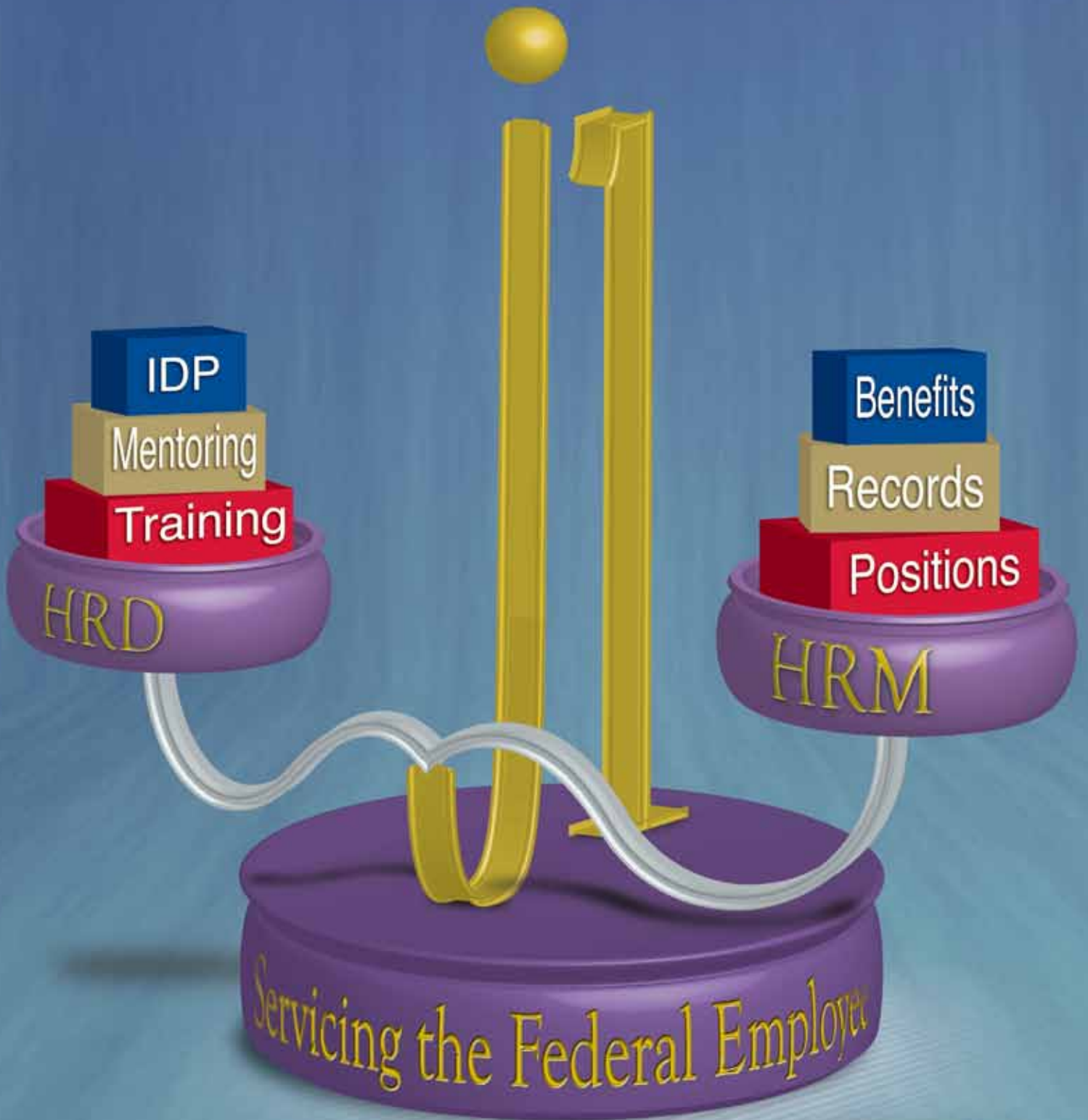


UNITED STATES MILITARY ENTRANCE PROCESSING COMMAND

Messenger

SHARING INFORMATION TO REACH A VISION VOL. 32, NO. 2



Messenger

Sharing information to reach a vision



Boston MEPS staff step in front of the camera

Commander Cathy Masar, Boston MEPS commander, gets prepped for her video shoot. Department of Defense Joint Advertising and Market Research Studies personnel were working with a contract camera crew to take video clips to add to the www.todayismilitary.com site. In truth, the crew was joking around, since participants didn't really receive make-up! Read the rest of the story on page 17.

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Command introduces new mentoring program

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U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

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Messenger

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Commander's Commentary

I'll be honest — prior to taking command at USMEPCOM, I hadn't worked in a military organization with such a large percentage of civilians. But — I tell you what — it's been a learning experience!

We have a great workforce out there — and I'm talking across the command — civilians and military.

Whether it's when I walk in a MEPS and see how our people react to the applicants, or whether I'm working with others at headquarters, it's clear that there are heroes making things happen every single day. In fact, I'm continually amazed at how all of you work together to accomplish the processing mission.

And I can't discuss the value of our civilian force without addressing a recent, significant change — the elimination of the MEPS' assistant budget tech positions. And I purposely used the word "position." Based on an altered workload, we had to eliminate positions, not people. It was a test for us.

Through the process, I appreciated observing our experts — from the field and headquarters — as they worked together to determine how we could keep the people and their talents in our command. It was a lot different than what happens in some private organizations and government agencies, when they hand their employees "pink slips." We didn't do that.

First, we tried to utilize their talents elsewhere in the MEPS. Or, if they were willing to move, we looked at placing them at another MEPS. And, if these weren't options, then we offered to help the person find another federal position.

Do you know of any companies or agencies that do that? I can't name any. Granted, the course of action wasn't without challenge, but it gave us the opportunity to look at how we

might transition our workforce in the future. Which brings me to another important topic for civilians — VIPS.

It is what it's name implies — a system — the Virtual Interactive Processing System. We will use VIPS to leverage technology in order to improve our organization for our people, our military services and our nation. We're not designing the system to replace people. We will continue to have a mission accomplished *by people*.

Over time, as we improve, streamline and standardize our processes, we will accomplish fewer tasks manually. So, naturally, some positions may change. But I learned a long time ago that taking people out of the equation is not the right path. I've said it before — doing so is not efficient in the long run.

The expertise is right here — in the MEPS, sectors and headquarters. If I lose one person, I'm losing an expert in that area and, in most cases, we'll need to spend both time and money to train their replacement. It just makes sense to hold onto our seasoned employees, doesn't it?

But there's a catch. We're all going to need to be open to learning and adapting. And, really, that's a bright side. Training is going to be a critical piece of making VIPS successful. Right now Human Resources (J-1) is heavily engaged in bringing us a learning management system and, when the time is right, we will build curriculum for that system.

It's obvious — if we're going to expect people to do their work in a different fashion, we have an obligation to teach them how to do it. We already have a lot of forces looking into how to push that training to the field.

For now, we're taking the first step of determining how positions could change. We're about to conduct



our second Human Capital Impact Workshop. Many people from MEPS, sectors and headquarters attended the first workshop to determine the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for implementation of VIPS 1.0.

With VIPS, we intend to continue our processing mission, just do it more efficiently and effectively — with less paper, in less time, and with less recruiter and applicant trips to MEPS.

As we move toward and through upcoming times of change and improvement, I ask you to remember that computers alone cannot process applicants. It is people who interact with applicants. We don't ever want to take the human interaction and decision-making out of the equation. You can build the finest machines in the world, but you still need people to run them.

The good news is that we have the people who can do it. I see them at work every day throughout the command — talented civilians and military members — accomplishing the vital mission of qualifying the young men and women who are volunteering to serve the Department of Defense and our nation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mariano C. Campos Jr.".

Mariano C. Campos Jr.
Colonel, USAF
Commanding

Program Budget Decision 712: five years later

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

When fiscal 2005 dawned, USMEPCOM's staff was about 60 percent military and 40 percent civilian. Then came Program Budget Decision 712 and its mandate to convert large numbers of military billets to civilian positions.

Now, a little more than five years later, the command's work force is 80 percent civilian and 20 percent military, and the conversion is almost complete. Most of the changes took place in fiscal years 2005 through 2007, but a few remain.

"I believe the conversion has pretty much settled," Marty Tetterton, director of Human Resources (J-1) said. "Most of the military personnel will depart this year. That is just in time for us to start the next phase of change management and transformation. I think that's a never-ending process. What makes this job exciting is the dynamic of workforce

change and how we can better support the folks (in the field.)"

The command did some things very well from the outset, but mistakes were made and other areas needed to be adjusted as the conversion progressed.

USMEPCOM was fortunate in that it received one civilian position for each military billet converted. Most Army units got one civilian slot for every two military; some only one for every three.

Liz Lane, J-1 deputy director admitted the command was a little lucky, but the one-for-one conversion rate was the result of hard work.

"It's a credit to the people who were working in USMEPCOM at the time (that they) were able to go up to the Department of Defense and push that issue," she said.

Tetterton, who was stationed in Europe when PBD 712 began, said his unit cut 90 military positions and only received 30 civilian slots to replace them. USMEPCOM's geographic dispersion and the importance of its mission played major roles.



"I think some people who were in positions of influence and decision-making recognized (the impact) and made provisions for us to get a one-for-one conversion," Tetterton said. "Without that, we would've been hard pressed to do our job at the level we do it today. That would've impacted all the services.

"DoD felt there was a priority for us to be able to continue our mission," he said. "That's what made us special. Our geographic dispersion makes us unique, in some regards, in that we are very small pockets of folks.

"If you try to make that three to one, it doesn't work," Tetterton said. "We have very little depth at a lot of places. Many of our MEPS have one medical officer. We're one deep in the (information technology) position, travel, the secretary, the (education services specialist). It's kind of hard to not go one for one when you have so many one deep positions."

Tetterton said the small number of people working in a MEPS even affects the positions that aren't one deep.

"That (human resources assistant) gets leave," he said. "When they're gone, they're gone, whether they're sick, on annual leave, or what have you. You have jury duty. You have military leave because they've been called up in a reserve unit. It didn't make sense to the leadership of the Department of Defense to cut us."

“

If you try to make it three to one, it doesn't work. We have very little depth in a lot of places.

Marty Tetterton
On converting to civilian positions

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On the down side, too many military positions were eliminated at the headquarters before they were filled, leaving a shortage of staff to deal with issues pertaining to departing military members.

“We still had a workload out in the field we had to convert and take care of,” Rick Wesler, a wellness program specialist and former chief of the military personnel division, said. “We went from a section of six Army down to two. We drew down faster in J-1 than we did out in the field.”

Tetterton said the situation was compounded by not immediately hiring civilians to replace the departed military members.

“When I got here in 2006, we were short approximately 20 people in the J-1 alone,” he said. “Other staff elements had the same problem.

“Because we weren’t sure how to organize, we had done no planning to support a civilian population,” Tetterton said. “The training division had very few people. We had the positions, we had done the conversions, but we hadn’t hired.

“All of the sudden, we went from this small population of civilians to a huge population of civilians in comparison, and we hadn’t done a lot of planning on how we were going to support them, train them and get them better prepared for career moves.”

Tetterton said the command began adapting under Col. Lon Yeary, the former commander and has continued under Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr., the current commander.

“(Colonel Campos) looked at the command vision and said, ‘That’s where we need to go. If we say this is our vision, then we need to get there. We need to start doing the planning and the strategic preparations to bring us to those levels.’” Tetterton said. “I think we’re doing that.”

Some military people are still assigned to the command because the person arrived after the conversion started and the services decided to leave them in place rather than cut their tours short.

“For the most part, we’ve converted all the authorizations,” Tetterton said. “The military members are actually over-strength right now, but



Marty Tetterton, Director, Human Resources

photo by Art Heintz

they will depart and not be replaced. For the most part, we converted all the authorizations (by fiscal 2007), but the holdover of people doesn’t necessarily track with the (number of people authorized).

“We took our folks into consideration and rather than force military members out immediately, people who had just moved into positions, we decided to retain them for their tours here at USMEPCOM,” Tetterton said. “I thought that was an excellent way to handle this whole conversion — consider our workforce and their families so we didn’t put undue hardship on them.”

As the conversion process progressed, the command realized that the grade structure for civilian employees had to be revamped. Turnover among civilians dissatisfied with their grade levels and compensation left the command, resulting in a 10 percent vacancy rate and an average of 300-350 recruiting actions at any given time.

The command undertook a 100 percent review of position descriptions in the MEPS, some of which

hadn’t been looked at in years, Lane said.

“Each cluster (now battalions) was assigned a couple of job descriptions, looked at the major duties of the jobs and how they had significantly changed since they were written,” she said. “The (battalions) sent the duties to the headquarters and proponents at the headquarters reviewed them.

“We evaluated those duties using Office of Personnel Management classifications and graded the positions,” she said. “There were a significant number of positions upgraded in the MEPS, primarily the medical staff. A few positions were upgraded in testing and processing. The secretary’s position was also upgraded.”

Lane said the health technician position description was very old and didn’t reflect the changes in medical testing that had taken place. For that reason, two people from the Civilian Personnel Division went on the road to assess the situation.

“They walked through the medical section and got a detailed description from a staff member about

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We drew down faster in the J-1 than we did out in the field.

Rick Wesler

On personnel shortages early in the conversion

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what they did with the hearing exams and all the tests that have to occur, depending on the different services and the specific skills (a person might need).

“We looked at what they did with the HIV tests and how they did the blood draws, and what they do with positive HIV or positive drug tests,” Lane said. “That detailed description really helped hone in on what they’re doing and how much the job descriptions were out of date.”

Tetterton said the bottom-up review was crucial in determining the proper grade levels for civilian employees in the MEPS.

“We looked at every one of the civilian positions among the MEPS and asked what they were doing,” he said. “The civilian grades are all about the complexity of the work, not the amount of work. The amount of work determines how many people you need.

“We increased grades considerably across the board in the MEPS,” he said. “(GS) fours went to fives, fives went to sixes, and so forth.”

Some specialties saw 40 percent turnover rates as recently as 2008. The number of recruiting actions has dropped to about 150 per month for the command’s 2,300 civilian positions. The position upgrades have

slowed turnover “significantly,” Tetterton said, and the fill rate is running at 95 percent.

“(Turnover) has come down considerably since those grade increases out in the MEPS, Tetterton said. “It’s been pretty static here in the headquarters.”

Tetterton said the structural changes in the MEPS are a major reason.

“We saw a marked decrease in the migration out of the MEPS,” he said. “We don’t know, in the long term, whether that will continue to show dividends, but it has improved in the last year and a half.

