

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Karen Sielski

TITLE: Assistant Product Manager and Project Lead for all MDA Support;
PD WESS

HOW LONG AT PEO EIS: Five years and seven months

AWARDS / EDUCATION / OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS TO NOTE: BS degree
in Physics from Clarkson University; retired Army; Achievement Medal
for Civilian Service



1. WHAT DO YOU DO AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO THE SOLDIER?

I furnish project leadership and guidance to a multi-disciplined team of government, SETA, and contractor personnel who support the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) with turnkey solutions to their communications needs. What my team and I do is not only important to the Soldier, it is important to the defense of the US, her deployed forces, allies, and friends. We support the MDA and its real world mission to defend the above with a missile defense shield for protection of against enemy ballistic missiles in all phases of flight.

2. WHAT LED YOU TO A CAREER WITH THE ARMY?

Actually, this is kind of my return to the Army, after having retired from active service in 1995. After I retired from the Army, I went on to do other things but in 2004, I was hired into CSC [Computer Sciences Corporation] and started my support of MDA. In the course of support to MDA, I always came into contact with the DCATS folks and always appreciated the "can do" positive attitude and professionalism they exuded. When DCATS BRAC'd from Monmouth, NJ, down here I jumped at the chance to join the team.

It was quite a retrospective feeling when I took the oath of office as a government civilian. Some of my first Army interfaces were here at Belvoir, and as I will eventually retire, Belvoir will also be my last "duty station". Kind of the Alpha and Omega of life.

3. WHO WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR MENTOR AND WHY?

In many ways I've had unofficial mentors or examples. But one man, Doug Cox, one of my Battalion Commanders from the Army and later my Project Leader in CSC. His mentorship was also friendship. He has always encouraged recommendations, allows people to try and to fail, and to show how you take care of your people and all people that you come in contact with.

4. MOTTO OR FAVORITE QUOTE?

I have a few as I go through life but one I just saw recently is from a motivational speaker, Ralph Marston, which has become part of my work signature block: "Being positive in a negative situation is not naïve. It's leadership." I strive continually to keep a positive attitude, to look forward and see all the good things in life. In the blink of an eye your life can change, and mine did. So, to quote Ferris Bueller, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while you could miss it."

One that I coined myself, "Breathe and Believe". Breathe in that you slow down, especially when things get crazy and hectic. Don't jump into things without thinking. And Believe, believe in God and yourself and that things will happen and God will help you along the way. I try to remember this when times are tough.

5. ADVICE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN?

Believe you can, because YOU CAN, and be yourself doing it or you will not be happy. Sometimes that is the hardest lesson and takes the longest time to learn. Set goals but don't be afraid to change them and have the courage to chase them. Know you are just as good as anyone else, continue to help those around you and those coming up "through the ranks", and challenge them to do the same. They aren't the competition, they are the future and bad management and leaders breed more bad managers and leaders. That is not the legacy you want.