



Base Realignment and Closure

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Post to provide medical training for all services Plan combines curricula, keeps service-specific training intact

By Michelle Tan
Army Times

More than 24,000 Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors will soon be trained here every year under a massive project to move enlisted medical training for all the services to one location.

The Medical Education Training Campus, the result of the 2005 base realignment and closure process, will receive its first students in June 2010 and be fully operational in September 2011, said Col. Karen Cozean, the Army action officer for the METC.

The campus will provide training for combat medics, corpsmen, radiology technicians and other specialties.

Only aerospace medicine— for those trained to care for flight crews, for example – will not be housed here. Instead, that school will move from Brooks City-Base, Texas, to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

“The intent is to integrate the curriculum as much as possible but keep some of the service specific training intact,” Cozean said.

While Fort Sam Houston already is home to Army combat medic training, to create METC, the Air Force will move its training from Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, and the Navy will move its training from the Naval Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, Ill., the Navy School of Health Sciences in San Diego and Portsmouth, Va.

“This is all an attempt to not only make it easy for students but keep the training integrated,” said Col. Kristan Wolf, the Air Force action officer for the METC.

The effort also will save the services money, said Capt. Lori Frank, the Navy action officer for the METC.

The METC will be led by a brigadier general who will serve as the commandant and a colonel who will serve as the deputy commandant. An E-9 will serve as the senior enlisted adviser.

The first commandant will be a Naval officer, the first deputy commandant an Army colonel and the first E-9 an Air Force chief master sergeant. These positions will be rotated through each service, Cozean said.

Officials at the METC expect to teach 7,800 students every day – about half from the Army, 34 percent from the Navy and the rest from the Air Force – and about 24,000 every year, Cozean said. These students will be taught and supported by 1,400 faculty and staff.

When the first classes begin, some of the most basic introductory courses will be taught as one, with Soldiers, Airmen and Sailors learning together in the same class before splitting off into their service-specific training, they said.

“There will be courses that are common to all three services,” Wolf said. “What we want is not just to save money but when we go into theater, we want to be interoperable.”

More than 129 different training programs will be moved to the METC, Frank said.

“I think the training my corpsmen will be getting is not just as good, its going to be ten times better,” she said. “No other time have they been able to update their curriculum based on best practices.”

Officials are also implementing the latest medical research and lessons learned, Frank said.

Students at the METC can be there anywhere from four weeks for students learning to be patient administrators, to 52 weeks for the longest program, cytology, the study of cells.

There has been some skepticism about how to consolidate training from each service into one campus, the action officers said.

However, they said the training will be improved and the end result will be the same.

“A lot of services think we’re going to take away their heritage, but we’re doing our best to keep (that) intact,” Frank said.

The Campus



Photo courtesy Joint Program Management Office