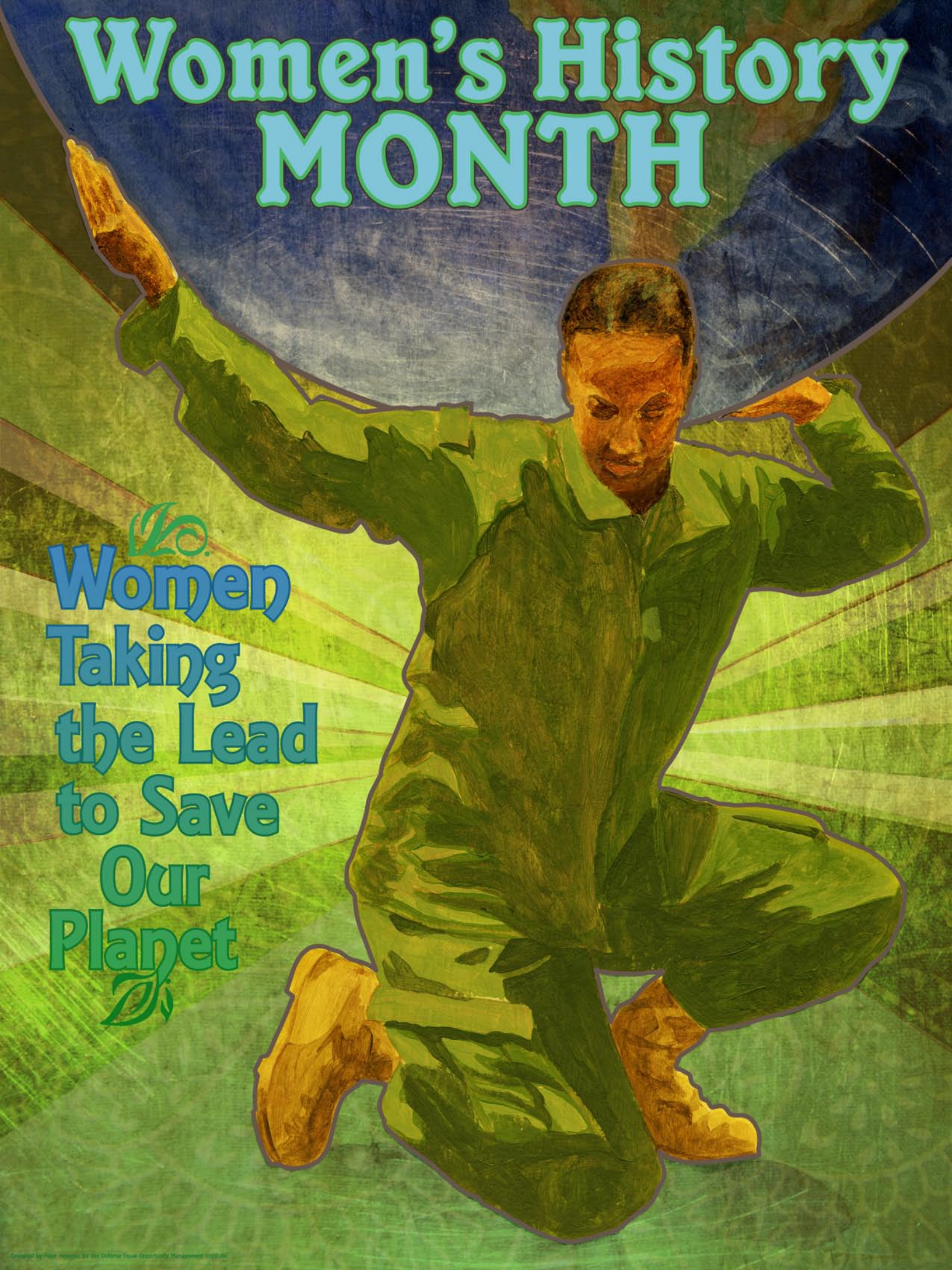
Women's History
MONTH
Women
Taking
the Lead
to Save
Our
Planet

