

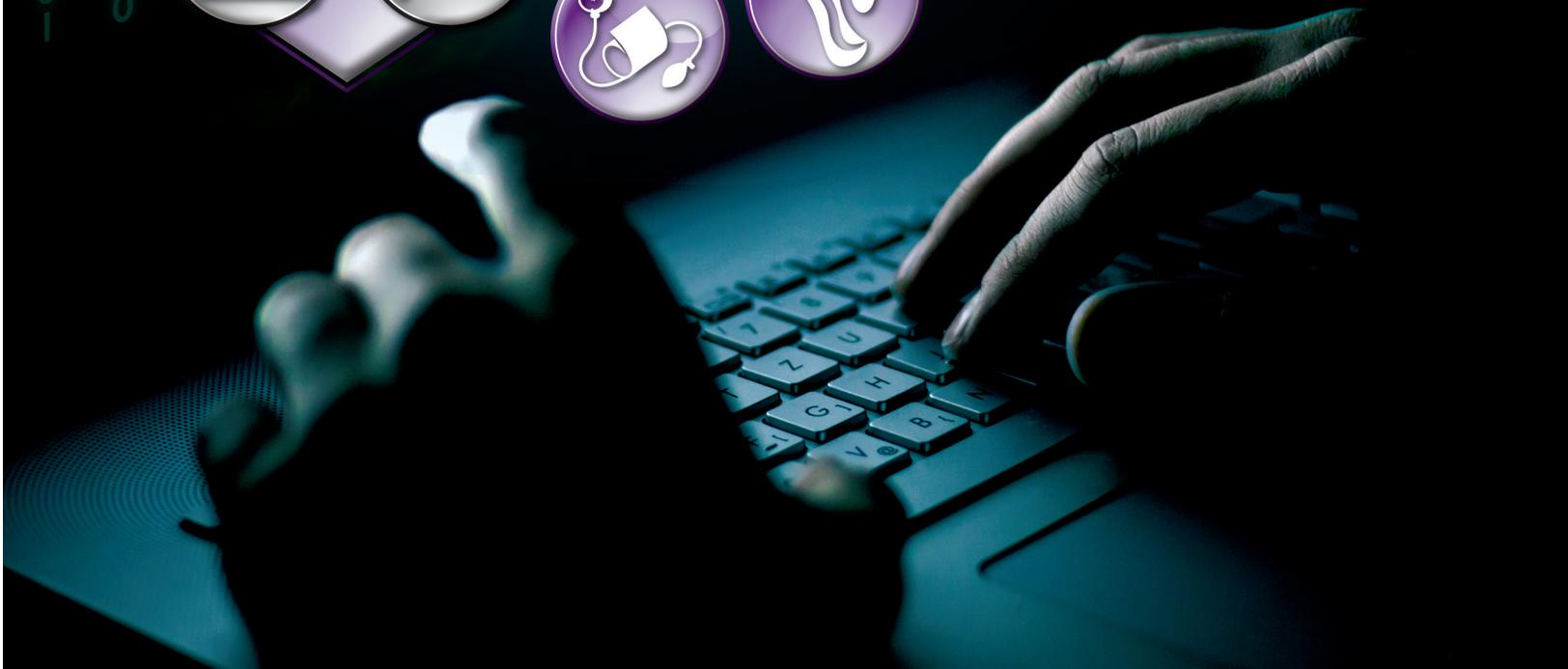
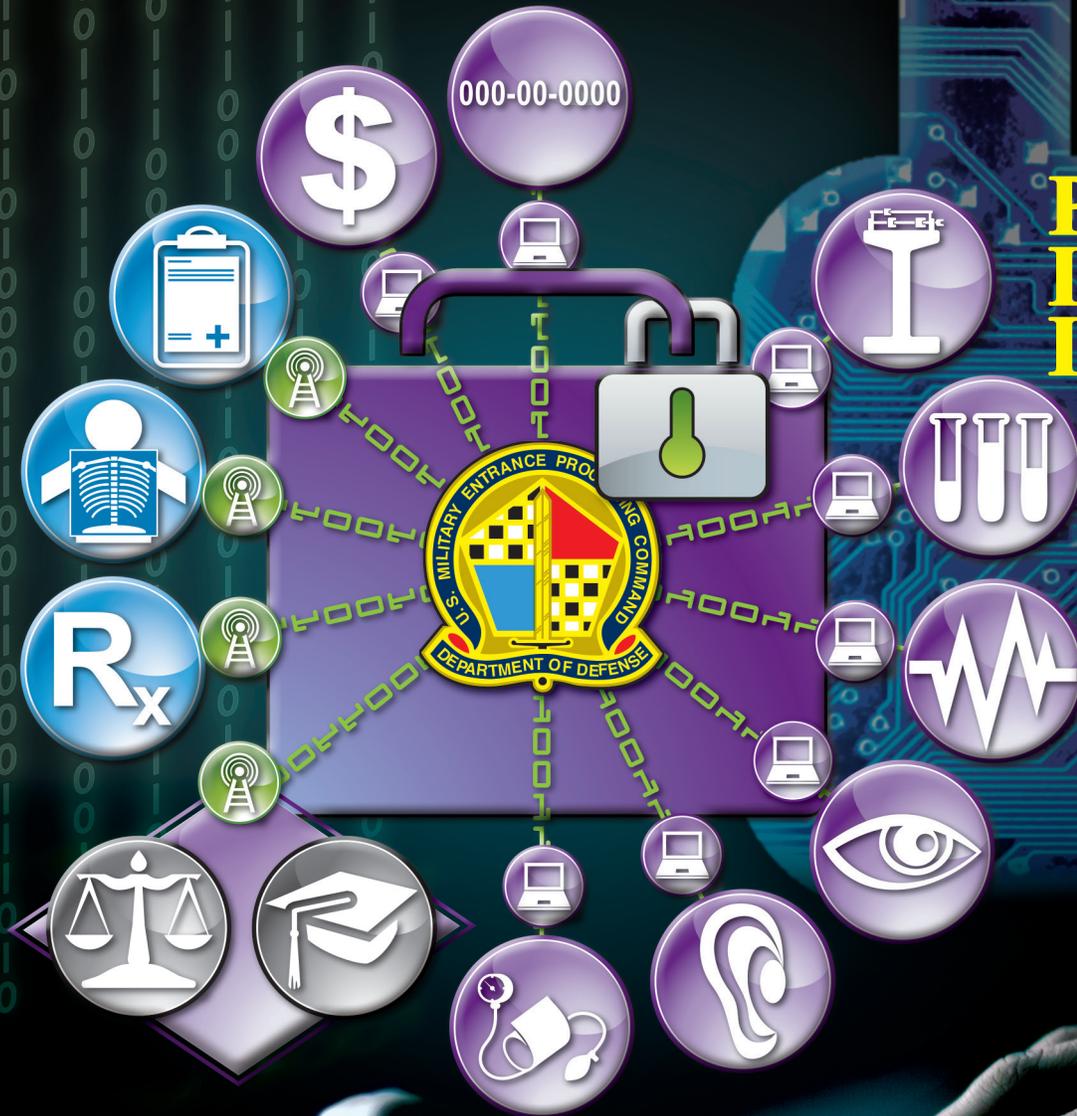
UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

Messenger

SHARING INFORMATION TO REACH A VISION

VOL. 40, NO. 2

Personally
Identifiable
Information



Messenger

Sharing information to reach a vision



Eastern Sector change of command

Army Col. Leslie Darling accepts the Eastern Sector Guidon from Navy Capt. David S. Kemp. Darling assumed command of the sector June 21. Page 11.



