, facilities director, or Gary Hinder, the command realty officer and funds have to be transferred to the government agency that will oversee the work.

Sometimes personnel changes at the MEPS create a project, such as when some MEPS added another officer when it became evident that Program Budget Decision 712 had cut a little too deep in some places.

"With the 712 downsize, they suddenly realized that they were short officers to conduct swearing in ceremonies," said Dennis Evans, the former project manager for all relocations and new construction. "Once they realized they'd downsized too far on the officer side, they brought in a third officer. Because they didn't really have a position for him, they were calling him the executive officer. And the executive officer needed to be

located with the commander in the command suite. That meant we had to carve out a new office for this person."

The owner of the building is the one who finds and deals with the contractor. Facilities doesn't have any contracting authority, so it works through the General Services Administration.

Since their projects often affect programs run by other directorates, facilities does a lot of coordination.

"We sit down with the sector commander or the headquarters proponent to discuss it," Warnock said. "Like if Western Sector gets asked for something, testing is right here, operations is right here, so we can go check if we don't understand it or it doesn't fit our guidelines. Then we have somebody sign off for it."

The headquarters renovation will take about three and one-half years when all is said and done. The planning was about 18 months and the construction, which started in February, is scheduled for two years.

The project began with each director reviewing the phases and when they would take place. After everyone agreed and signed off, Tony Galvan, chief of Resource Management's support branch, drew up a furniture floor plan.

Moving Western Sector Headquarters to North Chicago from Denver was the main purpose for the project.

"The wanted Western Sector in the building," Warnock said. "So we found space and Andy designed how we wanted it to look. Phase one was getting Eastern and Western Sector Headquarters in place.

Phases two and three are mostly the Information Technology Directorate. During phase four, Medical and Human Resources will move. The last phase will be the cafeteria, exercise room, Roper Training Facility and conference rooms.

— Skip Wiseman

## Preferences for **central business districts** and **historic buildings** often go hand in hand; present **special challenges** in design and renovation

# Just like Downtown

Some areas get special consideration when the command moves into a new MEPS.

Stations must be located in the central business district when possible and historic buildings get priority.

The preference for the central business district was established by an executive order sign by President Jimmy Carter in 1979.

"It's still in effect, and they still enforce it," Gary Hinder, the command's reality officer said. "If the MEPS is not in the central business district, we have to get permission through the GSA from the city to stay outside the central business district. They enforce it pretty strongly.

"As some of the core cities were starting to fail economically, they were obviously not going to let any potential dollars or tenants leave their area if they could avoid it," he said. "A lot of the mayors jumped on that and started demanding that we look in the downtown areas first, even if we were out in the suburbs.

"For instance, I have a leasing action in Jacksonville," Hinder said. "We wanted to stay down toward where we were.

"We had to push the boundaries we developed in

order to include downtown Jacksonville in order to have the city chop off on the action," he said. "They did a preliminary search of the area for acceptable sites in downtown Jacksonville and determined there were none available. That's the only way GSA got permission for us to remain outside of the downtown area."

Hinder said the central business district requirement and the preference for historic buildings often go hand in hand.

"Most of the historical sites are in downtown areas," he said. "Therefore, it follows that if you're looking for historical sites, you're also looking for central business district sites."

Locating a MEPS in a historic building presents some special challenges.

"If a building is designated a national historic site, you have to follow whatever guidelines the historic committee for the building decides," Hinder said. "Some of them allow you to do interior renovations and not change the exterior.

"Some of them, even if you change the interior, you have to stay within their historic standards as far as looks and type of wall finish and lighting," he said.

"You have to be very careful as far as data wiring, which is a real challenge in some of the older buildings," he said. "You have to preserve the look and feel of the existing building."

Hinder gave some examples of the difficulties.

He said remodeling the Minneapolis MEPS when it was located in the old customs building was "a nightmare."



“**You have to preserve the look and feel of the existing building.**”

Gary Hinder

"We had to have special light fixtures made for the control counter," he said. "You couldn't build overhead soffits. Hiding data cabling was a real challenge.

"We had to keep some skylights we didn't want because you had to meet the interior standard as well as the exterior standard," Hinder said.

Denver's committee was more flexible, but still required some features be retained.

"In a couple of spots they still have the old multi-colored tile in hallways," he said. "They wouldn't let us change the width of the hallways because they were historic — the old 10-foot-wide plus hallways. It was the same way in Houston because it's the same style of building."

Butte MEPS is a good example of the central business and historic district combining to dictate the MEPS' location. The MEPS was located in the Finlen Hotel, a historic site, and moved to the historic F&W Grand Silver Building.

"The historic commission in Butte refused to allow us to move out of the central business district and out of the historic district because Butte is hurting economically and they wanted to keep a major tenant downtown," Hinder said.



Greg Sielepkowski reviews drawings for a project.

“The final solution was the owner of the Finlen bought another building from the city that was in the development area a few blocks away and renovated that into a MEPS,” he said.

“We could make a lot of changes inside,” he said, “but when you see the building, the street façade looks the way it did when the building was built many years ago. We had to use specific windows; we had to be careful of the curtains. The façade has to meet historic building standards.”

Hinder said the classic example of restrictions because of a historic building was Honolulu.

“When we moved from the federal building in downtown Honolulu out to Pearl Harbor to the Marine barracks area, we rebuilt one of the Marine barracks buildings as the current Honolulu MEPS.

“We couldn’t do much to the façade of the building because it’s a historic building from World War II,” he said. “Even though it had severe termite damage, we couldn’t just knock the building down and build a new one.

“They literally tore the building down to just the timbers, but kept the original shell of the building and totally rebuilt it,” he said. “They had to replace the building exterior with like materials; they had to replace the windows with like windows. They could do some interior renovation.

“They were more concerned about the exterior of the building for the look,” Hinder said, “not so much what the interior looked like. We had to keep the lanai and several other areas of the building as it looked in the 1930s when it was built as a Marine barracks.

“It cost millions of dollars to do that,” he said. “When you have to replicate historic buildings you have to have a lot of stuff custom made. It’s not an off-the-shelf kind of thing where you go in and buy a certain size window, certain glass, certain pane size, certain siding, stonework, light fixtures, etc. It was quite a challenge working on a historic building like that.

— Skip Wiseman

<b>MEPS</b>	<b>Located Since:</b>	<b>Type</b>
Fargo	November 1961	Leased
New York	July 1965	Military
Denver	August 1965	Federal
Spokane	October 1967	Federal
Montgomery	November 1968	Military
Louisville	August 1969	Federal
Fort Jackson	October 1971	Military
Nashville	April 1974	Leased
Albany	February 1975	Federal
New Orleans	April 1975	Military
San Juan	June 1977	Federal
Boston	January 1980	Military
Houston	January 1986	Federal
Des Moines	May 1987	Leased
Chicago	February 1988	Leased
Lansing	December 1988	Leased
Anchorage	March 1989	Leased
Portland, Maine	March 1989	Leased
St. Louis	June 1989	Federal
Knoxville	October 1989	Leased
Jackson	October 1990	Leased
Albuquerque	February 1991	Leased
Tampa	August 1991	Leased
Memphis	September 1991	Leased
Detroit	November 1991	Leased
Raleigh	November 1991	Leased
Dallas	March 1993	Federal
Kansas City	November 1993	Leased
Salt Lake City	December 1993	Leased
Sacramento	July 1996	Leased
Omaha	August 1996	Leased
Los Angeles	October 1996	Leased
Jacksonville	July 1997	Leased
San Diego	August 1997	Leased
Harrisburg	August 1997	Leased
Sioux Falls	October 1997	Leased
Amarillo	October 1997	Leased
Honolulu	March 1998	Military
Cleveland	April 1998	Leased
Phoenix	June 1998	Leased
Indianapolis	August 1998	Federal
Columbus	December 1998	Leased
Boise	February 1999	Federal
Shreveport	May 1999	Leased
El Paso	June 1999	Military
Seattle	August 1999	Federal
Miami	August 1999	Leased
Atlanta	August 1999	Military
Fort Dix	June 2000	Military
Butte	June 2000	Leased
San Jose	October 2000	Military
Minneapolis	June 2001	Federal
San Antonio	June 2002	Military
Little Rock	July 2002	Leased
Portland, Ore.	August 2002	Leased
Charlotte	January 2003	Leased
Springfield	July 2003	Military
Baltimore	September 2003	Military
Oklahoma City	February 2004	Federal
Fort Lee	November 2004	Military
Pittsburgh	October 2005	Federal
Beckley	November 2005	Military
Buffalo	August 2006	Military
Milwaukee	August 2006	Leased
Syracuse	June 2007	Military

An Air Force **Reservist** sheds **civil service** duties and **volunteers** to deploy when his country calls

# Answering

# the Call

By Skip Wiseman  
*Messenger Associate Editor*

When America needed Greg Sielepkowski to go to war, it didn't have to go looking for him. He volunteered — three times.

Sielepkowski, in addition to his civilian duties as an engineering technician in the Facilities Directorate at USMEPCOM headquarters, is a master sergeant in the Air Force Reserve with the 440<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineering Squadron in Milwaukee where he is the heavy equipment supervisor.

He volunteered to deploy to Incirlik, Turkey, in 2000; to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, in 2003; and Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, in 2006.

The deployment to Incirlik was in support of Operation Northern Watch, which patrolled the no fly zones before the Iraq war.

"That's when they started (Air Expeditionary Force) rotations," he said. "We had to fill the slots and they were looking for volunteers. I volunteered. I think there were eight of us that went."

The normal rotation for Guardsmen and Reservists at that time was about three weeks. "I would've stayed there six months," Sielepkowski said.

There were three or four tent cities, he said, but he remembered the problems caused by heavy rain and a fire lane built up all around the outside of one.

"They kept putting gravel on it," he said. "As soon as it rained — and it rained really heavy — all these tents were flooded. It was sloped down into one corner. It was Easter Sunday. I'll never forget that. I had just gone to Mass and I was waiting for the rain to let up a little bit when this guy drove in to pick up some sandbags."

The man recalled that he had just picked Sielepkowski up and that he was a heavy equipment operator.