“There was a lot of turbulence,” Tetterton said. “We hired a lot of new people and they weren’t used to the type of work we do. I think we have a dedicated population of civilians out there who really feel what we are doing is important.”

There are still issues with compensation and career progression, Tetterton said. “There are still some areas we are trying to explore,” he said. “We are still trying to create a career ladder progression in the MEPS. We are working on training opportunities to identify the skills we need and how to better train those skills.”

The command is looking to improve compensation even more by making recommendations on locality pay to the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, the Civilian Human Resources Agency, the Army and Department of Defense.

“We are out in civilian communities for the most part,” Tetterton said. “There are MEPS that are on military installations, but for the most part, we are in a lot of commercial activities in high cost areas. We are in large cities. It can be expensive to live in those areas. We are cognizant of that and tend to try to influence the Department of Defense as they go through the studies to establish locality pay.”



Marty Tetterton, Director, Human Resources, and Rick Wesler, Chief, Wellness and Readiness Division

photo by Art Heintz

Managing the workforce

Supervisory roles have also gotten a lot of attention, Tetterton said.

“Obviously there was a learning curve going from managing military personnel to civilians,” he said. “A



**Liz Lane, Deputy Director,
Human Resources** *photo by Art Heintz*

lot of our leadership positions in the MEPS are filled by military personnel. The commander is military, the senior enlisted advisor is military. The operations officers are military. They are at a point in their careers where many of them have not supervised civilian personnel. We were kind of slow to come on board with that.”

The command has placed a lot of emphasis on training military leaders how to supervise civilians.

“We trained a number of supervisors this year,” Tetterton said. “We hadn’t done that before and it was sorely lacking. It was kind of hit or miss. You didn’t have a lot of experience supervising civilians and you were kind of out there on your own.

“We gave some classes at the (National Training Conference),” he said. “We gave some classes at the new commander and senior enlisted advisor course. They learned how to set objectives for civilian personnel. They learned about time and attendance, leave policies, how to help civilians with problems, how to rate employees, discipline issues if you

have performance issues, the dos and don’ts of personnel practices that are different from the military.

“They learned how to set up work schedules, unfair labor practices, things you can and can’t ask in an interview. It’s a little different when you are talking to military personnel.”

Tetterton stressed that a great deal of the training focuses on the differences between the way the military does business and how the civilian world works.

“You are trained throughout your military career to give direction and, as a

subordinate, to take that direction and talk about it later,” he said. “On the civilian side we sometimes need to give a little more information to make our intent clear and why we are doing what we are doing.

“On the military side, some of them are coming out of combat situations where we don’t have time to explain why they want something done,” Tetterton said. “Not that they won’t explain, but maybe later.

“Some of the military have come out of an environment where it

might mean life or death if you don’t follow instructions,” he said. “That isn’t the case here, but it doesn’t mean we don’t fall into that pattern subconsciously. Part of it is teaching them the differences in management style.”

Since USMEPCOM has units throughout the country, personnel management was also spread out. Depending on location, personnel programs were serviced by offices from different services.

“One of the problems we had when we first started the conversion process was that we were supported by Air Force, Navy and Army personnel offices,” Tetterton said.

Local commanders could track personnel actions, but the headquarters and sectors couldn’t “see” into those systems. And it was costing a lot of money.

“We were paying huge amounts of money for that because there is no requirement for the Air Force or the Navy to support our personnel administration,” Tetterton said. “We were paying command operational dollars to make that happen.

“About two years into the process, we converted to all Army CPACs,” he said. “The Army gives that to us free of charge. We can see an action from start to finish.”

Although that helped, there are still problems dealing with 42 personnel centers.

“When we made the changes in grades, we were dealing with 42 different interpretations of how that should be applied,” Tetterton said.

“Like anything else, people read regulations differently. It takes a lot

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**We evaluated those duties
using OPM classifications
and graded the positions.**

Liz Lane

On upgrading MEPS’ grade structures

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Training kicks in as staff turns over



By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

Converting nearly 850 positions from military to civilian over three years was a daunting task. Then the real fun began.

Replacing all those uniforms not only changed the flavor of USMEPCOM, but also drained it of a great deal of experience. True, roughly two-thirds of the civilian workforce was seasoned, but the rest were relatively new to the command when changes mandated by Program Budget Decision 712 took effect.

The command began transforming the way it did business shortly after and then began the transition to the Virtual Interactive Processing System.

There was only one thing to do: beef up training.

“We’ve taken positions out of hide and made them into trainers so we can improve the training of our civilian population and offer them more,” Marty Tetterton, director of Human Resources (J-1), said.

“Because we were somewhat new in this business in the training area, we (sometimes) waited until the military personnel left to convert those positions and to write job descriptions and consider what training we should have been giving people to prepare them for those jobs that were coming,” he said. “We probably could have done a better job at that.

“That’s not to say we did a horrible job at it, but in hindsight we probably could have done a little better and gotten our information flow out a little better.”



Jeff Knuth, Chief, Training Development Division, and Kim McMurray, Training Specialist *photo by Art Heintz*

Now the command is focusing on assessing the current status of its training program.

“We’re trying to establish where we are today in the training arena,” Tetterton said. “Later this year we’re going to do a skill gap analysis. We’re going to survey employees and supervisors on where they think their skills are.

“We already baselined one time in developing the survey,” he said. “Now we are going to baseline again and establish some standardized training. We’re also going to do some workshops where we’re going to look at what we have to do in every job. And we’re going to rely on the people who are already doing the job.”

The information gathered will allow the training development staff to gauge what is needed to ensure employees have the right skills to do their jobs. It will help determine what skills are needed and ask people to rate themselves on the skills needed to complete a particular task.

“Not only are we going to ask the individuals,” Tetterton said, “we’re going to ask the supervisors who rate those people.”

After analyzing the data, decisions will be made as to what training is needed and provide it, both under the current system and VIPS. Tetterton said the training developers will rely on the MEPS employees who actually perform the tasks day-in and day-out for advice on what types of training are needed.

“They are the subject matter experts,” he said. “We’ll have a good baseline on how it works today, then we’ll look at where we want to be in the future. We’ll break it down by task, the steps it takes to complete that task, the conditions under which that task is done and the standards for the completion of that task. What equipment do you need to complete that job? What constitutes the successful completion of each task that leads to the successful completion of your job?”

“As we all know, training today has gotten very broad,” Tetterton said. “We’re looking at distance learning, possibly off your own computer and potentially virtual classroom learning where you will be with an instructor online.”

The training development division has been beefed up to nine people and has broadened its scope to include the Army Learning Management System, Defense Connect Online and other resources.

“With VIPS coming on, there are going to be tremendous requirements for us to identify the newest trend needs,” Jeff Knuth, chief of training development said. “Many jobs are going to transition. We’re going to go away from paper and pencil and transfer to electronics. There will be new skill sets, both technical and in some of the soft skills.

“Things as basic as fundamental computer training for those who aren’t familiar with using computers,” he said. “We’ve done some of that with e-Security and biometric fingerprinting.”

Knuth said training is important so civilians can not only do their jobs but have job progression.

“Technology is always changing,” he said. “We have to keep pace with that and help people progress in their careers so they can move up the leadership chain if they so desire.”

Knuth also said one of his goals is to focus more on the needs in the field and he recently went to El Paso to gain some first-hand knowledge.

“I talked to the commander and the senior enlisted advisor,” he said. “I wanted to hear directly from them what their frustrations are (and ask

‘How can we do a better job for you here?’

“My goal is to do more for the MEPS,” he said. We aren’t in the headquarters on our own plateau. My vision of training is that we’re here to support the MEPS.”

The command is seeking to take advantage of the vast array of training methods that weren’t available a few years ago, Tetterton said. USMEPCOM spent about \$300,000 to send training teams to the MEPS when it fielded e-Security. It only cost about \$15,000 for training when e-Orders came online, mainly because the command leveraged technology rather than send people on the road.

“When we fielded e-Orders, we used Defense Connect Online,” Tetterton said. “We had instructors providing training from the training division and operations cell, and it was the same level of training we had for e-Security.”

Online training will also allow for better record keeping and give students a resource to review items they might forget before they put them into practice. That improvement is going to be needed, Tetterton said.

“We’ve got to get better at how we do training, because there is going to be a lot of it,” he said. “We should be able to track that you got that training. Right now, we track it manually. We want to be able to track it electronically.

“We want to be able to say you need this piece of training and sign you up for it individually,” he said. “You’ll take that training and we’ll get a report back. A commander or supervisor, the sector, and headquarters will be able to see what percentage of people have been trained.”

People will be able to review training individually as needed.

“You won’t have to wait for somebody to tell you you need a refresher,” Tetterton said. “You can go back and see it again if you forgot how to do a step.

“That’s our vision,” he said. “We think we’ll have it before the end of the fiscal year. That will speed things up and give flexibility to commanders and employees. If it’s a slow day in the MEPS, they can go in and maybe do their Constitution training.”

A big part of the training revolution will be Defense Connect Online, known as DCO. Jerome Hurst is heading the command’s efforts in that area.

Training will be recorded and posted on DCO and can be viewed by anyone who has an account on the system. The headquarters is currently recording its training day topics and posting them for employees who are shift workers or who were gone that day. In most cases, a link will be provided to those who need training on a particular topic. Those can be reached without establishing an account, Hurst said.

“Initially, we were thinking that you would have to establish a DCO account to access that,” Hurst said, “but we’ve been able to copy the hyperlink and embed it into an (information) message. Once you click on it, it will take you right to the training.”

Training can be live or recorded, Hurst said, and the internet address subject will be provided to retrieve the training.

“We have a great system of communicating with internal messages,” he said. “We will use that. We did

Please see ‘Training,’ Page 10

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My goal is to do more for the MEPS. We aren’t in the headquarters on our own plateau.

Jeff Knuth

On his vision of how training must be done

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The neat thing about the courseware is that it gives us the capability to test cognitive ability once you receive the training.

Jerome Hurst

On Defense Connect Online training

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‘Training,’ from Page 9

this with e-Orders. We trained all 65 MEPS on e-Orders and ATAAPS through DCO. We coordinated that by sending out messages so we could say, ‘East Coast, we’re going to start at this time. West Coast, we’re going to start at this time.’”

Establishing an account is simple, according to Hurst.

“I like to go into Google and type in DCO. You will get multiple options for Defense Connect Online. You want to go to the main page. There will be a disclaimer there letting you know it is a government web site.

“You will accept that, after you read it, and proceed,” he said. It will read your (common access card) and you will be able to establish a login and password that will enable you to

access DCO from any computer that has access to the internet. When you have access to a CAC reader, you can use your CAC.”

DCO also ties into the Army Learning Management System, which the command will also use for training.

“The Army Learning Management System is going to track all the training,” Hurst said. “Every employee has an (Army Knowledge Online) account. What is not well known is that the Army Learning Management System is being built better even as we speak.

“When I got here a year ago, it was available, but it was kind of tucked away,” he said. “It was not easy to find. Now, you can log into your AKO account. We’re talking about something that caters to our workforce.”

Senior command leaders will be “super users” who can see almost all command activity on ALMS. Directors will be able to track the training for their staffs.

Training will be vital as USMEPCOM converts to the Virtual Interactive Processing System. The command plans to use ALMS to provide many of the courses people will need to operate the new system. Just how much training can be done there will depend on which software the command buys, Hurst said. One training suite has the ability to push training to Blackberries, he said.

“That is very exciting. It has the capability of editing. We recorded training in DCO,” Hurst said. “I’m excited about that. It is going to give us the capability of putting training through that courseware on the ALMS that is pertinent to MEPCOM employees.”

“The neat thing about the courseware is that it gives us the capability to test the cognitive ability once you receive the training,” Hurst said. “It’s not one of those deals where you can say ‘OK, I watched it.’ We will be able to write a test in (the training) and you will have to take it.”

Training online also provides flexibility. For instance, the command can schedule training for all human resources assistants at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on a given day. Anyone who is not available that day can go to a link and complete it later.

‘PBD 712,’ from Page 7

of effort on everybody’s part to come to an agreement on what this action should mean or do.

“Some of the promotions were done perfectly in our interpretations; others were delayed,” he said. “We’re still working some of them and believe we will eventually make it happen. We will backdate the actions so everybody got (promoted) at the same time.”

The command asked to form its own personnel center, but has been turned down so far.

“What they have agreed to do,” Tetterton said, “is appoint a project manager to resolve issues.”

The CHRA works directly under Department of the Army Human Resources. The project manager will

provide guidance to the Civilian Personnel Operations Centers who will, in turn, pass it to the CPACs.

“We are looking at using that as a way to help us,” Tetterton said. “We’re going to use that when we need to, especially as we transform. We have a lot of work to do. We want to be able to offer our civilian workforce the opportunity to grow and learn with us and retain knowledgeable people in the command.”

More change to come

As USMEPCOM transitioned to a largely civilian workforce, it was also moving forward with the Virtual Interactive Processing System. That will continue to affect employees for the foreseeable future.

“We know it is going to have an impact on the workforce,” Tetterton said. “We know what our desired end-state is. We think we know how we want VIPS to perform. We’ve already done business engineering on how we do business today and how we want to do business in the future.

“VIPS is an IT solution to how we want the processes to be,” he said. “The problem is we don’t know exactly how that IT solution is going to meet the process of how we want it to be. It may be exactly what we want, it may be better or slightly off from what we want.

“Until we get the vendor in place to develop the solution and see how that solution is going to work, it is

Please see ‘PBD 712,’ Page 11

Job fairs introduce command to public

Job seekers have to know an organization exists before they submit applications. They also need to know how to apply and where to find vacancy listings.

To that end, the USMEPCOM Human Resources Directorate (J-1) developed a display highlighting the command and began taking it to job fairs.

"It's twofold," Liz Lane, deputy director of Human Resources, said. "One is we're going out and promoting USMEPCOM, where USMEPCOM is, what type of jobs we have, how we go about recruiting and where we use USAJOBS.

"The other part is educating people who come to our booth on how you maneuver through USAJOBS to find Army or USMEPCOM vacancies."

Col. Mariano C. Campos Jr., USMEPCOM commander, thought going to job fairs would be a good way to promote the command and attract potential new employees, and encouraged the human resources staff to explore the idea.

The job fairs are primarily aimed at college students or military veterans. Some are held for wounded warriors or particular ethnic groups. One recent event in San Antonio was for wounded warriors.

Theresa Bartley, a human resources specialist in J-1, said they

find out about job fairs in a variety of ways. Bartley said Campos suggested promoting awareness of the command at local job fairs.

