

Making the big move

Story by

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Change affects people in different ways, but one thing is guaranteed, change will happen. The CECOM Life Cycle Management Command and Army Team Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance is transitioning to Aberdeen Proving Ground as a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure law, mandated by Congress.

As part of the BRAC implementation, Army Team C4ISR has begun the inevitable transition to APG in order to meet the September 15, 2011, deadline to transfer its mission activities to Maryland. The CECOM LCMC (Forward) team is assembled and hard at work with Col. Augustus Owens, deputy commander, CECOM LCMC (Forward), there to lead the effort.

“My job is to take care of the workforce and make sure our Army Team C4ISR team members experience a smooth transition as they relocate to the area,” Owens said. “We want our advanced party to feel welcomed and appreciated as they serve as pioneers for the organization, and set the stage for the rest of the team to join us here.”

As of today, there are 700 ‘boots on the ground’ at APG, and this summer an additional 528 employees from Fort Monmouth are expected to join them. By the end of December 2009, approximately 1,400 Army Team C4ISR personnel are expected to be working at APG.

“I am enjoying the culture here,” Owens said. “We have a pretty close knit community.”

He said people who have relocated to APG have been helpful to one another in sharing experiences and networking.

“We sponsor monthly ‘meet and greets’ where Army Team C4ISR personnel meet after work to chat and get to know each other. Since many people are new to the area, it’s a great way to introduce the workforce and form relationships.”

Four Army Team C4ISR employees who have made the move from Fort Monmouth to APG share their experiences navigating their way through the decision to move and negotiating their transitions.

Linda Chapurтинov:

“I jumped at the chance to start a new adventure,” said Linda Chapurтинov, logistics specialist with CECOM Life Cycle Management Command G4. She reported to her new position at APG August 2008 and hasn’t looked back.

“I was excited to go into the unknown,” Chapurтинov said. “I like a challenge.”

Chapurтинov was afforded the opportunity to learn a new discipline in her new position, so not only was she moving to a new state, but stepping into a new job as well.

A former member of the Women’s Army Corps, Chapurтинov and her husband, Peter, are proud parents of two children, both of whom serve in the military. Now that her husband is retired, she said she had some flexibility in her choice to move.

“Change is a constant in life,” according to Chapurтинov, “Why not embrace it?”

Chapurтинov used to work in the Fort Meade area in Maryland, so she was somewhat familiar with the Baltimore area.

“In comparison to New Jersey, this area is quite affordable,” she said. She sold her home in Howell, N.J., and chose to purchase a home in Cecil County, Md.

“I love Cecil County,” she said. “I did a lot of research before I moved.” She said visiting the area was helpful in determining where she wanted to live. Chapurтинov made multiple visits before deciding where she and her husband would settle.

“You have to visit and see what the areas are like for yourself,” she said. “Once I visited, the unknown wasn’t so unknown.”

Chapurтинov said speaking with co-workers who had already made the move was helpful. She recommends that co-workers who are contemplating the move should contact the G1.

“G1 was great. Someone was always on the other end of the phone ready and willing to answer any questions I had,” she said. “I had no problems with transportation; the entire process went smoothly.”

Her advice

“Examine your needs before you move. Ask yourself if the move is right for you. Be open to change and tap into your resources. There are people here who don’t mind sharing their experiences so others may benefit. Take the time to research the different areas for specific school information and other things that interest you. Visit; it will help you get comfortable with the new area. If the move is right for your Family, you’ll know it,” she said.

Christopher Newton

“Jersey Boys’ don’t move around too much,” said Christopher Newton, human resources specialist, CECOM LCMC. “We may travel the world, but we always return,” he said with a smile as he thought back to his recent trip to Europe.

A graduate of Fairleigh Dickinson University in North Jersey, Newton, 25, decided to step outside his comfort zone and move to APG.

Newton was born and raised in New Jersey, but felt that this move was an opportunity he couldn't pass up.

"I believe in taking the road less traveled," Newton said. "Out of change comes new opportunities."

He admits he had some nervousness about the physical aspect of moving, as this was his first big move since college.

"I was impressed with the logistics of the move," he said. "They took good care of my possessions."

