



# Messenger *Sharing information to reach a vision*

- 8 National Training Symposium focuses on problem solving
- 10 Eastern Sector welcomes Kidder as new commander
- 16 San Diego dedicates ceremony room to Air Cav officer
- 17 Phoenix, Kansas City host critical blood drives
- 24 Tampa testing overcomes



**Ragnar run**  
The "Short Bus Mafia," including a contingent from the Milwaukee MEPS, completed a long-distance relay from Madison, Wisconsin, to Chicago. See Page 18.

## Departments

|                       |              |                                 |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Profiles.....</b>  | <b>11-15</b> | <b>Special visitors.....</b>    | <b>19-22</b> |
| <b>Community.....</b> | <b>17-18</b> | <b>Unusual enlistments.....</b> | <b>23-25</b> |

### U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command

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# Commander's Commentary



**Col. Kathy J. Maloney**

I want to take this opportunity to simultaneously reassure you and challenge you.

The cover story in this issue of the *Messenger* features the command's inspector general. The article explains that the IG exists to ensure the command complies with the regulations that govern the successful accomplishment of our mission.

The challenge part comes as MEPS begin another year of the Career Exploration Program and strive to achieve our goals for the school year.

As constructed today, our IG inspection program is certainly the most constructively engaged I have ever seen. MEPS need not worry about the IG showing up at the doorstep unannounced. Instead MEPS are provided ample opportunity to prepare during the pre-announced inspection window by utilizing the USMEPCOM Organizational Inspection Program. The checklist used to inspect MEPS operations beforehand is available in the OIP Inspection Guide available on

SPEAR. Bear in mind that the guide doesn't cover everything, so consult the appropriate regulations and forms, also available on SPEAR.

Our IG staff members are experts on USMEPCOM regulations and policies. If the MEPS is in compliance with the guidance, the station will do well. If the MEPS is not in compliance, the inspectors will provide additional training in the area or areas where the standards were not met. After training, a follow-up inspection will determine if the discrepancies have been corrected.

There is nothing punitive about an IG inspection. It is simply a means to ensure USMEPCOM is delivering full value to the taxpayer.

While most people associate the IG with inspections, it also provides another valuable service through the Assistance and Investigations Division.

While the Inspections Division focuses on internal functions and interactions with our recruiting partners, the Assistance and Investigations Division works with all of our customers, from applicants and their parents to MEPS employees.

Parents and applicants may contact the division regarding issues ranging from concerns about the enlistment process to appealing medical disqualifications.

The division also deals with a wide range of areas internally. Keep in mind that the best way to resolve workplace difficulties is communication between the parties. However, there are situations for which an employee may

contact the IG. Many times the IG will refer complaints to an office better equipped to handle the issue, such as Equal Employment Opportunity or refer the issue back to the chain of command for resolution.

On the second topic, I want to reiterate that the Student Testing Program is vitally important. In addition to providing prequalified leads to recruiters, the program fulfills a vital need in our local communities. In these days of ever-tightening school budgets, many schools simply cannot afford to offer the sort of aptitude testing the Career Exploration Program makes available at no cost.

Our command has exceeded its Student Testing Program goal for nine consecutive years; your challenge is to make it 10. The number of schools testing has increased for five consecutive years; your challenge is to make it six. USMEPCOM has increased the number of recruiter leads for three consecutive years; your challenge is to make it four.

The Student Testing Program provides an invaluable service to millions of Americans. Lets maintain the momentum.

**Kathy J. Maloney**  
Colonel, USMC  
Commanding

No need to

# Panic

## The Inspector General is your friend.

By Danielle Lieber  
Messenger Associate Editor

You just received the call. The Inspector General is coming tomorrow! But you are not nervous, because you are prepared. You are ready.

As Benjamin Franklin once said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Only by being prepared will an inspection go well.

The key to a successful mission and inspection is the MEPS' Organizational Inspection Program, or OIP.

"If they (MEPS) go onto SPEAR, they can see everything they need to know as far as how to set themselves up for success," Nancy Holcomb, command inspector general, said. "Any



Photo by 1st Sgt. Fredrick Warren

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Garth Gimmestad, Oklahoma City MEPS commander, and Jason Creek, inspection division supervisor, review data in the Automated Time Attendance and Production System



Photo by Jason Creek

Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Garcia, assistant inspector general, and Air Force Master Sgt. Marc Marrero, medical NCOIC, review medical inspection results during the Oklahoma City MEPS inspection.

of the documents we use to inspect their programs and processes are available to them."

Among the useful documents available in the inspector general shared documents library on SPEAR are the OIP Inspection Guide, which includes the questions the inspectors will ask during inspections, and the OIP Pull List, a list of documents each functional area needs to have ready for the inspectors.

The OIP Inspection Guide is "not all inclusive," Jason Creek, the supervisory inspector general, said. MEPS should also use USMEPCOM regulations as guides to implement a successful OIP. All regulations can also be found on SPEAR by clicking Regulations and Forms on the homepage. Any questions about regulations and how to implement them can be directed to the Inspector General Office.

The alert call comes in on Monday of the week of inspection. This should not be a complete surprise, since the battalion commander has already notified the MEPS the inspection

Please see **IG**, Page 6



Photo by Jason Creek

Dexter Glasgow, assistant inspector general, watches with Army Capt. Richard Churak, Oklahoma City MEPS operations officer, as Sharon Degraff, processing technician, opens the operations desk.

## The answer to your problem is just a phone call away

USMEPCOM's Inspector General does more than conduct inspections.

The Inspector General Assistance and Investigations Division, a three-person operation, responds to many questions as well as addressing concerns and complaints.

"Anyone can call us," said John Tonne, lead assistant inspector general for the Assistance and Investigations Division.

Tonne said the Inspector General

Office receives calls ranging from applicants and parents to MEPS employees concerning individual medical disqualifications, for example, to employee concerns.

"A lot of our cases deal with medical disqualification of applicants," Tonne said. If applicants "want to appeal their evaluations, we show them the process, what they have to go through."

The Assistance and Investigations Division fields all calls, regardless

of subject matter. If they cannot help directly, they know where to get it. A caller may be referred, for example, to the Equal Employment Opportunity Office or an outside agency.

"We've only done one (investigation) this fiscal year," Tonne said. Many command issues are referred to sectors as non-IG investigations. Sectors then assign an officer to investigate.

Many problems could be resolved via communication between

the employees and the supervisors.

"The commanders could stop a lot of complaints right then and there," Tonne said.

IG team members are experts on USMEPCOM regulations and policies. They can assist with understanding and implementing regulations and policy.

If you have questions, complaints or concerns, call the Assistance and Investigations Division. They can help.

-- Danielle Lieber



Photo by Jason Creek

Sgt. 1st Class Garcia and Army Sgt. 1st Class Jason Hernandez, assistant inspectors general, discuss a complex finding.

**IG**, from Page 4

will happen during a six- to eight-week window. "We are making an effort to make battalions the center of gravity," Holcomb said. "It's a beautiful thing."

Making the battalions the center of gravity includes inspecting all MEPS in a battalion during the same time period. This enables the inspectors to give a better picture of how the battalion is doing overall to the battalion commander. The new schedule was implemented in October 2012. All battalions will have been inspected on this schedule by June 2015.

The team of five inspectors, or six if a MEPS is large, arrives on Tuesday around 8 a.m. They give an in-brief, which is also available on SPEAR. After the in-brief, four of the team split off into the various functional areas with their inspector checklists, while the team chief meets privately with the commander and senior enlisted advisor. "It's very methodical," Holcomb said.

"If you have an appointment, if you have school visits, or you



Photo by Jason Creek

Dexter Glasgow prepares his daily discussion notes for the third day of the inspection.

have to leave early, just let the inspectors know, and we will work around your schedule," Holcomb said. "The mission of applicant processing comes first."

The rest of day one consists of asking questions, reviewing files and observing processes. "We look at programs and processes," Creek said.