"He said, 'Come on, let's go. We need you,'" Sielepkowski recalled. "He took me back to my tent, I put on my uniform, got on the grader and worked all day. We were down in the mud trying to open a slot to drain the water. I never saw so much water."

After a week of rain, it finally dried out enough for the heavy equipment to operate properly.

"We knocked down that fire lane and put in three drainage culverts so that when it rained it would immediately drain out of there."

Even before the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, terrorism was a concern.

"We had a couple of car bombs that went off," he said. "One was fairly close to the base. Even though we



Master Sgt. Greg Sielepkowski paints a logo on the heavy equipment shop.

weren't in Iraq itself, it was considered a war zone, so you still had terrorists to deal with."

The second deployment, to Kirkuk, was a standard four-month rotation, a little hairier and a lot more hush-hush.

"We didn't know where we were going," Sielepkowski said. "We found out a couple of days before we left, but we couldn't tell anyone. In fact, when we were over there, you couldn't tell anyone where you were."

That included his wife, Linda. They kept in touch by phone and e-mail.

"She'd say, 'You're in Iraq, aren't you? I know it.' and I'd say, 'I can't talk about it,'" he said. "She was kind of worried until I got home."

There was plenty of work to be done at the former MiG base. The Army had secured the operational portion of the



Clockwise from upper left: Master Sgt. Greg Sielepkowski, Tech. Sgt. Nestor Hinajajosa, Tech. Sgt. Kevin Sampson and Tech. Sgt. Tony Jackson on board a C-130 outbound from Kirkuk, Iraq.



Master Sgt. Greg Sielepkowski digs a trench for an electric line in Tent City at Kirkuk, Iraq.

airfield early on, but the rest of the base was a shambles.

“The Army went in right away and secured the runway, the tower, the essential stuff we would need for Air Force operations. The rest of the base they didn’t care about,” Sielepkowski, said. “The locals came in and stripped everything you could possibly imagine. All that was left was the bricks.

“These people had been subjugated so long that they had nothing, so they were taking scrap metal, copper, whatever they could get,” he said. “Our mission was to start rebuilding the base. We were laying water lines, sewage lines, electric lines, stuff like that.”

Being in a combat zone meant that force protection was a much bigger issue than it was at Incirlik. The base received small arms fire every day. Helmets and flak jackets were constant companions, “But it’s hot when it’s 155 degrees so you take it off whenever you get a chance,” he said. “If intelligence says there’s going to be an imminent attack, obviously you’re going to have it on. Sometimes we had to wear it 24/7.

“One day I was running a ’dozer fairly close to the main gate and all the sudden I saw people running,” Sielepkowski recalled. “I can’t hear anything, because I’m running the ’dozer and I’ve got my ear protection on. I dropped the blade, took off my ear protection and I could hear the gunfire. I went over on the other side of the ’dozer and squatted down and was hoping they didn’t have an RPG (rocket propelled grenade) because a ’dozer is a really nice target.”

When intelligence indicated an attack

by 2,000-3,000 insurgents, the heavy equipment operators helped the Army set up checkpoints. They knocked down some “horseshoe berms” which the Iraqis had used to protect the MiGs to build up berms between the base and a four-lane highway 50 yards away.

“We were out there all night,” he said. “That was one of those 30-hour days. You stick to it until it’s done.”

The attack never came, Sielepkowski said, because the insurgents would often call off attacks when they saw the Americans were prepared for it. But the howitzers were firing off rounds that night and A-10s, Apaches and Blackhawks flew cover the whole time.

Two other memories stand out — the heat and the sand.

“It really amazed me that none of the machines overheated,” he said. “We were overheating, but the machines didn’t. We were drinking at least a couple of gallons (of water) a day. You just get so sick of drinking water that you say, ‘You know, I’m not drinking any more.’ Then 10 minutes later you say, ‘Give me a bottle of water.’

“Our office was air conditioned and a couple of pieces of the equipment were air conditioned,” he said. “We had a brand new front loader backhoe. The air conditioning worked fantastic the first day and then it broke. It was still under warranty, but the company isn’t going to send somebody out to check it out.”

The sand was a constant battle.

“It’s not sand like you think of in the desert,” Sielepkowski said. “It’s pulverized

clay. It’s so fine it’s like talcum powder. It gets into everything. You’ve got to have everything zipped up in zip lock bags.”

More than a year after his last deployment, Sielepkowski still has sand in his watchband. “Even with trying to vacuum it out, once it’s in, it’s in for good. You can’t even wash it out.”

The deployment to Al Dhafra was like “a vacation” compared to the other deployments, Sielepkowski said. The base supports reconnaissance missions and is a major refueling hub for Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

“We poured concrete pads,” he said. “We were building parking lots, placed sewer boxes and stuff like that. We were living in tent city and building a semi permanent barracks. It was called a TCA — temporary cantonment area. It’s called temporary because the Arabs don’t like to have permanent buildings established.

“We worked pretty much all the time,” he said. “We usually got one day off a week unless there was something going on like concrete pours. Basically we were doing a lot of excavating, moving material from one place to another. We built a new entrance to the TCA because there was this huge ditch. We filled all that in, compacted it and made it part of the serpentine for the entry control points.”

Linda’s support was a constant through all three deployments, Sielepkowski said. She wasn’t particularly happy about his volunteering, he said but “did all she could to send me stuff and keep the home fires burning. She supported me and the ideals we stand for.”

Sielepkowski’s deploying days are over. The 440<sup>th</sup> has moved to Pope Air Force Base, N.C., and he’s retiring in September, but plans to stay in touch with his former comrades.

“In the Reserve you become like a family because you see these guys every month,” he said. “I’ve known these guys for 20 years. They’re like brothers. We’ve been through war together.”

The attitudes of his uncles, who fought in World War II and his dad, a retired Navy man, led Sielepkowski to begin his own 26 year active duty and Reserve career and his sense of duty caused him to volunteer for the deployments.

“I felt like it was my obligation to the United States,” he said. “We have a lot of freedom here. I wouldn’t live anywhere else in the world. I’ve been to Germany, the Middle East, all over the place. I like it here. I like our freedoms. Somebody has to step up to the plate and do what has to be done.”

# The who, what, when, where and why you should care about: Management Controls

by Christine Parker  
Messenger Editor

In addition to executive departments like Defense, Energy and Education, all federal agencies have something in common, something with which you may or may not be familiar: management controls.

In fact, since 1982, the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act has required federal leaders to sign something called an annual statement of assurance. Those statements are personal certifications of the effectiveness of management controls within that leader's organization.

"Management Controls is federal-wide, it's not just DoD or even MEPCOM," said Jeff Arthur, USMEPCOM's Management Controls administrator. Arthur offers a simple explanation of the program. "The theory behind it is that everything that should be happening does in fact happen. And the bad stuff that shouldn't be happening doesn't happen."

## Risk Reduction & Stewardship

The Management Controls Program focuses on both risk reduction and stewardship.

In the area of risk reduction, the program analyzes risk and determines the actions that could be taken to minimize risk for the organizational structure, policies, procedures and devices. The category of "devices" includes items like door locks, computers and government vehicles.

The second focus is stewardship, which is the correct or intended use of resources for

any given federal agency. Resources include money, people's time, devices, computers, government vehicles ...

The program requires leaders to "sign on the dotted line" once a year. However, "Really, it's something that's going on all year round," Arthur said. "It's an umbrella program that, in and of itself, is not on people's minds daily, but is a program that directly deals with daily activities."

Even though it's a program by itself, rather than creating new administrative tasks, management controls use what exists in order to increase effectiveness and ensure the program is fully implemented.

"Management Controls are a means to an end and that, of course, is mission accomplishment," Arthur said.

Since risk is inherent within any system, commanders and managers are not expected to provide absolute assurance that their system is operating perfectly. They are expected to apply General Accounting Office Standards for Internal Controls and ensure that they have "reasonable assurance" that key management controls are in place and working effectively.

## MEPCOM's Process

In USMEPCOM, key management controls are critical to the mission, determined by the Department of the Army or USMEPCOM Headquarters proponents, and identified in Army or USMEPCOM regulations. The command must formally evaluate key management controls at least once every five years. However, high risk areas are evaluated more frequently.

The formal process for USMEPCOM usually begins in January. This is the time when the command normally receives a tasker from its higher headquarters, the Army Accession Command. This tasker requests USMEPCOM to provide its annual statement of assurance. At that point, Arthur issues a suspense for "feeder statements" to accessible unit managers (definition provided on the next page).

The formal USMEPCOM tasking is known as the Annual Statement of Assurance. "Commanders at each level are sending a statement stating that things are good or they're not good. Each MEPS provides a feeder statement to sectors, where they are consolidated for Headquarters.

"We determine if there's anything that needs to be reported." And, then, the USMEPCOM commander sends his annual statement of assurance to the Army Accession Command.

"Either things are good or not good," Arthur said. If things are good or otherwise, in February the USMEPCOM commander sends his overall statement of assurance to AAC.

USMEPCOM has participated in this program for more than 10 years. "In all that time we've only had one item to report and that was about seven years ago. We reported a deficiency in regard to civilian pay," Arthur said. Deficiencies are known as material weaknesses (see definition on page 15).

Material weakness are not numerous, according to Arthur. In fact, he saw a major command's statement of assurance this

year and that command reported only one material weakness.

According to Arthur, “Someone leaving the door unlocked is usually a one-time occurrence. Doing so once is not a systemic problem. When you’re talking about material weaknesses, you’re talking about systemic problems.”

In fact, a material weakness must satisfy two conditions: one, it must involve a weakness in management controls that either are not in place, are not being used, and/or are inadequate; and two, it must warrant the attention of the next higher level of command, who must either take action or be aware of the problem.

In order to prepare USMEPCOM personnel for the upcoming request for feeder statements, in October, Arthur sends out a “heads up” about the tasker that will arrive early the next year.

The Management Controls Program touches everyone in a MEPS — especially medical, operations, and testing personnel. Arthur suggests that all employees keep the

program in mind “It’s a guideline to take a look at controls from time to time based on risk in order to ensure — what’s supposed

to be happening is happening, and what isn’t supposed to be happening isn’t.”