Biography

Mr. Daniel Kennedy, Jr. attended primary school on military bases, in the civilian public, and private schools. Graduating high school in 1975, from Boone High School, Orlando, Florida, Mr. Kennedy went on to study for the Roman Catholic priesthood at St. Meinrad College, Indiana, and received a BA in philosophy in 1979. He continued to study and received a Masters in Divinity (Mdiv) from St. Meinrad School of Theology in 1984 and has taken various history courses at the University of Central Florida (UCF), Orlando. He was a doctoral candidate at UCF from 2002–2004.

Preface

Mr. Daniel P. Kennedy is a consultant for the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) and created this publication for the Women's History Month observance. This publication is posted on the Internet at: http://www.deomi.org. Additionally, there are various materials on the Web site that support other national observances.

Cover design by Mr. Pete Hemmer, Five Rivers Services, contractor, with the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute.

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LEADERSHIP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
By
Daniel P. Kennedy, Jr.

The National Women's History Project set the 2009 theme to be a celebration of women leadership in the environmental movement. There is no better example of a woman leader for the environment than Colonel Maria R. Gervais, Commander U.S. Army Environmental Command (USAEC). Her organization provides the Army the "environmental stewardship expertise" it needs to help preserve our national resources.

Colonel Gervais attended the Reserves Officer Training Course (ROTC) at Lander College in Greenwood, S.C. and was commissioned as a Chemical officer in 1987. Her first tour of duty was in Augsberg, Germany as Brigade Chemical Officer and the Headquarters' Executive Officer for the 17th Field Artillery Brigade. The Colonel's career took her to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. She has served in the halls of the Pentagon. Col. Gervais attended the Army's Command and General Staff College as well as the U.S. Army War College. The Commander of USAEC earned various awards during her career such as Meritorious Service Medal (eight Oak Leaf Clusters), Joint Service Commendation Medal (two Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Commendation Medal (six Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Achievement Medal (two Oak Leaf Clusters), and more. To read more about Colonel Gervais' career and awards please visit: http://aec.army.mil/usaec/aecorg-commander2.html

This presentation will have two parts. The first part is fifteen interview questions sent to Colonel Gervais and her answers. The second part is a PowerPoint presentation about Colonel Gervais that contains pictures provided by the Colonel and by the USAEC Web site. The PowerPoint presentation will focus on Colonel Gervais career and the last

few slides will be about USAEC and what they do. Thank you Colonel Gervais and your staff for taking the time to answer these questions and sending back the answers and pictures sent.

Interview with COL Maria R. Gervais

Q1: You were commissioned as a Chemical Officer in 1987 through the ROTC program at Lander College in Greenwood, S.C., and your first assignment was that of the Brigade Chemical Officer and the Headquarters' Executive Officer for the 17th Field Artillery Brigade in Augsburg, Germany. What does a chemical officer do?

A1: A Chemical Officer, which is now known as a Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Officer, serves as the principle advisor to the commander for all CBRN weapons and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and nuclear, biological and chemical matters. To put it simply, a Chemical (CBRN) Officer ensures Soldiers/units are prepared to fight, win, and survive in an environment where CBRN or WMD weapons have been used—whether this is at home or abroad. Chemical (CBRN) Officers serve in chemical companies where they employ state of the art CBRN defense systems, or serve in a command and staff role where they plan, coordinate, supervise, and evaluate the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) readiness posture of the unit. Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to serve in both chemical units and staff positions. For staff positions, I have served on battalion, brigade, division, and Headquarters Department of the Army staff levels and I have served in company and battalion chemical units. I found both types of assignments very challenging yet rewarding.

I have also served in a variety of units to include artillery, aviation, infantry, logistics, chemical, and training units.

Q2: When you were stationed in Germany did you do any work in concert with the host country?