At the end of each inspection day, there is an out-brief to let everyone know how they are doing. "We have no secrets," Holcomb said.

"The second day is when we really get a good sense for how things are running at the MEPS," Holcomb said. The inspectors open with the MEPS on Wednesday, observing all the processes and procedures that go along with opening in the morning. From 9 to 10 a.m. on Wednesday, an Inspector

General Action Request, or IGAR, session is held. This is when MEPS employees can talk with an inspector about any concerns they have.

These concerns can be addressed anonymously, Creek explained. The purview of inspector general investigations are "fraud, waste and abuse," he said.

Thursday is much the same. The inspectors arrive between 7:30 and 8 a.m. and split into their functional areas with questions, observations and checklists.

"We don't deviate from the guide, unless something leads us away," Creek said. When lead away from the inspection guide, results are recorded as "Z Findings," Creek said. If a Z Finding keeps reappearing at different MEPS, it is added to the guide.

Once the inspectors

“**My mantra is: If you have a successful command inspection program, you will have a successful inspection.**”

– Nancy Holcomb  
USMEPCOM Inspector General

return to headquarters, they compile their findings. Seven to 10 days later, the inspector team chief has a teleconference out-brief with the sector, battalion and MEPS commanders.

Functional areas found to be not-in-compliance are addressed through training, which is scheduled as soon as possible. Ninety days after training is completed, the window for an unannounced follow-up inspection opens.

If three functional

areas are found not-in-compliance, the entire MEPS is reinspected after training. Follow-up inspections focus on the sub-functional areas that were not-in-compliance. However, all functional areas are subject to review.

"We don't change the way we do business," Holcomb said. "My mantra is: if you have a successful command inspection program, you will have a successful inspection."



Photo by Jason Creek

Sgt. 1st Class Garcia and Army 1st Class Latonya Langston, senior supply sergeant, prepare their daily discussion notes for the third day of the inspection at the Raleigh MEPS

# National Training Symposium focuses on practical problem solving in group discussions

By Daniel Oprish  
Instructional Systems Specialist  
Photos by Darrin McDufford  
Public Affairs Specialist

The 2014 National Training Symposium was held April 7-11 at the I.G. Brown Training and Education Center in Knoxville, Tennessee.

The event provided training and guidance on USMEPCOM issues and topics to better equip MEPS commanders and senior enlisted advisors to carry out their missions.

The training methods were lectures and small group discussions.

Problem-based learning is a form of small group discussion. Advocates of problem-based learning believe that



National Training Symposium participants listen to an explanation of a problem set before moving to breakout rooms.

learning is enhanced when learners engage in solving real-world problems collaboratively.

This is unlike some large group learning events when the learner is lost in anonymity and often receives information passively.

Because of time constraints and the large audience size, many participants never get to share ideas and experiences.

The smaller, problem-based learning setting allows all in the group to share experiences and ideas and learn from others with similar or different experiences.

Unlike larger group lecture-based learning where the presenter is sometimes the focus,

problem-based learning is learner-centered.

In a problem-based learning setting, the problems being solved are relevant and important to the learner, creating an environment where the learners are motivated to participate.

The problem-based learning scenarios began in the auditorium with an explanation of the scenarios given by the subject matter expert in a large group setting.

From there, the small groups moved to breakout rooms.

The 12 battalion commanders, assisted by their senior enlisted advisors, were facilitators, keeping the discussions on track, adhering to timelines and ensuring all participants were engaged.

During sessions, MEPS commanders, MEPS senior enlisted advisors and headquarters staff dissected real-world challenges encountered in the MEPS.

When the the small groups completed the problem solving exercises, they reconvened for an out brief.

Representatives from each small



Marine Corps Maj. Sean P. Keenan, Des Moines MEPS commander, asks a question during a panel discussion.

group explained the group's findings and were supported by proponent subject matter experts who provided the "textbook" answer.

The Human Resources Directorate problem sets dealt with civilian personnel issues that MEPS commanders or senior enlisted advisors might see in their stations.

One problem had the small group examine the case of the employee who found a bracelet in the MEPS but was seen later wearing it.

When confronted, she said the bracelet was a gift. But when law enforcement officials were called to investigate, she changed her story and admitted that



Marine Corps Master Sgt. Mark Kennedy, 11th Battalion and St. Louis MEPS senior enlisted advisor, cofacilitates a discussion about an applicant accident at the MEPS with his small group.

she had found the bracelet.

The small group had to decide what charges, if any, be brought against the employee.

The Medical Plans and Policy Directorate problem sets dealt with a surly chief medical officer, an applicant accident at the MEPS and the six-hour processing window.

One problem had the small group examine an accident that an applicant had at the MEPS.

After the blood draw, the applicant passed out in the restroom and broke his nose when he hit the floor.

When he regained consciousness, he told the medical technician he had just come from the lab where he had blood drawn.

The question posed to the group was how they would reduce the number of injuries after a blood draw at this MEPS, which had been plagued by five accidents the month before.

Finally, the Resource Management Directorate problem sets delved into the use of Standard Form 1034, Public Voucher for Purchases and Services Other Than Personal. This topic was selected because of problems experienced by some users when

submitting the form to the Field Support Branch.

Each group was given examples of properly and improperly completed packets.

After reviewing each packet, the group determined whether the packet was complete and should be accepted or was incomplete and should be rejected.

The symposium provided participants an opportunity to share experiences, collaborate with counterparts, solve real-world problems and meet with headquarters and sector leaders.

The success of this year's symposium will lay the foundation of the next symposium, tentatively scheduled for the middle of next fiscal year.



Marine Corps Col. Kathy J. Maloney, USMEPCOM commander, welcomes attendees to the National Training Symposium.

## Eastern Sector welcomes Kidder as its new commander

Eastern Sector, USMEPCOM welcomed its new commander, Army Col. Stuart A. Kidder, in a July 3 change of command ceremony at USMEPCOM Headquarters.

The sector bade farewell to Army Col. Neal F. McIntyre, who will become the military assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness and Force Management in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Marine Corps Col. Kathy J. Maloney, USMEPCOM commander, officiated the ceremony.

Kidder was most recently a student at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Before that, he served as commander of the 30th Adjutant General Battalion (Reception) at Fort Benning, Georgia.

“Army General George S. Patton Jr., once said ‘Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity,’” Maloney said.

“Just as Colonel McIntyre allowed his military entrance processing station commanders to accomplish their missions without being told ‘how,’” Maloney said, “he proved his abilities by getting the job done with self-determined planning and execution.”

During McIntyre’s two years in command, Eastern Sector:



Army Col. Stuart A. Kidder is “piped aboard” for the change of command ceremony.

- Processed more than 250,000 applicants.

- Completed more than 326,000 full physicals and 278,000 medical inspections.

- Administered more than 745,000 enlistment Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery tests and 148,000 special purpose tests.

- Tested more than 351,000 high school students during school year 2013–14 under the Career Exploration Program.

Maloney welcomed Kidder and outlined the challenges ahead of him.

“You arrive at USMEPCOM with a record as a leader of the first order,” she said. “You now assume command of Eastern Sector, a team of professionals. Lead them well as you go about the nation’s business of evaluating the men and women who choose to become tomorrow’s soldiers, Marines, sailors, airmen and Coast Guardsmen.”

As McIntyre said goodbye, he left attendees with some parting words. “The last few years, while serving as commander of Eastern Sector, have allowed me to gain a greater appreciation for one of my favorite quotes by Arthur Ashe, ‘Success is a journey not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome.’”

Kidder greeted the command with encouragement. “Sector teammates: I couldn’t be prouder to serve with you in these very challenging times in the Department of Defense. It’s very humbling to be selected for this position. I realize that it is my good fortune to work with the incredible service members and civilians that make this opportunity possible for me.”



Army Col. Neil F. McIntyre relinquishes command of Eastern Sector.