"A lot of people aren't familiar with USAJOBS and how to use it," she said. "I've been teaching people who have never used USAJOBS how to use it and teaching people who are familiar with the system how it has changed.

"When we go out there, we teach the audience who USMEPCOM is because a lot of people aren't familiar with us," Bartley said. "They believe we're a military organization solely, and we're not. We're a joint service command and also have civilian positions.

"A lot of them ask if we're trying to get them to join the military," she said. "That perception of us being a recruiter for the military is not good. A lot of people don't even know what USMEPCOM is or what the initials

stand for. When you bring it to light for them it's an 'aha' moment."

It is hard to measure the program's effectiveness. The goal is to make people aware of the opportunities the command offers. Resumes and applications are not accepted at the job fairs.

"We're getting awareness out there," Bartley said. "We let them know we have vacancies sometimes, but we're not an operating personnel office. We're teaching them how to apply for positions through our operating office. A lot of times people assume we're taking resumes, but we're not.

"I give credit to the commander," Bartley said, "because it's something he suggested. He thought it would be a great idea for us to go out and represent USMEPCOM and that's what we're doing."

—Skip Wiseman

“

A lot of people don't even know what USMEPCOM is. When you bring it to light it's an 'aha' moment.

Theresa Bartley

On the benefits of attending job fairs

”

'PBD 712,' from Page 10

hard to determine the impact on the workforce," Tetterton said.

"We are running some working groups where we have a number of people from the MEPS looking at how we're going to manage that," he said. "We're going to expand that membership and we're going to expand what we are doing. We had a supplemental working group that looked at Increment 1.0 of VIPS fielding and what we think that is going to do.

"They looked at the jobs in the MEPS and the effect on those jobs. They looked at the knowledge, skills and abilities and what training we will have to (enhance employees' knowledge.)"

Despite some bumps in the road, Tetterton believes the conversion has been successful and, perhaps more important, not noticed by applicants.

"The majority of (applicants) had never been to a MEPS before we did this," he said. "They have no preconception to draw upon.

"We are a qualification standards activity. We are not trying to recruit you. We do represent the services, and I think we do that extremely well. Our job is to qualify people for entry into the services. I think we know what the services need in qualified recruits and we do it pretty well."

Leader course teaches life, work skills

By Skip Wiseman
Messenger Associate Editor

So, you say the Army has never given you any training you could really use. What if there was a course you could not only apply to your professional life, but could use to help make your kids toe the line?

Kim McMurray and Theresa Bartley, both of the Human Resources Directorate (J-1), found just such a course when they attended the Civilian Education System Basic Leadership Course.

"I used it on my son while I was out there," McMurray said. "By the fourth day (of her being at the course) he wasn't doing his chores. He wanted me to rent a video. Instead of yelling and screaming 'I'm your mother, you do what I say,' I asked him 'Do you really think you deserve that?'"

"He was silent on the phone," she said. "I guess he started evaluating why I was throwing these questions at him."

By the next day, she said, he had cleaned the kitchen, done the dishes, and sent her the photographs to prove it. "He did everything, and all I did was talk to him. I said, 'Hey, this stuff really works.'"

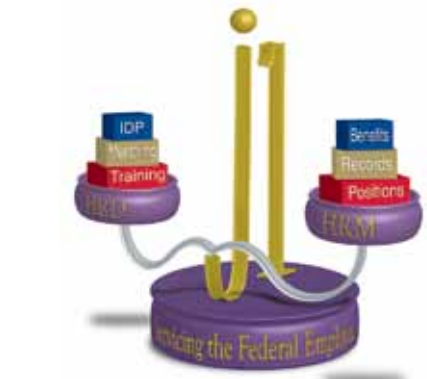
Bartley said she used a similar method with her daughter while she was attending the course.

The course is one of a series offered by the Army Management Staff College. It includes preliminary, online education with a two-

week resident course. Students must achieve a score of at least 70 percent on the distributed learning course to qualify for the resident course. The courses are designed to develop leaders among the Army's civilian employees.

Even the same course differs from class to class. Bartley and McMurray learned many of the same lessons, but through different methods by different instructors.

"It was pretty much run by the students," McMurray said. "They give you a guideline of what they



expect each day. Depending on who your instructors are, it's entirely up to the students and the class what gets done and how you get it done."

Bartley said her class was led by the facilitators.



Kim McMurray, Training Specialist photo by Art Heintz



Theresa Bartley, Human Resources Specialist

photo by Art Heintz

“They structured the class the way they wanted it to be run,” she said, “but the students were responsible for what you were expected to learn. At the end of the course, they leave it to you to go back to your organization and apply what you learned.”

The course helps people determine what sort of learners they are and the best methods to harness those traits. It also emphasizes active listening.

“You learn how to actively listen instead of just hearing what you want to hear or not hearing people at all,” Bartley said. “It teaches you how to listen and what level listener you are. (One of my goals) was to improve my listening skills. By the time I left, I had.”

Each class receives a weekly “charge,” a project for each of the four groups to complete. Once the task is completed, the group presents a paper and a briefing. Each student is responsible for a different part of the presentation. Bartley and McMurray both worked on PowerPoint slides for their groups.

“Another gentleman was responsible for writing the paper,” Bartley said. “Another person was responsible for research and another woman went over everybody’s work and told them what was wrong with their information, like an editor.”

“Then we all presented,” she said. “The entire group goes up in front of the class and each person has to present, because they want to hear your speaking ability as well.”

How long the project takes comes down to how the group interacts. McMurray said it was interesting to watch the dynamic in other groups.

“We had a group that had major conflict all the days except Friday,” she said. “They were literally doing everything but throwing blows. They were to the point where they were slamming stuff, slamming doors, walking out. The facilitators watched that, but they didn’t say anything.”

Bartley’s group was tasked to produce an individual development plan and a self-development plan.

“The individual development plan is usually tailored to how you want

to be trained at work,” she said. “The self-development plan, I went totally outside the realm of the government and decided I should be a fashion designer. People got a chance to bring out what they really want to do when they grow up.”

Learning to think critically is another major part of the course, McMurray said.

“Critical thinking is the biggest thing I brought back with me,” she said. “It’s a list of things you should always ask for in any situation you are in. It’s a list of ways to make you think critically. That’s what I used with my son.”

Students are also required to keep journals tracking their learning, how they think they can improve and their class experience that particular day. They track their improvement with a checklist where they mark the areas in which they improved that day.

Both women said even students who are not supervisors can benefit from the training. Instructors explained that people are selected to attend either because their supervisor sees leadership potential in them or the people see themselves as leaders at some future time.

Bartley said she highly recommends the course. “I personally believe it should be a prerequisite before you can even become a supervisor,” she said.

McMurray said she is looking forward to the intermediate course, and hopes it comes sooner rather than later.

“I really don’t want a long pause,” she said. “I want to continue so I can relate what I’ve learned now into the intermediate course. I’m waiting for them to ungray my little circle so I can click on it and register for the intermediate course.”

Yours for the asking – employee assistance

By Jayna Legg
Unit Service Coordinator
Wellness and Readiness Branch

When you call the Employee Assistance Plan hot line, the person who answers the phone will have at least a master's degree in counseling or social work. And no matter what your problem is – whether it's as simple as getting a child care referral or as complicated as an addiction – EAP will help. Best of all, basic EAP services are free and completely confidential.

"People don't know how much support they can get from EAP," said Lois Kenyon-Severson, a federal EAP counselor and consultant, during a recent presentation at USMEPCOM headquarters. "Everybody needs somebody ... We don't all know everything."

Kenyon-Severson – who holds several advanced degrees herself, is a certified employee assistance professional, and has her own private practice in Chicago – said she frequently uses EAP services because even she needs the expertise of other people, "to help me get through my life."

Times have changed, she said. "We don't always have mom and dad down the street like we used to. We don't have family around, and other people around. We're doing a lot of traveling, we don't know people, and so the EAP is a great support and a great resource."

EAP is available to all USMEPCOM civilian employees. Similar services are available to military employees and their families through Military OneSource. Military OneSource services are also free. "It's probably the best buy you'll ever get on today's market," Kenyon-Severson said.

Kenyon-Severson's lively and informative presentation at MEPCOM's quarterly training day was well-received by the audience of mostly civilian employees. EAP benefits are fairly new to command employees – they became available in August 2009 – and some people may not know everything that is available through EAP, said USMEPCOM Wellness Program Specialist Rick Wesler, who arranged Kenyon-Severson's appearance.

"Some employees are surprised by the breadth of services EAP provides" he said. "It's not just about addiction counseling. EAP is for everyone, whether you are a supervisor and want to schedule a class on time manage-

ment for your team, or you are an individual who wants to learn how to be a better parent."

Mike Mickelson, USMEPCOM antiterrorism officer, said the EAP training was time well-spent.

"It will be great information to help me as a civil service employee but also in the future as a retiree," he said. "There are a lot of great programs through EAP that could help me or my family members. It's great knowledge to have, just to know that it's there; it's available."

Family support

Each person seeking EAP counseling services – whether it's the employee or a family member – receives six hours of counseling free of charge. For example, Kenyon-Severson said, "Let's say you called me about your teenage son, who is having problems at school. I open a case for you, your husband, and I open a case for your son, and then we have 18 hours to work on this problem.

"We can work on it individually with him, or you and your husband can come in, or you and your son, any combination," she said. "We can get lots of sessions when we have more people involved."

Family members don't have to live with the employee to receive services. As long as the employee is providing most of the relative's care, that family member is eligible for EAP, a key fact to remember when it comes to sending children off to college.

"What you want to do is give them an EAP wallet card when they leave, and let them know they have a counselor 24/7 if they need one," Kenyon-Severson said. "So they can call a counselor and talk to them with their woes until they can get to you, and you can sleep and work without disruption."

Kenyon-Severson used her own children as an example. "I had two daughters in college," she said. "It was not uncommon for one of them to call me at 2 o'clock in the morning, sobbing that the world has come to an end, saying 'the boyfriend and I have just broke up, my life is over, I'm doomed for failure' – you know, the usual that you think when a girl breaks up with her boyfriend. And oh, boys do it too, by the way," she added.

"So then I don't get any sleep, right?" she said. "And I'm worried all night, finally get to talk to them again at 10 or 11 o'clock the next day, and I say, 'How is it going?' And she says, 'Oh, Mom, you won't believe it. I'm so glad

I got rid of that bum; I met the greatest guy in my bio class.”

Kenyon-Severson said it’s good to know that college-bound children have “a second mom or dad out there who can kind of be there for them at no cost, and it’s totally confidential.”

Family members 18 and older are granted the same confidentiality as employees. For anyone under 18, the employee has to give consent and be present for the first counseling session.

Kenyon-Severson likened EAP records to any medical records, which are protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. “I can’t disclose that I’ve ever even seen you, or that I even know you ... unless you want me to. We don’t collect social security numbers, birth dates, employee IDs; we don’t collect any of that.”

Another plus, Kenyon-Severson pointed out, is that EAP will find you a counselor or advisor close to home, usually within five miles. College students don’t have to come home to see someone. Kenyon-Severson has about 400 credentialed EAP professionals to pick from when a client needs specialized service.

“All of them have to go through a credentialing process. It takes a couple of years to get on our list ... If we ever get a single bit of negative feedback, we take them off the list.”

Counseling for many issues

Kenyon-Severson said most of the counseling she provides has to do with relationships – “relationships with a supervisor, a co-worker, a neighbor, whoever, as well as partners and children.”

Grief counseling is a frequent request, Kenyon-Severson said. She related an instance when she helped employees cope with the suicide of a co-worker. “I drop everything and go,” she said, referring to grief counseling. “In this case, I spoke at the memorial, and then I’m still working with the individuals who worked closely with him. One person calls me nearly every morning. She was scheduled to travel and conduct training with him. ‘It’s very lonely and frightening to do it without him,’ she told me. So by talking to me, she doesn’t have to feel like she’s all by herself.”

Elder care is a growing concern for many people, Kenyon-Severson said. And “elder care” can encompass a wide range of services. One unfortunate trend right now, she said, is

that some young workers are paying for their parents’ gambling debts.

“Because the senior homes these days, the entertainment they have, they put us seniors on the bus and take us off to the local casino to gamble for the day. Right, you are going to get a free lunch, but you are going to gamble all of your money away that day, and so then they get in trouble and their kids — who are still out there in the work force — are paying for their debts to try to keep them up.

“I’ve had that happen several times lately,” she said, “when these young people say, ‘The reason I use that government credit card is to pay off my parents’ debts, to help them pay for their medicine and pay their bills,’ so gambling is a major problem in our area right now.”

People can get addicted to anything, not just drugs and alcohol, Kenyon-Severson said.

“We’re seeing computer addiction, spending, chat rooms, porn addictions ... we see flight attendants and pilots. They have a lot of layovers; they’re looking for something to do. One of these things becomes a secondary addiction. They don’t get drug-tested on those addictions.”

Credit counseling and debt management can be done over the phone, or EAP will link the employee with someone for face-to-face counseling. EAP will assist with budgeting and will help the employee contact creditors to set up payments.

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Lois Kenyon-Severson sits behind a table full of brochures related to the employee assistance program. She was a guest speaker and explained aspects the EAP on a recent headquarters training day.

Employee Assistance Program

Legal services provided, too

Legal services are one of the program's best-kept secrets of the benefit, Kenyon-Severson said. Legal services are available by phone, or in person if necessary for a complex case such as a divorce or child custody. The first hour is free, and after that, if the employee goes to an attorney referred by EAP, there is a 25 percent discount on remaining fees.

Kenyon-Severson used EAP legal services when her parents needed help out of state. "EAP found a licensed attorney in Michigan," she said. "I asked, 'what if my two sisters, who live in Michigan, want to talk to you, too?' I still had 45 minutes left, so they could all sit with him, free of charge."

EAP legal services include powers of attorney and advanced directives. A power of attorney names someone to speak on your behalf if you can't. Kenyon-Severson urges all employees also to complete an advanced directive, a legal document that specifies what level of medical care they want if they are incapacitated. "For example, do you want everything done – feeding tube, oxygen, resuscitation – or another choice is that you don't want anything done to save you."

Most people choose something in between, Kenyon-Severson said. "Middle of the road is you are saying, 'I want everything done that can be done provided that when you remove that feeding tube, that oxygen, that I will have quality of life.'"

Advanced directives vary by state. "If you call EAP and they mail you out the packet, it costs money," Kenyon-Severson said. "But if you go on the Web site www.agingwithdignity.org and print out an advanced directive or power of attorney at home, you can call your doctor, the nurse, your minister or EAP legal services if you are having trouble filling it out. They don't have to be notarized. You just need to have a witness, someone who doesn't have anything to gain."