New senior enlisted advisor

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Christian Carr plans to focus on leadership development during his tenure as USMEPCOM senior enlisted advisor. Page 7.

- 10 Secretary of the Army Dr. Mark Esper visited the Baltimore MEPS.
- 12 NCOs from around the command competed for Military Member of the Year.
- 18 Two sailors – one from Boise the other from Milwaukee – were meritoriously promoted.
- 23 A husband and wife team joined the National Guard together in Cleveland.

U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

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United States Navy
Commanding

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Messenger

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Commander's Commentary

There are three things that keep me up at night – force protection, applicant safety and protection of Personally Identifiable Information.

The young men and women who enter our facilities as applicants are entrusted to USMEPCOM's care by their parents and the services.

We are obligated to do everything in our power to keep them, and their information, safe.

We must strive to do our utmost to provide the best physical security possible, while at the same time safeguarding their PII and Protected Health Information.

The command is redoubling its efforts to protect applicants' PII and PHI.

We held our first "spring cleaning" at every MEPS earlier this year to account for all applicant records in USMEPCOM's possession.

Although not perfect, we did extremely well. Only a handful of records from the hundreds of thousands the command maintains could not be located. This event will be observed regularly by each and every MEPS hereafter.

Safeguarding PII and PHI is vitally important – so important that it should be handled with the same vigilance as classified documents.

To an individual whose PII has been compromised, it most likely is as important as classified information. It can lead to

identity theft, which usually has a devastating effect on the person's life.

In today's wired world, where nearly everything is available online, it is even more important – and more difficult – to safeguard PII.

Almost all applicant PII and PHI is maintained electronically. Although that makes it easier to access and share, it also makes it more difficult to secure.

A piece of paper is only available at one location. An electronic file can, theoretically, be accessed from anywhere in the world.

There are a number of steps people must take to safeguard PII and PHI:

- Only view the information you need to see in order to process the applicant.
- As with classified information, only allow those with a need to know to view PII or PHI.
- Always encrypt emails which contain, or have attachments that contain, PII or PHI.
- Promptly purge records when they are no longer needed and in accordance with our regulations.

Physical security is another thing we continue to focus on.

We are doing everything we can to maintain and improve the physical security at the MEPS. We now use Federal Protective Service protective security officers to screen everyone entering our stand-alone stations.

In addition to ensuring the person has a legitimate reason to enter the station, the officers check for contraband, including weapons or drugs.

The FPS is also responsible for security at all leased federal facilities, so it only makes sense for

USMEPCOM to have them at our stand-alone facilities.

The FPS already provides security for all federal buildings.

For MEPS located on military installations USMEPCOM works with the local command to provide security.

In addition, for those MEPS located on military installations, we are close to taking out a contract to provide contract employees to conduct the personnel and baggage screenings at the entrances to our facilities. More on that in fiscal 2019.

Finally, we have begun upgrading the security of the buildings themselves by installing blast mitigation film on windows that will help the windows better withstand blasts and reduce injury. We are also erecting barriers to limit vehicular access to the buildings.

All that said, the most important element to ensuring physical security is the human one: You. Watch for anything out of the ordinary, be it someone loitering in the parking lot or filming the outside of the building or an unattended bag or package.

Remember and act on the slogan "If you see something, say something."

Thank you for what you do each and every day. And remember we are Freedom's Front Door.

David S. Kemp
Captain, USN
Commanding

Handle with care

Everyone is responsible for protecting Personally Identifiable Information

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Editor

If breaches in the security of applicants' Personally Identifiable Information keep Navy Capt. David S. Kemp, USMEPCOM commander, awake at night, Les Bandy is doing his best to help the captain get a good night's sleep.

USMEPCOM gathers and maintains a great deal of PII while processing applicants. Bandy is the command's Freedom of Information and Privacy Act officer. Safeguarding PII is a big part of his job.

The wide range of PII collected, coupled with advances in technology, make the task difficult. Protected Health Information also becomes PII when used for personnel purposes, rather than treatment, widens the responsibility.

"PII is anything that relates to an applicant or an employee that could be used to steal their identity," Bandy said. "It could be a Social Security number, date of birth, phone number, mother's maiden name – any information that could be used to steal someone's identity.

Safeguarding PII is everybody's responsibility, Bandy said.

"That is our commitment at

USMEPCOM – to prevent the disclosure of PII to anybody who's not authorized to have it."

If an applicant's information is compromised, Bandy is required to send the individual a letter signed by Jo Anne T. Cunningham, USMEPCOM deputy commander and chief of staff, notifying the person that his or her information may have been compromised. The letter includes instructions on how to check credit reports and how to lock a credit report. It also gives links to the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Labor.

"Unfortunately, identity theft is now the number one crime in the United States," Bandy said.

"We emphasize that the MEPS and headquarters be much more cognizant of the things they do to protect PII," he said.

Perhaps the best way for people to avoid getting in trouble is to treat PII and PHI with the same care they would use if handling classified information.

"It's sensitive information," Bandy said, "and you should always protect sensitive information. PII is fairly new in the realm of processing. It's become a bigger issue because

of electronics, like tablets, smart phones and everything that can be used to possibly steal an identity."

USMEPCOM is taking steps to increase control of records containing PII, including executing a "spring cleanup" to account for all records, setting limits on how long records can be checked out of a MEPS by a service representative and encrypting emails that include PII.

Kemp ordered the spring cleanup. Every MEPS was required to do a 100 percent medical records check to account for all records they were supposed to have, Bandy said.

"We did quite well," he said. "There were some records missing. We probably had five or six MEPS that notified me of missing records. It was a very low percentage."

"I would hope each MEPS will do it at least annually going forward," Bandy said.

The time limit on how long a record may be checked out would not only allow better record accounting, it could MEPS reduce workload.

Bandy would like to see a 30-day limit for the record to be returned.

"We're accountable even if it's checked out to one of the services," he said. "If the record is lost, it is still our record.

"It's very important for the services to have access to records," Bandy said. "But here has to be some median that you can use the record for, say, 30 days and bring it back.

"If the applicant doesn't assess, the record has to come back to our files room anyway," he said. "Lost PII creates a problem for everybody."

Bandy says there are safeguards built into USMIRS and the command's internet system.

"There's plenty of governance there," he said.

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That is our commitment at USMEPCOM – to prevent the disclosure of PII to anybody who's not authorized to have it.

Les Bandy
USMEPCOM Freedom of information
and Privacy Act officer

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Encrypting email is a simple way to safeguard PII, Bandy said.

“I send everything encrypted unless I can’t send encrypted email to an outside agency,” Bandy said.

“Encrypting protects any email I send to the headquarters staff or any one of the 65 MEPS,” he said. “If I’m communicating about an applicant, it’s always encrypted.”

MEPS information technology specialists can show people how to set up email encryption, Bandy said. MEPS commanders should encourage MEPS staff members to encrypt messages sent within the command.