### Eastern Sector Commander



Col. Stuart A. Kidder

**Hometown:** Bradenton, Florida. “It’s in southern Florida on the west coast. I grew up on the Gulf of Mexico.”

**Fond childhood memories:** “It’s a great place to fish.” He fished for tarpon, snook and redfish.

**Fish story:** “The biggest fish I ever caught wasn’t down there. The biggest fish I ever caught was in Alaska. It was a halibut.”

**What was your favorite toy when you were a kid?** “A BB gun.” He liked being able to shoot. He shot cans and says he was “pretty good.”

**Big boy toys:** The shooting hobby is still part of his life. “I like weapons. I’ve taken some marksmanship classes. One that I took a couple years ago at Fort Benning was entirely with BB guns. You get to a point where you’re shooting objects in the air. I eventually shot a BB with a BB in the air. It’s called instinctive shooting.”

**Education:** Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Northwestern State University; Master of Science degree in organizational management from University of La Verne, California; Master of Science degree in military art and science, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama; and Master of Science degree in national security strategy from the Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

**Why did you join the Army?** “My sister was in the Army. She played in the Forces Command band. It was a good opportunity for me to get money

to go to college. I primarily joined for three years to get the GI Bill. An opportunity came along for Green to Gold in ROTC and the simultaneous membership program with the National Guard. That’s how I completed my college.”

**Previous assignment:** Student at the Army War College. Before that he was commander of the 30th Adjutant General Battalion (Reception), Fort Benning, Georgia. “The customer of MEPS. They came from MEPS to me.”

**Favorite assignment:** “I don’t know that I had a favorite assignment. I had some that I enjoyed the job more than others and places I enjoyed more than others. I really loved being stationed in Alaska. I would have to say being a battalion commander, having that autonomy and having an organization where I could be part of the team and help develop the team. Company command was a lot of fun, too. I was a company commander in Korea and again in Germany. I did rear battalion command in Germany as well. I’ve had more than my fair share of command opportunities.”

**Future military career plans:** “I don’t know. I was excited about coming here. The Army seems to figure that out for me pretty well. I just kind of do what they tell me to go do. I’ll have almost 30 years in by the time I get done with this job.”

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** I bought a house in Washington State, actually. It’s in a town called Shelton, pretty near Olympia. I’ve thought about maybe going back there and working as a lobbyist in the state or something like that. Probably not with the government, but I might. If not that, then I’ll go work on the floor at Cabella’s selling fishing poles and shotguns.”

**What do you do when you’re not a commander?** “I like to hunt. I like to fish. Spend time with my kids. I’ve hunted from Africa to Alaska. I like the pursuit.”

**What’s your leadership style?** “It changes. I’m not an autocrat. I’m not a democrat. I can be an autocrat. I can be a democrat. I consider myself to be more of a team player. As a leader, you’ve got to be a follower as well. The key to that is if you take care of your subordinates, you don’t really have to

worry about yourself because they’ll take care of it for you.”

**What do you like best about your job?** “The diversity of the organization. Since you’ve got the eastern half of the United States, you have everything from people who live up in Maine to Puerto Rico. If everybody looks and acts like I do, you’re not going to get creative thought. Having that pool out there is a massive treasure for MEPS in general. You can get a lot of different viewpoints from a whole lot of different cultures.”

**Thinking joint:** “The only joint time I had was when I was deployed in Iraq. It was a joint billet the deputy (combined joint human resources officer) for 1st Multinational Corps Iraq and U.S. Force Iraq.” He was deployed 2009-10.

**What do you order when you eat out?** “I eat anything. I’m probably more of a carnivore than an herbivore. I order whatever looks good at the time. I’ll eat anything. I love seafood from growing up on the water, but there’s nothing better than a good steak, too.”

**What’s the best present you ever got?** “My daughter gave me a really nice tie at Rockefeller Center under the big Christmas tree on Christmas Day last year.” It was green.

**When they make a movie of your life, who plays you?** “Me. I don’t know, but it will probably be somebody like Adam Sandler. It’s going to have to be somebody with a sense of humor.”

**Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you.** “I played the violin for a long time growing up and I was fairly decent at it, but I’ve put it away, although I still have it and I break it out every now and then.” He played regularly until he was about 20.

**What is your favorite all-time movie?** “That’s kind of a tossup. I really like ‘13 Days.’ It’s about the Cuban Missile Crisis. I can watch it over and over again. As a kid, I fell in love with the ‘Wizard of Oz.’ It’s timeless.”

**What is the last book you read?** “I am reading ‘Brave Decisions: Profiles in Courage and Character from American Military History.’ It’s kind of obscure. I picked it up in an antiques shop down in Maryland. It was writ-

ten by a lieutenant colonel. It's about leaders being put in a position where they have to make a tough call."

**Mentors:** "I have a bunch of them. I try to take something from all the people I work with – the good and the bad. Some of my best role models were the worst leaders. You look at them and say that does not work. Early on, as a lieutenant, I worked as a protocol officer in Alaska for General Dave Bramley. He is the epitome of a gracious leader. I sure took a lot away from him. There are tons of them. (Maj. Gen.) Barrye Price. I worked for him. He's a great guy. Pat Rice, a colonel over in Alaska right now. I reach out to him a lot."

**What is your ideal vacation?** "I really enjoyed hunting in Africa. I'd like to hunt in South America, like in Argentina. I'd like to go fishing in New Zealand. It's going to involve the outdoors. I just don't know where yet."

### USMEPCOM Liaison



Maj. Justin Devantier

**Hometown:** Flint, Michigan. "It was very blue collar when I was growing up. Everyone's parents were either nurses, teachers or shop workers. It was pretty community oriented, blue collar, not necessarily wealthy at all. Going back now is discouraging because all the places I knew growing up are gone."

**Fond childhood memories:** "Family time. We were pretty active in sports, my brother and my stepbrother and stepsister. We were all pretty active in sports. Mainly baseball and football. We were all pretty athletic. It's funny. Growing up in Michigan, we were all Yankee fans. I blame that on my stepdad. I excelled playing baseball through high school. Then joining the military, I started playing softball." In high school, he pitched and played shortstop. As he got a little older moved to the outfield.

**What was your favorite toy when you were a kid?** "Probably my red fire truck. I thought I was going to be a fireman when I grew up. It was a big Tonka hook and ladder. I think my mom probably has it in the attic somewhere."

**Diverse family:** "I joined the military when I was 17. My mother used to be a war protester. With a lot of pain in her heart, she signed me away at 17. I did it because my grandfather was a POW during World War II." His mother signed for him to enlist "because she knew that was what I wanted to do and it was probably the best opportunity for me and probably conversations between her, my grandfather and my stepdad."

**Education:** Bachelor of social work degree from Morgan State University. Pursuing a master's degree in human resources.

**Why did you join the Army?** "My grandfather was my hero. When I was a kid, he had books about World War II. I would just dive on the floor when I went over there. With his stories and all the war books he had, that kind of molded me into wanting to go into the military. My older stepbrother and stepsister went in a couple of years before me."

**Role model:** His grandfather was in the 82nd Airborne Division. "He had basic training at Fort Meade, Maryland. Then they shipped him over to England where he participated in Operation Market Garden. On his first mission with the 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, he was shot down in a glider over Holland." He was a prisoner of war for about a year and a half. Operation Market Garden was the unsuccessful allied operation in Germany and the Netherlands to cross

the Rhine River. At the time, it was the largest airborne operation of the war.

**Previous assignment:** Captains' Career Course instructor at the Adjutant General School, Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

**Favorite assignment:** "My first assignment. I was stationed in Germany in February 1989-August 1991, so I was there before the Berlin Wall came down. I was there when the wall came down and during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. There were a lot of transitions. I had just turned 18 before going to Germany, so that was my first time out in the world."