## Leadership’s role

### Communicate expectations through:

- Training staff
- Evaluating controls
- Involving leaders and managers

### Demand a quality annual statement that discloses known material weaknesses and corrective actions

### Focus on controls in your day-to-day discussions:

- What controls should have prevented this problem?
- Why didn’t the controls work?

### Use your portion of the Management Control Plan as a tool for oversight: The plan is available at the web site in the box below.

## Take a look at USMEPCOM’s Management Control Plan

[https://mepnet.mepcom.army.mil/cdms/documents/mrm\\_links\\_01++USMEPCOM-Mgt-Ctrl-Plan\\_FY08-12.xls](https://mepnet.mepcom.army.mil/cdms/documents/mrm_links_01++USMEPCOM-Mgt-Ctrl-Plan_FY08-12.xls)

## Helpful Definitions

### Assessable Unit Managers

Sector commanders, MEPS commander, directors and special staff officers are considered assessable unit managers.

### Management Control Plan

The Management Control Plan shows what will be evaluated, who will do the evaluation, and when they will do it. The MC administrator prepares the 5-year schedule of evaluations and functional proponents (e.g., MEPS commanders, sector commanders, and Headquarters directors) review it.

### Material Weakness

A problem in the overall process; a reportable condition which is significant enough to report to the next higher level. It is management’s

judgment as to whether or not a weakness is deemed material (according to Department of Defense Instruction Number 5010.40, January 4, 2006). The next higher level for USMEPCOM is the Army Accession Command.

### Resources

Everything an agency possesses and uses for its intended purpose in the accomplishment of the agency’s mission. Resources include, but are not limited to, facilities, telephones, computers, equipment, funding, manpower and government vehicles.

### Stewardship

The responsibility and accountability held by public managers who are entrusted with public resources.

## Why?

Management Controls is a federal program. It is not solely a USMEPCOM or even a Department of Defense program. All federal agencies must have management controls.

The following excerpt from an Office of Management and Budget Circular, A-123, dated December 21, 2004, defines the program.

“Management has a fundamental responsibility to develop and maintain effective internal control. The proper stewardship of federal resources is an essential responsibility of agency managers and staff. Federal employees must ensure that federal programs operate and federal resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve desired objectives.”

# Free credit reports can help financial health

By Capt Daniel A. Papajcik  
Staff Judge Advocate's Office

Whether you recently moved or made any changes to your financial accounts, knowing what information is on your credit report will strengthen your financial health.

The Fair Credit Reporting Act requires each of the nationwide consumer reporting companies — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — to provide you with a free copy of your credit report, at your request, once every 12 months.

A credit report includes information on where you live, how you pay your bills and whether you've been sued, arrested or filed for bankruptcy.

Nationwide consumer reporting companies sell the information in your report to creditors, insurers, employers and other businesses that use it to evaluate your applications for credit, insurance, employment or even renting a home. This information impacts many areas of your financial life.

## How to order

You can order your free annual credit report online at [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com), by calling 1-877-322-8228 or by completing the Annual Credit Report Request Form (available at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)) and mailing it to: Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281.

When you order, you need to provide your name, address, Social Security number and date of birth. To verify your identity, you may need to provide some information that only you would know, like the amount of your monthly mortgage payment.

## Getting best use from reports

With some minor changes, each nationwide consumer reporting company — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — will report the same basic information, such as accounts and payment information.

You can order your free annual credit report once per year from each company. However, staggering your order by ordering

from a different company every four months, will give you a more frequent picture of your credit history.

## Correcting inaccuracies

After you get your report, make sure that all information is accurate. If there is inaccurate information on the credit report, each company provides a procedure for disputing this information.

A warning about “imposter” sites: The FTC advises consumers who order their free annual credit reports online to be sure to correctly spell [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com) or link to it from the FTC's website to avoid being misdirected to other websites that offer supposedly free reports, but only with the purchase of other products.

While consumers may be offered additional products or services while on the authorized website, they don't have to buy anything to receive their free annual credit reports.

*Note: This information adapted from [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov).*

# Financial specialists provide information

by Christine Parker  
Messenger Editor

The goal of the Command Financial Specialist Course is to “train the trainers” to return to their command and pass on what they've learned. Mark VanArsdall did just that.

Van Arsdall is the ASVAB test coordinator and command financial specialist at the Shreveport MEPS. He attended a one-week course at Great Lakes Naval Station that included topics like personal financial management, car buying strategies and retirement planning.

The financial specialist course includes topics such as military pay issues, reducing living expenses, introduction to financial counseling, record keeping, consumer awareness, lifecycle of insurance, referral resources, credit management, Survivor Benefits/SGLI as well.

Attendees also learn how to use a financial planning worksheet which shows a person their spending areas and how they can reduce debt.

After VanArsdall attended the course, on the next MEPS training day, he gave an initial briefing to explain what he had learned and offer his new skills. He also gave a presentation on identity theft.

Since then he's given presentations on most training days and he has included a financial page in each MEPS' quarterly Readiness Support Group newsletter. VanArsdall also keeps in touch with the Thrift Savings Plan regional office to acquire informational posters, literature and DVDs.

“I had three people come up to me after the first presentation to ask for more information,” he said.

VanArsdall believes that personal finances are usually a private issue.

“People don't beat down my door to get me to help them with problems,” he said, “but I almost always get questions during or after my briefings and newsletter inputs.”

More people want information about the Thrift Savings Plan than any other topic he's covered.

“One of the most frequent questions I get is, ‘How do I get started in the TSP?’ I love to answer this question, because I believe that everyone should be contributing to the TSP and planning for their retirement.”

A couple of months after VanArsdall gave his first presentation on identity theft, “It happened to two people I work with,” he said.

He said the two most important things he's learned about identify theft are to make sure you really get to know someone before you share personal

*Continued on page 29*



## Fort Jackson hosts Afghan Army chief of staff

Fort Jackson MEPS hosted Afghan Gen. Bismillah Mohammadi, chief of staff of the Afghanistan National Army and Lt. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, the new commanding general of United States Army Accessions Command.

Mohammadi came to Fort Jackson to view a “Day in the Life of a Soldier.”

The goal was to give him a solid understanding of how the United States Army recruits, evaluates and trains its Soldiers.

During the visit Lt. Col. Richard Wagner provided him with the MEPS VIP briefing including a walk-around tour of the facility with a hands-on demonstration of the different processes applicants must complete to enter their respective services.

Mohammadi watched demonstrations on CAT ASVAB, Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength, height weight measurements, and audio and visual requirements.

The Army liaison showed him how an individual selected their military specialty and then operations showed him the final process including fingerprinting.

The tour ended with a ceremony conducted by Freakley.

During a tour scheduled for mid-July, the head of the Afghanistan Army recruiting and retention and the human resources officer were scheduled to receive the same tour and briefing with a little more time for questions and answers.

“I can not tell you how appreciative General Mohammadi and Lieutenant General Freakley were of their visit and how honored I felt knowing that what we do here in MEPCOM is getting worldwide attention,” Wagner said.



Lt. Col. Richard Wagner, Fort Jackson MEPS commander, briefs guests during a visit by the Afghanistan National Army's chief of staff.



The visitors soak in more information during a tour of the Fort Jackson MEPS.



## Two organizations celebrate 30-year ASVAB partnership

On July 17, USMEPCOM Commander Col. Lon Yeary and three representatives from the Office of Personnel Management cut a cake celebrating the 30-year anniversary of a partnership between the military processing command and OPM. The five OPM representatives met with Yeary and a cross section of command personnel to discuss the current partnership and further recognize the milestone with a cake-cutting ceremony and celebration. In the past four years, OPM test administrators have administered more than 125,000 student and enlistment test sessions at high schools, National Guard armories and Military Reserve Centers across the country. During this same period, more than 4.5 million young Americans were tested and nearly one million of those tested volunteered for military duty.

# Learning the Ropes

## Junior ROTC cadets glimpse inside MEPS

Ninety-four Junior ROTC students from Meade Senior High School interacted with employees at the Baltimore MEPS, located at Fort George G. Meade, Md., March 23, April 19 and May 3.

These three events were part of a national initiative known as Job Shadow

Defense and the military services.

His presentation on the MEPS was aided by the videos "A Day at the MEPS" and "ASVAB Career Exploration Program."

After a guided tour of the MEPS, the students were introduced to their personal mentor for the day. This interactive experience gives young people a chance to see how the skills learned in school relate to the workplace environment. It can begin to provide them the knowledge and skills they will need to achieve their dreams.

A detailed interview of the mentor is conducted

see a wide array of careers so they are not necessarily focusing on one. They are right now getting the opportunity to see 25 to 30 different careers in this one building."

The Job Shadow program proves very useful for students getting ready to graduate. "This is very helpful to me as a senior," Marissa Farrow, 17, said. "I feel this is very beneficial, getting to interact and seeing how it really is in the work field. This is the time where we choose where we want to go as far as a career path and it's helpful for JROTC in case we do want to join the military."

Amanda Porter, 18, thoroughly enjoyed the event. "It was a great opportunity to get



Maj Michael Thomas, Baltimore MEPS executive officer, conducts a tour for Junior ROTC cadets.



A student conducts an interview with Mary Lou Maisil in the files room.

Day where community partners work with employers and schools to organize job shadow experiences for high school students.

The program kicks off Feb. 2 each year. The Baltimore MEPS took a one-day event and produced an entire job shadow program for this Anne Arundel County, Md., public high school.

The students began their day at the MEPS with an X-ray baggage scan followed by an orientation where the students were introduced to the MEPS commander, Lt. Col. Robert Larsen. He explained that the mission and purpose of the MEPS is to ensure each new member of the armed forces meets the mental, moral and medical standards required by the Department of

for specific qualifications required for their career.

"This is a chance for students to get out of school and see what people are doing in the real world," said Bill Sheppard, career connections facilitator at Meade Senior High School.

"This particular place offers them an opportunity to



Lt. Col. Robert Larson, Baltimore MEPS commander, explains the MEPS mission to students from Meade Senior High School.



Deborah Legrand, right, and Sheila Hicks chat with visiting students in the medical section.

out of the (school) building and see a little bit of how the working world operates. It gave us a chance to see what jobs people in the military do, and it also gave us a chance to see some civilian careers as well.”