USMEPCOM Regulation 25-1, Managing Information Technology Resources, stipulates when to use encrypted email. It is available on the command’s intranet site, SPEAR.

Should a breach occur, the MEPS must submit a Starnet report and a Department of Defense Form 2959, Breach of Personally Identifiable Information Report.

Bandy has to complete two reports and a risk assessment, which are reviewed by the command’s staff judge advocate personnel.

By Department of Defense regulation, medical records must have cover sheets and any email that includes PII or has an attachment containing PII must be encrypted. USMEPCOM must retain the records of disqualified applicants for seven years and qualified applicants who did not assess for two years.

“There is an expiration date in USMIRS when the record cease to be of value to us,” Bandy said. “A report can be run from USMIRS. It’s called a purge roster.”

Files on the purge roster are destroyed.

Bandy encourages people to be familiar with USMEPCOM Instruction 25-52-1, Personally Identifiable Information and Protected Health Information Incident Reporting and Breach Notification Procedures, which is available within the command and on SPEAR.

“It covers PII and PHI and the proper incident reporting if there is a breach,” he said. “We wrote it to give everybody in the command knowledge of what they should be

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Encrypting protects any email I send to the headquarters or any one of the 65 MEPS. If I’m communicating about an applicant, it’s always encrypted.

Les Bandy
USMEPCOM Freedom of information
and Privacy Act officer

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doing, how they should be doing it, and the correct procedures to follow if we do have a breach.”

Bandy encourages people with

questions to contact him. He can be reached at (847) 688-3680, Ext. 7182 or via email at leslie.r.bandy.civ@mail.mil.

Joint Legacy Viewer increases accountability to safeguard Protected Health Information

By Danielle Lieber
Messenger Associate Editor

In the past, USMEPCOM has been exempt from the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, also known as HIPAA.

“Protected Health Information, or PHI, becomes Personal Identifiable Information, or PII, when used for personnel purposes rather than for medical treatment purposes, Suzanne Kichhoff, medical program business manager in the Medical Plans and Policy Directorate, said. Therefore, USMEPCOM protected PHI as it would PII.

USMEPCOM will soon gain access to HIPAA-protected PHI via the Joint Legacy Viewer, also known as the JLV, to reduce paper consumption and view applicant medical records electronically.

“We have to be a lot more cautious. More eyes are watching us,” Kirchhoff said.

USMEPCOM has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Defense Health Agency and Veterans Affairs ensuring the HIPAA

protected PHI they are sharing is protected.

In the document, USMEPCOM agreed to only use medical records to evaluate applicants for military service. The agreement also specifies what to do in case of a breach.

A HIPAA breach occurs if the wrong person’s records are accessed or if an unauthorized person accesses protected records.

USMEPCOM will also be required to provide the Defense Health Agency with a list of USMEPCOM employees in “good standing” on a monthly basis. This means, USMEPCOM will track all employees who have access to the JLV to ensure they are updated on their HIPAA and Information Assurance training and have satisfactory background checks.

In an added effort to safeguard PHI and PII, all emails sent by Medical Plans and Policy Directorate personnel are encrypted.

Finally, a cross-directorate team is drafting and implementing a policy on how PHI will be properly disposed of once USMEPCOM is finished with it.

Physical security

Command takes numerous steps to improve applicant, employee security

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Editor

Employee and applicant security are a top priority for USMEPCOM.

Projects at MEPS and headquarters are proof of that from hiring Federal Protective Service officers to man entrances at stand-alone MEPS, to improved barriers at headquarters. Upgrades are ongoing throughout the command.

FPS is responsible for security at all federal facilities, including leased buildings according to Bill Boyle, chief of the Programs Division in USMEPCOM's Human Resources Directorate.

"They have jurisdiction, so part of their service is to provide security in the form of protective services officers," he said. "That's what we've got at the MEPS. There are two PSOs working at the MEPS from opening to closing."

The command is taking steps to make the buildings themselves more secure. The command is working with the General Services Administration to upgrade the windows in some stand-alone MEPS.

"They've have a contractor going to selected MEPS to determine if the windows meet the blast mitigation criteria," Boyle said. "Once they're done with their assessment, they'll draft a report and cost estimate and send it back to us. Then we'll go ahead and start processing those for funding as they come in and get that going."

Security enhancements for MEPS on military installations and in federal buildings will take a different path.

"The federal buildings already have their established security," Boyle said. "For military

installations, we're working with the individual installation command to to acquire some type of security through the established security force already on the installation. It might be the military police or the Department of Defense police might be utilized.

"It would involve a modification to the current Interservice Support Agreement," he said. "Ideally, they would provide us two security personnel to do the access control and screening operation from opening to closing and USMEPCOM would provide funding for that."

In addition to screening those entering the MEPS, security officers also check for banned items at the entry control point.

"It's important for our command because, number one, we don't want any contraband brought in and, number two, we don't want applicants having those type items in their bags when they ship out and go to the airport. We definitely don't want them to get picked up by the TSA."

Hotel security is mainly covered in the command's contract with the hotel, but the command's physical security inspectors, Vince Lee and Odis Stroud, visit the applicant hotels and talk to the staff and security managers during their visits to MEPS.

The security changes at the headquarters are driven by the host installation, Naval Station Great Lakes, Illinois. Barriers have been placed around the building. The next phase will be upgraded perimeter security gates. The final phase will improve the fence line and install four electronic gates.

Although the upgrades are

important to security, people are the key element, Boyle said.

"Watch over each other," he said. "Take care of each other. Be aware of your surroundings. The first person who arrives in the morning, be that the commander, the senior enlisted advisor or the operations person, should look around for anything out of the ordinary. You don't know what happened over night."

The need to remain vigilant continues throughout the day.

"If you see something, say something," Boyle said. "If you see something out of the ordinary – somebody out in the MEPS parking lot or somebody across the street from the MEPS filming it – by all means, let your chain of command know and notify local law enforcement."

People should notify the Programs Division about equipment needs or problems.

"If you think you need an additional security camera or your X-ray or something else breaks down, notify your chain of command – the MEPS through battalion and sector – and shoot an email to Mr. Lee or Mr. Stroud to let us know you have an equipment breakdown," Boyle said. "Don't wait. Notify us right away so we can tell you what you need to do and get the funding once you get cost estimates for repair or replacement."

Communication is the main thing, Boyle said.

"If you have any questions, don't wait until the commander visits or a staff assistance visit or an Inspector General visit," Boyle said. "Contact us, call us, email us right away. If we're not here, leave a message and we will get back to you."

New senior enlisted advisor settles into first joint command

Story by Skip Wiseman
Messenger Editor

Photos by Amy Gregorski
USMEPCOM Public Affairs

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Christian Carr says his biggest adjustment since assuming duties as USMEPCOM senior enlisted advisor has been learning to deal with the different services and their structures.

Carr said his first impression of the command was “absolutely positive,” although it wasn’t exactly what he expected.

“It’s probably the most unique command structure I’ve been in with having all the different services,” he said. “In addition to the geographic dispersal, the thing that stands out from a positive point of view is the transparent communication at all levels.

“I guess I wasn’t expecting the amount of different aspects you have to learn dealing with the different services and all the nuances that go into the different MEPS,” Carr said.

He is reviewing each service’s leadership development program because he wants to make sure all service members get service-unique training appropriate for their grades.