**Life as a liaison:** "My responsibilities are to communicate the MEPCOM commander's vision, the things that are important to her, the things that are relevant to her, to our higher headquarters, which is OSD. That means providing input at OSD meetings on behalf of the commander. That means realizing ahead of time some of the things that OSD is dealing with and how that might affect the MEPCOM mission. The throughput, whether it's the commander to OSD or OSD to the commander, I have to make it palatable. I have to make it understandable so we're all going forward at the same pace. The best way to put it is I'm kind of like a double spy."

**Future military career plans:** "I have an approved retirement date. That will be effective 1 June 2015."

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** "I'm trying to figure that out. I'm going to see what's available in DoD and outside the government. Right now, I'm getting a feel for the different opportunities that might out there. I'll pursue any opportunity. If I stay in government, I might like to stay in (the Office of the Secretary of Defense) under Personnel and Readiness or in the Department of Veteran Affairs with my experience with the Post 9-11 GI Bill policy."

**What do you do when you're not at work?** "I like to travel. I'm pretty busy right now. I just bought a new home in D.C., so I'm busy furnishing that. I do travel. I cook. I play softball. I golf. I've been playing golf for about three years and every chance I get I'm either on the driving range or the golf course trying to get my game to a respectable level."

**In the kitchen:** "I like to grill. I

get fresh vegetables, fresh food, fresh herbs and spices. I'm a pretty healthy eater. I like the simplicity of fresh food and vegetables."

**What do you like best about your job?** "Particularly in this job, where there are two interests I have to feed, one at the OSD level and one at the MEPCOM level. And the independence of me being able to use my resources outside of OSD or MEPCOM. The freedom to use them, to be successful and to see some of the successes we have had. It has really been worthwhile and helpful to me. This has been, at the highest level, one of the most enjoyable assignments."

**What do you order when you eat out?** "I try not to eat out much, but I'll get maybe salmon or something baked and something leafy."

**What's the best present you ever got?** "Until recently, I never really celebrated birthdays. I don't have any kids, so I don't do holidays that much. I think the best present I get is spending time with family. I don't get to do it that often, because I'm kind of removed from where they are, but that makes everything worthwhile. That's the only present I ever ask for."

**What's your guilty pleasure?** "Cigars. I smoke Partagas Benjis. I'm trying to see if they have an updated version of the master blends."

**Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you.** "I'm actually an A Type. I'm pretty laid back for the most part and I really haven't had the opportunity to be an infantryman again, which I used to be. When I tell friends that are maybe not so familiar with the military, I was in the infantry and I started the war over in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom). I was part of the group that basically snuck through the Western part of Saudi Arabia and into the war. There are a lot of things I've done that I don't talk about – or won't or can't. I was a brand new lieutenant. I was an infantry platoon leader. Anyone in the Army will tell you that's the most powerful position in the military – being an infantry platoon leader in combat."

**What is your favorite all-time movie?** "I have about four of them. Most of them include Tom Hanks. 'Saving Private Ryan,' 'Forrest Gump,' 'Philadelphia' and 'Shrek II.'"

**It's 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon. What are you doing?** "I'm probably in the middle of brunch. If it's football season, I'm an hour into a game."

**What is the last book you read?** "How the Irish Saved Civilization' by Thomas Cahill and 'Rastafari: Roots and Ideology' by Barry Chevannes. The Chevannes book was the first full documentation of the Rastafarian movement. "It was in-depth, referenced. It's not mystical or spiritual. It was very in depth with names and why it came about and who was involved. One of the guys in my platoon was reading 'How the Irish Saved Civilization.' He gave it to me and said 'Check this out.' It had to do with the plight of the Irish in America and other places. I kind of related it to African-Americans. There were so many similarities."

**What is your ideal vacation?** "I want to go to southern Spain – Marbella. I've been trying to get there for a couple years, but it's always been overcome by events. My favorite place so far is Barbados. I've been a couple of times. I have a special relationship with Barbados, because when I came back from OIF I spent eight days there by myself contemplating everything in life. I actually made a 10-year plan that I accomplished since then."

### USMEPCOM Senior Enlisted Advisor



Command Sgt. Maj. David Howard

**Hometown:** San Bernardino, California. "However I'm a military brat. My father retired out of the Air Force

after 30 years." His father retired as a chief master sergeant. He first served in security police and later cross-trained into personnel. Sergeant Major Howard was born at Travis Air Force Base, California. Growing up, he lived at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California; Carswell Air Force Base, Texas; Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada; McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey; and Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

**Fond childhood memories:** "I loved being a military brat. You get the best of both worlds. You get the great schools, the great education, but at the same time you get the involvement of the community. We were always involved in sports and all sorts of things that took place throughout the community."

**What was your favorite toy when you were a kid?** "Probably the fuzzy head GI Joe – the original GI Joe. GI Joe with kung fu grip. The original GI Joe was an action figure that came with all the accessories, all the uniforms, all the different gadgets. Up to that point, I don't think there was anything that existed like that. And of course later on when they came out with Big Jim and Big Josh, which were action figures where they make the muscles and the muscles would grow. I think everybody during that time had a Stretch Armstrong, but I don't think they lasted long."

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in business administration (magna cum laude) from Averett University, Danville, Virginia. Currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration degree from Columbia Southern University.

**Why did you join the Army?** "It's a funny story. Originally when I went down to the MEPS to join the service, I interviewed and tested with the Air Force. The Air Force told me the two jobs they had were cooks and security police. I didn't want to be a cook and I didn't want to be an SP. The Army said 'Hey, we've got something good for you.' So I joined the Army as a 71 Lima. The term they used a long time ago was clerk-typist."

**Previous assignment:** "Command sergeant major for the special troops battalion in Korea. It's the Army's largest battalion. It consisted of 10 subordinate elements and two major commands – U.S. Forces Korea

and 8th Army, a total of 4,685 people.”

**Favorite assignment:** “I can say all of my assignments have been good. I don’t think I’ve had a bad assignment with the exception of one. I’ve never heard anyone say anything positive about Fort Polk, Louisiana. Out of all the assignments I’ve had, that is probably the least favorite assignment.”

**Future military career plans:** “Right now I’m sitting at 31 years. After this assignment, my mandatory retirement is right at 32 years. This time next year, I’ll be done.”

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** “I haven’t figured that out yet, but I do know I want to go home and spend time with family. I’ve been away from them for 32 years.” He plans to settle in the San Bernardino area.

**What do you do when you’re not a senior enlisted advisor?** “I’m involved with things that go on in the church. If you talk about hobbies, a long time ago, because of injuries I suffered playing basketball and football, the doctors told me I couldn’t play any more, so I picked up the hobby of playing the guitar. I love music.” He plays a wide variety of music, but favors classic rock from the late ‘60s and early ‘70s by groups like America and Bread.

**What’s your leadership style?** “There are millions of books about leadership, but none of them have the true and right answer. What I’ve learned about leadership over time, based on great mentors, is that first of all, you have to be true to who you are and true to what your character is. You can never be a successful leader being something that you’re not. Your soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines are believers in transparency, and they can see when you’re trying too hard to be something that you’re not and when you’re being genuine and authentic. I believe leadership first has to be authentic and genuine. Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines have to genuinely know that you’re going to take care of them in order for you to get the absolute best out of them. I believe, as far as a leader is concerned, as a senior leader, it is my responsibility to get the best out of my people and not necessarily for them to show me their best. I have to

identify the strengths and weaknesses of everyone in the organization. I have to put them in places where they are able to be successful, not necessarily force them into positions and make them perform.”

**What do you like best about your job?** “If you talk about USMEPCOM specifically, there is no other organization across the DoD enterprise that does what we do. You can take a pilot from the Air Force, transfer them from one base to another and it is basically ‘pull and plug.’ You can take an infantryman from one organization and put him in another unit, and it’s basically, ‘pull and plug.’ USMEPCOM is the only entity in the Department of Defense that does what we do every single day, which is assess young men and women for their fitness and qualification into the armed forces.”

