



# EQUAL WRITES

MARCH 2013

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY NEWS FOR JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

## COMMANDER'S CORNER

The month of March, declared by Congress since 1987 as National Women's History Month, provides us the opportunity to pause and reflect on the significant contributions that women have made to our Nation and to honor and celebrate their historic achievements.



This year's theme, "Women Inspiring Innovation through Imagination: Celebrating Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics," is one that has great resonance with our organization. On a daily basis women engaged in STEM careers throughout the Corps continue making contributions and BUILDING STRONG. And the Corps continues making headway as exemplified by the appointment of BG Margaret Burcham, Commander Great Lakes & Ohio River Division, the first woman to be promoted to general officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

This year's theme also honors the generations of women that by using their intellect, imagination, ingenuity, and resolve have made remarkable contributions in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics throughout our Nation's history.

I am proud of leading an organization that for years has been engaged in promoting STEM at local high schools as part of its outreach efforts to encourage women and other groups to enter in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

I encourage all members of the District to join me in celebrating and recognizing the extraordinary accomplishments and contributions of American women.

ALAN M. DODD  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
Commanding

## 3RD QUARTER OBSERVANCES

### April

Holocaust Remembrance Day

8 April 2013

Days of Remembrance

7-14 April 2013

Theme: NEVER AGAIN heeding the warning signs

### May

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

1-31 May 2013

Theme: Building Leadership: Embracing Cultural Values and Inclusion

### August

Women's Equality Day

26 August 2013

Theme: Celebrating Women's Right to Vote  
(This theme does not change)

## EEO TRAINING see page 3



## EEO STAFF

Gonzellas Williams  
EEO Officer (Acting)  
904.232.1668  
Room 499

Lucy Soto  
EEO Specialist  
904.232.1188  
Room 4116

Adam Morrison  
EEO Specialist  
904.232.3660  
Room 4104

# *Little Known* **WOMEN'S HISTORY** **FACTS**

National Women's History Month's roots go back to March 8, 1857, when women from New York City factories staged a protest over working conditions. International Women's Day was first observed in 1909, but it wasn't until 1981 that Congress established National Women's History Week to be commemorated the second week of March.

Women's History Month 2013 celebrates women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics that are inspiring innovation through imagination.

## **Dr. Elvia Niebla - Scientist**

Born: 3/12/1945 Birthplace: Nogales, Ariz.

Dr. Niebla received an associate of arts degree from Fullerton Junior College

in 1965 and a BS in zoology and chemistry from the University of Arizona in 1967. She taught special education in California for three years before returning to the University of Arizona, where she received a PhD in soil chemistry in 1979. Niebla took a job at the Western Archaeological Center, where



she worked on maintaining historic adobe buildings and ecosystems in national parks. In 1984 Niebla joined the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and wrote regulations on the use of sludge made from decomposed garbage on agricultural land.

In 1989 Niebla became national coordinator for global change research in the Forest Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She manages the science research program on global change in forests. Dr. Niebla received a Bronze Medal from the Environmental Protection Agency for her work linking industrial sludge and human health.

According to Dr. Niebla, in junior high and high school, she had to make an important decision that would affect the rest of my life. She was advised not to continue taking science and mathematics courses because knowledge of those subjects was not necessary for a secretary or a Spanish teacher – the two traditional careers for Hispanic females in the 1960s.

## **Ellen Ochoa - Astronaut**

Born: 5/10/1958 Birthplace: Los Angeles, California

Astronaut Ochoa first left Earth in July, 1991 and became the world's first Hispanic female astronaut. A mission specialist and flight engineer, she has since logged more than 900 hours in space on four flights, the last in 2002.

Dr. Ochoa's many awards include NASA's Exceptional Service Medal (1997) and Outstanding Leadership Medal (1995). Besides being an astronaut, researcher, and engineer, Ochoa is a classical flutist.



## **Brig. Gen. Margaret W. Burcham - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Division Commander**

In a historic ceremony, Brig. Gen. Margaret W. Burcham became the first woman to be promoted to general officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jan. 27, 2012. In September, Burcham became the first woman selected to command a Corps of Engineers division when she took command of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division located in Cincinnati, OH.

Burcham received her commission at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in 1982, and previously served at the Pentagon as the Chief of the Joint Capabilities Division of the Resources, Assessments and Force Management Directorate, and commanded Gulf Region North Engineer District in Iraq and Europe Engineer District.



