

TR2 Terror Response Technology Report

Business Opportunities for Critical Infrastructure Protection

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DoD Biometrics Tech Demo Planned

The Pentagon's Biometrics Management Office (BMO) and the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) plan to kick off a pilot demonstration this spring using finger scan technology to improve process communications and enhance the security and integrity of standard military enlistee processing. If all goes well, MEPCOM hopes to move beyond the demonstration to a command-wide deployment while the BMO hopes it would serve as a model for other Defense Department and U.S. government organizations. MEPCOM, with help from the BMO, expects requirements definition for the upcoming demo to be completed in March, at which time the BMO's Biometrics Fusion Center will begin design and development leading toward deployment of the first systems. The design and development phase is expected to include the acquisition of finger scan technology although nothing has been decided regarding potential vendors.

The cost of the demonstration is put at about \$2 million. The Pentagon's Defense Manpower Data Center will also be aiding in the demonstration. Plans call for deployment of the biometric systems at six Military Entrance Processing (MEP) stations and 21 associated Mobile Examining Team (MET) sites in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. First up will be the MEP in Pittsburgh, Pa., and three of its 13 METs, beginning in the May/June time frame. Once the bugs are worked out there, follow on deployments should quickly occur in Baltimore, Md., Chicago, Honolulu, Los Angeles and San Juan, Puerto Rico. MEPCOM hopes to have all the demonstrations underway by September although that could slip several months, Ted Daniels, chief of the Assessment Division at MEPCOM's Operations Directorate, tells TR2. Each of the cities chosen for the demonstration represents its own set of challenges, with San Juan and Honolulu having communications problems given their remoteness and some of the others because of their size or geographic footprint. In addition to improving communications, MEPCOM hopes biometrics improves the processing of recruits through the testing process all the way to arrival at basic training.

The demonstrations are expected to work this way. When an armed forces recruiter brings an applicant for the aptitude test at a MET, the recruit will submit their standard processing forms.

Once a recruit is in the database, they will have their finger scan taken and any subsequent contact they have with MEPCOM can more accurately be checked against previous visits, Daniels says. Some recruits hire professional test takers to get them through the aptitude test or have someone else take the physical exam for them while sometimes recruiters try to get their recruits who failed a test to retake it sooner than permitted. Biometrics should prevent any end around being successful, Daniels says. Another facet to the demonstration will be to use the biometrics, including a photograph, as an electronic-signature platform that would eventually follow successful recruits through their service life. "This allows us to move to a paperless process," he says. Each year MEPCOM, through its 65 MEPs and 500-plus METs, has close to 600,000 applicants, resulting in around 240,000 enlistees that go on to basic training. Daniels is hopeful that success will bring the opportunity to replicate the use of biometrics in processing recruits throughout the command in the FY '06 budget, but if the demonstrations slip then budgeting might have to wait until FY '07. **TR2**