**What do you order when you eat out?** “I’m a hamburger connoisseur. Anything dealing with hamburgers, My favorite around here is probably between Pertillo’s and Five Guys. My all time favorite, and you can only find it out west, is In-N-Out Burger. Everybody knows about it. You haven’t had a burger until you’ve been to In-N-Out.”

**What’s the best present you ever got?** “I usually don’t ask a whole lot for myself. Most of the things that are near and dear to me have specifically to do with family, friends and relationships. I think the most important gift I ever received was when I came back from my deployment in 2007 and 2008 and my family asked me what I wanted and what I wanted to do when I got back. My only desire was to have all the family come together – grandparents, parents, nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles and everybody else. We probably had 200 plus family members come together.” He was deployed to the Phoenix Academy just north of Baghdad as the first sergeant. “It was for special operators and the military transition team. They would come there for their final 10 days of training before we set them loose to join with their Iraqi counterparts and serve with them side-by-side.”

**What’s your guilty pleasure?** “I have an appreciation for old cartoons. If you talk about the Bullwinkle and Rocky show, most people don’t appreci-

ate the humor, but I could sit back and watch those all day long. I have an affinity for old cartoons, old television.”

**When they make a movie of your life, who plays you?** He was initially stumped, but later did what any good husband does. He asked his wife. “After going home and speaking with my wife she proclaimed, ‘Dennis Haysbert, the gentleman from the All State commercials.’ There you have it, if she says it, it must be true.”

**Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you.** “For the most part, when we as seniors get to the level we are, people tend to think that we’re naturally extroverts. That’s not necessarily the case. For me, coming up in my family, the youngest of three, I wasn’t one that necessarily talked a lot or socialized a whole lot. My ability to talk and communicate wasn’t necessarily ingrained in me. It was something I really had to work long and hard at.”

**What is your favorite all-time movie?** “Forrest Gump.’ If you look at it in its truest essence, just shows the simplicity of life. It’s about a man who cared about people. He didn’t care about the money he made, he didn’t care about how big he became. The only thing that was important to him was his family and the friendships he had over time. Whether it was with Lieutenant Dan, whether it was with Bubba, whether it was with Jenny, whether it was with his mom or whoever the case may be. Those were the things that were most important to him. He was a simple man of humble beginnings.”

**It’s 2 o’clock Sunday afternoon. What are you doing?** “I’m probably in the middle of taking a catnap.”

**What is the last book you read?** “‘David and Goliath.’ It’s not one particular story. It’s a number of different stories how the underdog has overcome in different situations.”

**What is your ideal vacation?** “To go to either Fiji or Belize. All the other places are common. You hear people talking about going to Australia, the Bahamas, Jamaica and Hawaii. I’m a fan of beautiful scenery and beautiful locations. Fiji and Belize are two I’ve done some research on and have to put on my list of things to do.”



**Hometown:** Little Rock, Arkansas “I was born in Cleveland and raised in Little Rock. It’s the state capital, but it’s small. Country. Low income. Not much capitalism. I think Tyson Foods is largest employer.”

**Fond childhood memories:** “I had a ball, man. Mostly sports. Local activities. I was always outside playing because the weather was pretty good. My parents were divorced, but we were able to see both, so no issues with that. My dad had seven kids and my mom had five so it was a pretty large family.”

**What was your favorite toy when you were a kid?** “The Green Machine. You get on the big wheel and spin it around. That was the toy.” He played basketball and football. “I was pretty good at it. In football I played tight end and some defensive end. In basketball, I was a small forward.”

**Education:** Bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Troy University. Pursuing a master’s degree in human resources from Columbia Southern University.

**Why did you join the Army?** “Actually, the Marines contacted me first. They turned me off because they asked me how big I was. I was like ‘What does size have to do with me being a Marine?’ They wanted the guy who was 6’2,” 210 pounds – the perfect

Marine. The Air Force, I don’t think I scored high enough on the test. The Navy, I couldn’t swim. So I was left with the Army.”

**Previous assignment:** “I was battalion command sergeant major at the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York. I deployed to Afghanistan 2011-12 with that unit. All my units were dispersed across Afghanistan. Lot of traveling. We spent most of our time out visiting troops.”

**Favorite assignment:** “Drill sergeant at Fort Leonard Wood. It was great being a drill sergeant there because you didn’t have much spare time and there wasn’t very much to do anyway. You get to see men and women who have no association with the military. Getting to see them transform in nine weeks is exceptional.”

**Future military career plans:** “Right now it’s up in the air. As you make sergeant major, especially command sergeant major, your options are limited. When the military says you go, you go. Most people think you’re at the top and you have a voice in your career. Actually, you don’t. I’m due to rotate no later than 2016, but I could rotate any time before then, wherever the military says it needs me.”

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** “I love coaching. I had an opportunity to coach some AAU teams at El Paso, Texas, and Augusta, Georgia. I’ll probably do that. Coaches gave me the leadership ability I have, the drive. I’d like to get back to that. I had a good time doing that.”

**What do you do when you’re not a senior enlisted advisor?** “Work on my degree. Spend time with my son. Go to movies. I love to ride motorcycles. I love water. I can’t swim very well, but I can dog paddle.” His son is 19 and is about to attend Olney Junior College in Southern Illinois.

**What’s your leadership style?** “I’m kind of diverse. I think I’m a people person. I get straight to the point. I don’t like to sugarcoat things to people. I tell them ‘This is how it is. And here’s how we fix it.’ I’m not aggressive, per se. I tell them ‘I’m just an old country boy. It doesn’t work that way. Here’s how it should be.’ I’m respectful. Very humble. Just to be a senior enlisted advisor in any branch of service, is excellent. They could have selected 20 people other than me to be

at USMEPCOM. You see the pictures on the wall. A lot of those people went to the pinnacle. Just to have the opportunity to be here is an honor.”

**What do you like best about your job?** “To be in the times we are in right now, to have men and women say, ‘I still want to join the military.’ Every day the number of people who actually qualify is reduced. Just to see them come in and say ‘I want to be a part of this service.’ When we were at war, we were giving them a lot of money. At that time, the military was a viable option. Now we’re 40 years into a volunteer Army. That’s difficult. To hear people say ‘I want to serve my country,’ that’s the best part.”

**What do you order when you eat out?** “I love food. I love Joe’s Crab Shack. It’s one of my favorite places. I love Buffalo Wild Wings and Dave and Buster’s. I’ve been deployed a lot I’ve been to Korea, Germany, Croatia, Iraq. There is not a variety of food I wouldn’t taste.”

**What’s your guilty pleasure?** “Watches. I have watches. I love watches. If I see a watch on someone’s wrist, I will admire it. I’m a watch freak.”

**When they make a movie of your life, who plays you?** “A lot of people would say Denzell Washington, but I’ll say Will Smith. He’s a humble guy. He’s a comedian, but he also plays serious roles.”

**Tell me something people would be surprised to know about you.** “In high school, I had to take two years of ballet. I’ve even got a photo. It’s on Facebook. I can’t believe somebody posted it.”

**What is your favorite all-time movie?** “Brothers.” The characters grew up together, but now they all have different views.

**It’s 2 o’clock Sunday afternoon. What are you doing?** “During football season, I’ll be watching a game, hopefully. During baseball season, probably cleaning up.”

**What is the last book you read?** Colin Powell’s biography. He also liked books by Mike Krzyzewski and Tony Dungy.

**What is your ideal vacation?** “Belize. Just to have a good time. Enjoy the beach, enjoy the water, enjoy the scenery. Either that or Australia.”





### Milwaukee relay team runs from Madison to Chicago

Six Milwaukee MEPS members participated as team "Short Bus Mafia" June 6-7 in the Madison-to-Chicago Ragnar Relay, a 200-mile venture.

The two-day, one-night event was one of 16 Ragnar Relays run in the United States and Canada.

Running for the MEPS were Army Maj. James Douglas, 13.3 miles; Army Capt. Matthew Miller, 18.1 miles; Army 1st Lt. Hedy Vincent, 18.7 miles; Senior Chief Petty Officer

Jeremy Gonyer, 16.4 miles; Gunnery Sgt. Jeremy Sims, 20.7 miles; and Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Purtee, 13.2 miles.