A2: Yes, when I was a decontamination platoon leader in 11th Chemical Company we conducted training exercises with both host nation forces and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces (specifically British, Italian, and Norwegian). We conducted several exercises with German Army units as part of larger NATO exercises. We conducted these training exercises for several reasons:

- To ensure our equipment was compatible with host nation and NATO forces
- To ensure U.S. Army decontamination units were properly trained on German Fire Fighting equipment. This equipment could be used as an alternative to the U.S. decontamination systems.
- To ensure U.S., German, and NATO forces were familiar with the capabilities, equipment, and personnel of each other's Army.
- To develop, test, and validate Standardized Agreements (STANAG), which are NATO agreements that establish processes, procedures, terms and conditions for military procedures of the alliance. These STANAGS ensured interoperability of equipment and ensured all members of the alliance used the same procedures.

Q3: Through the years how has your perspective about being a chemical officer changed?

A3: My perspective about being a chemical officer has changed and evolved as the threat to our country has changed. Before 9/11, the threat was primarily the "traditional" threat of the NBC warfare weapons such as nerve, mustard, and nuclear delivered by artillery, bombs, and rockets in an overseas country. The battlefield we were prepared to fight on included open, nonindustrial, wooded, or desert terrain. I was primarily focused on ensuring my unit could fight, win, and survive in this type of environment, and it was common for our unit to be part of a Joint or coalition force. After 9/11, the threat expanded considerably to include industrial CBRN materials, radiological dispersal devices, advances in genetic engineering, and even unknowns. The environment expanded to include homeland, urban, and industrial areas. The mission of the Chemical (CBRN) Soldier expanded to include stability operations, civil support, and WMD elimination. The Chemical (CBRN) leader and Soldier now must operate with civil authorities (U.S. and foreign), non-combatants, and others who are now part of the Homeland Defense mission. As you can tell from my explanation above, the role of the Chemical (CBRN) Corps has increased in importance and scope. Today's Chemical (CBRN) Soldier must be more technically and tactically proficient than before 9/11, and there are so many more opportunities (missions) for chemical (CBRN) officers than when I first came in the Army.

Q4: In your career as a chemical officer and your dealings with environmental cleanup have you noticed any difference in approach or attitude in the military throughout the years?

A4: When I first came in the Army, the Army didn't need to be as forward thinking and because of that some lessons were learned the hard way. The Army Environmental Program started only a few decades ago when federal environmental regulations were applied to the Department of Defense. We began to realize the damage that had been done to the land, air and water resources over time. Our initial efforts focused on getting our installations in compliance with environmental laws and regulations—we have learned some hard lessons about marginalizing the importance of the environment. For example:

- In 1996, Fort Bragg had to impose training and construction restrictions to comply with the Endangered Species Act—specifically they had to protect the red cockaded woodpecker and its longleaf pine forest habitat. To accomplish this, Fort Bragg had to impose a 200 foot restriction around trees that had red cockaded woodpeckers—thereby, severely compromising maneuver training.
- The Massachusetts Military Reservation is another example where environmental challenges resulted in training restrictions being implemented. In 1996, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an administrative order under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This administrative order prevented the Massachusetts National Guard from firing lead bullets on its firing ranges.

From these hard knocks, the Army learned the smart way to conduct its environmental stewardship mission. The Army has been transforming its environmental management from simply being compliance-based approach to a more holistic, integrated management of our air, water, and land assets. We are taking a more proactive approach to sustaining our air, water, and land assets. So the smart way is not just about meeting environmental regulators guidance, it is also about facilitating mission readiness while sustaining the environment, not just today but also for tomorrow. We moved from conflict to collaboration at Ft. Bragg—we brought in many partners that have buffered Ft. Bragg from encroachment, partnered with non-profit conservation groups to expand training areas for light infantry training, reduced the training restrictions on post, and recovered the red-cockaded woodpecker five years ahead of schedule. New small arms range management practices helped reinstate small arms training for the Massachusetts National Guard. Sound environmental stewardship not only supports the quality of Soldier training but also supports the quality of life of our families, workforce, and community neighbors—and the Army takes this commitment seriously

Q5: Are you able to liberate yourself from your management duties to do research in your field? If you have done research, can you tell us what you have done?