“It was a really great experience,” Jarod Davis, 18, said. “We all seemed to enjoy working side-by-side with someone doing their job. It gave us a peek into our own futures.”

The mentors also seemed to have a good time. Gunnery Sgt. Kephart said, “Job Shadow is an excellent program that allows students to broaden their horizons to military occupations.”

“I think the impact is significant,” said David Rogers, MEPS test control officer and workplace coordinator for the Baltimore MEPS Job Shadow Program. “When I was in school we had a career day and professionals

and Growth or F.L.A.G. It is beneficial to both the professional mentors and student shadows.”

During a “wrap-up” session the students, mentors and a school faculty member provided written feedback to improve the program. Several activities are conducted using a MEPS organization chart and information gathered from mentors to understand the importance of every position in order for the section teams to reach

the overall MEPS goals.

Every participating student was presented an endorsed Eastern Sector F.L.A.G. Certificate followed by a lunch of pizza, fruit and drinks in the MEPS or even a cook-out. Recent approval was granted by Fort Meade for monthly access of the Job Shadow participants

gave us 45-minute presentations. This, I think is more effective; it is more immersed and interactive and therefore, more effective. The students are actually at the workplace with professionals. This program exemplifies all of the Eastern Sector values: Family, Leadership, Ambassadorship,

to eat lunch at the Fort Meade military dining facility, Freedom Inn.

“Next school year we have plans to expand the program to seven months of the school year and extend the offer to all ninth through twelfth grade students beyond the JROTC,” Rogers said. “With these seven sessions it’s possible to offer over 210 Meade students an opportunity to experience a job shadow event”

Due to the improved relationship between Meade High School and the MEPS staff; the high school agreed to administer the ASVAB Career Exploration Program May 14-17, 2007, to all Junior ROTC cadets. During the MEPS presentations, Sheppard discovered the career clusters for their curriculum mirrored those listed in the



Students talk with Lt. Col. Robert Larsen, Baltimore MEPS commander, to learn more about his job.

Career Exploration Program. Earlier this year the school only tested five out of 210 Junior ROTC cadets.

For more information, visit the Web-site at [www.jobshadow.org](http://www.jobshadow.org).

The point of contact for the Baltimore MEPS program is Dave Rogers, 301-677-0380 or [baltco@mepcom.army.mil](mailto:baltco@mepcom.army.mil)

*This article was compiled by Dave Rogers, Baltimore test control officer, from information provided by Lynn Davis, Fort Meade “Sound-Off” newspaper and Bill Sheppard, Meade High School Career Connection Facilitator.*



Nekeesha Modeste explains shipper travel to a visiting Junior ROTC cadet.

# The Shadow Knows

## ROTC cadets get a taste of life inside the MEPS

By Capt. Timothy R. Hickman  
Assistant Operations Officer, Beckley MEPS

Ten members of the Beckley MEPS team laughed and talked with their local students during its first Job Shadow Day.

As the group sat inside the cafeteria, eating pizza, laughing and talking with their workplace hosts, it was obvious that the 10 Junior ROTC cadets were enjoying their time at the MEPS.

Paired off with various members of the MEPS staff, the students from Fayetteville Institute of Technology got a little taste of what it is like making an important phone call to Eastern Sector Headquarters with the MEPS commander, managing the day's events with the first sergeant, preparing for ceremonies with the operations officers, and



Cadet Michael Chaffin made the mistake of asking Sgt. Michael Cramer whether a Marine can stay in shape at a MEPS.

running a medical section with the NCO in charge — just a few of the roles the students took on during their half-day at the Beckley MEPS.

“This was a great way to reach out to our community, and offer some real-life experiences to high school students who might not have them otherwise,” Maj. Allana Bryant, MEPS commander, said,

“Growing up, I had no idea what people did at their jobs or how that job interfaced with the community,” she said. “Hopefully, the students we hosted won’t be able to say that and they can use the experience to their advantage when choosing among options after high school.”

The students’ day began with an introduction by Bryant, an overview of what happens at a MEPS, and a tour by Beckley’s operations officers.

The students were introduced to and paired off with their workplace hosts, who conducted an informal review of the students resumes and their career interests, as outlined in the Job Shadow Day program guide.

“We should remember the old quote, ‘It takes a village to raise a child,’” Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Monitta Alvin, operations NCO and a workplace host, said. “We should all get involved with our youth of today, to try to lead and guide kids in directions that will enhance their futures for the better.”

One of the most important parts of the student’s experience at the MEPS was witnessing an oath of enlistment ceremony. Lining the walls of the ceremony room, the cadets snapped to

attention when the officer administering the oath entered the room.

The clicking of the cadets’ heels echoed, adding to the seriousness of the event. Applause for the enlistees rang out from the students once the oath was complete.



Senior Master Sgt. Mark Stamps, Beckley MEPS senior enlisted advisor, presents a certificate of appreciation to Cadet Laura Oatridge.

The day concluded with a pizza party and presentation of certificates by the commander and the first sergeant to the students involved.

Retired Army Maj. William Meador, head of the Junior ROTC Program at Fayetteville Institute of Technology, thanked the MEPS staff for their efforts, and said, “The students really enjoyed their visit and can’t stop talking about their day at the MEPS.”

Beckley’s Job Shadow Day’s success took some planning, and involved training for the workplace hosts. Workplace hosts conducted role playing exercises, and



Sergeant 1st Class Monitta Alvin, Beckley MEPS operations NCO, and Maj. Allana Bryant, Beckley MEPS commander, field questions from the visiting junior ROTC cadets.

“ Growing up, I had no idea what people did at their jobs or how that job interfaced with the community.

Maj. Allana Bryant  
Beckley MEPS commander

reviewed the Job Shadow Day handbook the day before the event, putting themselves in the shoes of someone from outside of the MEPS looking in.

“Job shadowing is an academically motivating activity designed to give kids the unique opportunity of an up-close look at the world of work,” reads the program’s website (jobshadowday.org), and it provides the answer to the commonly asked question: “Why do I have to learn this?”

Each year, tens of thousands of businesses host more than one million students across the country. Job shadowing can take many forms, but normally includes a half-day visit by the students to a workplace, a tour and at least two hours of shadowing with a workplace host, participating in workplace activities.

The mission of the Job Shadow Day initiative is dedicated to engaging students in the world of work to:

- Demonstrate connections between academics and careers, encouraging students to learn by making their class work more relevant.
- Build community partnership between schools and businesses that enhance students’ educational experience.
- Introduce students to professional and industry requirements to help

them prepare to join the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

— Encourage an ongoing relationship between young people and caring adults.

Job Shadowing invites students to get firsthand knowledge of how the skills they learn in school actually relate to a workplace.

The goal of the program is to provide more one million school aged kids each year with Job Shadowing experience. The program is led by the National Job Shadow Coalition and is supported through a national sponsorship.

For more information contact your local Junior Achievement office or visit [jobshadowday.org](http://jobshadowday.org).

Lt. David Culp, operations officer, summed up the Beckley MEPS Job Shadow Day.

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“I felt pretty good about the whole experience,” he said. “The students got something positive out of our Job Shadow Day. In the case of my job shadow, he just doesn’t have the chance to actually expand his experiences or interests like he did on Job Shadow Day. At least he got to see a little of what’s actually out there.”

The visiting cadets got to see firsthand what it takes to get people into the military. They saw that the workplace has a lot of things going on at once and that it takes a variety of skills from different types of people to actually make it all happen.

One student in particular was amazed at the opportunities available for working for the government, and asked her workplace host, “What do I need to know to get your job someday?” Mission accomplished.



Members of the Fayetteville Institute of Technology Junior ROTC program.

# Virtual War

## Anchorage MEPS learns about combat skills on training day

by Maj. Laura Bozeman  
Anchorage MEPS Commander

Members of the Anchorage MEPS deployed to Fort Richardson's Battle Command Training Center as part of their quarterly Training Day.

MEPS personnel engaged the facility's virtual enemies, including hands-on participation in squad collective engagement drills and the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer simulation.

At the end of the visit, every individual, military or civilian, had a greater appreciation for the risks members of the armed forces face while fighting the war on terror.

The center's mission is multi-faceted. It allows Soldiers to conduct three categories of training: battle staff; command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and warrior skills.

As the center's motto, "Training Today's Warriors for Tomorrow's Challenges" indicates, it uses the latest technologies to prepare personnel for emerging threats. In addition to the squad drill and the combat trainer, the center has a Javelin Basic Skills Trainer, Guard Unit Army Device Full-Crew Interactive Simulation Training, a Sniper Training System, a Shoot/No Shoot Trainer and a Laser Marksmanship Trainer.



Capt. Nichole Wood, Anchorage MEPS operations officer, serves as .50-caliber gunner in the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer.

Russell Beauvais, the center's chief, showed the Anchorage MEPS staff the center's battle staff training room, which is where Army brigade and battalion commanders train their staffs on using Digital Battle Command.

Many of the Alaska forces presently in Iraq used the Digital Battle Command to prepare their forces before deploying.

Using this system, leaders can see real-time locations of friendly units, "drill down" to the desired level of detail and practice in a forgiving environment.

Emerging technologies allow tracking enemy forces as well. Armed with this information, combat leaders are able to increase the survivability of their personnel on the battlefield. After answering questions about the center's battle staff and C4ISR missions, Beauvais led the Anchorage MEPS personnel into the squad collective engagement drill training facility, where the visit's hands-on activities commenced.

Following a few minutes' orientation on using the center's specially modified rifles and machine guns, Beauvais started a simulation in which Anchorage MEPS personnel engaged virtual enemy forces on a movie-theater-sized screen.

Eight unit volunteers fired weapons from a raised platform, where each firing

position came complete with weapon, spare magazines and sand bags. Some of the unit's weapons enthusiasts had a chance to show their prowess with the M-16A2 rifles, others, some of whom had never fired a weapon, got



Russell Beauvais of Fort Richardson's Battle Command Training Center, reviews results from the Squad Collective Engagement Drill while Sgt. 1st Class Katrina Clark, operations NCO, and Carol Smith, budget technician, observe.

basic instruction from other unit members.

The squad engagement drill presented multiple scenarios — everything from small unit combat in a desert environment to urban settings.