A Ragnar Relay team consists of 12 members; the other six "Short Bus Mafia" team members came from a Madison-based Army Reserve unit.

All together, 525 teams took part in the relay. All runners wore vests, head lamps and tail lights for safety reasons along the 200-mile course.



The "Short Bus Mafia" from the Milwaukee MEPS after completing the Madison to Chicago Ragnar Relay.

Each participant ran three legs, starting out in Madison, Wisconsin, at 1:00 p.m. June 6 and ending in

Chicago's Lincoln Park June 7 at 8:00 p.m.

Two local charities benefited from the proceeds from the event.



### Fort Dix supports Special Olympics

Members of the Fort Dix MEPS military and civilian staff, family and friends pose after volunteering to support the 2014 USA Special Olympics by setting up and providing about 6,000 meals to hungry athletes, coaches and care providers during a barbeque June 20. With nearly perfect temperatures for a cookout near Trenton, New Jersey – sunny, low 80s and low humidity – the "Unified Festival" preceded the closing ceremony after a week of competition. Army Sgt. Monique Sims, medical technician, worked with organizers to credential, train and outfit the team. Danielle Lee, the niece of Army Capt. Arnold Adams, MEPS executive officer, said, "I had an awesome time working the event and felt like I was part of the staff."

### Submariners lend model, poster to promote 'silent service'

Several members of the United States Submarine Veterans Inc. Perch Base visited the Navy Liaison office in the Phoenix MEPS June 19.

A model of a Seawolf class submarine and a framed poster of a Virginia class submarine were presented for display to promote the silent service and spark interest in the submarine force in the Navy's future sailors.

The items will remain on indefinite loan from the local chapter of the USSVI due the efforts of Chief Petty Officer Heather Pittman, Phoenix MEPS senior navy

enlisted classifier and an associate member of the USSVI.

The items were presented by Richard Kunze, Rick Simmons, Mike Hinderliter and Chuck Emmett of the USSVI Perch Base.

The USSVI is a charitable organization whose purpose is to perpetuate the memory of their shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country.

The organization seeks to educate third parties about the services their submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made the freedom and life-



Members of the United States Submarine Veterans Inc. pose with the poster and model they loaned to the Phoenix MEPS.

style Americans enjoy today possible.

During the event, Pittman was also awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for her superior performance during the four years she has been assigned to Navy

Recruiting District Phoenix.

Master Chief Petty Officer Edwin Stone, Navy Recruiting District Phoenix presented the medal and thanked Pittman for her service as she and her family move to Naval Air Station Lemoore, California.



Photo by John Bering

The Phoenix MEPS staff poses at the Arnie F. Maine control desk. Phoenix MEPS welcomed Maine's friends and family to change the name of Phoenix MEPS, control Desk, to the "Maine Desk." Maine died April 20 at the age of 67. He spent 25 years in the Air Force, retiring as a master sergeant in 1991. He worked in operations element at Phoenix MEPS for more than 14 years. Survivors include his wife Lin, son Bill, daughter-in-law (and honorary daughter) Lydia, stepson Erik, daughter-in-law Lynn, sister Linda Maine Griffin, grandchildren Sadie, Trinity, William, Joshua and Ethan, and extended family, co-workers and friends.

What's your story?  
Contact Messenger staff to tell us about it  
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## Under secretary of defense tours San Diego; thanks staff, applicants for commitment

By John W. Stine  
Education Services Specialist

Jessica Garfola Wright, under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, visited the San Diego MEPS April 3.

After a briefing from Navy Cmdr. Kyle Vernon, MEPS commander, and her senior staff, Wright observed an enlistment ceremony for six applicants. She thanked the newly enlisted members for their commitment in serving our nation.

At the end of the tour, the secretary thanked Kyle and the control desk staff for taking time out of their busy work schedules. She also presented two MEPS staff members with Department of Defense service coins.



Jessica Garfola Wright talks with the San Diego control desk staff.

## Sports

### Shreveport sergeant wins national boxing championship

One of Shreveport MEPS' test administrators has been crowned the Women's Super Heavyweight Division National Boxing Champion.

Sgt. Donvana Lee went toe-to-toe with Janet Munoz, the reigning champion, who stood nearly 6 inches taller and outweighed Lee by 50 pounds.

Lee won the semi-finals by knockout and took the title by unanimous decision.

Lee completed another

about the next day that counted toward the number of sanctioned bouts she needs to apply for the Army Boxing Team – a dream she's had since she began boxing three years ago.

The national championship title was another of her dreams, and she made it come true.

When she's boxing Lee has only one thing in mind – winning.

"There's only going to be

one side of the story, and that side is going to be mine. I enjoy the part of the story where I won and you got knocked-out."

Lee is a member of the South Carolina National Guard 741st Quartermaster Company. She is approaching the end of her second year of Active Duty Operational Support at the MEPS.

Since being assigned to the MEPS, Lee has

supported the medical and testing sections. She is a well-rounded soldier who gives back to the community regularly while also serving as the president of the Shreveport MEPS Family Readiness Group.

Lee is a member of Ray Paxton's Youth Boxing Club in Shreveport, where she has been training while patiently waiting for willing opponents because women are rare in her weight class.

"My mother has always supported everything I do – boxing, basketball or whatever sport or activity I participate in," Lee said.

Lee has been very humble about her recent success, and the Shreveport MEPS staff has shown overwhelming support for her.

Lee plans to enter the Ray Paxton Youth Boxing Open Invitational in Shreveport and the Ringside International Tournament.

"I have a 10-fight-goal to reach by the end of the summer. Hopefully someone in my weight class will show up," Lee said.



Sgt. Donvana Lee, left, closes in on her opponent, Janet Munoz, during the championship bout.

## Military attachés learn about U.S. processing in Phoenix

Michael Hodgson  
Lead Health Technician

Military attachés from 33 foreign countries visited the Phoenix MEPS April 28, including 11 general officers.

Major General Robert L. Walter Jr., the Army's assistant deputy chief of staff for intelligence, officially escorted the group.

The visitors were welcomed and briefed by Navy Lt. Cmdr. Kelly A. Maksem, Phoenix MEPS commander.

Maksem gave an overview of USMEPCOM's mission and nationwide assets and a more detailed brief on daily operations in the MEPS.

The officers were

interested in MEPS functions and impressed by USMEPCOM's operations nationwide.

Following the briefing the visitors divided into three groups for a tour of the Phoenix facility, escorted by the commander, executive officer and operations officer.

In the medical section, the supervisor briefed the visitors on medical processing, demonstrated the vision and hearing exams, and orthopedic maneuvers.

The visitors were interested in the height and weight standards for each service and were impressed with the way the MEPS processed drug and HIV



Photos by John Bering

Air Force Maj. Michael L. Eide, Phoenix MEPS executive officer, explains applicant processing to foreign military attachés during their visit.

samples with an emphasis on protecting the applicant's personal information and sample accountability.

In the testing section, the education services specialist, test control officer and test score technician provided insight into enlistment eligibility, aptitude assessments and the Student Testing Program.

The visitors were intrigued by the career exploration portion of the Student Testing Program.

The fact that all students in Arizona are required to have a four-year career plan after high school impressed them as did the way the Student Testing Program supports the state requirement while providing recruiters with student contact information.

Perhaps the highlight of the tour was when each group asked to see an enlistment ceremony.

Considering that many of the countries represented conscript people into their militaries, they were impressed that not only does America have an all-volunteer force, but applicants swear allegiance to the country and constitution and not an individual or specific service.

They were impressed with the symbolism and sincerity of the oath of enlistment ceremonies.

The groups reunited at the end of the tour for a final question and answer session and expressed their gratitude for the warm reception and outstanding exchange of information.