A5: Unfortunately, I have not had many opportunities to conduct research in my field. However, while attending the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College, I did have the opportunity to conduct research into promotion rates

for dual military couples and Sexual Misconduct in the Initial Entry Training Base.

Q6: You were a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer for the 11th Chemical Company (Decontamination) during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. What was that like?

A6: Being a Platoon Leader and Executive Officer in a Chemical Company during a time of war proved to be an invaluable experience for me. Both of these positions helped develop me as an officer and leader of troops. In both these positions, I was directly responsible for the training, morale, welfare and safety of my Soldiers along with the readiness of the platoon or company equipment.

The deployment process was interesting because units in Germany were already considered forward deployed and plans weren't really in place to conduct a large scale deployment from Germany. Originally, our equipment was supposed to go by barge and by sea to Saudi Arabia; however, all of the unit equipment went by air transportation. Our company was one of the first units from Germany on the ground in Saudi Arabia. We were sent in early so we could train units deploying through the Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (RSOI) site on NBC tasks. We conducted this mission for about two months before we were sent north towards the Iraqi border to link up with 11th Aviation Brigade. We spent the remainder of the war with 11th Aviation Brigade and deployed into Iraq and Kuwait with them.

What was it like (deploying)? Being deployed to combat is what every Soldier trains for and we knew we were ready. Being in a foreign country was challenging. We had to learn as much about the culture as we could before our deployment and we had to prepare ourselves for the harsh conditions that existed in this environment. During the day, the temperatures would reach as high as 130 degrees and drop to around 70 degrees at night. The days were extremely hot and sandstorms were prevalent during the day making it extremely difficult to work during the day. Most of our days were spent fortifying our perimeter, constructing our bunkers, maintaining our equipment, and conducting training with various units. In our base camps, there were no latrines or shower facilities until later in the war. We had to build expedient latrines (wood stalls with 55 gallon drums cut in half) and shower facilities. Each day the waste material from the latrines had to be burned. Navigating in the desert was extremely challenging since there are very few terrain features and very few maps were available. During my first deployment, we did not have GPS systems to assist with navigation. You learned to navigate by azimuth and by following main supply routes. In this environment, you learned to improvise, adapt and overcome any obstacle to ensure the mission was accomplished to standard.

On a personal level, the hardest part of going to war was leaving my six-month old daughter. Since I am part of a dual military couple (my husband is in the Army), I had to ensure that my daughter had someone designated to take care of her while we were deployed. I had to fly my mother-in-law from the states to

Germany to pick up my daughter before we deployed. Knowing that my daughter was taken care of gave me the peace of mind needed to focus on the mission of deploying my Soldiers and the remainder of the company to Saudi Arabia. I also had to ensure our personal affairs were in place. This meant I had someone designated to check on our off-post residency and pay our landlord every month. I deployed to Saudi Arabia with a list of all my bills so I could ensure they were paid on time even if I did not receive the monthly statement.

In summary, this deployment experience was a great opportunity and an invaluable leadership experience. As Soldiers and leaders, we train in peacetime to ensure we can execute our mission in war. This deployment validated to me that all of our training was to standard, we have the best equipment available to do our mission, and a United States Army Soldier is the best in the world.

Q7: In your tour in Southwest Asia, what were your victories in the decontamination process?

A7: I am not exactly sure what you mean by victories in the decontamination process. In the first Gulf War, NBC weapons were not employed on the battlefield; therefore, there was no requirement for my company to execute its decontamination mission—to me that is a victory all in itself. From my point of view, I would consider several things "victories in the decontamination process." First and foremost is the fact that the Soldiers of 11th Chemical Company were well trained and prepared to execute their mission in the event chemical weapons were used on the battlefield. Secondly, we maintained our equipment in a high

state of readiness and had one of the highest mission readiness rates in theater despite being forward deployed; and finally, we executed our mission in Saudi Arabia safely—bringing all Soldiers back home.

