

## 1. WHICH PARENT WAS IN THE MILITARY?

My father. Army, Retired Lieutenant Colonel and Vietnam Veteran; Current Active Army Civilian.

## 2. HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU MOVE GROWING UP?

*Seven moves total (I got off easy!). I was born in Germany, where my dad was stationed, and returned to my family's farm in Kentucky with my mom when he was deployed to Vietnam. I've also lived in Tennessee, Missouri, Arizona, Germany again, and Northern Virginia – where I've been for 32 years.*

## 3. WHAT LED YOU TO A CAREER WITH THE ARMY?

My father, mother, stepfather and stepmother all served as Active Duty Military or Army Civilian. My mother is a retired Army Public Affairs Officer, and she inspired me to pursue public affairs as a government Civilian, since I had held similar positions in the private sector for years prior to taking my oath in 2004. Doing so was the best career decision of my life, and I'm grateful to my early and recent mentors for all that I have learned and had the opportunity to experience.

## 4. HOW MANY PLACES HAVE YOU LIVED AND WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE?

Seven. My favorite will always be home – Central Kentucky, where my entire family is from, and where I spent summers and holidays throughout my childhood – but I also loved living in Sierra Vista, Arizona (Fort Huachuca). It was a great place to live in the early 80s, and I fell in love with the desert.

## 5. WHAT VALUES DID YOU LEARN GROWING UP IN THE MILITARY?

Flexibility, a thirst for knowledge, and curiosity are values I learned from living in a military community for most of my life. My dad's deployments and my parents' career trajectories led us to a lot of interesting places and circumstances. I learned that in order to thrive, you have to be curious and interested in your surroundings and the culture of your community. That curiosity has led me to a lifelong love for history, travel and literature.

## 6. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE STORY FROM GROWING UP IN THE MILITARY?

My mom and stepdad were somewhat unconventional – basically hippies with careers. We had a '72 Volkswagen Bus in which we traveled all over Europe. Memorable moments include an earthquake in Switzerland through which I slept soundly, a night in the Netherlands sleeping in the pop-top of the VW Bus in a field of poppies and nearly freezing; and fishing and camping along the Rhine and Neckar Rivers. Best story: Visiting the apartment of the Romanian 1980 Olympic Swim Team, who had just defected.

# Ms. Ellyn Kocher

**TITLE:** Public Affairs Officer, Communications Division, HQ PEO EIS

**TOTAL YEARS OF ARMY/FEDERAL SERVICE:** 12 years Army Civilian service; 8 years as a federal government contractor with the White House, the Department of Navy, GSA and the Department of State.

**HOW LONG AT PEO EIS:** Since June 2011

**EDUCATION:** M.F.A. Doctoral Candidate, English/Poetry, and B.A. English, George Mason University; Congressional Operations Seminar Graduate and New Congress Seminar, Georgetown University, 2004-2008; Published poet and author. **Awards:** Keith L. Ware Award, First Place, Category E: Website/Blog, 2015; PEO EIS Hero of the Month, June 2014; PEO EIS Commanders Certificate of Appreciation, MET IOC, May 2014; Department of the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service, 2005-2011; Department of the Army Commander's Award for Civilian Service from GEN Ann Dunwoody, Commanding General, Army Materiel Command, April 2011.



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