Navy Lt. Cmdr. Kelly A. Maksem, Phoenix MEPS commander, briefs the visitors.

### Defense Department's senior enlisted member pays a visit to Jacksonville MEPS

Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan Battaglia, senior enlisted advisor to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited the Jacksonville MEPS April 14.

Battaglia received an overview briefing on the MEPS, performed a

ceremonial enlistment ceremony, toured the station and conducted an all-hands call with the MEPS staff and liaisons. The enlistment contracts were signed by a commissioned officer, as required by law.

Battaglia's areas of interest included paperless

testing, the most common reasons for medical disqualifications, whether obesity was an issue, why testing numbers fluctuated from one year to another and why some schools do not use the Career Exploration Program.

He expanded the

question on testing to include Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's query of whether the Defense Department "missed the mark" during last year's furlough. The MEPS staff explained that, while the MEPS staff was exempt, the individual test administrators were not.

### Marine recruiting commander visits Anchorage, meets staff

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Mark A. Brilakis, commanding general of Marine Corps Recruiting Command, arrived at the Anchorage MEPS June 16 to visit the Marine liaisons and meet the MEPS staff.

He was accompanied by Sgt. Maj. Michael A. Logan, the recruiting command's sergeant major; Maj. Joel C. Schumacher, Portland, Oregon, Recruiting Station

commander; and Sgt. Maj. Dennis Nash, the station's sergeant major.

Brilakis toured the MEPS and spoke with staff members in each section. He thanked them for supporting his command.

Brilakis also said he was happy the relationship with the MEPS is strong, and if the MEPS staff needed anything, he was there to help.



Left: Leroy Price, Anchorage MEPS human resources assistant, explains his duties to Maj. Gen. Mark A. Brilakis, commanding general of Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Above: Sgt. Maj. Michael A. Logan, Marine Corps Recruiting Command sergeant major, talks with Capt. Carlos M. Lopez Anchorage MEPS operations officer, and 1st Sgt. Jodi E. Woods, Anchorage MEPS senior enlisted advisor, about how important the MEPS is to the Marine recruiting mission.

### Sector EO advisor visits Phoenix

By Maj. Michael Eide  
Phoenix MEPS Executive Officer

A site visit by Senior Master Sgt. Ray Anderson, Western Sector equal opportunity advisor, July 28-31 completed a Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey for the Phoenix MEPS.

The survey was conducted June 16-30. Anderson visited the MEPS to help answer questions and clarify perceptions found in the survey.

The survey consisted of five categories that identified positive and negative factors and proposed corrective actions.

Seventy-four percent of the MEPS staff took part in the survey, double the participation in the last survey.

The results of the survey and the site visit showed the MEPS is doing well and has a positive rating and a healthy human relations climate.



Senior Master Sgt. Ray Anderson, Western Sector equal opportunity advisor, briefs the Phoenix MEPS staff on its climate survey.

### Normandy veteran attends grandson's enlistment ceremony

By Douglas Freeman  
Human Resources Assistant

Normandy Army veteran Wilson "Bill" Colwell attended his grandson's, Pvt. Vincent Colwell, enlistment ceremony at the Phoenix MEPS and shipping to Fort Benning, Georgia, for basic training.

At 15, Bill Colwell lied about his age to join the Army in 1943, where he was assigned as a member of the 101st Airborne Division and parachuted into Normandy during the D-Day Invasion.

He went on to fight in several other major battles during World War II, including Sainte-Mere Eglise, and was the second man of the Allied Forces to walk through the gates of the Landsberg concentration camp.

After completing his Initial Entry Training, Vincent Colwell plans to attend both Airborne and Ranger schools, so he can follow in his grandfather's footsteps.

He knows he has big shoes to fill, but assures everyone he is ready for the challenge and will carry on the Colwell legacy with pride and honor.



Normandy veteran Bill Colwell and his grandson, Pvt. Vincent Colwell. Photo by John Bering



### Final re-enlistment

Master Chief Petty Officer Michael Diiani takes to oath of enlistment alongside shippers at the Phoenix MEPS. Diiani enlisted at the Phoenix MEPS 27 years ago and wanted to take the oath for his final re-enlistment at the same place. He re-enlisted May 7. All the shippers were Navy and were excited to have master chief standing with them in ranks.

## Tampa staff adjusts on the fly to reach student testing goal

By Myra Entendencia  
Tampa MEPS Testing Coordinator  
It's all about preparation.

Tampa MEPS keeps its staff trained and ready to step up and continue the student testing mission as circumstances require. That readiness, plus the volunteer spirit of Tampa MEPS personnel, paid big dividends during the government shutdown of 2013.

Unlike other MEPS personnel, who were exempted from the Sep. 30, 2013 shutdown's prohibition on reporting to work, Tampa's test administrators, upon whom the student testing program normally depends, were not exempt. Tampa MEPS, which serves more than 250 high schools in 19 Florida counties, faced the challenge of accomplishing the student testing mission without the services of its normal test administrators for an unknown period of time.

The MEPS staff quickly responded, developing a voluntary plan to continue the mission during the crucial testing month of October. As a result, the Student Testing Program continued seamlessly through the shutdown. No recruiter leads were lost. No school had their testing rescheduled.

The MEPS commander, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Michael Giglio, was first to volunteer. He and Larry Daley, MEPS education services specialist, made the first school visit, to Land O Lakes High School, on Oct. 1, 2013.

Upon his return, Giglio sent out an email to his staff requesting additional volunteers to follow his example. Within 15 minutes, Army Capt. Sandra Johnson, MEPS operations officer, presented Alberto Velasquez, test control officer, with a plan providing every previously scheduled school with a certified test administrator.

Mavis Matthews, MEPS human resources assistant, a former Office of Personnel Management test administrator, was one of the first to map out routes to local high schools scheduled to test in her area. She tested Lake Mary High School, which had last tested in 2001. Daley and the author had actively worked this school previously to make certain was scheduled in 2013. Matthew's test administrator experience, customer

service skills, and positive attitude saved the school from having to reschedule.

Military members representing all sections of the MEPS volunteered to take on testing sessions. Senior enlisted advisor Army First Sgt. Gerald Bentley, volunteered. Allen Brown and Lewis Williams of the testing section, as well as Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Jordan Gilbreath, and Army Spc. Zachary Graf maintained the MEPS testing section throughout the critical shutdown period.

Through communication with Interservice Recruitment Committee members, who recognized the importance of maintaining Student Testing Program momentum, area service recruiters also pitched in the effort by providing necessary test proctors.

The station planned the utilization of two government vehicles to transport testers without violating the shutdown-imposed travel restrictions.

Fortunately, the shutdown was lifted on Oct. 4, 2013, and normal operations resumed thereafter. Tampa MEPS

achieved 100 percent of its testing goal the following March.

Despite last year's furlough, followed by the government shutdown, despite earlier building construction and two relocations of the testing section during peak testing seasons, training and preparation have served Tampa MEPS well as it continues to achieve its testing mission.



Army Capt. Sandra Johnson, operations officer; Navy Chief Petty Officer Jeffery Williams, operations NCOIC; Mavis Matthews, human resources assistant; and Larry Daley, education services specialist.



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Tyra, medical NCOIC; Lt. Cmdr. Michael Giglio, MEPS commander; Spc. Zachary Graf, test administrator; Allen Brown, test administrator; Develin Lyons, test coordinator; Alberto Velasquez, test control officer; Myra Entendencia, test coordinator; Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Jordan Gilbreath, test administrator; and 1st Sgt. Gerald Brantley, Tampa MEPS senior enlisted advisor.

## Little Rock holds Memorial Day ceremony for shippers

By Army Capt.  
Karen M. Santos Rojas

The Little Rock MEPS conducted a special Memorial Day enlistment ceremony for shippers May 23 at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History.

The ceremony honored the 108 Arkansans who have fallen in combat since September 11, 2001.

More than 250 family members, friends and community leaders attended as 25 shippers from the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Arkansas Army National Guard were administered the oath of enlistment.