Q8: At one point in your career you were assigned to the Pentagon as a Joint Chiefs of Staff intern where you served in the J-5, Policy and Strategy Directorate, Weapons Technology Control Division and as the Systems Integrator for Smoke and Decontamination (DECON) Systems in Headquarters Department of the Army, G3. Can you tell us what your contributions to Army policy were and how was Army policy affected by your input?

A8: From June 1997 to June 1999, I served as an intern on the Joint Staff and Army Staff. This was one of the best assignments of my career as I was able to observe how/why policy was shaped or enacted; was able to observe how a civilian controlled government interacted with the military; and I also had the opportunity to observe how decisions were made by both military and civilian leadership. While serving as a J-5 intern, I had the opportunity to be part of a team that supported the U.S. Delegation to the International Landmine Conference in Oslo, Norway. As a member of this team, we played a pivotal role in protecting U.S. military interests and concerns by identifying key issues and providing advice to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concerning the recommended U.S. policy on an international treaty to outlaw anti-personnel land mines. It was a great experience to be part of a team that actually shaped the U.S. position on a key issue. As a result of our efforts and our teams input, the U.S. did not sign the Ottawa Convention outlawing anti-personnel landmines. The U.S. did not sign the

Ottawa Convention because we as a country had learned the danger of these non-self-destructing (NSD) anti-personnel landmines in the Vietnam War. The U.S. quit using NSD anti-personnel landmines after the Vietnam War and now only used self-destructing (SD) anti-personnel landmines. These SD anti-personnel landmines did not pose the hazard to innocent civilians after the war as the NSD anti-personnel landmines posed. The only place the U.S. had the NSD anti-personnel landmines deployed was in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Korea. Removing these NSD anti-personnel landmines from the DMZ could result in higher casualty rates to U.S. and South Korean forces in the event of hostilities with the North Koreans. Therefore, the U.S. did not sign the Ottawa Convention which would have banned anti-personnel landmines. As a HQDA intern, I served as a systems integrator for smoke and DECON systems and was also responsible for the Chief of Staff of the Army's plan to fix chemical defense readiness throughout the Army. As the systems integrator for smoke systems, I developed the Mini-POM (budget) strategy which resulted in an additional $7.6 million being programmed for FY01 procurement. Additionally, I was responsible for coordinating and resolving fielding issues for both the M-56 (wheeled) and M-58 (tracked) multi-spectral smoke generator systems—allowing the fielding schedules for these two systems to remain on track. In both my Joint and HQDA tour, my input directly shaped U.S. or Army policy—whether it be to not sign the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines or to develop the strategy to fix chemical defense readiness throughout the Army.

My tenure as an intern on both the Joint Staff and HQDA staff was extremely rewarding, assisted me in understanding the bigger (strategic) picture, and also helped in developing me as a senior leader. Although I was a junior officer in the Pentagon, I was utilized in positions that allowed me to contribute to key actions, shape U.S. policy in key national security interest, and contribute to the overall readiness posture of Army forces.

Q9: You have a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Lander College, a Master of Arts in Human Resources from Webster's University, and a Master of Military Science from the United States Army War College. How has your education enhanced your career?

A9: My education has greatly enhanced my career by expanding my overall base of knowledge, expanding my overall leadership skills, increasing my critical thinking skills, and also improving my strategic thinking skills. My Master of Arts in Human Resources from Webster's University has furthered my understanding of the human dynamic element of leadership and has also improved my ability to implement change in an organization. From my studies at the Army War College, I have improved my critical and creative thinking abilities, have improved my decision-making skills in an uncertain environment, and also improved my understanding of National Security Policy and Strategy formulation and improved my capability to assist in the development of National Military Strategy.

Q10: The USAEC Web site states that the vision of USAEC is to be "The Armed Forces' premier environmental organization, sustaining military readiness and communities." What does that mean?