Beauvais explained that the center has multiple realism enhancers. For example, leaders can request their troops receive a barrage of foam pellets throughout the squad collective engagement drill — a way for Soldiers to practice applying the principles of small arms marksmanship while under enemy fire. While the M-16s and squad automatic weapons don't fire real rounds of ammunition, each magazine or clip has realistic limits, so people must conserve ammunition and reload as needed.

Michael Johnson, Anchorage MEPS test clerk and a retired Coast Guard petty officer 1<sup>st</sup> class, was pleased to learn that the BCTC has rapid response capability.

If a platoon sergeant has an hour free on a given afternoon and the squad collective engagement drill facility is unoccupied, BCTC personnel can set up training for platoon members with little advance notice.

Johnson said he was "impressed when the instructor said they only need 30 minutes

to set up simulations. Military members are able to spend more time on training.”

People can come to the BCTC to zero the simulator’s weapons and then save their settings for the next time they visit. It is also possible to conduct virtual weapons qualification — ideal for units like Anchorage MEPS who have military personnel assigned, yet have no assigned weapons.

After each simulation, Beauvais reviewed the numbers of hits and misses from each of the firing stations. Cheers or groans resounded in the cavernous building, as unit members learned how well, or how poorly, they had performed.

One of the best shooters of the afternoon was Tony Fuentes, test score technician and a retired Air Force master sergeant. While he was on active duty Fuentes served as a marksmanship instructor with the combat arms training and maintenance unit at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., — something few members of the MEPS knew before.

Fuentes thought the simulation made for excellent training and said, “Firing the weapon provided reinforcement for the necessity of training. If you didn’t understand how to operate, reload and align your sights, the results were immediately available for all to see.”

Once everyone who wanted to got the chance to participate in the squad collective engagement drill, Beauvais ushered the Anchorage MEPS staff into one of the trailers that houses the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer simulation.

Each trailer contains two virtual High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicles setups, with stations for the driver, commander, two rear passengers and gunner.



Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Taheerah Hendricks, human resources assistant, spots for Tech. Sgt. Nicholas Burtcher, medical specialist as he fires the M249 Squad Assault Weapon. Burtcher noted that it was good to see how much hard work goes training before putting someone in harm’s way.

While Anchorage MEPS personnel stood around the .50 caliber gunner station, Tom Earley, training specialist of Raydon Corporation, gave a quick introduction to the system.

Earley explained that the VCCT boasts a large data set of recognizable Middle Eastern structures and terrain, and its convoy training includes rocket propelled grenades and improvised explosive devices, snipers, suicide bombers, civilian activity, and pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Individuals undergoing training on the system have a 360-degree view of the virtual reality landscape, via the simulator’s high tech headsets. Each time a participant shoulders his or her rifle or grasps the .50-caliber machine gun, the headset displays weapon sights.

Once Earley’s introduction was complete, Beauvais split Anchorage MEPS into two groups and took half the participants into another trailer, to operate four virtual HMMWVs in a simulated convoy.

Eloilda Morales-Castro, lead human resources assistant, volunteered to drive, while Carol Smith, budget technician, served as the vehicle’s commander. Charaine Harris, human resources assistant and a staff sergeant in the Alaska Air National Guard, served as the gunner.

Once the group had figured out how to communicate with the other HMMWVs and how to operate their respective stations, their virtual HMMWV rolled out along the streets of Baghdad. At first, it was difficult maintaining the convoy speed of 40 miles per hour.

Just when they started to get the hang of things,



Maj. Laura Bozeman, Anchorage MEPS sommander, demonstrates the M16A2 semi-automatic rifle to Katharine Dickerson, Anchorage MEPS secretary. After firing the rifle, Dickerson quipped, “I knew there was a reason I didn’t join the Army!”

chaos erupted: Their vehicle had hit an IED and Smith became a casualty.

“It was all fun and games until I realized it was my blood splattered across the front windshield; then it was a reality check,” Smith, an Army veteran said after her virtual demise. She went on to say that she found the training very informative and that she is “glad our Soldiers are getting more realistic training than the old pop-up targets.”

All told, everyone from Anchorage MEPS benefited from the tour of the Battle Command Training Center, which connected the MEPS’ mission more closely with the modern battlefield.

Army recruiters in Alaska occasionally take applicants to the center to motivate Delayed Entry Program participants, so MEPS personnel got to experience something that both applicants and Soldiers do.

“It helps to see the job the applicants will soon be doing,” Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jennifer Olson, medical specialist, said. “Anyone would benefit from visiting a center like this, regardless of if they worked at a MEPS.”

Wayne Thibedeau, test coordinator and a retired Army sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> class, echoed Olson’s remarks, noting that the tour “gave the MEPS’ employees a different perspective on what the applicants we process to the services will be facing in terms of preparation and training for combat deployment.”

For those MEPS near military training installations, a BCTC tour makes for a great collective experience that helps to increase awareness of the role the people the MEPS access have in winning the war on terror.



**Knoxville**  
Lt. Cmdr.  
Breckenridge Morgan

**Hometown:** Knoxville, Tenn. “When the Navy said we’ve got a job you can do in Knoxville, there wasn’t much looking at the rest of the list.”

**Childhood memories:** “Sledding. I just remember it would snow. We usually get snow 5-6 times a year and about twice a year you could go sledding. The street behind where I grew up was great for sledding. We’d sled until one or two in the morning. It was a neighborhood event. The parents would send out hot chocolate so we’d stay warm.”

**Education:** Bachelor of science degree in business from the Citadel. “They made me take physics and calculus because I was an ROTC scholarship student, so that made it a BS. They sent me a letter, I went down and really liked what they had to offer.” He said the first year was tough, but the rest were good. “It tore you down and built you back up.” His twin brother came to visit and said, “I would’ve lasted about five minutes.”

**What’s it like being a twin?** “My standard response is what’s it like not being a twin? I always had somebody my own age to hang out with. I always had somebody whether I liked it or not.”

Oddly enough, there are three twins on the Knoxville staff, Morgan, the first sergeant and

a human resources assistant. **Last assignment:** Manpower at Navy Recruiting Command in Millington, Tenn.

**Favorite assignment:** “My two afloat tours. I was on the Samuel Eliot Morison (a frigate) and the Philippine Sea, a cruiser. I liked that we were on the pointy end of the spear. On the Morison we did several operations in support of international operations. We rescued more than 700 Cuban migrants in the Straits of Florida. When we pulled into Guantanamo Bay, they started shouting USA, USA. I knew they appreciated what we were doing. Some were going to be repatriated, but they knew they had a shot. On the Philippine Sea we did operations in the Mediterranean and off the coast of Bosnia.”

**Where does the name come from?** “Breckenridge is an old family name. People call me the man with three last names because my middle name is Stovall. My twin brother and I were the last of six kids. The first four were named after people on my dad’s side and my mom said it was time for her side of the family to get some recognition, so I was named after my great uncle, Jonathan Breckenridge Stovall.” (One of his brothers was already named John.) “I’m the one person who’s never been to Breckenridge, Colo., but I’ve got a bunch of stuff from it. Everybody who goes brings me back something it seems like.”

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** “I got my undergraduate degree in business and my master’s is in physics and I’m a senior professional in human resources. I kind of see myself running a company or being a director in a large company doing human resources. It will be something that involves working with people.”

**What do you do when you’re not a commander?** “Play with my kids. We play Wii or

you can find us playing in the back yard. This time of year we’ve usually got some kind of water thing going.”

**What’s the best way to inspire the troops?** “Be a great role model. Be honest with them.”

**Motto:** “Be fair, just and consistent.”

**What do you like about your job?** “You mean other than the fact that it’s in Knoxville? I’ve got great people who work hard every day to make our nation stronger.”

**Hobbies:** “A 13-year-old, 3-year-old and 1-year-old pretty much take up most of my time. I like games that make you think. I’ve got an old ‘82 (Volkswagen) Rabbit I’m trying to get running again. I hope I’m getting closer. I built a deck on back of the house.”

**What do you order when you eat out?** “There are two places we really like. Jumbo Buffet (Chinese) and The Green Hills Grill where I usually order chicken enchiladas.”

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** “I have just about all the Star Wars books in first edition, including two of them that they only printed 500 of one and 1,000 of the other. My mom sent me one of the books when I was on deployment. Now I just go out and pick one up whenever it comes out. I must have about 40 books. The one they only printed 500 copies of was only available at the Star Wars convention in Indianapolis in 2001. A young petty officer asked me to re-enlist him and he wanted to do it at the convention. I re-enlisted him surrounded by Storm Troopers. We just kind of did it there on the convention floor. It was really neat. People were taking pictures and everything.”

**Three things his desk:** A globe model of the USS Enterprise, as in Star Trek, not the U.S. Navy, a Peyton Manning bobblehead and a Star Wars battle droid.

**One thing always on his desk:** “Pictures of my family.”

**What’s your ideal vacation?** “It’s funny. My wife and I were talking about it just last night. It’s got to be one of those all inclusive resorts for a month so all you’ve got to is wake up, hang out, eat and sleep. We saw it a great opportunity to put all the worries aside and spend time with the family.”



**New Orleans**  
Maj. Kevyn Bryant

**Hometown:** “Actually I’m an Air Force brat, but all my family and my wife’s family live in Montgomery, so that’s home.” His family lived in Okinawa, the Philippines, England, New Jersey, Ohio and Michigan while he was growing up.

**It’s a small world:** “I went to high school in a little town in Michigan called Oscoda. When I was a senior, my current first sergeant was a freshman. We tell people he used to carry my books and still is today. We didn’t really know each other, but we tell people we did.”

**Education:** Bachelor of science degree in finance and marketing from Alabama State University, master’s of business administration from Auburn and a doctorate in Christian education from Southern Christian.