“I’ve pulled down each of the service’s leadership development frameworks,” Carr said “I’m kind of studying that and figuring out how I can apply it to each of the service members who serve in the MEPS. Basically, applying a strategic leader development structure, by service, down to the MEPS.”

Carr wants to focus on all three domains of leader development – institutional, organizational and self.

“Institutional is the professional military education and the schools they need to go to,” he said. “Organizational leader development is kind of universal to all the services – things like the physical fitness program at each MEPS.

“The self domain is civilian education and certifications, structured development that individuals can do while they’re assigned to a MEPS,” Carr said.

“It’s really simple,” he said. “The overarching objective is to ensure that the enlisted members in this command receive a leader development path to success. I can inform the commander what systemic issues exist as far as gaps in sending people to school and getting time to prepare for their advancement exams. It’s just a matter of building a strategy to bridge that gap.

“The MEPS senior enlisted advisor needs to know exactly what to do for each service,” Carr said. “I want to help them come up with a service-specific leader development strategy that lays out exactly what they need to do and can do to develop each of the service members under their watch.

“My expectation of them is to be engaged leaders who are positive, foster a positive command climate and are focused on developing the service members in USMEPCOM. In addition to that, I want them to



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I guess I wasn’t expecting the amount of different aspects you have to learn, dealing with all the different services.

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Christian Carr
On adjusting his first joint command.

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understand the need to work as a team with their civilian teammates as well.”

Carr expects MEPS senior enlisted advisors to be positive and engaged, and use the command’s values – Teamwork, Professionalism, Integrity and Respect – as their foundation.

Please see “Carr,” Page 8

“Carr,” from Page 7

He describes his own leadership style as agile.

“Agile leadership means being an adaptable leader and taking a leadership approach tailored to each situation and person,” Carr said. “I try to use agile leadership to adapt to the operating environment.”

Carr hasn’t forgotten that most USMEPCOM personnel are civilians, though many of them have served in the military.

“It’s trying to piece together working with the civilians at the headquarters and learning what they do and how it ties into what civilians do in a MEPS. I’ve been fortunate so far, because I’ve received excellent in-briefs from each of the directorates, which are mostly led by civilians.”

Although he is new to USMEPCOM, Carr isn’t new to the accession community. He previously served as noncommissioned officer in charge of strength management for U.S. Army Recruiting Command.

“The experience in USAREC is an enabler when it comes to communicating with our recruiting teammates,” he said. “I can speak the recruiting language because I spent three years in USAREC.

“I still know a lot about the day-to-day operations in recruiting,” Carr said, “I understand the accessions interoperability between USMEPCOM and the recruiting commands.”

He believes teamwork at the local level is the most important thing USMEPCOM can provide recruiters.

“It begins with the relationships that exist at the MEPS between the station’s leadership and the service liaisons,” Carr said.

He said that after he had visited six MEPS with Navy Capt. David S. Kemp, USMEPCOM commander, only one had included service liaisons in the all-hands meeting Kemp and Carr held during their visit.

“The teamwork between the MEPS staff and service liaisons was evident,” Carr said. “That is the cornerstone as far as bridging the gap between the recruiting

commands and USMEPCOM.”

Carr said the professionalism and “genuine teamwork” of the command’s people impresses him.

“Everybody is professional,” he said. “The most impressive thing I’ve seen is the genuine teamwork and transparent communications at all levels of the command. Working with each of the services is a remarkable opportunity.

“We have some consummate professionals from each of the services,” Carr said. “From what I’ve seen so far we have the top tier of each service assigned here.”

Having units spread throughout the country makes Carr’s job more difficult.

“The geographic dispersment will always be challenging in a leadership position, because nothing replaces direct, face-to-face communication as it pertains to leadership,” he said.

Carr is trying to take advantage of technology to close the distance.

“We’ve already started to video teleconference with our Navy senior enlisted leaders,” he said. “We’re going to do that on a regular basis.”

He may also do all hands VTCs with the command’s enlisted people. All hands meetings by MEPS will be in support of Kemp.



“ *The overarching objective is to ensure that all the enlisted members of this command receive a leader development path to success.* ”

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Christian Carr
On his goals for leadership development training.

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Three assignments stand out as most significant to Carr’s career.

His most significant mentor was Command Sgt. Maj. George Desario, now retired, Carr’s battalion command sergeant major with the 3rd Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, who taught him what engaged leadership looked like.

“I was a newly promoted staff sergeant,” Carr said. “His knowledge of every aspect to the command, passion for the people and the mission and overall leadership presence have stuck with me

throughout my career.”

The 2nd Infantry Division was probably the “most cohesive unit” to which Carr has been assigned. He cites the leadership of his boss, the division human resource officer, the division commander and division command sergeant major.

“They fostered a cohesive, positive command climate,” he said.

Finally, Carr’s assignment as the U.S. Army Europe human resources command sergeant major allowed him to indirectly influence the assignments of 30,000 people throughout Europe. He also developed a teaching and training program, where he traveled to 48 battalions and trained human resources personnel throughout Europe.

The experience will serve him well in this assignment because he learned to communicate and leverage capability with units away from the headquarters.

“When you travel, you make sure you hit every one of them that makes sense,” he said.

Carr’s grandfather was the biggest influence in his decision to join the Army.

“He served in World War II and I wanted to follow in his footsteps,” Carr said.

“On my father’s side, it was all Navy,” Carr said. “My father and uncle and their father were in the Navy. On my mom’s side, it was all Army.”

His father talked him out of joining the Navy.

“He said ‘you’re not joining the Navy,’” Carr said. “You get seasick like I do. So I changed course and joined the Army.”

Hearing his grandfather talk about his experiences in the Army convinced Carr it was the service for him, too.

“He was so proud to be a veteran,” Carr said. “It started with him. I also had three older cousins who joined and I followed in their footsteps.”

Carr is a native of Kenosha, Wisconsin, which is just over the border from USMEPCOM headquarters in North Chicago, Ill.

“I never tried to get back here,”



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He served in World War II and I wanted to follow in his footsteps. He was so proud to be a veteran.

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Christian Carr
On how his grandfather’s influence led him to join the Army.

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Carr said. “It’s surreal living in my hometown. I never thought I would be back in Wisconsin, let alone stationed 45 minutes from my hometown. The closest I had been stationed was Fort Knox, Kentucky.”

Carr is also a “huge Green Bay Packers and Wisconsin Badger fan.”

While being close to his

hometown is a pleasant surprise, Carr’s primary focus is on his new job.

“I’m honored to be the USMEPCOM senior enlisted advisor,” he said. “I’m looking forward to getting out to the MEPS and making an impact.”



Army Lt. Col. Mark B. Howell, executive officer of USMEPCOM's 12th Battalion, greets Secretary of the Army Dr. Mark T. Esper at the Baltimore MEPS.



Esper poses for a picture with Army Col. Brigilda Teneza, USMEPCOM Medical Plans and Policy director, (left) and Army Col. Leslie E. Darling, Eastern Sector commander, at the Baltimore MEPS.

Army secretary visits Baltimore

Secretary of the Army Dr. Mark T. Esper toured the Baltimore MEPS at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, July 6 and visited with employees and senior leaders.