A10: It means that we are dedicated to the proposition of providing the Army with the environmental stewardship expertise it needs to ensure that limited resources are renewed and available in the future to sustain all the necessary operations on an Army installation; that installations provide a quality of life for everyone who lives or works there and contribute to the quality of life in the surrounding community: and our impetus for doing this is to strengthen Soldier and their Family's readiness to serve their nation.

Q11: Does your organization's vision ever change? If so how do you personally effect that change?

A11: Yes, it does. With significant events, changing world climate, and the advent of new technology such as we have today, change always comes, and currently the Army is undergoing the most significant transformation in a generation. So, the Army Environmental Command transforms its vision, too. It's gone from being compliance-driven to sustainability-focused.

Q12: In the USAEC's Web site "About Us" section many of the organization's focus points are enumerated. Does each of those focus points get equal attention or is there a level of priority? If there is a level of priority does it ever change? What would cause that level of change?

A12: There is a level of priority that changes the amount of attention each focus point gets and this level also changes. No one focus point is always the priority; neither is it never the priority. The level of attention that is needed is given to each.

Q13: The USAEC Web site describes your role as the Commander of USAEC. It states

> "Leads a brigade-level subordinate command of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command. Provides central planning, management, coordination, oversight, and technical support to the Army's environmental programs. Her leadership includes restoration of contaminated lands; pollution prevention; technology transfer; reporting and tracking of Army environmental programs; conservation of natural and cultural resources; and compliance with environmental standards and criteria set by laws and regulations. Commands approximately 160 military and civilian personnel, and manages an internal budget (USAEC, 2009)."

What is the most important task you feel you must do as the Commander of USAEC?

A13: The most important task I feel I must do as a Commander is prepare my Command for relocation to Fort Sam Houston in 2011.This is the most immediate and pressing challenge—the challenge here will include maintaining our technical expertise capability throughout the transition in order to sustain the environmental support AEC provides to Army installations. Right now, we are projecting approximately 40% of the current work force to make the move to San Antonio. We currently have several retention and recruiting initiatives taking place with

two purposes, to stabilize the workforce not transitioning to San Antonio as long as possible and secondly to recruit as quickly as possible for identified gaps due to departing personnel. To stabilize the workforce, we are forming memorandums of agreements with other agencies—this allows these agencies to hire selected personnel well ahead of their need and allows AEC to utilize this expertise until a pre-agreed date in the future—this promises a job to designated employees after AEC departs. We are also looking at other tools available, such as retirement incentives to help stabilize the workforce. What I like about all of these tools is it allows the expertise to be stabilized until a predictable date and also allows me to take care of my employees. My top priority is standing up the organization in San Antonio, but I will do this while taking care of those AEC employees who are not relocating to San Antonio.

Q14: There are some people who have feminized environmental issues. As you know the environment is not just a feminist issue, it should concern us all. I believe it should be one of the paramount issues for the DOD. Have you experienced such an attitude in your career in the US Army?

A14: In my 21 years of service, I have not experienced any feminist attitude toward protecting the environment. The Army is a values based organization and it is every Soldier's responsibility to do the right thing even when nobody is watching—that means protecting the environment to ensure readiness today and in the future. The land, air, and water resources we work and train on are vital to both our present and future mission. We must use those resources wisely in a manner that reflects our devotion to duty and respect for the needs of tomorrow's

Soldiers. The Army has realized great cost savings, mission enhancing innovation, increased environmental stewardship and beneficial partnerships with local communities through installation sustainability initiatives.

Q15: If you had it all over to do again, would you have chosen to serve as a Soldier in the United States Army?

A15: Without a doubt I would have made the same decision I did 21 years ago to join the Army. I have loved every minute of being a United States Army Soldier and I would not change a thing. I can think of no better way to serve my country than being a Soldier. I have enjoyed the jobs I have held in the Army; I have had great opportunities; and I love the people I work with.