**Why pursue a doctorate in Christian education?** “Preparation for my next walk in life. I’m an ordained Baptist



minister, have been for years. The only reason I'm not a chaplain is because by the time I met all the requirements, I had passed the time in service requirement." He plans to be a parish minister when he retires. **Why Army?** "I was offered an Army ROTC scholarship and had five years prior enlisted service. My father was an Air Force chief master sergeant at 22 years. I was an Army staff sergeant in five years and people told me I'd be a sergeant major someday. I knew if I took the ROTC scholarship I could contribute more because the span of control would be higher and I could serve better." **Last assignment:** Battalion executive officer for the reception battalion at Fort Knox. "I used to tell the colonel he was responsible for everything that went right and I got the blame for everything that went wrong. It made the learning curve a little less steep when I got here." **Favorite assignment:** "It used to be being a brand new second lieutenant tank platoon leader. Now it's being the commander here, coming here with the unit in a state of flux." **After Katrina:** Eighty percent of the people were living in FEMA trailers or with relatives. The city still looked like a war zone. I told people 'I wasn't here for Katrina and I'm not going to tell you I know how you feel, because I don't. What I do have is a 100 percent commitment to you and to make your life better.' Now we don't even talk about Katrina. You can't forget because it's everywhere. About 40 percent of our people are still displaced. Out of that, half are working on their properties and could be back in their homes in 90 days or so. The other half is waiting for money and FEMA grants and their houses look like they did Aug 29. People in the military are used to having something happen and you pull on your

boots and carry on. Sometimes people sell the civilian work force a little short, but I see folks come to work every day and do what it takes, knowing they came from a FEMA trailer and they're going back there." **What do you do when you're not a commander?** "I pastor here for a local church. I serve as a youth mentor. I'm an advisor for the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity chapter. I was appointed to Mayor's Executive Leadership Consortium and mentor students in inner city schools. The schools have metal detectors at the doors. Then you get patted down by security guards. When you walk down the halls you could be in San Quentin. There are guards in the lunchroom. It was an awakening the first time I went to one of those schools." **How did you get appointed?** "I was the guest speaker at a church and someone heard me and recommended me. I guess they thought I had some good things to say." **What's the best way to inspire the troops?** "It changes with the unit you're in. For some, its commitment to mission accomplishment for others, some attainable goals. The best way to motivate people here is inspire them with hope. They're not destroyed. Life isn't over." **What do you like about your job?** "The ability to make a difference. You can grant that exception to policy that everybody else wants to deny. That guy might be a future Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. He might be 15 minutes late, but we're going to process him. What if it was you?" **Hobbies:** "I'm a musician. I play piano, guitar, drums, sax, clarinet, trumpet and trombone. I started out on a music/football scholarship. But the football scholarship went away when I hurt my ankle my sophomore year. The music

scholarship didn't cover much more than books." **What about the football scholarship?** He was an outside linebacker at the University of Michigan. **What do you order when you eat out?** "Whatever my wife says to get because she'll eat half of it anyway." **What would people be surprised to know about you?** "All the way through junior high and high school I was in special education because of a serious speech impediment. The only way I got into Michigan was because I was a halfway decent football player. Back in high school people thought I was just a dummy. People say 'And now here you are with a doctorate and preaching in a churchful of folks.'" **Three thing in his desk:** "My high speed Marine planning calendar the liaisons gave me, the birthday gift the staff gave me yesterday (the whole office was filled with balloons, the desk was covered with them) and a recruiting needs goal work sheet because we have a cluster meeting this afternoon." **One thing always on his desk:** He keeps a Bible on his desk for his personal use, not to proselytize. **Last book he read:** The Audacity of Hope by Barak Obama. "I thought it was good. It's kind of your classic biography. You read about the trials and struggles throughout the lives of accomplished people. It kind of reminded me of Colin Powell's book." **Ideal vacation:** "Any time away from the MEPS (laughs). Actually My family goes on a cruise every year — that southern thing — the whole family. (This year it'll be about 50 people). You pay your money and the people on the boat treat you like a king. Being military, you don't get together with your extended family very often, so it's nice to be able to spend time with them."



**Jacksonville**  
Lt. Cmdr. John Leskovich

**Hometown:** Lexington, Ohio. "It's a small town, actually classified as a village. Everybody knows everybody there." His dad was a junior high school teacher. **Did you have any classes your dad taught?** "I did not. It was school policy. He was the high school football coach, he started the wrestling and soccer program and was the long-time track coach." **What's it like having your dad for a coach?** "Good and bad. Looking back, it was fantastic because I got to spend time with my dad. It was bad because I always thought he was harder on me than everybody else." **Hometown memories?** "Being a small town, they always had holiday celebrations. I remember most the 4th of July parade where they had a civil war cannon and the Boy Scouts would fire it at the end of the parade right by the town's one traffic light, right in the middle intersection." **Education:** Graduated from the Naval Academy with a degree in economics. **Why economics?** "It's not a real popular one. I started out to be an aerospace engineer and switched to economics. I played football my freshman year and then played sprint football. I wanted to be able to balance both." Sprint football is mostly played at Ivy League

schools and the academies. All the players have to weigh in a couple days before the game, so everyone's about the same size. "It's a very fast game. Linemen were just as fast as the backs, so you'll see a lineman run a back down from behind."

**Why Navy?** "I had a cousin at the Naval Academy, two other cousins who were in ROTC and an uncle who was retired. I was accepted at West Point, too. I like to say I chose the Navy over the Army."

**Previous assignment:** Attended the Naval War College. "Before that I was the enlisted programs officer for Navy Recruiting Detachment Pittsburgh. It's the same position as an ops officer for the other services."

**Favorite assignment:** "I was a senior Tomahawk mission project manager with the George Washington Battle Group. I was deployed to the Persian Gulf and was planning missions for the Persian Gulf area of operations. Tip of the spear stuff."

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "I'd love to take Bill Murray's job in Caddyshack. Actually, I'd like to be a coach. I got to coach football for three years during a tour at the academy and discovered why my dad was a coach. It's great interacting with the kids."

**What do you do when you're not a commander?** "Spend time with my family — my wife, two boys and a daughter. All my kids are in sports. I spend as much time as I possibly can with them."

**What's the best way to inspire troops?** "Lead from the front. Actions speak a lot louder than words. They need to know we care about them. The best way to do that is your actions, not just telling them."

**Leadership Motto:** Motivation is a force multiplier. It goes along with leading from the front. If you have your own motivation, that filters down

to everybody else. If you're walking around with a smile and high energy, that infects everybody. It increases your ability to get the most from whatever size staff you have."

**What do you like about your job?** "Why we're here at the MEPS. We're here to fill the front lines, support the services and, in the end, help protect our country in a supporting mode. I also like being able to work for the people here. We've got a great group here — military and civilians, and lots of stakeholders. It's really a tremendous responsibility that I enjoy."

**Hobbies:** Sports — all sports. "Golf, boating, soccer, football. I like to cook, I've catered some events." One friend had a luau for a birthday party "I got to soak in some of the cuisine when I was in Hawaii and learned to cook it. I'm kind of the gourmet cook in our family. I cook dinner for the big holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas."

**What do you order when you eat out?** "We love Chinese. I like General Tso's chicken. It's kind of like orange chicken, but spicy."

**What else do you do with your spare time?** "I'm a huge Sopranos fan, but now my life is void of that."

**What did you think of the ending of the Sopranos?** "I was pretty furious in the 15-30 seconds after the ending and thought about calling the cable company and asking them what just happened. But after I sat back for a little while and analyzed it, I thought it was a pretty clever." He thinks Tony Soprano might be dead. "Everything in the show was from his perspective. If he's dead, that perspective isn't there any more."

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** "I'm a huge Shakespeare fan. I started reading Shakespeare in high school and took a couple classes at the academy. I still keep the books

on my shelf at home and read them from time to time."

**Three things on his desk:** "A bottle of water, an engraved gold and leather pen holder shaped like a golf bag with pens shaped like golf clubs my kids gave me, and a picture of my kids."

**One thing always on his desk:** An Eastern Sector command coin. "It's right beside my phone. It has "Remember the F.L.A.G." on the back. That's one I intend to plagiarize when I leave MEPCOM. It's a tremendous slogan. I never heard it before I came here."

**Last book he read:** Digital Fortress by Dan Brown. "It's kind of a code breaking thriller about NSA (National Security Agency). NSA has a new huge code breaking machine and they're having some problems. Unfortunately, a Navy commander turns out to be the bad guy."

**What's your ideal vacation?** On the beach with my family in Hawaii — on the big island. We went there when I was stationed in Hawaii and we've been itching to go back — just spend a week or two on the beach.



**Fort Jackson**  
Lt. Col. Rich Wagner

**Hometown:** "I'm a Navy Brat." (His father is a retired Navy command master chief.) "I was born in Bremerhaven, Germany, and raised around the world. I went to high

school in Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. I call Florida home because my parents retired there.

**Childhood memories:** "I remember when we lived on Midway Island, walking out and grabbing a banana in the morning and watching the sun rise. In Washington, we took field trips to the Mall. I took "Boogie Board 101" as a college class in Hawaii."

**Education:** Graduated from the University of Maryland, graduate degree from the University of South Dakota.

**Why the Air Force?** "When I was going to join, I talked to people in the Marines, Army and Coast Guard. The Air Force allowed me to continue my education." Wagner served 10 years enlisted time in personnel. "I was an alternate for Naval Academy and was offered Air Force prep school for the academy and turned it down. I was stupid."

**Last assignment:** European Command working Navy, Marine and Air Force manning. "This is my third joint tour."

**Favorite assignment:** "All of them. I never had a bad one. Each one had great things about it. I spent six years in England and loved it there. Stuttgart was five hours from every major city in Europe. South Dakota was a great family environment."

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "I don't know. A multi-millionaire? Actually, I want to either teach or go into politics. I know that sounds kind of strange, but I want to serve one way or another. I'd like to go into local politics, and be mayor or a member of the county board or something like that. Or teach history or humanities. I can teach science, too. It's really what they need me for."

**What's the best way to inspire your troops?** "Talk with them. Sit down and talk with them. They call me the stealth commander because I'm always walking

around and they say, 'Where did he come from?' And always doing the right thing. Sometimes it's the hard thing, but do the right thing."

**What do you like about your job?** "That I can make a difference. It's not a power trip or 'Just because I said so.' I can make a difference in these young kids lives. Saying the oath every day still gives me chills and I've been doing it for a year and a half. Every time I help one of my troops out it just makes me feel good."