Army Col. Brigilda Teneza, USMEPCOM Medical Plans and Policy director, and Army Col. Leslie E. Darling, Eastern Sector commander, met with Esper during the visit.

Esper also met with Army Col. Dina S. Wandler, U.S. Army 1st Recruiting Brigade commander, and Army Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew E. Kunk, brigade command sergeant major, and brigade recruiters.

Esper conducted his first enlistment ceremony since assuming duties as Army secretary.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Tamara Thomas, Baltimore MEPS noncommissioned officer in charge of processing, takes a selfie with Esper.

**Army photos by
Staff Sgt. Brandy N. Mejia**

Eastern Sector welcomes new commander

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Editor

Eastern Sector welcomed a new commander at a June 21 change of command ceremony.

Army Col. Leslie Darling assumed command, succeeding Army Col. Christopher Beveridge.

Darling assumes command of Eastern Sector after serving as chief of distribution and readiness in the Directorate of Military Personnel Management for Army Headquarters Human Resources. Beveridge will assume duties as deputy director of Technology and Business Architecture Integration, Army Headquarters Human Resources.

Navy Capt. David S. Kemp, USMEPCOM commander, officiated the event. He thanked Beveridge during his remarks and noted his leadership when Hurricanes Irma and Maria hit Eastern Sector.

“He leaned forward with sound, careful, coordinated contingency planning and execution for applicants and 306 civilian and active duty military staff at five MEPS that were affected by the storms,” Kemp said.

Kemp also noted the benefits of Beveridge’s extensive experience with USMEPCOM.

“As a self-described student of

USMEPCOM, he arrived with his experience as an enlisted applicant, experience in recruiting and experience as a MEPS and battalion commander under his belt,” Kemp said. “This allowed him to quickly dive in and help fix some of the long-term challenges that we had faced for years.”

Kemp then turned his attention to Darling.

“In taking command of Eastern Sector, you are assuming a key leadership role in the military accessions community,” he said. “I know you already understand the importance of our mission. As you assume command, I ask you to keep Eastern Sector on course and speed, fair in the channel. I ask you to infuse our core values in

everything you do. I ask you to thoughtfully confront and overcome the daily challenges that will arise by executing to the limits of your authority.”

Beveridge spoke of the pleasure the assignment brought him.

“I leave command today with



Navy Capt. David S. Kemp, USMEPCOM commander, passes Eastern Sector’s unit colors to Army Col. Leslie Darling, incoming Eastern Sector commander. (Photo by Amy Gregorski)

humbleness and humility. Eastern Sector has blessed me and given me two years of joy,” he said.

He also thanked Kemp for his leadership.

“Thank you for your partnership, for your friendship, for your guidance,” Beveridge said. “Thank you for the decision space to allow me to command Beveridge style. It has been truly a great organization to be part of. There are so many great things going on in the organization that it’s important that we keep our eyes on the prize.”

Darling said it was a privilege to assume command.

“Boy, I am lucky,” she said. “And I’m so fortunate. I just thank the good Lord for blessing me for this moment in my life. Taking command and having that opportunity is what each of us in our careers as leaders hope to do. It’s come to fruition and I’m grateful for that.”

She is looking forward to leading Eastern Sector.

“To the Eastern Sector team, I want to express my gratitude ahead of time for what I believe will be the absolute most special tenure in my military career,” Darling said.



Army Col. Christopher Beveridge, outgoing Eastern Sector commander prepares to enter the change of command ceremony. (Photo by Amy Gregorski)

NCOs vie for USMEPCOM Military Member of the year title



Army Sgt. 1st Class Jackie Burrage, Portland, Maine MEPS, and Air Force Staff Sgt. Talisa Higginbotham, Memphis MEPS, complete a puzzle during the urban orienteering competition.



The competitors wore custom T-shirts identifying them as part of the event.



The Coast Guard provides a scenic boat ride for the competitors.



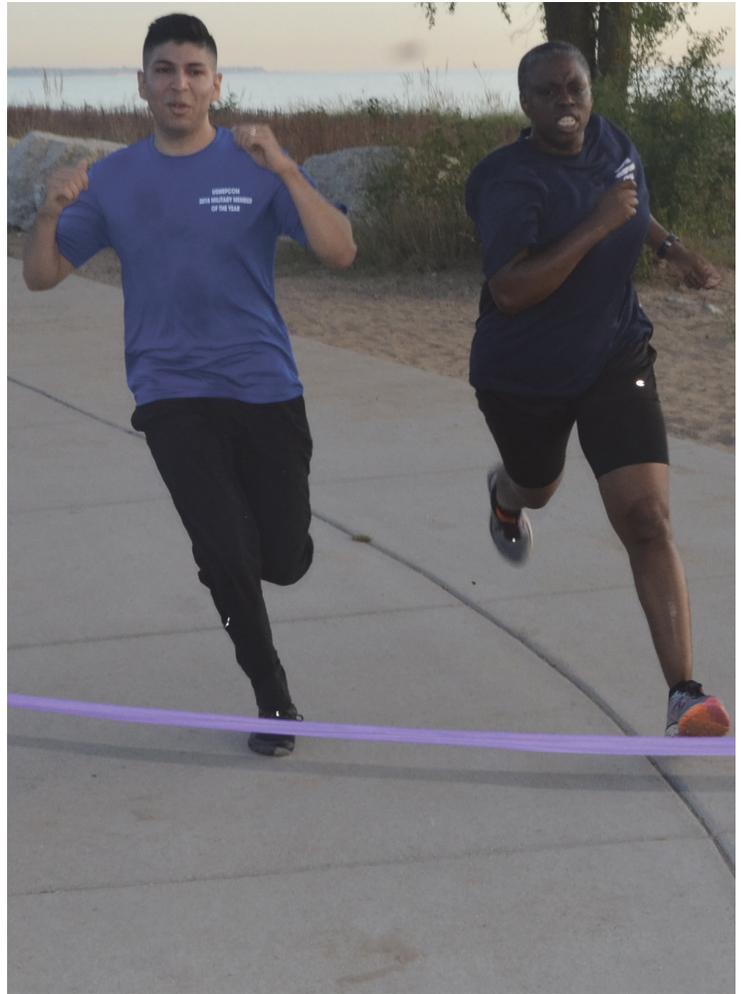
Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class, Anchorage MEPS, and Army Sgt. 1st Class Sherry Wright, Honolulu MEPS, compete in the physical fitness competition.



Army Staff Sgt. Alejandro Torres, Headquarters Human Resources Directorate, and Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Christopher Young, Headquarters Human Resources Directorate, take a quiz after completing a leg of the urban orienteering competition. Young was selected as USMEPCOM Senior Non-commissioned Officer of the Year.



Army Staff Sgt. Alejandro Torres, Headquarters Human Resources Directorate, does burpees during the physical fitness competition.



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Martinez, Anchorage MEPS, and Army Sgt. 1st Class Sherry Wright, Honolulu MEPS, finish strong in the physical fitness competition.



Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Onyeka Obadom, Albany MEPS, and Army Sgt. 1st Class Chris Morris, Tampa MEPS, find a required checkpoint in the Kenosha, Wisconsin, Public Museum.



Army Staff Sgt. Paul Goeman and Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher Woodhouse, Phoenix MEPS, search for clues in a display in the Kenosha, Wisconsin, Civil War Museum. Woodhouse was selected as USMEPCOM Noncommissioned Officer of the Year.