Newton reported to his new APG position in January of 2009 and said that his paperwork went smoothly. He recommends filing any claims as early as possible to allow time for processing.

An avid traveler, Newton enjoys the small town feel of North East, Md.

"It wasn't an area I originally thought I would move to, but I like the small town feel and the accessibility to live, eat and play on the water," Newton said. He said he enjoys watching the boaters on the Chesapeake and Susquehanna and the fact that he is just a couple of hours drive from home. He describes the North East area as quaint.

"Believe it or not, New Jersey isn't all that different from Maryland," he said. "I found that Red Bank is quite similar to the Mount Washington area of Baltimore. There's something here for everyone."

His advice

"Try to connect with advanced party movers. I would really like to see the movers post their experiences onto the Army Team C4ISR Knowledge Center or our blog. I think reading lessons learned will be helpful for people in transition from Jersey. I also recommend that people take advantage of the bus trips to Maryland. They helped me a lot in deciding where I wanted to live."

Al Perrella

"I grew up about five minutes away from Fort Monmouth," said Al Perrella, health physicist, CECOM LCMC Directorate for Safety. For Perrella, his attachment to Fort Monmouth goes back about 15 years, when he started in May of 1993. But when he found out his job was moving, he chose to look forward and secure his Family's future. Perrella and his wife have one son.

"I wanted to get my son settled in a community before he started school," Perrella said. He purchased a home in Bel Air, Md., just minutes away from APG. "The schools are good in this area," he said. "The toughest thing about this move was leaving our Families and the beach.

"We're adjusting to not having Family close by," Perrella said, "but it is only a two-and-a-half-hour drive back home so we know we can visit anytime." Perrella, a self-proclaimed "beach boy," said he does miss the accessibility to the beach. "Here, it's [the beach] a few hours away, so I can't go as frequently as I'd like to. But there are plenty of other things to do in this area," he said. Perrella said the area is strategically placed, so Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Delaware and Philadelphia are all about an hour away.

"I've been to the cities around here [Baltimore and Washington, D.C.] quite a few times since I moved here," said Perrella who moved to the area in August of 2008. "We love our house, because we are away from the 'hustle and bustle,' but can find action and city life when we choose to."

"It's always scary to pick up your Family and move away from what you are used to," he said. "But if you do some research and visit a few times before moving, the transition will go much smoother. It made us more comfortable with the decision to move."

His advice

"Talk to the local residents and do your research. It's your life, your move and your Family. Don't solely depend on the information distributed; take a look into it yourself. Visit the area," Perrella said. "My move went smoothly, and the movers were great. Thankfully, I had no problems. I have found that this area is not that different from Monmouth County, and I'm discovering the charm this city has to offer."

Joey Beteta

"For me, this is my career so it wasn't a matter of if I was moving, it was a matter of when," said Joey Beteta, logistics management specialist, CECOM LCMC Logistics and Readiness Center. "If my job is moving, my first priority is taking care of my Family, which means, I go where my job goes." Beteta and his wife, Mindy, have two children ages, 12 and three-and-a-half.

Beteta is no stranger to relocation, as he spent five years in the military. His wife, however, is a New Jersey native, and has strong ties to Family and Jersey life.

"But she is up for the challenge," said Beteta with a smile.

He said he and his Family took several trips to the APG area to house hunt. He settled in Aberdeen in a new housing development, easily accessible to the Aberdeen Area.

"We walked into the model home for this development and knew right away this was the place for our Family," he said about his newly purchased home. He closed on his house May 1.

"You must visit," Beteta said. "Seeing the area, and driving around makes a world of difference. Don't always believe what you hear, come down for yourself, explore the area and then decide what is right for you and your Family."

Beteta advises movers to take advantage of the bus trips and the government-sponsored six-day house hunting trips.

The G1 will be able to provide more information about the relocation benefit packages for movers, according to Beteta.

His advice

"Take advantage of the bus trips. Visiting the area really helped us decide where we wanted to live," Beteta said. "Check out

the entire area. There are many places to live that are accessible to APG. Moving early was great because I was able to take advantage of the housing market before the masses migrate to the area. If you have a Family, include them in the process and think of it as a Family adventure. Change can be good,” Beteta said.