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DEP recruits get preview of coming attractions



Spc. Jonathan Del Marcus 1st Cavalry Division PAO

Approximately 28 Army Delayed Entry Program recruits from outside the Houston area received an up-close and personal look at the "real" Army when they visited Fort Hood March 13.

The DEP recruits, accompanied by several recruiters, were guests of the 27th Main Support Battalion, Division Support Command, 1st Cavalry Division.

They were treated to a number of displays at the 27th MSB motor pool, and afterward ate lunch at the DISCOM dining facility and visited an M16A2 firing range.

Before the new recruits were able to see some of the Army's equipment, however, they had an opportunity to start the day off right by standing in - you guessed it - formation, where DISCOM commander Col. Kenton L.

Ashworth greeted and addressed them.

The intention of the visit was to introduce new recruits who are waiting to enter basic training to the types of things "real" soldiers do.

"This is what we call a DEP member function. It is part and parcel of the whole U. S. Army Recruiting Command experience for us out here in recruiting command.

"The intent of it is to try to alleviate some of the fears. Naturally, some of these youngsters are a little bit

apprehensive about service in the Army. We take them out to show them what the Army is really like in an attempt to (reduce) potential DEP losses - guys who decide not to show," said Capt. Hayden H. Hungerford, commander, Beaumont Recruiting Company.

"Familiarity is a great asset. Certainly, there is some merit bringing these guys down here and letting them see what it's like standing in a formation - letting them see some soldiers - letting them see a few pieces of mili-

tary equipment. That way, the transition - the system shock - isn't quite as severe," he said.

The recruits readily saw the benefits of getting a sneak preview of what Army life is like.

"I think it is a very good experience. It gives me a chance to see some things. It gives me a little bit of a look into what's in the future, and it gives me an insight," said Michael Yocum, 19, from Pasadena, Texas. Yocum, who enlisted for the infantry as a military occupational specialty and hopes

to be a ringer, will be leaving Texas June 16 for basic training.

"I think that actually seeing this will help them want to get through basic training because a lot of them have their minds just set on basic training - that basic training is what the Army is about," said Staff Sgt. Bryant A. Perry, a recruiter with Beaumont Co. "But, when they come out here and they see that there are people actually doing the job that they enlisted for, it helps them to understand that basic training is not going to last forever."