*Continued on Page 3*

# MAKING A CONNECTION



## EEO REVIEWS POLICIES/PROCEDURES DURING TRAINING SESSIONS

Gonzellas Williams, EEO Officer, conducted two Lunch and Learn sessions for both Jacksonville District supervisors and employees in March focused on the Management Directive (MD) 715 Report.

The MD-715 Report requires federal agencies systematically and regularly to examine their employment policies and practices to identify and remove barriers to equal employment opportunity (EEO). It also provides agencies with guidance and standards for establishing and maintaining effective programs for equal employment opportunity under Title VII and effective affirmative action programs under the Rehabilitation Act.

The MD-715 sets forth the six essential elements of a model EEO Program: (1) Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership; (2) Integration of EEO into the Agency's Strategic Mission; (3) Management and Program Accountability; (4) Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination; (5) Efficiency; and (6) Responsiveness and Legal Compliance.



Gonzellas Williams, EEO Officer, reviews EEO practices with Jacksonville District employees during a Lunch and Learn session.

Both supervisors and employees benefited from this EEO overview. ■

## Women's History **FACTS**

*Continued from Page 2*

### Women in STEM Careers

Despite the dramatic gains women and girls have made in education since the early 1970s, they continue to be underrepresented in STEM fields and classes. Males continue to earn more credits in physics, computer and information science, and engineering and science technologies classes than females.

Although women fill close to half of all jobs in the U.S. economy, they hold less than 25 percent of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics jobs. This has been the case throughout the past decade, even as college-educated women have increased their share of the overall workforce. Women are vastly

underrepresented in STEM jobs and among STEM degree holders, despite making up nearly half of the U.S. workforce and half of the college-educated workforce.

Removing barriers to women's participation and success in STEM fields will benefit the whole nation. ■

### Source:

Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, March 2013

All photographs are public domain from various sources. The information in this article is not to be construed as an official DEOMI, U.S. military services, or the Department of Defense position, unless designated by other authorized documents.

# AwardSPOTLIGHT

Pam Peralta has been nominated for the Steel de Fleury Award for her 40 years of outstanding federal service.

Peralta began her service in the U.S. Woman's Army Corps in January 1973 and graduated from the Southeastern Signal School, Fort Gordon, GA in June 1973. She served a total of 6 years and 10 months in the U.S. Army and earned several awards including: the National Defense Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Good Conduct Medal (2nd Award), and the M16 Rifle Expert Qualification Badge.

Peralta started her civilian federal service career as a Lock and Dam Operator at Racine Lock and Dam, Huntington, WV in March 1982 serving for six months as a temporary hire WY-05. Pam was later hired permanently at Marmet Lock and Dam, Huntington District, WV for two years as a WY-08 until October 1984. At this time she accepted a Lock and Dam Operator position in Jacksonville District, FL at Moore Haven. This selection was historic in that Pam was the 1st ever female lock and dam operator stationed in Florida working for the Corps of Engineers.

Peralta continued in this position with Jacksonville for nine years from November 1984 until March 1993 as a WY-09. Due to a critical vacancy she served at Ortona Lock and Dam for one year until being reassigned back to Moore Haven for three additional years.

In September 1997, Peralta was promoted to Lock and Dam Leader, WO-09, at Moore

Haven Lock and Dam until the present time. Her promotion to a lock and dam leader is also a historical first for a woman in the State of Florida working for the Corps of Engineers.

Peralta has continued to serve with a reliable, steady dedication for 16 years in this position.

Now, Peralta is nearing retirement after 40 dedicated years of service. She has always found ways and means to be successful. Despite the maintenance challenges of working on a lock built in the 1930s with all the archaic machinery and systems, she has worked steadily and responsibly to keep the mission going. She is an expert in the abilities of the hydraulic machinery, gate operations, gear systems and spillway capabilities and ensures any discrepancies are addressed and solved.

Peralta's quiet confidence and resolute abilities on the job are her hallmark traits. She has earned this distinguished award nomination given her 40 years of military and federal service.

The Equal Employment Office salutes Peralta for her dedicated service. ■



## *Quotes by Famous Women to Ponder...*

"Something which we think is impossible now is not impossible in another decade."

— Constance Baker Motley (First Black Woman in the U.S. to become a Federal Judge)

"I think the key is for women not to set any limits."

— Martina Navratilova

"Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got."

—Janis Joplin

**EQUAL WRITES**  
EEO JACKSONVILLE  
DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

*welcomes your contributions...*

Managing Editor: Adam Morrison  
Design & Layout Artist: Christina Swanson

*This newsletter is published periodically. Contact the Editor at 232-3660 with your submissions or ideas. Content does not reflect the official view of the USACE, the Army or DoD.*