ID theft services

The growing problem of identity theft gives EAP counselors another job. On average, ID theft victims spend more than 175 hours and at least \$1,000 in out-of-pocket expenses to clear their names and re-establish good credit, according to EAP. People might not realize, Kenyon-Severson said, that they can call EAP if their credit card number is stolen and receive free assistance right away.

"The beauty of it is that it's there 24/7," said Kenyon-Severson, who twice has had to use EAP ID theft services. "One time I called at 3 o'clock in the morning on a Saturday, and they had the problem solved in 24 hours, at no cost to me, and no hassle. They were able to unravel it because they got to it quickly."

The second time her credit card number was stolen, Kenyon-Severson said it was a Sunday afternoon. "The person had gone up the coast of California, and they told me he or she had charged thousands and thousands of dollars in about two days. That would have been a tremendous cost to me if I had to be responsible for that. It could have taken a while to unravel it if the thief had been able to keep going for two or three more days. So, by being able to access ID service and have them immediately get on it any hour of the day or any day of the week, you get faster resolution to it, and generally it's at no cost to you, so I highly recommend the ID theft services."

Supervisor's Guide

Supervisors of employees eligible for EAP should be aware of the resources they can tap through EAP, Kenyon-Severson said. "We have more than 60 presentations we can give, most of them last 45 minutes, at no cost to the agency."

Some of the training topics include anger, time and stress management as well as "The Art of Parenting," "Balancing Work and Personal Life," "Dealing with Conflict," "Effective Communication," "Transitions in the Workplace for Employees," "Ups and Downs of the Holiday Season" and "Planning for Retirement."

"We're not talking about the financial aspects of retirement here," Kenyon-Severson said. "We're talking about the psychological and emotional aspects of going into retirement. People don't think about that ... they say they can't wait, but when it comes, they don't have that structure anymore. A lot of people don't have friends, don't have outlets, and don't have any hobbies. A lot of concerns can come up when you go into that phase of life."

For an additional fee to the agency, presentations can be customized, "but most of the time, we don't have to customize it because we have it," Kenyon-Severson said.

Supervisors can seek help from EAP for a variety of situations that may arise with employees. For example, a formerly reliable employee begins arriving late for work, conflict arises in a work group, layoffs are pending, the supervisor suspects that an employee

Please see 'Employee Assistance Program,' Page 17

Boston employees step in front of the camera to help promote military's national effort

Early this year, Boston MEPS personnel, applicants and liaisons contributed to an effort that will further the understanding of the accessions process and service requirements — on a national level.

“Adding depth and clarity to understanding the military experience” is not an easy task. However, Department of Defense Joint Advertising and Market Research and Studies (JAMRS <http://jamrs.org/>) have research that shows video is a great tool to provide a “complete picture,” establish credibility and encourage exploration of the military services.

So, to tell the story, they chose to produce six videos at Boston MEPS. Quite a visit for a commander that hit the ground only weeks before.

The JAMRS staff members and commercial video crew set out to document an up-to-date version of “A Day at the MEPS” for the web site, www.todaysmilitary.com.

After the USMEPCOM Public Affairs Office gave the go ahead to shoot the video, Boston MEPS personnel distributed photo release forms to applicants, liaisons and MEPS staff members who would participate in the filming.

Participation was voluntary, so applicants who wanted to participate wore stickers indicating that.

The JAMRS team and video crew started the day with the applicants at 5 a.m. They captured all aspects of MEPS processing, including the commander’s welcome brief, shipper brief, medical brief, ASVAB testing, medical and enlistment processes, and oath of enlistment ceremonies. Users will be able to watch the clips in any order. The ASVAB testing was a re-creation with volunteer applicants who agreed to simulate taking an ASVAB.

“The JAMRS team worked well with the applicants, staff and service liaisons,” Sgt. 1st Class Frank E. Ketcham III said.

Heather Pope, from the Office of the Secretary of Defense said the final video clips will include an overview and cover security, ASVAB, physical, oath of enlistment and the Virtual Interactive Processing System, or VIPS.



The camera crew videotapes Boston MEPS test control officer, Dennis Boston as he discusses USMEPCOM’s testing program. The crew taped various MEPS personnel for the video clips that will be featured on www.todaysmilitary.com.

The Boston MEPS commander’s office was transformed into a mini studio where the crew interviewed MEPS staff, liaisons and recruiting personnel.

“The footage will be used for years to come and it was a positive experience for the applicants, liaisons, contractors and MEPS staff,” Ketcham said. “It was an exciting and interesting experience to be a part of the project, and to see how much effort goes into professionally filmed footage.”

In an e-mail, Pope explained the goal of the video clips, is “to increase site visitors’ likelihood of considering, recommending or supporting military service.”

She said the video clips are scheduled to be on www.todaysmilitary.com by late summer or early fall.

Editor’s note: Sgt. 1st Class Frank E. Ketcham III, Boston MEPS operations NCOIC, contributed to this article.

Employee Assistance Program

has personal problems at home, or the boss suspects an employee of abusing drugs or alcohol — all are situations EAP counselors are trained to handle.

EAP also offers management seminars on subjects including, “Skills for Effective Management,” “Workplace Violence Prevention,” and “Managing Performance.” The presentation, “A Supervisor’s 24/7 Resource,” is a good starting place for managers,” Wesler said. “It focuses on the nature of the EAP as a voluntary, confidential and free benefit to employees. It underscores the EAP as a

consultative resource that offers practical tips for dealing with employees when they are experiencing problems that subsequently affect the workplace.”

There’s no end to the positives of EAP, Kenyon-Severson said. “EAP is a great service. This EAP uses her EAP, believe me.”

For more information, call 800-222-0364; for the hearing impaired, call 888-262-7848. Or log on to EAP through the Federal Occupational Health Web site www.FOH4you.com.

Command will launch formal mentoring program

By Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

In this time of cut, cut, cut, the command's workforce will gain what could prove to be a powerful resource – a formal mentoring program – scheduled to launch in August.

Throughout history, seasoned people have taught other workers lessons learned from experience and education – in so many forms. The idea isn't new, but recently, a new team is formalizing USMEPCOM's mentoring program.

"We want to help people look at their career path and then give them the options and resources they need," said Caroline Oncken. The mentoring program is another way the command will get "the right people with the right training into the right job at the right time."

The mentoring program will likely be an asset to the command as it adjusts to the changes and growth that arises as the command moves through implementation of VIPS, or the Virtual Interactive Processing System. People may find the program is a useful tool for navigating career changes.

Diane Skubinna is the mentoring program design team lead and Pat Moore and Oncken are program managers. Skubinna is a future plans officer for human capital development in the Human Resources Directorate (J-1) at headquarters. Moore is the Eastern Sector education services specialist.

Although Oncken is in her first civilian position, she isn't new to the Department of Defense. She served in the Coast Guard for 11 years, during which time she attained the rank of chief petty officer.

"I loved my Coast Guard career," Oncken said. Her official duties involved telecommunications and messaging, but she also did background investigations, including analysis, and search and rescue communications. "Working distress and trauma was very rewarding, very intense," she said.

Oncken left the Coast Guard to be a full-time mother. Her daughters are 8 and 4. She is the USMEPCOM Facilities Directorate secretary.

"I enjoyed working with the military and I appreciate that MEPCOM is very military-minded," she said. "And it's another way to serve."

Relatively new to the command, Oncken saw the need for mentoring. "There's a need for more than just orientation, more than the initial training you need for your position," she said.

Skubinna ensured the design team was a cross-functional, diverse work group, with people from a variety of backgrounds. The 13 team members work in MEPS, sectors and headquarters, and possess a variety of professional and personal backgrounds.

"We don't always know our co-workers' backgrounds. And your background influences so much of what you do and how much you can influence other people," Oncken said. "That's a big part of mentoring. And that's something we began to realize as we went through the process."

Types of Mentoring

"Some people think of mentoring as one-on-one, face-to-face, involving one senior person and a junior person ... and that's very common," Oncken said. "But there are different types of mentoring."

Potential benefits for a mentor

- Share knowledge and wisdom
- Motivate, educate and guide others
- Contribute to:
 - The career and professional development of others
 - The development of a team-building environment
- Demonstrate expertise
- Develop or improve leadership skills
- Strengthen knowledge base
- Increase:
 - Self-awareness
 - Professional confidence
 - Networking opportunities
- Gain the mentee as a new professional colleague



Carolyn Oncken holds a draft brochure about the command's new mentoring program. *Photo by Art Heintz*

That common type, or traditional mentoring, does involve one experienced or senior employee who mentors a junior employee. Other, non-tradition types include group mentoring, peer mentoring and reverse mentoring.

Group and peer mentoring are what their names imply. An example of reverse mentoring could be a case where a junior employee who is well-trained on computer systems mentors a more senior person who is experienced in other areas, but needs assistance with computer systems.

Online tools and resources for both traditional and non-traditional mentoring are available. "Face-to-face mentoring is the most effective, but there's going to be

certain situations where we can't do that, so we want to maximize online tools, DCO and video teleconferencing," Oncken said.

Defense Connect Online, or DCO, is a collaborative tool. The Defense Information Systems Agency manages Defense Connect, a version of Adobe's Acrobat Connect collaborative software. Registration requires a common access card.

The mentoring design team investigated online tools like Army Knowledge Online, SharePoint and the MEPNET. In June, Oncken launched a site on SharePoint. She chose this program because it's available to everyone in the command.

"The site is fully functional," she said. "It's growing and we're fine-tuning it continually."

The address is <http://sharepoint/mentoring>. "We want it to be used as much as possible."

In addition to the SharePoint site, the team is looking into the possibility of brown bag lunches and workshops, book studies or clubs, and guest speakers.

As the team began working, they heard people say they've informally run similar programs already. "We want to encourage that," Oncken said. "We want to facilitate what they're doing, give them guidance and see how we can maximize those relationships, because it's all about relationships."

What's next?

The design team is conducting focus groups to find out what command employees want in the program. On July 12, the team began soliciting mentors and mentees. They hoped to make 30 mentor-mentee matches by the end of July. "From the buzz I've heard, we might get more than 30," Oncken said.

The pilot program will last one year and the team plans to gather metrics about its success and make necessary course corrections. Upon launch, on Aug. 2, the team plans to have an online presence for mentoring materials, including application forms and a program packet.

Definitions

The mentoring design team wrote the following definitions.

Mentoring is a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the **mentor**) assists another less experienced person (the **mentee**) in developing specific knowledge, skills and abilities that will enhance the less experienced individual's professional and personal growth. A formal mentoring program should provide structure and guidance for individual success and broaden functional experience, clarify performance goals, and develop strategies to address job-related challenges.

USMEPCOM's mentoring program is designed as a collaborative, dynamic, and reciprocal enterprise geared to support career and personal development benefitting both mentor and mentee. This program will endeavor to cultivate future leaders through effective mentorship of new and existing federal employees by utilizing the vast knowledge and experience of our outstanding workforce. Our program will also facilitate mentors' development of leadership qualities vital to transition USMEPCOM to meet strategic goals for the future.

Potential benefits for a mentee

- Networking
- Learn from someone more experienced
- Develop different or new perspectives
- Learn about:
 - Professional subjects
 - Organizational structure
- Improve:
 - Communication skills
 - Career growth opportunities
 - Career transitions
- Increase:
 - Self-awareness
 - Professional confidence
 - Networking opportunities
 - Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Gain:
 - Professional encouragement and support from a mentor
 - Exposure to new ideas, theories, practices and people
 - Role modeling from mentor
- Complements ongoing formal education and training

Silent Heroes?

– One man's view of the value of mentoring

By Leaf Rich
Spokane MEPS, retired U.S. Army

Our command is piloting a mentoring program. What does that mean, and what will it look like?

If you ask 20 different people to describe mentoring, you might just end up with 20 different viewpoints. But why? A possible answer is that the positive effects of mentoring are usually very personal. Here's one man's take on what mentoring is and how those who take part might benefit.

We can leave the scientific or sociodynamic definitions of mentoring to the experts and academicians, but each one of us can use our own words to describe a person who mentored us or the positive effects that we garnered from someone else taking the time to give a hoot about what we were doing in some sort of professional setting; albeit military, private sector, federal employment, non-

profit experience, volunteer service, etc.

For me, words like selfless service, tough love, humorous anecdotes, 1/3s – 2/3s, leading from the middle, being available, organizational vision, looking two terrain features ahead, and “paying it forward” all conjure up a wealth of memories that seemed to be magical to me at the time until they became part of my everyday life. Have you ever had someone treat you to lunch, send you a card, or recognize you in some way that was a pleasant surprise and totally unexpected? That's what mentoring has been like for me.

One thing I know for sure, the men and women who were my mentors were folks who took the time to invest a part of themselves; some without even knowing that their efforts had left an indelible mark on me. The interesting aspect of this concept of mentoring for me is that each person gave ‘something’ of themselves that transferred to me, because I was receptive to what they were offering. Further, that ‘something’ differed from mentor to mentor.

A few examples might serve as useful memory joggers for things you have benefitted from in your own careers: I remember a one-star general in the 82nd Airborne Division who was from an 18th Airborne Corps unit. Five other soldiers and I were task organized to provide support to the general for a special mission. The general didn't know us at all, but took about 30 minutes out of his tour of the command center to ask us how exactly we were going to support him in a way that he could make pro-active decisions to defeat the enemy. I gave some normal textbook response which would not have provided him with what he needed. He then took time to show us a technique to not only quickly detect the enemy, but to notify his operations staff to vector active shooters to stop or eliminate the threat. The entire mission was a tremendous success with no friendly losses, and folks from the Fort Leavenworth schoolhouse were asking me how we did it. I showed them the intelligence tools we had created that were modeled after the general's technique. He took

Potential benefits for an organization

- Increased employee:
 - Satisfaction
 - Productivity
 - Commitment
 - Loyalty
- Higher employee retention rates
- Improved succession planning
- Ability to identify and/or develop potential new leaders
- Improved employee job performance, contributing to faster learning curves and better-trained staff
- Ability to identify and/or develop potential new leaders
- Aligns with organization's commitment to professionally develop employees
- Supports USMEPCOM's transformation

no credit for what we did and told the interviewers to ask us for the answers, because we had done the work. I will never forget what that man did, and continue to use what he taught me in military and non-military related activities to this day. I never actually worked for this general — I merely supported him in a specific operation.

There was an infantry lieutenant colonel who took the time to show

boss, but was my senior rater (my bosses' supervisor).

