

SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT

LTC Kenya M. Booker

TITLE: Chief, Contracting Division, CLPID

HOW LONG AT PEO EIS: One year and one month

AWARDS / EDUCATION / OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS TO NOTE: Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Army Achievement Medal, Army Superior Unit Award, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one campaign star, Iraq Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon, NATO Medal and Combat Action Badge. Associate of Arts, Liberal Arts (Thomas Nelson Community College, Hampton, VA), Bachelor of Arts, Psychology (Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA) and Master of Business Administration, with honors, (Webster University, Fort Sam Houston, Texas).



1. HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU SERVED?

August 2016 will mark 19 years of service for me.

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

Not what but who and the answer is my mother, Shirley. She always had a way of finding opportunities for her children. Serving in the military was the furthest thing from my mind at the time and all I remember is showing up to the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) department with my mother one day at school and the rest, as they say, is history! I have to thank my mom because had she not led me to ROTC, I would have missed out on the opportunity I've had for the past 18+ years serving with this great organization.

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

I've encountered a number of mentors over the years whose advice and leadership have been instrumental to me. Aside from my mother, one person in particular I wish to highlight is Mrs. Cynthia Mitchell-Riley, whom I worked with at Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support. Cynthia truly is an amazing woman and I'm constantly astounded by how much she accomplishes on a daily basis. She is the president of the Federally Employed Women, Philadelphia Chapter, uplifting and empowering women every day and is very active in her church and community. She has motivated me to start reaching out and speaking at events to share my life experiences with others; something I would have never done prior to meeting her. Since my mother is no longer with me, Cynthia is definitely someone I look up to with the hopes of emulating one day. She truly is an inspiration to all she comes into contact with.

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

I've lived in eight different places throughout my career so far and my favorite was Fort Stewart, GA, because it was my first duty station and first time living on my own. I was an adult at that point and was responsible for taking care of my own affairs, making my own decisions, and living my own life without the comfort of mom at home. It was both nerve-wracking and liberating at the same time and is a feeling you can only experience once – your first apartment.

5. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE STORY OF YOUR MILITARY CAREER?

Deploying as a Company Commander to Operation Iraqi Freedom II because it taught me and proved to me that you are ready for more than you realize when the time comes to lead. Being responsible for 165 lives in a hostile environment is an enormous responsibility for a young adult to take on but it showed me that even though I doubted myself and my readiness for the job, with the support of my soldiers we could and did accomplish everything we were trained to do and we all returned home safely to our families. That deployment taught me that I am just as capable and qualified as my peers, to never short change myself, and to always pursue opportunities even if I don't believe I'm ready or am the best person for the job. I'm of the mindset now in my career where I let others in positions of authority tell me "no" instead of shying away from opportunities because I don't think I'm best qualified. That mindset has paid off in my current job because I saw an opportunity, pursued it and am now happy performing a job that is more in line with my career goals.

6. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ARMY TRADITION?

Military balls have always been one of my favorite traditions. It's an opportunity for soldiers to mingle amongst each other and have fun. It's always been a great opportunity to see everybody letting their "hair down" and enjoying themselves.