San Juan award

Emirito Gonzalez, San Juan MEPS operations supervisor, reads the award citation for the liaison office with the fewest administrative errors in a quarter. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Olga Bradley accepted the award, which was presented by Navy Capt. David S. Kemp, USMEPCOM commander. It was the second straight quarter the Coast Guard captured the award. The winning liaison officer has their service branch placed on a plaque in the MEPS. (Courtesy photo, San Juan MEPS)



Battalion commander relinquishes command; battalion moves to Boston

Navy Cmdr. Jed Espiritu, outgoing commander of USMEPCOM's 2nd Battalion and the New York MEPS, salutes the sideboys as he prepares to relinquish command of the battalion. Espiritu relinquished command of the battalion and New York MEPS in June. Navy Cmdr. Christopher Muller assumed command of the battalion and will assume command of Boston MEPS in December. The battalion headquarters was transferred from New York to Boston. (Courtesy photo, Boston MEPS)



Army recruiting commander visits Oklahoma City

Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Snow, then commanding general of U.S. Army Recruiting Command, visited Oklahoma City MEPS, June 20.

During his visit, he administered the oath of enlistment to 12 enlistees of all branches of service. He talked with the enlistees and their families afterward telling his story and how he stayed focused on his career, ensuring the new enlistees knew they were making a good start on their career paths.

Snow also took a guided tour of the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum with Army Lt. Col. Jim Hill of the Oklahoma City Recruiting Battalion.

The memorial commemorates the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building. The bombing killed 168 people and wounded 680.

The memorial honors the victims, survivors, rescuers and all who were affected by the tragedy.

Snow was impressed with the whole layout of the museum and used the interactive stations to follow the sequence of events April, 19, 1995, Oklahoma City bombing.

Snow was touched by the magnitude of the emotions caused by the bombing as he went through each station.

Top: Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Snow, then commander of United States Army Recruiting Command, administers the oath of enlistment to applicants in the Oklahoma City MEPS.

Bottom: Snow examines an exhibit in the Oklahoma City Memorial Museum. (Courtesy photos, Oklahoma City MEPS)



Butte welcomes record-setting polar explorer

By Chris Heiland
Butte MEPS Testing Clerk

Aaron Linsdau, world record holder for the longest expedition to the South Pole, spoke to members of the Butte MEPS during training day May 4.

His visit helped motivate employees to seek innovative ways to enhance internal processes and team building in the MEPS.

Linsdau spoke of the trials and issues he faced both during preparation and his actual expedition alone on a 601 nautical mile, straight-line distance from his drop off point to the South Pole.

He talked about “climbing the wall,” of troublesome problems at work, and getting through them with perseverance and resilience, just as he did in the extreme temperatures.

He also addressed relying on his compass to guide him when he faced whiteouts, just as staff members need to use their co-workers and supervisors in a team effort.

In his book, “Antarctic Tears,” he



Aaron Linsdau, who holds the world record for the longest expedition to the South Pole, speaks to the Butte MEPS staff. (Courtesy photos, Butte MEPS)



Linsdau dons some of the equipment he used during his expedition while showing a slide from his trek.

highlights his self-determination in overcoming adversities along the way to making a dream come true. He challenged staff members to reflect their own lives, seek individual work goals and not to forget reaching for family and life goals.

The staff was impressed with how Linsdau was able to complete such a feat.

The topic was applicable to MEPS staff knowing how important its task is to help young individuals along the way to meet their goals of entering the military.

The MEPS staff meets daily challenges, but through collaboration and communication, succeeds in providing this service to our future men and women of the armed forces.



Left to right: Members of Joint Recruitment Commanders Committee: Col. Robert E. Kuster, Army National Guard chief of recruiting and retention; Capt. Thomas Walsh, commander of Coast Guard Recruiting Command; Rear Adm. Andrew J. Mueller, deputy commander of Navy Recruiting Command; Maj. Gen. James W. Bierman, commander of Marine Corps Recruiting Command; Maj. Gen. Frank M. Muth, commander of U.S. Army Recruiting Command; Brig. Gen. Jeannie M. Leavitt, commander of Air Force Recruiting Service; Capt. David S. Kemp, USMEPCOM commander; and Chris Arendt, deputy director of Accession Policy.

Protection officer loans Purple Heart display to Jacksonville

A Jacksonville MEPS force protection officer has loaned his great uncle's Purple Heart display to the station.

Joseph Sikes' great uncle, Charles Larry Awtrey, was an Army private first class during World War II. His Purple Heart was posthumously presented to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Awtrey, after he was killed in action Jan. 3, 1944, in Italy during the battle of Cassino at the age of 19.

Awtrey enlisted in the Army in April 1943. After training at Camp Blanding, Florida, and Camp Robinson, Arkansas, he shipped overseas.

Awtrey was killed while attached to a service battery of the Field Artillery.

Awtrey's sister, Murial Sikes, who was Sikes' grandmother, inherited the medal when her parents died. She kept it and Awtrey's war documents in a hope chest from 1950 until her death in April 2014.

Joseph Sikes kept the display in his home as a memorial to his great uncle.

When he began working at the MEPS, Joseph Sikes lent the display to the station for display in Awtrey's honor.



Navy Cmdr. James M. Carroll, Jacksonville MEPS commander, and Joseph Sikes, a MEPS force protection officer, with the Purple Heart display in honor of Sikes' great uncle, Charles Larry Awtrey. Sikes loaned the display to the MEPS. (Courtesy photo, Jacksonville MEPS)

Two sailors meritoriously advanced at Boise, Milwaukee

Two sailors assigned to USMEPCOM were promoted through the Navy's Meritorious Advancement Program in July.

Derek Jensen of the Boise MEPS and Samantha Rischar of the Milwaukee MEPS received their surprise promotions to petty officer first class July 2 and 3 respectively at their MEPS.

Marine Corps Col. Richard T. Brady, Western Sector commander, Air Force Lt. Col. David A. Talafuse, then 3rd Battalion and Denver MEPS commander, and Navy Command Master Chief Jason M. Buonomo, then 3rd Battalion and Denver MEPS senior enlisted advisor, arrived in Boise the morning of July 2.

Navy Capt. David S. Kemp, USMEPCOM commander, and Army Command Sgt. Maj. Christian J. Carr, USMEPCOM senior enlisted advisor, suffered a flight

cancellation, but dialed in by video teleconference to advance Jensen.

Jensen, a corpsman, has eight and one-half years in the Navy, is dual warfare-qualified, and has been at USMEPCOM just over two years. He volunteers both in the MEPS and in his community, has won several awards, and is pursuing his degree.

Kemp, Carr, Army Col. Leslie E. Darling, Eastern Sector commander, and Army Command Sgt. Maj. Joe N. Campbell, Eastern Sector senior enlisted advisor, drove to Milwaukee MEPS July 3 where they met Army Lt. Col. Willette L. Alston-Williams, 6th Battalion and Chicago MEPS commander, and Army 1st Sgt. Angelia D. Witter, 6th Battalion and Chicago MEPS senior enlisted advisor.

Milwaukee MEPS already had a promotion ceremony planned for Army Maj. Ponnica Terral McKenzie.