I remember a battalion commander who was not even my boss, when I was at the brigade headquarters supporting her battalion and five others. She taught me the importance of making sure every subordinate unit, lateral units and higher headquarters were kept in the loop. She did this with me each time she saw me at command-

ever know what a lasting impact they had on me, but the time they took to try to impart leadership principles to others successfully found fertile soil and took root in me.

The stories I have are numerous, some just involving one pearl of wisdom that was made available to me, in either a direct way or indirectly, that I caught. I say caught because unless those being mentored are in a frame of mind to better themselves, those around them and the organizations in which they serve, I believe any attempt at 'being mentored' would be fruitless.

I am thankful for those who have touched my professional life in so many ways, that I try to "pay it forward" as often as I can. They are my personal heroes. Their positive effects on my professional life are transparent to everyone except me. The funny thing about being on the receiving end of what a mentor has to offer is that you are usually left with the desire to try to do the same for others. It's kind of like a germ that is spread from one person to another, except in this case the infection that results is worth it. Here's hoping you catch the bug, too.

Editor's note: Caroline Oncken, USMEPCOM's program manager for the mentoring program, said Leaf Rich was "an integral member of the mentoring design team."

"One thing I know for sure, the men and women who were my mentors were folks who took the time to invest a part of themselves; some without even knowing that their efforts had left an indelible mark on me." — Leaf Rich

me how to tailor information to not only answer the obvious command-level questions, but to anticipate follow-on questions, or requests for information that would come from others on the staff and in the field. Everything important that I ever learned about briefings and preparing topic papers, etc., I learned from him. He was not my

level meetings. Our exchanges would last no more than 2 to 3 minutes.

Most of what I ever learned about leadership that I actively incorporated into my own leadership style I learned from Gen. Colin Powell, then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division while I was stationed in Germany. I worked for neither, and neither will

VIPS Update

by Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

Current status

Just weeks ago, the Virtual Interactive Processing System reached a milestone on the deadline for proposal submissions for Increment 1.0.

Last year, the Department of Defense transferred executive oversight for VIPS to the Business Transformation Agency. The BTA mission is “to guide the transformation of business operations throughout DoD and to deliver Enterprise-level capabilities that align to warfighter needs.” BTA is managing the acquisition of whatever is required to make VIPS a reality for USMEPCOM.

The Army Contracting Command posted the final request for proposals solicitation for VIPS Increment 1.0 development to the FedBizOps portal April 20. The deadline for proposal submissions was June 7.

Currently ACC is reviewing the proposals and will select a vendor. Following this selection, ACC will award the contract.

It is important to stress that all USMEPCOM employees must be very careful when communicating about VIPS.

Ralph DiCicco is the program manager for VIPS at BTA. He clarified that no one in USMEPCOM can communicate with vendors — via e-mail, telephone or in person — about any aspects of the RFP and that all communications must be through the contracting officer.

The VIPS contracting officer is Linus Brandt at the National Capital Region Contracting Center, ACC. His e-mail address is linus.brandt@us.army.mil. An alternate point of contact is Akefeh Lambert, akefeh.lambert@us.army.mil.

“When we’re in procurement actions, if a vendor or anyone asks questions about VIPS, we must refer them to the contracting officer who is managing the RFP process,” Suzanne Kirchhoff said. “No matter how benign the question might seem,” she continued. Kirchhoff works in the Office of Strategic Planning and Transformation in USMEPCOM.

The VIPS schedule in the RFP included five milestone deadlines. They are:

No later than three months after contract award

- Finish rapid operational capabilities
- Finish preliminary design review

NLT eight months after contract award

- Increment 1.0 ready for operational test and evaluation

NLT nine months after contract award

- Increment 1.0 ready for deployment

NLT 15 months after contract award

- Completion of Increment 1.0 deployment

Kirchhoff said she is looking forward to the selection of a vendor. “Once we have the proposal, we might have some interesting details,” she said. And more will follow.

When the contract is awarded, the command will know the vendor and its location. And, the vendor will provide a schedule that will include details on what will be delivered, when, and other plans, e.g., for testing and deployment.

Working groups

As the BTA program manager for VIPS, DiCicco is establishing a working integrated project team that will assist in the transition to VIPS. This team is called a WIPT (pronounced “whipit” by some) and will have four working groups — business transition, technical transition, deployment and human capital transition.

The sectors will chair the deployment group. “MEPS personnel may be very interested in this working group,” Kirchhoff said. “This group will determine where and when to deploy VIPS.”

“When we fully deploy VIPS to MEPS, we will turn off USMIRS [the USMEPCOM Integrated Resource System],” Kirchhoff said. This may present challenges.

“What could be difficult is if an applicant begins their enlistment process at one MEPS that’s using VIPS, and then tries to complete their enlistment at another MEPS that is still using MIRS,” Kirchhoff said. The second MEPS would not be able to access the applicant’s information.

“What do we do then?” she asked. The command must ask and answer this and similar questions before the transition.

“There will be a whole lot of rules and plans for how to handle the transition,” Kirchhoff said. These plans will be formulated beforehand.

Initially, the command will do preliminary testing and then test VIPS at one MEPS. Following this, the deployment working group will determine how it will be moved forward to battalions and MEPS.

DOT what?

It's DOTMLPF and the acronym stands for doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel and facilities.

The Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System is the process that defines acquisition requirements and evaluation criteria for future defense programs. JCIDS uses DOTMLPF as a guide in the acquisition process; however, military planners can use a DOTMLPF study as a tool to analyze the undertaking of a new program. That's the case in USMEPCOM.

"When you take on a new system and processes, there are changes in all those areas," Kirchhoff explains. "We are in the process of trying to capture all the DOTMLPF that need to change. It's not just the business practices, it's not just the IT [information technology] systems, it's the organizational structure, it's the training people need, facilities, it's all of that."

Kirchhoff explained that, since VIPS is going to be a web-based system, we have to make sure that all of our MEPS personnel can access the Internet. How does something like that relate to more than IT?

Kirchhoff explained how something like an electrical outage may seem like just an IT issue, but is related to other areas of DOTMLPF, as well.

(Mary) Lou Wetzel, who works in OSP&T, is heading up the DOTMLPF study right now. Working with others from throughout headquarters, she is writing a Transformation Management Guide that will include analysis of all the DOTMLPF issues.

She is taking each topic, formulating questions, meeting with subject-matter experts in a cross-functional atmosphere to obtain answers to those questions, and then documenting all the details.

For example, VIPS Increment 1.0 will have a scheduling system. "That's going to have a huge impact on processing,"

Kirchhoff said. The command will need to determine how a scheduling system will affect processing, and other areas like training, materiel, facilities, and so on. And, after identified, all the changes must be included in doctrine.

"Our Transformation Management Guide will spell that out," Kirchhoff said. The TMG will also include a project schedule. And each project will be assigned to a directorate or office.

"Just because OSP&T is facilitating this effort to capture all the issues that need to be resolved doesn't mean we're doing it all," Kirchhoff said. The projects will be accomplished by the functional proponents in headquarters. It's OSP&T that will keep track of the projects and ensure they're on schedule.

Which leads to an interesting subject — how has the transition to VIPS affected headquarters? And, will it continue to affect headquarters?

Affects all around

Processing takes place at MEPS and, if VIPS will affect the way the mission is accomplished, that's going to affect just MEPS, right? No, not at all.

Headquarters and sectors have unique missions in the command. Although they don't process applicants on a daily basis, they support the processing mission. So how will VIPS affect them?

The truth is, headquarters and sectors have seen a lot of change already, particularly in the last seven years.

In 2003, the then-USMEPCOM commander directed the headquarters manpower division to submit a concept and stationing plan to the Army, to reorganize sectors and relocate Western Sector. The move took place in 2006, when Western Sector moved from Aurora, Colo., to North Chicago, Ill. (the same location as Eastern Sector and HQ, USMEPCOM).

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A dozen VIPS-related acronyms

How many do you know?

ACC

Army Contracting Command

BTA

Business Transformation Agency

DOTMLPF

Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities

ICAT

Internet-based Computerized Adaptive Testing

OSP&T

Office of Strategic Planning and Transformation

PI

Positive Identification

PMO

Program Management Office

ROC

Rapid Operational Capabilities

RFP

Request for Proposals

SOO

Statement of Objectives

TMG

Transformation Management Guide

WIPT

Working Integrated Project Team

‘VIPS,’ from Page 23

Between 2004 and 2007, based on Program Budget Decisions 712, 721 and 722, the command converted 901 military billets to civilian positions. Later, based on need, 52 Army billets were returned.

In 2005, the command began using the J-Staff designations. Following that, the Civilian Personnel Office, Support Services Branch, HQ Commandant and the personnel training mission transferred to J-1, Human Resources.

In 2008, sectors sent four medical billets to the HQ medical directorate. In 2009, the commander established the Office of Strategic Planning and Transformation — to bring focus to the command’s strategic planning and transformation efforts.

There were other changes at Headquarters. But, overall, the manning has remained consistent. In fiscal year 2004, the command had a total of 2,807 billets and in FY 2010, the command total is 2,825.

Those are some of the changes seen, but, how will VIPS affect headquarters? Who will be affected by the changes related to VIPS? The entire command will.

The truth is, it’s a work in progress. As can be seen in the changes that have been taking place over recent years, the entire headquarters is constantly changing to accommodate VIPS.

“Some MEPS personnel say they’ve only seen the affect on MEPS and not on headquarters,” Kirchhoff said.

“This transformation is not just aimed at the field,” USMEPCOM commander, Col. Mariano C. Campos said. “It’s going to affect Headquarters, too. And we’ve already made changes — partly because of VIPS, but partly because we have to move the organization forward.”

The expansion of OSP&T was one significant change — and it’s not over yet. What was once the Program, Analysis and Evaluation Directorate has increased both its mission and its staffing from 13 to 19.

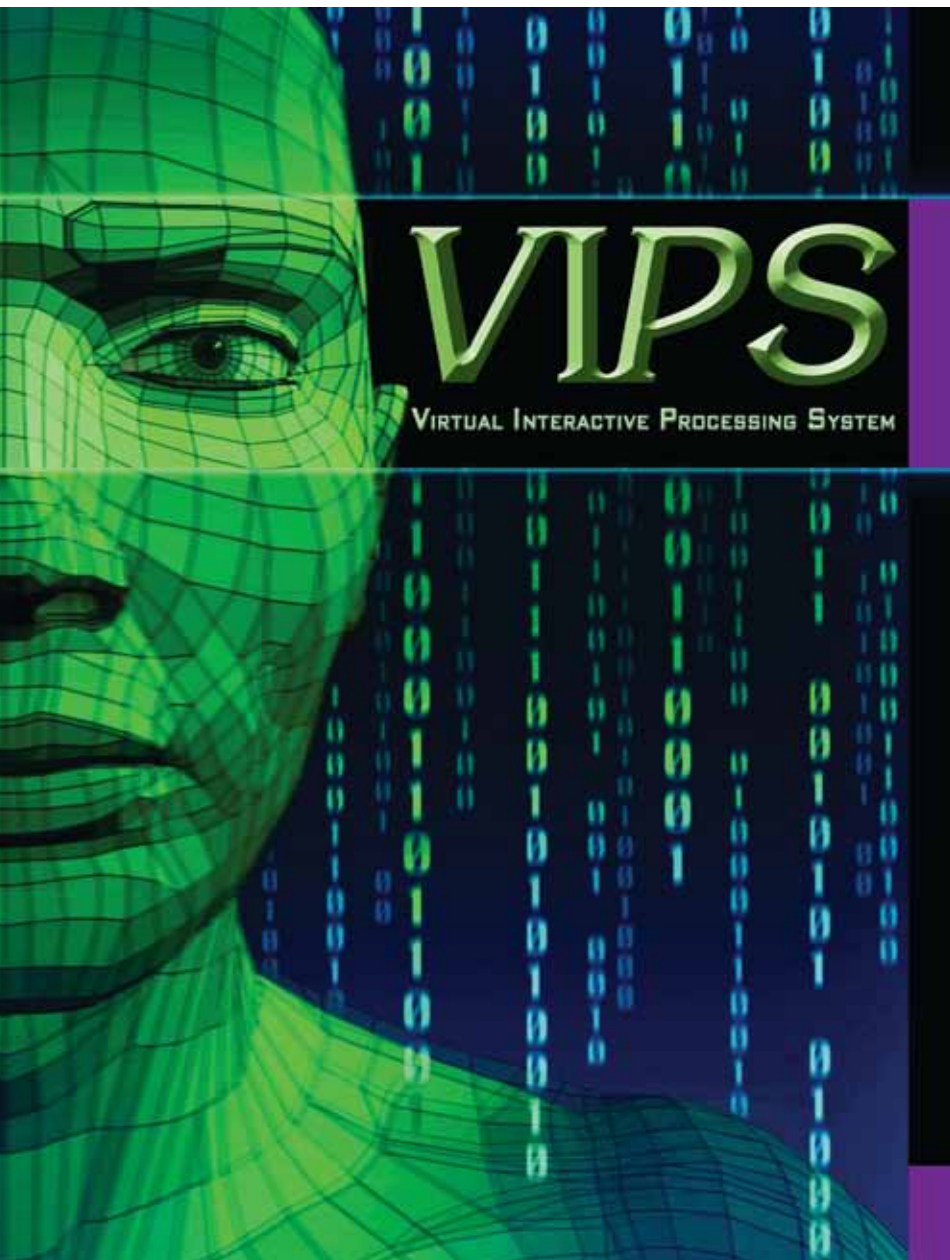
“People were removed from their comfort zones,” Campos said. He explained that PA&E formerly did strategic planning, program analysis and evaluation, but gained the mission of transformation, that includes working with BTA to manage VIPS implementation. “These people, who were doing certain work, had to adapt very quickly.”

Kirchhoff explained further. “There are people [at headquarters] who are not only carrying out their original objectives, but now they’re also focused on making sure VIPS can be successful. So we’ve taken on additional roles,” she explained.

“There are also a lot of people who are participating in the whole process [of implementing VIPS],” she said.

One example of the extra work that’s taking place is the recent VIPS Increment 1.0 Human Capital Impact Workshop. People from all levels of the command discussed the impact of Increment 1.0 on MEPS headquarters, testing, medical and operations sections. Specifically, their goal was to identify where Increment 1.0 will impact *people*. Six different MEPS employees attended the workshop.

In addition to changes to OSP&T, “It’s the same thing on the medical side,” Campos said. “There were three separate medical areas — the medical policy directorate, and eastern and western sectors. They all did a great job, but sometimes the communication wasn’t as good as it could be.”



Significant realignment took place in the last couple of years and the sector physicians joined the headquarters in what are now the east and west field support branches.