**Hobbies:** Play darts, swim, ride bikes.

**What do you order when you eat out?** "My favorite is Bojangles fried chicken or chicken wings."

**What are your future career plans?** "From here, I'll go be a cadet brigade commander, to the personnel center in San Antonio or the Pentagon. I'll go anywhere they send me. The kids are grown and in college. It's just my wife and me. She's a retired major."

**What was it like being a dual military family?** "Sometimes it was difficult, balancing her career and mine. We were in Colorado Springs and my assignment people called and said they had a job for me in Stuttgart." She said 'Wait a minute, why are you calling me?' They said, 'We don't have a job for you.' She was a communications officer and she ended up in protocol. It could've been the other way around."

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** "I can dance. I was on Dance Fever in the 1970s representing Washington, D.C., me and my partner, Angie. I did pretty good. It always surprises people at a party when I start doing the disco stuff."

**Three things on his desk:** "Pictures of my wife and my kids and some Dolphins. I'm a big Miami Dolphin fan."

**One thing always on his desk:** An American flag. "It always reminds me of what I'm doing here."

**Last book he read:** Dean Koontz, *The Prodigal Son*. "It's like a modern day *Frankenstein*."

**Ideal vacation:** I want to go on a cruise down the Nile. I want to see all that history. We did almost everything else in Europe and we had tickets for the Nile trip but had to cancel because I got this job.



**San Diego**  
Lt. Cdr. Cheryl Stolze

**Hometown:** East Hampton, Conn. "It's a very small, blue collar industrial town. At least it was when I grew up. The New Yorkers have invaded it because it's cheaper to live there and drive to work in the city."

**Fond childhood memories:** "It was a good place to grow up. Everybody knew everybody."

**College:** Bachelor of science degree in secondary education industrial management from Old Dominion University. "It's what we used to call 'Shop.' I always liked to do woodworking, work with my hands and teach. I love to inject technology into education. My parents are very creative working with their hands. I get it from them."

**Source of commission:** Enlisted as a data systems technician in March 1985. "I was actually a 'DEPPER' for

364 days. I was waiting for that advanced electronics seat. There weren't many of them for women back then." She applied for fleet accession to the ROTC and was accepted. **Why Navy?** "Because I wanted to work on airplanes and the Navy had more airplanes than the Air Force. They told me I qualified as an air crew member, but I couldn't do it because I was a female."

**Last assignment:** Executive officer at the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Keesler Air Force Base, Miss. **Surviving Katrina:** "My daughter, my mother and I were there during Katrina. It was devastating. We lost our house. But we didn't lose any life. Most of my people lost their houses or cars or something. Almost everyone was affected by it."

**Favorite assignment:** "I enjoyed Keesler. I had a great command. For a place of duty, Iceland was my favorite. It was a very close-knit community, very family oriented. My husband and I were able to get assigned as officers in charge on different parts of the base."

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "I've thought a lot about that. I want to be involved in secondary education, integrating technology in some meaningful way. I want to help kids use technology to fit their individual learning styles."

**What do you do when you're not a commander?** "I'm a wife and mother."

**What's the best way to inspire the troops?** "Just walking around and having my people believe I really am sincere when I ask how they're doing, because I truly do care."

**What's the best thing about your job?** "The people I work with. They're very dedicated, very hard working, and truly believe in the mission."

**Leadership philosophy:** "I believe in mentoring, not asking my people to do

anything I'm not willing to do. We work as a team. I do my job and keep them informed, they do their jobs and keep me informed."

**Hobbies:** "I'm a sports fanatic. I love soccer. I'm getting a little too old to do it myself, but I love sports. I'm also an avid reader and crossword person."

**On being geographically separated from family:** I try to get back to Phoenix to see my husband and kids as often as I can. My husband's a navy retiree. When he retired, I got a job with the Naval Recruiting District there. The biggest reason they're there is so my son wouldn't have to be in three different high schools. My family has gotten used to the deployments."

**Career plans:** "I was just selected for commander. I'm waiting to find out if I screened for command, so it's kind of up in the air."

**What do you order when you eat out?** Normally prime rib medium rare – closer to rare.

**What would people be surprised to know about you?** "I was very overweight and had to lose weight to come in the Navy. I struggled with my weight and now I can't put it on. I had two children and it never came back."

**Three things on her desk:** Her cup of coffee, a bottle of water and tons of paper.

**What are you reading?** "A book by Dick Francis called *Hot List*. I haven't gotten far enough into this one to know what it's about. With Dick Francis, it's always a mystery and always around horse racing somehow."

**What's your ideal vacation?** "Probably a cruise where people serve me. A cruise to Alaska is the best vacation I've ever been on. I've never been much of a beach person. They offer a cruise that goes right near Russia."

## Best friends join Marines Corps together

By Capt. Jason Sopko  
Shreveport MEPS

**B**randi Cook and Brittany Clair aren't really joined at the shoulder, but you could say that.

If you lived in Mt. Pleasant Texas, and saw Brandi out and about, you were sure to see Brittany right beside her.

The two have been the closest of friends since seventh grade. Their friendship was inherited from their older sisters, who were also best friends. Both are 2006 graduates of Paul Pewitt High School, Omaha, Texas.

June 7 was nothing out of the ordinary, just another typical lazy summer sunny morning. As usual Brittany and Brandi were

lounging by the pool, having their typical conversation about who the cutest boys in town were or trying to decide what they wanted to do after the summer.

This led them to think about some of their friends who had already joined the military after high school and are doing very well for themselves.

That was when Brandi looked at Brittany and said, "Wanna join the Marines?" Brittany replied with, "You sure?" Then with one glance at each other they said in unison "Let's go."

Early the morning of June 8, Marine recruiter Sgt. Jonathon Courts was opening his office and sitting down making out his



Brandi Cook and Brittany Clair

daily battle rhythm. When, to his surprise, two young women entered his office.

As soon as he said "Can I help you?" they both blurted out "We want to sign up."

Courts kind of smirked and thought to himself, "Is this for real or am I still in bed

dreaming?" With one pinch of his arm he knew was not dreaming.

After discussing all of the options with the girls they decided that they would join the Marine Corps under the buddy program.

The girls would go to basic together and managed to get jobs in the same career field. To their amazement both were being assigned to the same camp after training.

Looks like these two will stay joined for a while longer. Brandi and Brittany shipped to basic training July 9.

The Shreveport MEPS staff wishes them both a long and rewarding careers in the Marine Corps.

## Newlyweds spend 'honeymoon' at Fort Jackson, Fort Lee

By Capt. Jason Sopko  
Shreveport MEPS

**W**ho would have guessed a simple date to the high school prom would have ended with a honeymoon at Fort Jackson, S.C.?

That's just what happened to the Army's newest family Megan and Brent Lantz.

Although the high school sweethearts attended rival schools and endured a daily separation it didn't affect their love for each other.

In fact, their love for each other was only matched by their love of country.

They were married April 7, processed into the Army together and shipped to Fort Jackson 19 days later.

Smiling at each other they said jokingly they wanted to travel and do something new for their honeymoon.

After completing initial training they will both attend advanced individual training at Fort Lee, Va., where both of them train to be automated logistical specialists.



Brent and Megan Lantz

## First sergeant's daughter heeds call to duty

By Capt. Jason Sopko  
Shreveport MEPS

**I**f you ask her, Tatiana Murphy will tell you growing up wasn't easy.

Her family traveled the world with her father, 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Freddy Murphy, supporting the Army and the country.

Murphy, a 23-year veteran is now the senior enlisted advisor at the Shreveport MEPS.

After watching her father and her family give unconditionally to the Army, the younger Murphy felt a call to duty herself.

After attending Hunter University in

New York for two years with a concentration in pre-med, Tatiana felt it was the right time for her to serve her country.

She also wanted to help those injured in the war on terror.

After a long discussion with her parents, the younger Murphy decided to continue the family's military service tradition and enlisted into the Air Force.

She will start her Air Force career in the medical field and hopes to continue her education in medicine.

Her goals are to become a doctor and an Air Force officer.



Maj. Steven Downey, Tatiana Murphy and 1st Sgt. Freddy Murphy.

## Oklahoma City employee marks 40 Years

For Thurman Wagoner, May 2 was just another day at the Oklahoma City MEPS.

He made his morning rounds with his characteristic coffee cup, flannel jacket and extension phone in his jacket pocket. He walked through all the sections, fixing computer problems, answering questions and helping service liaisons input data.

For his fellow employees and friends, May 2 was a day to celebrate 40 years of government service for one their most beloved and dependable colleagues.

Wagoner entered the Army in August 1966 as a warhead specialist. After serving in Vietnam, he spent the rest of his career as an Administrative NCO at various posts in the United States and overseas. He retired in 1986 as a sergeant first class, earning the Meritorious Service Medal for his long and distinguished career.

USMEPCOM Commander, Col. Lon Yeary, recognized Wagoner for his 40 years of service. The MEPS employees helped Wagoner cut the cake they had made for him.

And then Wagoner, always smiling, went back on his rounds to support the mission and help young men and women join the armed forces.

Wagoner began working at the Oklahoma City MEPS in 1987, eventually moving up to the information technology specialist position. In his 20 years at the MEPS, Wagoner was USMEPCOM Employee of the Year in 2002, Western Sector Employee of the Year in 1991, and Oklahoma City MEPS Employee of the Year three times. He was also the Federal Executive Board Employee of the Year in 2002.

He and his wife Fran have one son, Tag; and three daughters, Christie, Carol and Lara.



Cmdr Tracey Whitely, then Oklahoma City MEPS commander, presents a certificate to Thurman Wagoner in honor of his 40 years of government service.

## DIVERSITY

### New Orleans MEPS observes Days of Remembrance

The New Orleans MEPS remembered the Holocaust by hosting a "Days of Remembrance" ceremony in May.

The guest speaker was Felicia Fuksman, a Holocaust survivor.

A native of Lodz, Poland, Fuksman was 19 when the Nazis invaded her homeland and forced her into a concentration camp in Ravensburg, Germany for two and one-half years. Her parents and four siblings all died in concentration camps.

After the Russians liberated Ravensburg, Fuksman worked and saved for six months to pay the Russians so she could leave Poland. She worked for three and one-half years in Germany until her visa to enter the United States was approved.

Fuksman settled in New Orleans where she married a fellow Holocaust survivor also from Lodz and raised four children.