Under the guise of showing up

late, the visitor recognized McKenzie and then surprised Rischar by advancing her on the spot.

Rischar, also a corpsman, has 10 1/2 years in the Navy and has been at USMEPCOM for about a year.

She works in every area in the medical element and takes on additional duties, such as Automated Time Attendance and Production System timekeeper.

She volunteers in the MEPS and in her community and has earned two associate degrees.

"We are fortunate Navy has this program that allows us to celebrate and recognize things that can't be measured on a test, like leadership, toughness and character," Kemp said. "But what stands out to me every single day is the professionalism and commitment to our core values of our entire USMEPCOM civilian and military team."

Fort Leonard Wood staff ride visits St. Louis

Members of the 43rd Adjutant General Reception Battalion from Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri visited the St. Louis MEPS April 19 as part of a staff ride.

The group observed the MEPS processes for screening applicants to

Department of Defense standards for accession to the services' reception training centers.

The 43rd AG Reception Battalion processes initial entry training soldiers assigned to Fort Leonard Wood for Basic and One Station Unit

Training.

Staff rides originated with the German Army during the late 19th century.

The intent was to train general staff officers, often on horseback, to war game through the study of battles and making historic site surveys to capture what happened, why, and lessons learned to apply in future battles.

Staff rides are essential to military training today as a part of the lifelong learning process for service members.

It is an adaptable educational tool to promote discussion of different topics while gaining insight and awareness of the concepts of leadership and military operations.

The 43rd AG Reception Battalion visit included a mission briefing, question and answer session including all three members of the Accession Triad (recruiting, MEPS and training center) and a facility tour.

The highlight of the visit was an open discussion with all three partners of the Accession Triad.

The session provided improved understanding of the three roles working together in the DoD accession process while dispelling myths and common misunderstandings.

The visitors walked away better integrated to the overall process of military accessions.



Members from the 43rd Adjutant General Reception Battalion in the St. Louis MEPS in the Spc. Sterling W. Wyatt Ceremony Room.



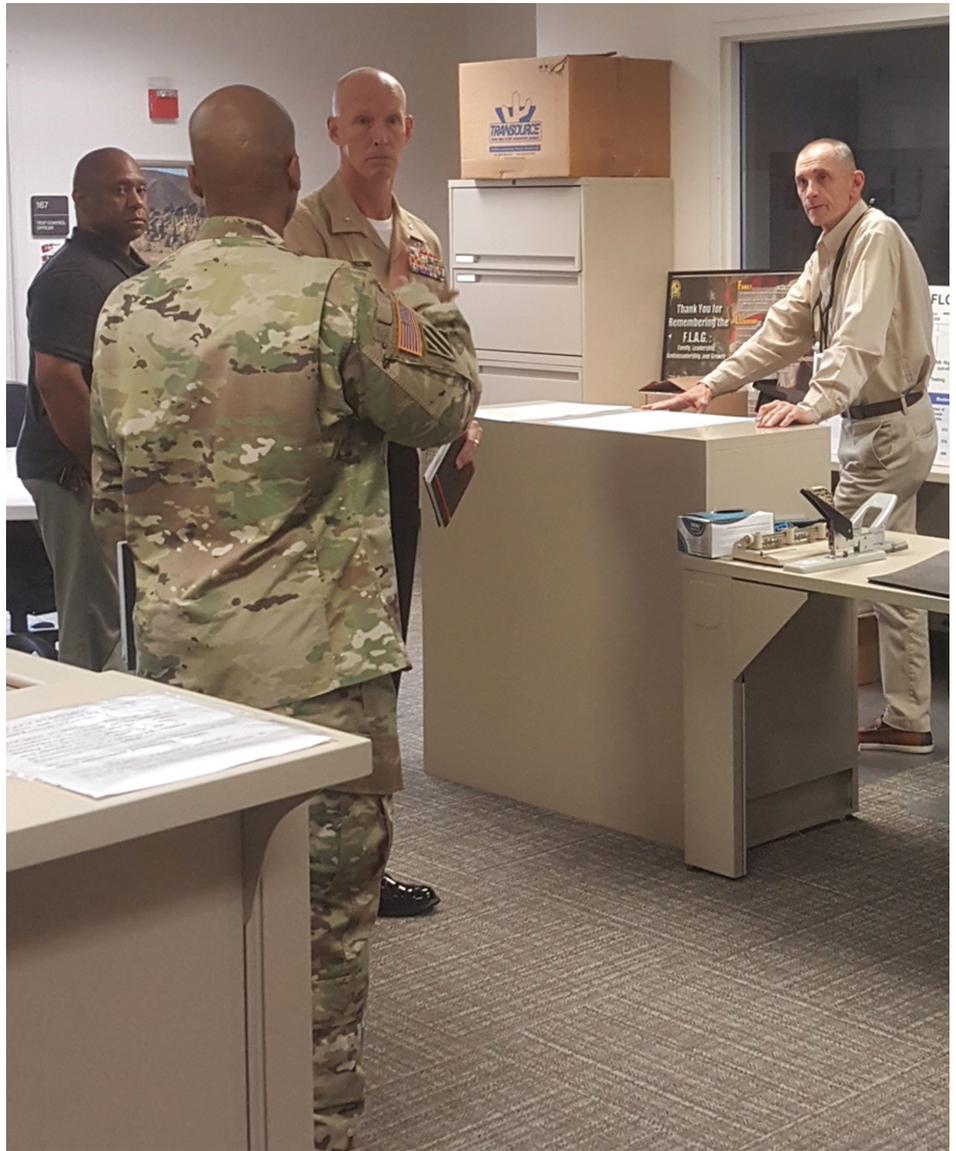
Sioux Falls supports Habitat

Clockwise from left: Jeffry Christianson, Sioux Falls test control officer, prepares to saw lumber. Navy Petty Officer Alexander Ploth, a Sioux Falls medical technician, fits dry wall. Army Maj. John Sommervold, Sioux Falls commander, and Jeannie Meyer-Hoagland, Sioux Falls education services specialist, take measurements. Sioux Falls staff members and a one spouse volunteered with Sioux Empire Habitat for Humanity. The MEPS staff regularly supports Habitat for Humanity and enjoys the team building that takes place while volunteering, Army 1st Sgt. Zulma Gray, Sioux Falls senior enlisted advisor, said. (courtesy photos, Sioux Falls MEPS)



Baltimore visitor

Right: Dr. Marchello Delano, Baltimore MEPS education services specialist, Army Lt. Col. Bratcha J. Kellum, 12th Battalion and Baltimore MEPS commander, Marine Corps Brig. Gen. James F. Glynn, commanding general of Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, and Eastern Recruiting Region, and David Rogers, Baltimore MEPS test control officer, talk after an overview of the enlistment and student testing programs. Below: Glynn administers the oath of enlistment to five Marine Corps applicants at the Baltimore MEPS. Glynn also took the Tailored Adaptive Personality Assessment System test during his visit. (Courtesy photos, Baltimore MEPS)



Married couple enlists in Guard in Cleveland

By Stephanie Beougher
Ohio National Guard

Irene and Nate Miller met through mutual friends in their hometown of Chagrin Falls in north-east Ohio and have been married for four years. They're best friends and, according to Irene, do everything together – including joining the Ohio Army National Guard.

They each have wanted to join the military since they were young, and recently started to look at putting the idea into action. They were hesitant to go into the active duty because they didn't want to move far from work, school and family.

"We had endless conversations about every possible angle, and eventually decided to check out the Guard, since we would be able to have one foot in the civilian world while still serving our country," Irene said.

"We can continue to live where we do and we will have more time to see each other than if we went active duty," Nate added.

Statistics aren't kept on the number of married couples entering service at the same time, but dual-military spouses are rare. A 2015 report by the Department of Defense put the figure at 2.6 percent in the National Guard and Reserve.

"I've talked with our recruiters in other parts of the state and no one can remember a recent case where a married couple joined together," said Sgt. Noah Siegner, of the Ohio Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, who recruited the Millers. "They're an awesome couple and I think they'll be very successful in the Ohio Army National Guard.

The Millers, both 27, raised their right hands at the Cleveland



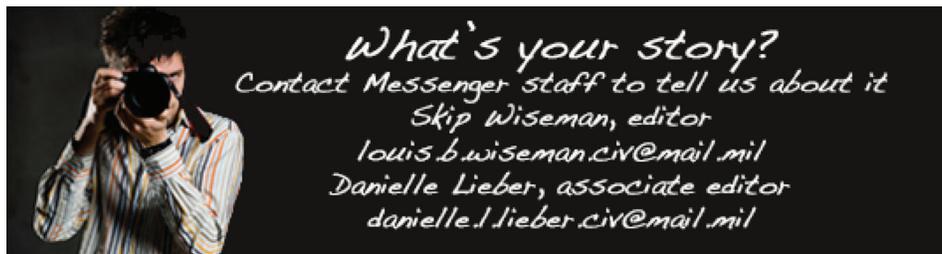
Nate and Irene Miller of Geauga County, Ohio, take the oath of enlistment together at the Cleveland MEPS. The couple, married for four years, enlisted together into the Ohio Army National Guard and are scheduled to go to basic training in October. They will be assigned to the 1484th Transportation Company, based in North Canton, Ohio. (Army photo)

MEPS May 25 to take their oaths in the Guard. They're scheduled to go to basic training in October, and will be assigned to the 1484th Transportation Company in North Canton, Ohio. Irene will train to be a human resources specialist while Nate will train to be a motor transport operator.

While the Millers can't wait to get started, each said they understand it will be challenging balancing a military commitment and a marriage.

"The biggest challenge will be (being) separated for almost six months while we go through basic and advanced individual training, but we're committed to making our relationship the first priority," Nate said.

"We are both going to be busy with our separate commitments, and taking the time to just enjoy each other's company could be a challenge," Irene said. "If possible, we'll try to go on a date once a week and keep those communication lines open."



National commission visits Boston

Members of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service visited the Boston MEPS May 9.

The meeting and tour of the Boston MEPS allowed the commissioners to observe and better understand military entrance processing and standards and provided context for the operational elements associated with a significant increase to the accessions pipeline in the case of conscription.

Attendees were Joseph Heck, commission chairman and former member of the House of Representatives for the 3rd District of Nevada; Debra Wada, vice chairwoman and former assistant secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; Edward Allard, former deputy director of the Selective Service System; Tom Kilgannon, president of the Freedom Alliance; Jeanette James, former professional staff member of the House Armed

Services Committee; and Shawn Skelly, former director of Executive Secretariat, U.S. Department of Transportation.

Christopher Arendt, deputy director for Military Accession Policy, represented the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness during the visit.

Following the meeting and tour of the MEPS, Wada presented a certificate of appreciation to the Boston MEPS on behalf of the commission.

MEPS of Excellence

2nd Quarter, Fiscal 2018

Category 1
Dallas
Fort Jackson
San Jose

Category 2
Oklahoma City
Salt Lake City
Seattle

Category 3
Amarillo
Boise
Des Moines

The MEPS of Excellence Program acknowledges military entrance processing stations that obtain a level of excellence based on criteria related to USMEPCOM core processes (medical, testing and applicant processing) and general military readiness. Stations recognized as MEPS of Excellence are also authorized to display the unit pennant.

The two requirements to become a MEPS of Excellence are:

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

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

These MEPS are authorized to display the unit pennant for the first quarter of fiscal 2018. MEPS who achieve a 90 percent score higher but do not achieve top three status in their category qualify to display the pennant.

Amarillo; Boise; Buffalo; Dallas; Des Moines; Detroit; Fargo; Fort Jackson; Oklahoma City; Omaha; Pittsburgh; Portland, Maine; Portland, Oregon; Salt Lake City; Seattle; Spokane; and Syracuse.

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

- Timeliness of military evaluations and awards.
- Total students tested goal.
- Drug and HIV specimen processing.
- Clinical Laboratory Improvement Program.
- Physical fitness readiness.
- Height and weight standards.
- Electronic fingerprint capture station (unclassifiable fingerprints).
- Incidents of serious misconduct by military or civilian employees.
- Test loss compromise.
- Citibank travel card delinquency rates.

Headquarters staffer lends a hand in San Antonio

When Julie Savage arrived at the San Antonio MEPS June 19, she jumped right into making a positive impact.

Savage, a management analyst in the Operations Center at USMEPCOM Headquarters, volunteered to serve at the MEPS during the summer surge.

During the first week she worked closely with the medical element to ensure the medical technicians were tracking the new prescreen process.

She also provided training to the chief medical officer, assistant chief medical officer, fee basis providers and senior service liaisons.

She worked closely with them over the next few weeks to ensure USMEPCOM's medical prescreen intent was being met.

With a 5:30 a.m. start, Savage assisted the medical section in checking in applicants and preparing them for medical front-load operations.

She also conducted the commander's welcome briefing.

Her experience at USMEPCOM



Julie Savage, a management analyst in the USMEPCOM Operations Center, gives a briefing while serving at the San Antonio MEPS, during the summer surge. (Courtesy photo, San Antonio MEPS)

Headquarters and personal military experience provided another level of insight.

In addition to assisting the medical element, she worked

closely with the processing element, tackling the files room, QRP, and control desk operations.

Savage's efforts ensured that projected applicants met processing standards and timelines.

She worked closely with service liaisons to identify ways to help mitigate processing issues, which resulted in smoother morning check-ins.

Savage assisted the control desk by checking in applicants, directing them to their next processing check point, ensuring visitors were signed in and out accordingly, provided the pre-oath briefing and prepared applicants for the enlistment ceremony.

On several occasions, Savage was the only person working in the files room. She purged, filed, created and distributed applicant records.

One of the most notable accomplishments during Savage's service at the San Antonio MEPS, was her efforts in identifying 100 percent accountability of applicant records.



San Diego visitor

Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Ryan P. Heritage, commander of Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and Western Recruiting Region, and Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Devon Lee, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and Western Recruiting Region sergeant major, are briefed by Navy Cmdr. Marco D. Spivey, commander of USMEPCOM's 7th Battalion and San Diego MEPS. The visitors learned about the Marine liaison offices mission and partnership with the San Diego MEPS during their Aug. 9 visit. Spivey also provided a tour of the facility and the visitors met with section leaders in the medical, testing and processing elements. Heritage observed and conducted an enlistment ceremony for a future Marine during his visit.

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T R U S T

A N D R E S I L I E N C E

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