“We combined them to make them more reactive to the field, but also to prepare for VIPS as well, because the medical piece is a big part of our transformation,” Campos said. “They’ve had to change as well.”

The Operations Directorate, which includes the testing mission, is constantly experiencing change, because, as their name implies, their work focuses on the processes that take place in MEPS.

Two examples of this are positive identification and web-based testing. “If any group is going to have to react sooner it’s going to be Operations,” Campos said. “Because they’re the ones who have to push these new programs out to the field.

“And here’s the difficult part — not only for Operations, but for everyone in the command — I understand that we’re working on changes that are going to make our work more efficient, but at the same time, we still have our current mission, so you’re doing things in parallel,” Campos said.

According to Campos, there are a lot of changes going on in the personnel arena as well. For example, on June 21, operational control of the Joint Personnel Adjudication System, or JPAS, transferred from the Defense Security Service to the Defense Manpower Data Center. JPAS is DoD’s automated system for recording and providing personnel security eligibility and access information for DoD government military and contractor personnel.

Adapting to this migration is “one of the things J-1 is working on,” Campos said. And, when VIPS necessitates that position descriptions be rewritten, the J-1 staff will gain that additional work. “There’s no easy ride for anybody in this,” Campos said.

He compared personnel to IT. “Sometimes they can’t win for losing,” he said. “Because they touch everything, they touch everybody in the command. Whether they’re in IT or personnel [since both work on automated systems] every time something happens, they’re more often the ‘goat’ than the ‘hero.’

“The expectation is that, ‘the computer should be working fine,’ and whenever something goes wrong or fails, it’s always ‘their’ fault.

“You talk about a shop of busy people,” Campos said, referring to IT, “they’re constantly stressed, because, once again, they’re accomplishing the day-to-day mission, making sure data flows, making sure we can process applicants — and working on the development of systems that are going to take us into the future.”

The Resource Management Directorate, or J-8 has experienced major changes as well. A specific example is GFEBs, or the General Fund Enterprise Business System. This new system eliminates manual methods and moved the command from budgetary accounting to proprietary accounting.

Other, smaller directorates and special staff offices like Facilities, Public Affairs and Equal Employment Opportunity are preparing for VIPS as well.

Campos described the Facilities Directorate as “a shop that does a whole lot with not a lot of people.”

“As we become more efficient [with VIPS], if we’re less reliant on paper processes, for example, that’s going to affect the MEPS’ internal work flow, which could change the use of facilities,” Campos said. “Whether a MEPS will need to be physically redesigned or move, they’re [Facilities is] going to have to figure that out.”

VIPS will affect the Public Affairs Office in that it’s their job to communicate messages about VIPS. “As we introduce things, they will broadcast the messages. And there may be more media inquiries as well,” Campos said. Additionally, with VIPS deployment and training, PAO will produce more products.

“The people at headquarters need to be ready — it’s going to be no different than it is in the field — everyone will need to adapt to these changes,” Campos said. “The only difference is that they [headquarters] might see it first because they’re the ones who have to put out the policies associated with change.

“We can’t say, ‘I think I’ll put this [our mission] down for a year until we get VIPS online — it doesn’t work that way. “It’s difficult for both — headquarters and the field — because you’re doing two things at one time — accomplishing the day-to-day work and planning for the future.

“It affects everybody, up and down, left and right. This is a team effort,” Campos said. “And no one should think, ‘I’m over them or I have more than someone else, or vice versa. No. We’re all in this together.”

What’s it going to take? In one word, flexibility.

“You’ve probably heard my story about my mother, who was a key punch operator for the Army in the 1970s,” Campos said. He explained that, when the Army announced key punch machines would be going away, she didn’t complain, think about quitting or say, “How dare they get rid of my job?” Rather, when the Army announced they would need programmers instead, she volunteered to learn those new skills and she stayed in the federal system.

Ultimate goal

“All you have to do is read the paper,” Campos said. “The President and the Secretary of Defense agree that we need to cut the DoD budget. We may be affected as well. It’s a reality to which we have to be attuned.

“The big ‘however’ is that I believe posturing ourselves with this transformational effort will help,” he said. Instead of the command waiting for cuts and reacting, “We have a plan.

“I guess I’m optimistic in that sense,” he said. “We’re trying to do what the President and Sec Def have asked us to do. We’re becoming more efficient in order to save our government’s money — everything from streamlining our processes and getting rid of duplicity to electronic medical records. We’re moving in the right direction.

“With the smart people we have in this organization, we’re doing everything we can to continue to support the nation’s mission, while trying to make ourselves internally smarter, more efficient, and continue to be the type of organization that the Department of Defense and the President want us to be.”



Dallas MEPS executive officer, Marine Corps Maj. Graham Hoppess administers the oath of enlistment to Navy and Marine Corps applicants. *Photos by James Garner*

Dallas applicants take oath in front of 8,000 on Memorial Day

By Lt. Col. T.J. Edwards
9th Battalion/Dallas MEPS Commander

On May 29, a group of applicants from the Dallas area enlisted in the armed forces, not in a ceremony room, but at the Dr. Pepper Ball Park in Frisco, Texas.

Dallas MEPS executive officer, Marine Corps Maj. Graham Hoppess administered the oath of enlistment to Navy and Marine Corps applicants. The men and women took the oath in front of more than 8,000 fans of the minor league AA Frisco Roughriders as they took the field against the Tulsa Drillers.

Decorated members of the Dallas Veterans Association Military Order of World Wars stood behind Hoppess as he administered the oath of enlistment. They faced the new applicants, to represent the passing of their great experience and responsibility to these future Sailors and Marines.

In addition to the oath of enlistment ceremony, the players and fans were treated to a cavalry-mounted color guard provided by the historic 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Cavalry Horse Detachment, Fort Hood, Texas. The riders

proudly presented the national colors and Texas' Lone Star Flag. Immediately following the presentation of the colors, a lone bugler rendered "Taps" near the Fallen Soldiers Memorial in right field.

Please see 'Dallas applicants,' Page 27



Two AA Frisco Roughriders and their mascot pose with Dallas MEPS Capt. Andrew White and retired Navy Capt. Rollie Stevens, who threw out the first pitch.

Texas governor administers oath on state's independence day

The Honorable Rick Perry, Texas governor, visited the Dallas MEPS for a special enlistment ceremony and celebration March 2.

Perry administered the oath of enlistment to 24 applicants from all five services. Afterward, those present in the MEPS — staff, applicants, family members and Interservice Recruitment Committee members — took part in a ceremony to honor Texas' Independence Day.

According to a state proclamation, "174 years ago, on March 2, 1836, delegates from throughout what was then the Mexican Department of Texas convened at Washington-on-the-Brazos and signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. Thus the Republic of Texas was born.

"From the fall of 1835 to spring 1836, Texans of all backgrounds came together to fight for liberty and better government. It was a daunting struggle, and the Texas rebels endured hardship and defeat, most notably at the Alamo and Goliad. But with determination, Texan forces defeated Santa Ana, which ended the war and assured Texas' independence.



Texas governor, Rick Perry speaks to applicants in the Dallas MEPS ceremony room. *Photo by Avil Selk, Dallas Morning News*

"The Republic of Texas existed nine years until it joined the Union as the 28th state Dec. 29, 1845. The Lone Star State still has the distinction of being the only state to have once been a sovereign country."

The governor ceremonially cut a cake with a Navy applicant. Also as part of the ceremony, the governor presented Petty Officer 1st Class William McDowell and Staff Sgt. Steffan Crews with certificates for their military service in Dallas. Both McDowell and Crews were about to depart the MEPS.

Dallas MEPS commander, Lt. Col. T.J. Edwards presented the governor a USMEPCOM coin and coin box on behalf of the USMEPCOM and its commander, Col. Mariano Campos.

A number of location and national television networks, including CNN, and newspapers covered the event.

'Dallas applicants,' from Page 26

The crowd reverently maintained silence throughout the ceremony and for one minute after. Many thought of the thousands who have given their lives for the safety and well-being of our country.

Next the Colony High School Band played the national anthem and a U.S. Army C-7 Caribou flew over. Then Dallas MEPS Capt. Andrew White and retired Navy Capt. Rollie Stevens threw out the first pitch.



(Left) Young men and women take the oath of enlistment during the ceremony. (Right) Decorated members of the Dallas Veterans Association Military Order of World Wars attend the ceremony.



Family continues family tradition — via teleconferencing

“That’s my boy,” Grandma Betty Jo said, moments before the ceremony.

“So have they convinced you this is what you want to do?” his grandfather said. Preston smiled.

The 18-year-old was about to raise his right hand. Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Neil Coddington was about to swear in his grandson via teleconference at Raleigh MEPS.

Preston said he “always wanted to do it,” ever since he was a kid, seeing his dad in uniform and telling the stories. Preston is the son of 4th Fighter Wing Senior Master Sgt. Jeffrey Coddington, stationed at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Goldsboro, N.C.

The most senior Coddington has sworn in three children, a granddaughter and now his grandson. All Air Force.

Raleigh MEPS commander, Maj. Angela Hunter said it was a rewarding moment and something in which she was proud to participate.

This Coddington’s Air Force legacy of service and sacrifice continues.

(Above) Retired Air Force Lt. Col. Neil Coddington swears in his grandson, Preston via a video teleconference at Raleigh MEPS. (Right) Preston poses for a photo with his mother and father, Air Force Master Sgt. Jeffrey Coddington.



Former congressman, Cornhuskers coach, educational champion visits Omaha

Dr. Tom Osborne, former U.S. congressman from Nebraska and current University of Nebraska athletic director, visited the Omaha MEPS April 15.

Osborne was the head coach of Nebraska Cornhuskers football team for 25 years and was a three time national champion. He and his wife, Nancy, are the co-founders of the Teammates Mentoring Program, an organization that pairs mentors with youth from communities across Nebraska and Iowa with the goal of seeing them graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education. The Omaha MEPS education services specialist, Bill Duerr,

is active in the Teammate Program.

Osborne toured the MEPS and learned about modern-day military entrance processing. Osborne served in the Nebraska Army National Guard and Army Reserve in the 1960s. During his tour, Osborne met and talked with MEPS staff, liaisons and applicants about the positive influence that military service can have on today’s youth.

Lt. Col. Tim Stiansen, 1st Battalion and Omaha MEPS commander, presented Osborne with a framed and signed photograph of the Omaha MEPS staff, thanked him for his positive influence on today’s youth, and for his support for the military. Osborne thanked MEPS members



Lt. Col. Tim Stiansen, 1st Battalion and Omaha MEPS commander and Dr. Tom Osborne.

for their service and sacrifice to the country and reminded them of the United States armed forces’ proud tradition of selfless service, teamwork and leadership.

Iraqi dignitaries visit Baltimore

By Maj. Dan Hood
Baltimore MEPS Executive Officer

Twelve Iraqi dignitaries from the ministries of defense and interior visited the 12th Battalion Headquarters and Baltimore MEPS April 1.

The tour included a briefing followed by highlights of the “trail of an applicant.” Several in the party took the opportunity to have their blood pressure and eyes checked. The tour also showcased many of the MEPS automated processes including e-Security,

ASVAB testing and fingerprint collection.

Most of the visitors serve in a variety of human resources-related cabinet positions in the Iraqi government. The delegation began a two-week visit to the United States with five days of training with the Society of Human Resource Management in Alexandria, Va. The delegation’s visit culminated with meeting several key leaders



Continued

Top photo (from left) — Mr. Saadi, director of manpower for the Iraq Ministry of Defense, Retired Brig. Gen. Clint Anderson and Lt. Col. Chris Beveridge discuss the significance of the MEPS applicant swearing-in ceremony. Beveridge served as Mr. Saadi’s senior advisor during his recent tour in Iraq. Anderson was on hand to conduct his son’s enlistment ceremony. Second photo — Members of the ministries of defense and interior watch an enlistment in the Baltimore MEPS.



Army assistant secretary of manpower and reserve affairs visits St. Louis MEPS

Some of the St. Louis MEPS staff and the Army’s St. Louis Recruiting Battalion and Company pose for a photo with Thomas Lamont, the Army assistant secretary of Manpower and Reserve Affairs (center). Lamont oversees all civilian and military personnel interests for the active and reserve force. He serves as the Army’s lead for civilian and military manpower policy, human resources, the review of Soldier records, reserve and active component force-structure policy, the equal employment opportunity program and other matters affecting personnel. Sworn in a year ago, Lamont is a retired Illinois National Guard colonel with more than 26 years of service in the Judge Advocate General Corps.

from United States Army Recruiting Command’s 1st Brigade and the Baltimore Recruiting Battalion. The MEPS was their last stop.

Lt. Col. Chris Beveridge, 12th Battalion and MEPS commander, had worked with many of the visitors as the senior military advisor to the director of manpower, Ministry of Defense while deployed to Iraq from August 2008 to May 2009.

“My duties in Iraq have come full circle. It’s personally and professionally rewarding to see the director of manpower and his colleagues travel to the United States to learn about our human resources systems,” Beveridge said. “It’s great seeing old friends.”

Albany gets on board the Sailfish

The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Sailfish* welcomed aboard 30 Albany MEPS staff members on the MEPS' training day, May 14.

The mixed military and civilian MEPS staff learned first-hand about the Coast Guard's mission, operations, equipment and personnel.

"As far as we know, no other MEPS has engaged in this kind of training anywhere in the country," said Maj. Alfred Miller, Albany MEPS commander. "Obviously, we know the front end of the process, how to put people into the uniformed services, but our staff does not get to see the end product, the young man or woman who completed basic training and reported to a unit."

The cross-training consisted of two phases. In the morning, at the MEPS, Davies and members of his crew delivered a Coast Guard overview briefing and answered questions. The MEPS staff then traveled to the Port Authority docks, boarded the *Sailfish* and received a ship-specific briefing and tour. The Coast Guard planned to take the MEPS staff on a three-hour orientation cruise on the Hudson River, but the cutter was sidelined for maintenance.

The training was a hit. MEPS personnel commented on their appreciation for learning about the Coast Guard mission, operations, crew and vessel.

"The day provided an opportunity to observe the smallest branch and its technologies, which were extremely impressive," William Palmer said. "I enjoyed the professionalism of the Coast Guard crew. They exemplified the professionalism of their service."

"It was, without a doubt, the best training day this command has had in years," Hollis Stedman said. "The interaction with the crew was enlightening. The crew was proficient, professional and personable."

"Being ex-Navy, it was good to be on a ship again," Joe Rudinski said.