Fuksman's first-hand account of the horror of the Holocaust reminds us that we must never forget the atrocities from that shocking time.

Fuksman remains active in the New Orleans community working with the Jewish Community Center telling her life story in the hopes that people will one day learn how to live in peace with one another.

(From right) New Orleans MEPS Commander, Maj.

Kevyn Bryant poses for a photo with Holocaust survivor Felicia Fuksman (center) and Ms. Woldenberg, Director of Jewish Community Affairs.



### Financial specialists (continued from page 16)

information such as where you have worked, where you live, etc.; and, two, always use a landline when giving out your personal information.

"Never use a cordless or cell phone to conduct your personal business," he said.

VanArsdall said he's just someone who likes to help people. "I've read a lot over the years and learned some things — sometimes the hard way — and I've attended a really good class."

People interested in getting financial help or information can contact their MEPS financial specialist.

Those who would like to attend the Command Financial Specialist Course should contact the Wellness and Readiness Division of Human Resources at USMEPCOM Headquarters. That division maintains a fund to cover the attendees' expenses and prepares orders for the course.

## 'Good idea' improves test scheduling process

After several conversations with recruiters and his fellow test coordinators, Mark VanArsdall, test coordinator at the Shreveport MEPS decided he needed to add a couple of new columns to his monthly reports used to schedule high schools for the Student Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

The new columns help test coordinators schedule schools to take the ASVAB.

"I felt there was some valuable information missing from the current scheduled schools report in our schools database," he said. "I downloaded the form into Microsoft Excel and changed it to meet the needs of my customers and me.

"I added a 'lapboards required' column and a 'MEPS test administrator required' column to the form," VanArsdall said. "These added columns would prove helpful to the recruiters, the schools I was scheduling to take the ASVAB, and me.

"These are two valuable pieces of information that could cause the delay or cancellation of a test session and possibly cause the school officials to stop taking the ASVAB entirely," he said.

After talking with his supervisor, John Kupris, he decided to submit a "Good Idea" to USMEPCOM.

"The process (of submitting an idea) is not difficult at all and does not take a

lot of time, VanArsdall said. "Shortly after submitting my idea, I received a phone call from Randy Cason (then the chief of the MEPCOM operations center) who told me that in fact I did have a good idea and that he thought it should be implemented command wide."

Adding the new columns was assigned to Don Hill (supervisory education services specialist), who added the columns to the form.

VanArsdall said it's easy to track the progress of his idea on the USMEPCOM link provided to him.

## MEPS of Excellence

In order to be named MEPS of Excellence, MEPS must meet or exceed the criteria in 12 areas representing the core processes of medical, testing and processing, and general military readiness.

The 12 criteria are:

- Timeliness of military evaluations, awards
- Recruiter leads goals
- Medical same day processing
- Drug/HIV specimen processing
- Clinical lab improvement program
- Practitioner credentialing timeliness
- Bank of America travel card delinquency
- Physical fitness readiness
- Height and weight standards
- Unclassifiable fingerprints
- Incidents of serious misconduct
- Test loss compromise

### Fiscal Year 2007 – 2nd Quarter

#### Western Sector

- Albuquerque MEPS
- Amarillo MEPS
- Little Rock MEPS
- Oklahoma City MEPS
- Honolulu MEPS

#### Eastern Sector

- Cleveland MEPS
- Fort Lee MEPS
- Louisville MEPS
- Montgomery MEPS
- Syracuse MEPS

## FOND FAREWELLS

### ALBUQUERQUE MEPS

#### Capt. Malenm Cruz-Segarra

Operations Officer

Years of service: 7

Departing for: Camp Humphreys, South Korea

Departing Comments: "I am going to miss everyone here. You are like my family."

### ATLANTA MEPS

#### Tarita Bagley

ASVAB Test Coordinator

Years of service: 16

Next assignment: Fort Knox, Ky.

Departing comments: "The two years I spent working at the MEPS have been both professionally and personally

rewarding. The team will truly be missed!"

Most remembered for: Her positive attitude and the expression, "hold on partner!"

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

Operations Specialist

Years of service: 12

Next Assignment: Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn.

Departing comments: "I really enjoyed this joint command experience. Semper Paratus!"

Most remembered for: His professionalism in conducting applicant briefings. He loves the public eye.

## APPLAUSE

### ALBUQUERQUE MEPS

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Carlos Canales, bachelor of science degree in computer information systems from the University of Phoenix.

### AMARILLO MEPS

Gayle Roberson, lead health technician, Amarillo MEPS Civilian of the Quarter; James A. Burgin, test clerk, Amarillo MEPS Civilian of the Quarter; Petty Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class Ramiro Pena, Testing NCO, Amarillo Military Member for Oct. 1–31 Mar. 31

### JACKSONVILLE MEPS

Staff Sgt. Michelle Gafford, selected for promotion

### SACRAMENTO MEPS

Staff Sgt. Lisa Quinonez, selected for promotion

**ALBUQUERQUE MEPS****Maria Broyles**

Budget Technician  
 Years of service: 5  
 Last assignment: Kaiserslautern, Germany  
 Diversions: Golf and traveling  
 First impression: "Very friendly with lots of smiles."

**Andrea Burke**

Human Resources Assistant  
 Years of service: 3  
 Last assignment: Keflavik, Iceland  
 Diversions: Roller skating and the movies.  
 First impression: "Great place to work. Small group with a family-type atmosphere."

**Lindsey Martinez**

Travel Specialist  
 Years of service: 2  
 Last assignment: Kirtland Air Force Base  
 Diversions: Working out or anything outside.  
 First impression: "Very close group of employees; relaxed and friendly environment and extremely hard working."

**AMARILLO MEPS****Capt. Nicole Lauenstein**

Operations Officer  
 Years of service: 6 1/2  
 Last assignment: Fort Huachuca, Ariz.  
 Diversions: Traveling, tennis, reading, volleyball.  
 First impression: "Very friendly, extremely welcoming."

**ATLANTA MEPS****Sgt 1st Class Michael Johnson**

Medical NCOIC  
 Years of service: 19  
 Last assignment: 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Fort Wainwright, Alaska  
 Diversions: Football, wrestling, track and weightlifting.  
 First impression: "A welcome change from the field units. Great staff and a pleasant working environment."

**Jennifer Harness**

Health Technician  
 Years of service: 7 1/2  
 Last assignment: Jacksonville MEPS  
 First Impression: "Happy all the time."

**Alicia Walters**

Human Resource Assistant  
 Years of service: 8  
 Education: Associate Degree in Paralegal Studies  
 Last assignment: Dental Activity, Fort Knox, Ky.  
 Diversions: Shopping, painting, and fishing.  
 First Impression: "Caring, best place I've ever worked!"

**Melissa Strother**

Human Resource Assistant  
 Years of service: 4  
 Education: Pursuing a bachelor's degree in business  
 Last assignment: Fort Benning, Ga.  
 Diversions: Shopping.  
 First Impression: "Nice, friendly, and caring."

**Valerie Hill**

Human Resource Assistant  
 Years of service: 13  
 Education: Medical assistant certification  
 Last assignment: Medical support assistant, Fort McPherson, Ga.  
 Diversions: Volleyball and running.  
 First impression: "People working together to make sure everything and everyone is well taken care of so the MEPS can operate smoothly."

**Mary Lamb**

Assistant Budget Technician  
 Years of service: 4 1/2  
 Last assignment: Headquarters, 1st Infantry Division, Wurzburg, Germany  
 Diversions: Travel and reading.  
 First Impression: "Wow!"

**HOUSTON MEPS****1st Sgt. Kent Traylor**

Senior Enlisted Advisor  
 Years of service: 22  
 Last assignment: Fort Drum, N.Y.  
 Diversions: Basketball, swimming and fishing.  
 First impression: "Friendly people."

**Latoya Whidbee**

Processing Clerk  
 Years of service: 4  
 Last assignment: Fort Huachuca, Ariz.  
 First impression: "Warm and friendly environment."

**OMAHA MEPS****Lt. Jason Motes**

Executive Officer  
 Years of service: 5  
 Last assignment: Damage control assistant, USS Pinckney  
 Diversions: Boxing, motorcycle riding, fantasy football.  
 First impression: "Love the command; people are friendly."

**Petty Officer 1st Class Stephen Bedell**

Medical Specialist  
 Years of service: 15  
 Last Assignment: USS Carl Vinson  
 Diversions: Fishing, scuba diving, home improvement.

**Ermelinda Olson**

Human Resources Assistance  
 Years of service: 15+  
 Last assignment: Human resources assistant at the Honolulu MEPS  
 Diversions: Gardening, knitting, crafts, home improvements, antiques.  
 First impression: "Quiet, friendly staff and helpful."

**PHOENIX MEPS****Steven Cochran**

Human Resources Assistant  
 Years of service: 20, U.S. Navy  
 Last assignment: Navy Recruiting District New Orleans  
 Diversions: Baseball, hockey, football.  
 First impression: "I was happy coming to MEPS. I had been waiting for some time to become part of the team at Phoenix MEPS."

**PITTSBURGH MEPS****Ruth Ann Drumhiller**

Human Resource Assistant  
 Years of service: 3 years at AFEES before going into the Air Force; 20 years in the Air Force.  
 Last assignment: Separations and Retirement Section, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska.  
 Diversions: Family and reading.  
 First impressions: "Pittsburgh is quite different from Alaska. It was different when you are used to seeing people in uniform all the time while here I am processing young people who are going into the military."

**Eric Anzur Sr.**

Test Administrator  
 Years of service: 18 years Air Force and 1 year temporary federal service.  
 Last assignment: Land Surveyor for Keystone Consultants, Carnegie, Pa.  
 Diversions: Archery, fishing, golf, bowling and family. Really — any sports.  
 First impressions: His first impression of the MEPS was the quiet professionalism. When he entered the Air Force, he came through MEPS Pittsburgh. At that time he remembered how noisy it was — controlled chaos.





UNITED STATES  
**AIR FORCE**  
**60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

HERITAGE TO HORIZONS:  
COMMEMORATING 60 YEARS OF  
AIR & SPACE POWER  
OCTOBER 2006 - NOVEMBER 2007