The Arkansas National Guard shippers were administered the oath by

Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe.

The new active duty service members were administered the oath of enlistment by Marine Corps Col. William H. Reinhart, Western Sector commander.

Marine Corps Master Sgt. Mark Kennedy, 11th Battalion and St. Louis MEPS senior enlisted advisor, sang the national anthem.

The Little Rock MEPS hosts two special enlistment community engagements each year in conjunction with Veterans Day and Memorial Day to build bonds with the community and highlight the mission of the MEPS as a part of the accessions triad.

Retired Air Force Col. (Dr.) Roy Mathews, chief



Photo by Tiffany Jackson

Army Maj. Adam Grim, Little Rock MEPS commander, addresses the applicants and their families before the oath of enlistment.

medical officer for the Little Rock MEPS, is well known in the Arkansas military community.

He has been the CMO at the Little Rock MEPS since November 2003. During

his tenure he has processed more than 42,000 applicants through the medical section.

The MEPS honored him as the oldest military veteran at the station.

## Fargo takes it out to the ball game for Military Appreciation Night

The Fargo MEPS staff took part in the 2014 Fargo-Moorhead Red Hawks Military Appreciation Night July 7.

The event was held during a baseball game between the Red Hawks

and the Gary South Shore Railcats.

Army 1st Sgt. Cathy Lazo, MEPS senior enlisted advisor, coordinated with Vincent Dicks, military outreach specialist with the Fargo Military Service

Center, and Jessica Lee, government affairs and advocacy manager for the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce, to conduct an enlistment ceremony before the game.

The ceremony included

16 recruits from the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and North Dakota and Minnesota National Guard.

Army Capt. Alphonso Williams, MEPS executive officer, conducted the ceremony. Army Sgt. 1st Class San'Tora Mathis, noncommissioned officer in charge of the MEPS operation element, prepared the applicants for the ceremony.

The night's other events included a hot dog picnic for military members and their families, inflatables, Red Hawk's mascot Hawkeye, player autographs and photos, sky divers, a color guard and a P-51 flyover.

The first pitch was thrown out by a 92-year-old World War II veteran.

Several MEPS staff members attended the event in honor of military members past and present.



Applicants march onto the field under the watchful eye of Army Capt. Alphonso Williams, Fargo MEPS executive officer, during Military Appreciation Night.

## San Diego applicant saves boy from drowning in hotel pool

By John W. Stine  
Education  
Services Specialist

It was supposed to be a relaxing evening at the San Diego MEPS applicant hotel, but it turned into anything but for Navy applicant Chaney Bryant and a 6-year-old boy when Bryant saved the boy from drowning.

The evening of June 18, Bryant was relaxing poolside at the San Diego Marriott, preparing to take the oath of enlistment for the Navy Delayed Entry Program the next day. He couldn't foresee the event that would make him a hero.

He saw the boy struggling

in the pool and immediately took action.

"I don't think I'm a hero, I don't think it was a hero situation. I just happened to be at right place, at the right time, for the right person."

Clearly, the quick reaction of this future Navy member saved the boy's life.

Bryant responded without hesitation by diving into the pool and pulling the young boy to safety and immediately administered CPR. The child was taken to a nearby hospital where he made a complete recovery that evening.

At the MEPS the next day, Navy Cmdr. Kyle Vernon, commander of the 7th Battalion and the San



Navy Cmdr. Kyle Vernon, 7th Battalion and San Diego MEPS commander, presents a coin to Navy applicant Chaney Bryant.

Diego MEPS, presented a 7th Battalion coin.

Vernon said Bryant is exactly the type of individual

the Navy wants and reflects the quality of applicants coming through "Freedom's Front Door."



(U.S. Air Force photo)

### In appreciation

Lt. Col. Timothy Maxwell, 338th Recruiting Squadron commander, presents a certificate of appreciation to Perry McDonald, transportation liaison at the Indianapolis Military Entrance Processing Station, May 5. McDonald was acknowledged for his willingness to help the squadron and complete the mission in any way possible. Even with the extreme winter weather, he ensured all shippers were taken care of with transportation despite multiple canceled flights.



### Silver anniversary in Lansing

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Adam J. Diaz, Lansing MEPS commander, accepts a proclamation from Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero declaring April 3, 2014, Lansing MEPS day. Bernero was the keynote speaker at the anniversary ceremony. He spoke of the positive and substantial impact the MEPS has had on the community over the past 25 years. The MEPS also received a proclamation from declaring April 3 Lansing MEPS day from Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder.

## Baltimore NCO receives Purple Heart for injury suffered in Afghanistan



Lt. Col. Megan B. Stallings, 12th Battalion and Baltimore MEPS commander, pins the Purple Heart Medal on Sgt. 1st Class Angeleek Courtney during the ceremony.

The noncommissioned officer in charge of processing at the Baltimore MEPS received the Purple Heart Aug. 8 for injuries sustained while serving in Afghanistan.

Lt. Col. Megan B. Stallings, 12th Battalion and Baltimore MEPS commander, presented the medal to Sgt. 1st Class Angeleek Courtney during the ceremony.

Courtney was injured while serving with the 122nd Aviation Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, while deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan, in July 2012.

The medal and certificate were forwarded to the MEPS for presentation by the Army Human Resources Command.

## Civilian calls it a career after 27 years with Beckley MEPS

By Senior Master Sgt. Debra L. Wright  
Beckley Senior Enlisted Advisor

V. Marie Collins, test score technician, retired May 2 after 32 years federal service.

Collins worked in the operations, headquarters and testing sections at the Beckley MEPS since October 1987.

Collins worked in several positions at the MEPS. She was also ready and

willing to assist any section when called upon.

Her retirement ceremony was held in the drill hall of the National Guard Armory in Glen Jean, West Virginia.

## MEPS of Excellence

Fourth Quarter, Fiscal 2014

Category 1  
Jacksonville  
Los Angeles  
Tampa

Category 2  
Charlotte  
Indianapolis  
Memphis

Category 3  
Albany  
Beckley  
Boise  
Omaha

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

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.

# National Hispanic Heritage Month

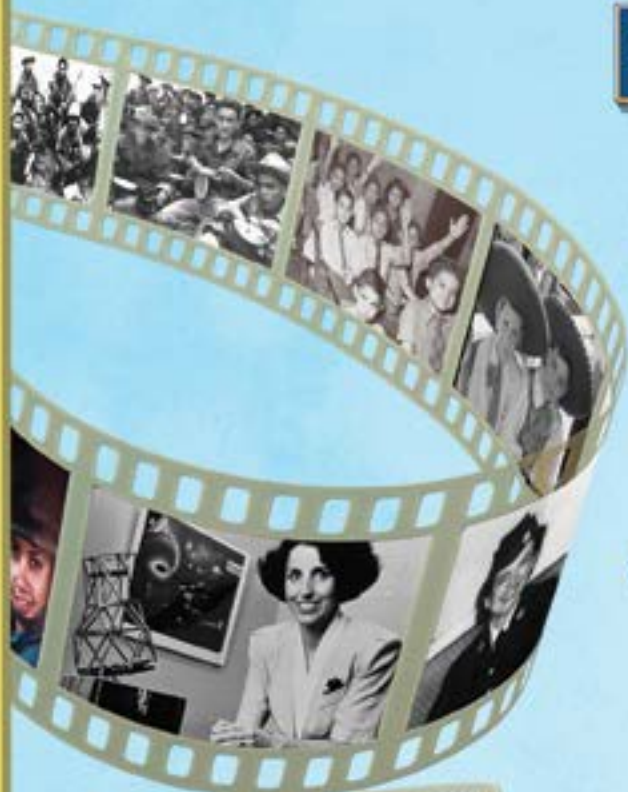
SEP 15–OCT 15, 2014

## HISPANICS:

*A Legacy of*  
**HISTORY**

*a Present of*  
**ACTION**

*and a Future of*  
**SUCCESS**



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