"It was interactive and informative and you can't beat the realistic aspect of this type of training. We got to see the 'finished product' of what starts here at the MEPS,"

Please see 'Sailfish,' Page 31



Albany MEPS staff watch as Coast Guard Boatswain Mate 2nd Class Mindy Poorman, left, a *Sailfish* crew member, demonstrates survival equipment at the start of a tour of the ship. Photo by Lori Van Buren, used by permission, *Times Union*, Albany, N.Y.



The Cutter *Sailfish*, in the Port of Albany.



A crew member stands by while Albany MEPS personnel tour the *Sailfish*.

'Ring of Fire' battalion holds inaugural leadership conference in Seattle

Fifth Battalion held its first conference for commanders and senior enlisted advisors in Seattle April 5-8, 2010.

The battalion includes the Anchorage, Honolulu, Portland, Ore., Seattle, and Spokane MEPS. The conference was a way to promote team building, distribute some information and have a little fun.

The battalion team building was especially important since two of the five stations are almost 3,000 miles apart. One of the outcomes was a re-branding of 5th Battalion from "Fire and Ice" to "Ring of Fire." The thought was that there is at least one volcano (active or dormant) in each state represented in the battalion.

Participants had a chance to interact with each other and share information. Some of the topics were the latest Student Testing Program goal setting, the Los Angeles and Portland STP Zone Blasts, and leadership lessons learned from a command group perspective.

Coast Guard Station Seattle gave attendees some unique professional military education. The commanders and SEAs got a better appreciation of the Coast Guard mission and an in-depth view of what Guardians do every day.

The station provided outstanding support and Chief Warrant Officer Jeffrey Niblett, helped obtain on site conference facilities and conducted familiarization tours.

These included a tour of the operations command and control center, a shipboard tour of an icebreaker, a ride on a Defender Class boat, and an exclusive Coast Guard museum tour. The battalion also took a behind-the-scenes



Everyone donned Mustang Survival Suits before a high-speed boat ride in Elliot Bay. Pictured from left to right is Maj. Kevin Kerby, Portland, Ore. MEPS commander, Lt. Cmdr. Brett Hinson, Seattle MEPS commander, 1st Sgt. Mcmanus Suzuki, Seattle MEPS senior enlisted advisor, Cmdr. Rich Obregon, 5th Battalion and Spokane MEPS commander, Cmdr. Chris Caston, Honolulu MEPS commander, 1st Sgt. Anthony Lockett, Honolulu MEPS SEA, Maj. Lydia Weatherspoon, Anchorage MEPS commander, 1st Sgt. Rodolfo Lozano, Anchorage SEA, 1st Sgt. Sean Kirk, Spokane MEPS SEA, and 1st Sgt. Craig Winbush, Portland, Ore. MEPS SEA.

tour of Safeco Field and Seattle's Experience Music Project. Special thanks to Juan Cruz, Seattle MEPS test coordinator, for his help on these last two tours.

'Sailfish,' from Page 30

Tim Noble said. "And how the young men and women have matured into professionals," he continued.

"I gained an even greater respect for the Coast Guard and the invaluable role they play in protecting our nation," Kathy Henry said.

The Sailfish is homeported in the New York and New Jersey harbor area. As part of Coast Guard Sector New York, its area of responsibility extends from northern New Jersey to Troy, N.Y. The Sailfish is on its way up the Hudson River on a law enforcement patrol, a frequent mission for Coast Guard vessels. Participating in the MEPS training is the kind of multi-tasking familiar to all who serve in the Coast Guard.

"Helping out another federal agency just makes sense," said Coast Guard Lt.j.g. Steven Davies, the captain of the Sailfish. "In the Coast Guard, you learn to be flexible and to take on multiple missions."

Editor's Note: Lisa Kalfin of the Albany MEPS, and Gaylan Johnson of the USMEPCOM Public Affairs Office contributed to this article.



Albany MEPS staff members commented that they were especially impressed by the Sailfish crew members.

Denver delivers another volunteer success!

By Lt. Cmdr. Jed R. Espiritu
Denver MEPS Operations Officer

The Denver MEPS staff reached out to its local community again, delivering Easter baskets to children of the Denver Children's Home.

Twenty children struggling with the effects of poverty, abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence received the baskets, which were aimed at reminding them that they are still loved.

Following their "Valentines for Veterans" event, the Denver MEPS Readiness Support Group decided to conduct an Easter egg hunt for needy local children. In researching local cancer wards, children's homes, and family shelters, the RSG found a willing participant in the Denver Children's Home.

The RSG realized the home's children, ages 12 through 18, may have outgrown the childhood excitement of an egg hunt. So the Denver RSG adapted and pushed forward. They decided to build personalized Easter baskets for the children's home.

The RSG sent out e-mails to MEPS staff and Interservice Recruitment Committee commanders, requesting help. They sent wish lists for items for the baskets, and a list of ages and genders of the 20 children. The IRCs then forwarded the request to get even more support.

The reaction was almost viral: members of Buckley Air Force Base, Denver Navy Recruiting Command,

MEPS liaisons, MEPS staff and even the MEPS lunch meal vendors volunteered to sponsor a child or donate items, producing 22 baskets.

Jennifer Ouzts, personnel officer at Navy Recruiting District Denver, was one of the first volunteers to respond and sponsor a child. "There were so many kids on the list, I really wish I had the time and resources to give to all of them," she said.

Ouzts said she was excited to participate. "What a great way to bring happiness and joy to a child's holiday.

Dixon said she felt that shopping for and creating her sponsored child's basket was a bonding experience. "It was an awesome life-learning experience for both of us."

Feedback for the event was phenomenal. Erica Bernard, Denver MEPS travel specialist, said, "Everyone that participated said that it was so much fun going out and shopping for a child that age." She suggested that, for many of the volunteers, the challenge of purchasing items for an older child was somewhat liberating.

"They felt great having to come up with ideas for the baskets and about not having to stick with the typical Easter gifts: bubbles, candy, and those five-cent toys," she said.

Bernard, who delivered the baskets on the morning of Easter Sunday, was greeted by a young boy asking, "Which one is mine? Which one do I get? When do we get to pick out our baskets?" She noted that the child was sincerely grateful, and that "it wasn't your typical child's reaction. He was so excited to be getting the basket — it was just heartbreaking to see his wonderful reaction."

Holly Kerr, Development Manager at the Denver Children's

Home, coordinated with the MEPS, stating that the children "absolutely loved them." She extended warm thanks to all the volunteers for their contributions, adding, "Each basket was thoughtfully put together and brought a sense of 'home' here, and the children were able to have a great holiday."

The children of the Denver Children's Home made thank you cards for all the volunteers.



Led by the Denver MEPS Readiness Support Group, MEPS staff, family members, liaisons and Interservice Recruitment Committee commanders all chipped in to make and distribute Easter baskets to children at a local children's home.

I'm looking forward to working with the MEPS again on future community outreach events."

Volunteers of various ages participated in the event. Kysha Dixon of the Denver Navy liaison office commented on the impact it made on her 9-year-old daughter. "Through this experience," she said, "not only did Kaysha learn how to be grateful and appreciate the belongings she has, but she also learned — first-hand — that it is better to give than to receive."



(Left) The father of Navy SEAL and Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Michael P. Murphy gently touches the hand-painted portrait upon its unveiling. Congress posthumously awarded Murphy with the Medal of Honor for valor and sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty in Afghanistan.

(Below) The keynote speaker, Rear Adm. Garry Bonelli, deputy commander of Naval Special Warfare Command, spoke of 'the brawn, the brains and the heart,' as key components of the ethos of the American service member, as recipes for victory in the 21st century and as the essence of Murphy's heroism.



New York dedicates portrait to Navy SEAL

By Capt. Michael Harper
New York MEPS Operations Officer

The New York MEPS staff celebrated the birthday of fallen Navy SEAL and Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Michael P. Murphy May 7, with a portrait-unveiling ceremony on the bluff at Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Murphy, who processed through the New York MEPS in 2000, was killed in action June 28, 2005. Congress posthumously awarded Murphy with the Medal of Honor for valor and sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty in Afghanistan.

He was the first service member to receive the award for actions in Afghanistan and the first member of the Navy to receive the Medal of Honor since the Vietnam War. Using a photograph, the artist, Yoni Park, of Studio Incamminati in Philadelphia, expertly reproduced Murphy's likeness on canvas. In both the portrait and the picture, Murphy looks the part of the quintessential Navy SEAL with his weapon slung in the "low ready" position, essential tactical gear attached to his vest, and a beard that grew from living outside the wire for weeks on end. When the portrait was unveiled, Murphy's father gently touched it and smiled as he recalled many memories of his son.

The ceremony, a somber yet inspirational memorial to a modern hero, gave the MEPS staff and its guests time to reflect on Murphy and the themes associated with him, his Medal of Honor, and his portrait.

Colonel Todd Garlick, Eastern Sector commander, USMEPCOM, echoed Abraham Lincoln as he commented on the importance of events honoring the heroes of our armed forces so that, "none shall be forgotten or left behind."

The keynote speaker, Rear Adm. Garry Bonelli, deputy commander of Naval Special Warfare Command, spoke of "the brawn, the brains and the heart," as key components of the ethos of the American service member, as recipes for victory in the 21st century, and as the essence of Murphy's heroism.

Retired Navy Cmdr. Ellen Emerson, a former New York MEPS commander, and the portrait donor, referred to the portrait as a symbol of the potential that lies inside of each applicant who processes through any MEPS. Murphy's portrait hangs near the entrance to the New York MEPS. It is the first thing that staff, recruiters and applicants see when they enter the building. His portrait signifies the relevance of USMEPCOM's mission, the importance of the voluntary commitment to military service and sacrifice service members make for the nation.



Six Heartfelt Stories; One Race

By Kathy Johns

“Have your mammogram done yearly!”

is what many women over the age of 35 hear from their primary care physicians. But do we do it? Many of us don't, and for different reasons. We may be too busy, we have to take the kids to soccer, we have to get home before the kids get off the bus, or we forget ... but we should.

For the Indianapolis MEPS, the Susan G. Komen race means breast cancer awareness and striving to find a cure. The Indianapolis MEPS staff members who walked, ran or volunteered in the Race for the Cure April 17, did so for different reasons.

MEPS operations officer, Maj. Catrina Cole, ran the race this

year with her neighbor, Joy, who was diagnosed with cancer. She also ran for two of her aunts, Krystal Burks who succumbed to breast cancer in 2006, and Medonia Paige who was diagnosed with breast cancer in February.

“I wanted to represent the MEPS and show support to our community” Cole said.

Karen Gill, budget technician, walked for her twin sister Kathy Snell, who has been a survivor since 1987, and for her mother Dorothy Peters who was an eight-year survivor before she died in 1995 from lung disease.



Maj. Catrina Cole (right) and her friend, Joy.



(Left to right) Alicia West-Colbert, Gena Wyatt, Ginger Gardner, Amanda Kissee.

“The outpouring of love, support and determination to fight, by those young and old to win against breast cancer was an experience that has definitely made a footprint in my heart forever,” Gill said. “I intend to participate again next year with my co-workers to show support.”

Valeria Wesseler, human resources assistant, walked for her sister, and for awareness of other types of cancer that have disabled others within her family.

“As I walked with Judy Chillous and Karen Gill, and saw all of the women and men who walked in the Pink Parade that are survivors of cancer for 50 years down to one year, I could tell that something is working to save all these lives. That is why I wanted to be there to walk and help, in whatever I could do,” Wesseler said.

Judy Chillous, lead human resources assistant, walked for her mother who is a survivor, diagnosed in 2000. Chillous explained that, since her mother's diagnosis, she has participated in the walk every year. She even registered her mother for the walk and mailed her the T-shirt so she could wear it the day of the walk.

“This year I walked for my mother and in memory of Gena's sister, and Karen and Val agreed to walk with me,” Chillous said.

“Participating in the Komen Race for the Cure is something that my husband and I usually do every year in memory of his mother and my aunt,” Amanda Kissee, test administrator said. This year Kissee's husband, who is deployed, was unable to attend, so she volunteered with co-workers Gena Wyatt, Ginger Gardner and Alicia West-Colbert. During the early morning hours, they helped with set-up, put out flags with the names of other women who have battled cancer. Kissee, Gardner and West-Colbert wanted to show their support for Gena Wyatt, as well.

“I volunteered for the Susan G. Komen event in Indianapolis because I've seen what breast cancer does to the mind, body and spirit,” Wyatt said. “On April 22, 2009, my sister Annette Henry lost her battle with breast cancer. Any opportunity to give blood, plasma or to further research for a cure for cancer, I will always provide support.”

Six heartfelt stories; one race. Indianapolis MEPS staff members supported the Race for the Cure, in honor of their co-workers, and in memory of those they've lost. They plan to continue to support the race.

Fort Dix Air Force family attends White House Easter Egg Roll

The family of a Fort Dix MEPS human resources assistant attended the annual White House Easter Egg Roll.

Kara Bowman, her husband, Staff Sgt. Shawn Knickerbocker, and their son are an active duty Air Force family, stationed at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J. Bowman is a human resources assistant at the Fort Dix MEPS. Shawn is assigned to the 621th Contingency Response Team.

Knickerbocker's commander sent an e-mail to Shawn and his flight crew, indicating they might have an opportunity to attend the event, by logging on to the Blue Star Families web site and contacting the local representative.

Many of the airmen in the flight crew thought it would be a long shot, but Knickerbocker and Bowman decided to give it a try. Two weeks later they received an e-mail reply from the Blue Star representative saying they were selected and their tickets would be arriving in the mail.

"We couldn't have been more excited!" Bowman said.

On April 5, they traveled to Washington, D.C. It was their son's first visit to the capital.

"He was in awe of everything and couldn't wait to see the White House," Bowman said.

After following the crowd off the Metro and finding their way to the event, the family overheard that more than 30,000 people would attend.

When she and her family looked out at the throng of people sprawled out on the White House lawn, "It felt as though they were all there at the same time," Bowman said.

She said the event was well organized, but there was a lot of waiting as well.

"It was a warm day and everyone was dressed in their Easter best, with the kids looking adorable," Bowman said. "Security was quick and efficient, and once the patrons passed each station, volunteers offered everyone



Kara Bowman, her husband, Staff Sgt. Shawn Knickerbocker and their son pose for a photo in front of the White House. The active duty Air Force Family were chosen to attend the annual White House Easter Egg Roll. Bowman is a human resources assistant at the Fort Dix MEPS.

cold organic beverages and energy bars, right in line with Michelle Obama's 'Let's Move' campaign!

"Shortly after arrival, the president and first lady came out and addressed the crowd, kicking off the event."

The event included a performance by the cast of Glee and activities for the children, including face painting, arts and crafts, gardening demonstrations, obstacle courses (Bowman's son's favorite), food sampling and music performances by Yo Gabba Gabba and Justin Bieber.

"When our group entered the lawn it was an amazing sight. We were incredibly close to the White House and it was beautiful," Bowman said.

Before leaving, each child received a souvenir wooden egg signed by the president and first lady.

"The White House Easter Egg Roll was an amazing experience and we are very thankful that we were selected to attend." Bowman said.



Kara Bowman's son poses for a photo. Bowman said her son's favorite part of the event were the obstacle courses.

Albany education services specialist retires after 30 years and 4 countries

After almost 30 years of serving others and crisscrossing the globe — to Germany twice, Italy, Korea, and Forts Monmouth, Buchanan and Knox — Albany MEPS education services specialist, Susanne Anderson retired June 30.

She entered government service in 1982 as a speech therapist in the Department of Defense Dependent Schools in Frankfurt, Germany. After finishing a master's of education in guidance and counseling, she began working as a guidance counselor for the Army Continuing Education System in Germany and Italy.

Upon returning to the United States in 1988, she held positions as an exceptional family member advisor at Patterson Army Community Hospital and as a budget analyst for the education center at Fort Monmouth, and as an ESS with ACES at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico.



Susanne Anderson (center) holds a plaque honoring her retirement as she poses for a photo with (front row, left to right) Albany MEPS commander, Maj. Alfred Miller, Lisa Kalfin, 1st. Sgt. Ricky Douglas, Joseph Rudinski, Capt. Sean Gill and other Albany MEPS staff members.

In 1995, she returned to Germany as an ESS and an action officer for U.S. Army Europe ACES in Heidelberg. There, she was responsible for supporting the remote ACES sites in Egypt, Southwest Asia and Kuwait.

“Susan began her incredible work as Albany’s ESS in April 2000, and has watched its ASVAB Career Exploration Program grow by leaps and bounds into a successful program that consistently achieves its student testing goal ahead of schedule year

after year,” Maj. Alfred Miller, Albany MEPS commander, said.

“Her thorough knowledge of education services and careers, coupled with her sense of mission accomplishment, has greatly contributed to the testing section receiving a ‘excellent’ rating each inspection year during her presence at Albany MEPS. She has been an integral member of the Albany MEPS team whose accomplishments have been many and greatly appreciated.”

Spokane honors its civilian employees

Six civilians who have been working at Spokane MEPS for 10 or more years received Achievement Medals for Civilian Service May 11.

Over the past five years, this group has helped Spokane achieve two MEPS of Excellence awards

and high marks on two major command assessments. Also, they have helped the MEPS exceed its Student Testing Program goal for three consecutive years. Their dedication to excellence and professionalism truly reflect great credit upon themselves, the Spokane MEPS, the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command and the Department of Defense.

Catherine Zitzelberger
lead medical technician

Mary Kaye Hayes
administrative services technician

Dorothy Yeager
lead human resources assistant

Fred Brenize, education services specialist

Tim Walsh, budget technician

Rosito Yalung
administrative support technician

(Left to right)





San Diego MEPS executive officer, Marine Corps Capt. Carlos R. Flores sprints to the finish of the 26.2 mile Bataan Death March at White Sands Missile Range, N.M.

San Diego executive officer takes on death march challenge

By John Stine
San Diego MEPS Education Services Specialist

More than 5,700 people lined up to begin a 26.2-mile foot race across high desert terrain, hills, pavement and sandy trails at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, March 21. San Diego MEPS executive officer, Marine Corps Capt. Carlos R. Flores was one of them.

This was the start of the 21st Annual Bataan Memorial Death March that commemorates the sacrifices, deaths and survival of 75,000 American and Philippine prisoners of war captured by Japanese forces during World War II.

In 1942 after the Battle of Bataan, captured military personnel and civilians were forced to march more than 60

miles, while enduring physical abuse, torture, and murder at the hands of the Japanese.

The week-long march resulted in up to 11,000 fatalities along the route. Historians regard this event as one of the most horrific war crimes in history. The Army ROTC Department at New Mexico State University began sponsoring the memorial march in 1989. In 1992, White Sands Missile Range and the New Mexico National Guard became co-sponsors of the event and it was moved to White Sands Missile Range, where it's been every year since.

Civilians, active duty military, retirees and wounded warriors flock to White Sands to participate in the active history lesson. People in Sunday's march come from all 50 states, as well as the Virgin Islands, Canada, Brazil, Cuba and the United Kingdom.

Runners choose between heavy or light categories to enter. The heavy category requires the runner to carry a 35-pound rucksack in the race. Military runners are also required to wear their service uniform. The memorial march sends messages on a number of levels. It's about the values and the warrior ethos of the armed forces. It's about the emphasis we place on physical fitness and resilience in our forces, but, most important, it's about those great men.

Twenty-three World War II veterans and survivors of the Bataan Death March were present for the race. They greeted runners at the starting line and were waiting for them at the finish. The race was not just about the competition, it was also about building camaraderie with fellow service members, and memorializing the sacrifices these veterans had to endure.

Upcoming Diversity Celebrations

August 26

Women's Equality Day

Celebrating Women's Right to Vote

September 15 - October 15

Hispanic Heritage Month

October

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

November

National American Indian Heritage Month

*"If we cannot end now our differences,
at least we can help make the world
safe for diversity."*

—John F. Kennedy

MEPS of Excellence

The MEPS of Excellence Program acknowledges military entrance processing stations that obtain a level of excellence based on criteria related to USMEPCOM core processes (medical, testing, applicant processing) and general military readiness.

The two requirements to become a MEPS of Excellence are:

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

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

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.

Second Quarter, Fiscal 2010

Category 1
Atlanta MEPS
Columbus MEPS
Phoenix MEPS

Category 2
Boston MEPS
Knoxville MEPS
Portland, Ore. MEPS

Category 3
Albuquerque MEPS
Portland, Maine MEPS
Shreveport MEPS

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Selectees

USMEPCOM has 11 selectees for technical sergeant (out of 35 eligibles). This is a 31% selection rate for USMEPCOM compared to a 20.85% selection rate Air Force-wide. The command's technical sergeant selectees (including MEPS and line number) are: (Eastern Sector) **Jason Caro, Cleveland MEPS (133)**; **Christie Bennett, Jacksonville MEPS (1,890)**; **Heriberto Garcia, Miami MEPS (2,059)**; **Amos Hoskins, Jackson MEPS (2,373)**; **Renita Dailey, Jacksonville MEPS (2,928)**; **Demetris Redfield, Fort Lee MEPS (6,995)**; (Western Sector) **Peter Tabalba, Portland, Ore. MEPS (444)**; **Dawn Thompkins, Houston MEPS (934)**; **Rodney Pitcher, El Paso MEPS (1,793)**; **Annie Grayson, Little Rock MEPS (2,531)**; **Trinidad Villa, Portland, Ore. MEPS (6,542)**. Also, **Michelle Abrahamsson, Boston MEPS (2,819)**, who arrived at USMEPCOM in June.

NEW FACES

BOISE MEPS

Kathleen Hannah

Education Services Specialist
Years of service: 14 federal
Last assignment: Training instructor, Centennial Job Corps, Nampa, Idaho
Diversions: Motorcycle road trips with family.
First impression: "Impressed. Employees are helpful and friendly and I'm looking forward to getting started."

FORT LEE MEPS

Molly Sippio, Medical Technician

Years of service: 6+ military, 3 federal
Last assignment: Licensed practical nurse (contractor), Kenner Army Health Clinic, Hohenfels, Germany
Education: Associate degree in general studies, LPN, March 2008
Diversions: "Watching my children's sports — football, basketball, track and baseball — walking, laughing and making people smile."

OMAHA MEPS

Monica Perry, Test Clerk

Years of service: 3 Army
Last assignment: Rock Island Arsenal, Ill.
Diversions: Tattoos, roller derby, concerts
First impression: "As soon as I walked in the door I was greeted warmly. All staff is very knowledgeable, professional and efficient. I am very impressed and proud to be a part of this team."

RALEIGH MEPS

Simone Chambers, Test Administrator

Years of service: 13 federal
Diversions: Praise team, reading, and outdoor sports
First impression: "Teamwork."

Steven Oberhausen

Test Score Technician
Years of service: 24 military, 5 federal
Diversions: Recreational sports and volunteering
First impression: "Excellent Team."

Petty Officer 1st Class Shirley Fielding

Medical Technician
Last assignment: Submarine Base Connecticut, Naval Branch Health Clinic
Years of service: 17
Diversions: Experimental cooking, weight lifting, collecting muscle building and health magazines
First impression: "Neat, new and great experience."

FOND FAREWELLS

ATLANTA MEPS

Petty Officer 1st Class Robert Blount

Assistant Medical NCOIC
Years of service: 20 total, 3 at Atlanta MEPS
Award: Joint Service Commendation Medal
Departing for: Retirement
Remembered for: Basketball challenges.

Former MEPS commander, now at headquarters, jumps at the chance to tour Marine One

By Christine Parker
Messenger Editor

It was “outstandingly special,” Robert Dalton said, of his recent opportunity to tour, and sit in the pilot’s seat of Marine One.

President Barack Obama and his family flew to their hometown of Chicago on May 24 and stayed through Memorial Day. The president was scheduled to participate in a ceremony at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Ill., May 28. In the meantime, Marine One was standing by.

Turns out Dalton’s soon-to-be daughter-in-law is not only a Marine, but also a mechanic on Marine One. As such, she can bring two people to tour the aircraft. That’s exactly what she did — invited her soon-to-be father-in-law and a friend. “You can’t take pictures when the doors are open,” Dalton said. “The aircraft is guarded 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

Dalton had to be vetted through a security process that included a background check. On the way to the aircraft, he had to pass through a gate, then ride through a single-lane security zone with heavily armed Marine Corps guards and Secret Service agents. He enjoyed riding on the tarmac, albeit in a “van.”

“I was kind-of surprised by the amount of security,” he said. There are also supporting aircraft for Marine One. Dalton saw at least three.

His almost daughter-in-law has been in the Corps about three years, now stationed in Quantico, Va. His son is in the Army, but stationed at the Navy Yard. The couple plans to get married “next Cherry Blossom season,” he said.



Marine One

FOND FAREWELLS

BOISE MEPS

Marine Corps Sgt. Bruce Jones

Assistant Testing NCO

Departing for: Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan

Remembered for: His expertise in all facets of the MEPS.



Dalton shared snapshots of the front and back of his box of presidential M&M's.

Dalton hopes there’s a “next time” for him to tour the aircraft and maybe then he’ll get a chance to see the President transferring into the vehicle sometimes referred to as the Beast, Rolling Tank or Cadillac One.

Dalton walked away with a great memory and a box of Presidential M&M's. Plain, not peanut.

“I’d do it again in a heartbeat,” he said.



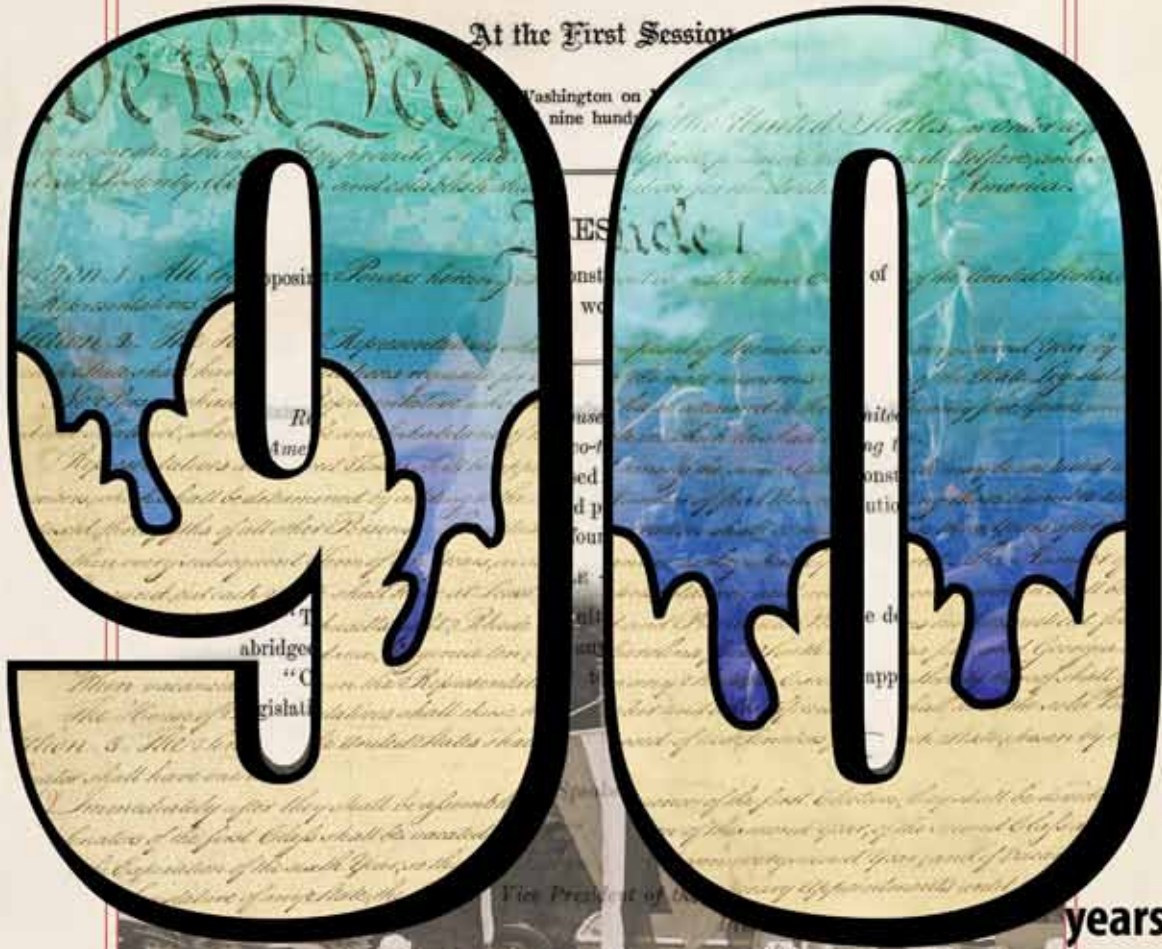
Robert Dalton poses for a photo while sitting in the pilot’s seat of Marine One.

Women's Equality Day

Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States of America;

At the First Session

Washington on
nine hund



August 26, 1920 – August 26, 2010
Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment