

## In The Spotlight: SSG Sherrie Kingston

December 2005 -- Since 1998, Sherrie Kingston has been a fixture in the front office of the Department of Biological Sciences. Her duties as Senior Administrative Assistant require her to be a jack-of-all-trades: from assisting the department Chair, to helping the faculty create multi-million dollar research grant proposals, to supervising the office staff as they conduct the day-to-day business for one of the largest departments in the university, her thorough yet efficient work ethic has helped to keep things running smoothly for several years. Then in July 2005, she learned that another organization would need her services: as a member of the 78th Training Support Division in the Army Reserves, Sherrie had been activated for an 18 month tour.

Sherrie's military career started in 1986 when she joined the Army because, "I thought it would be an interesting thing to do. I saw the commercials and it looked like something that would enhance my life." She began by serving 5 ½ years of active duty at Fort Hood, TX with the 504th Military Intelligence Brigade assisting the Air Force and other units with communications, then managing the delivery of bulk fuel. In 1991, she left active duty and went into the 301st Military Intelligence Battalion of the Army Reserves. There she worked in logistics for two years, then transferred to the 75th Training Support Division in Houston where she provided communications capabilities for battle simulation exercises for the Reserves and National Guard.



Sherrie Kingston

While living in Houston, Sherrie started working for [Dr. Dan Carson](#) at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, which is part of the University of Texas. Dr. Carson later accepted the position of Chairperson of the Department of Biological Sciences here at UD. "When I was being recruited to the University of Delaware, I insisted that we recruit Sherrie as well," he said. "I simply would not have taken the job here without her." When she agreed to move, the Reserves transferred her to the 78th Division at Fort Dix, NJ in the Battle Projection Group. As a Battle Simulation Technician, her role involved operating a complex computer-organized simulation that allows units from the area to train. This system keeps track of everything from troops to equipment to vehicles, and as it reacts, the leaders of the various units need to make decisions on how to overcome the challenges the computer presents. While it might sound almost like a gigantic multi-player video game, you'll never hear that from those involved. "We don't call it a game," said Sherrie, "because it's serious."

When she was activated in July, Sherrie was assigned to the 78th Training Support Division's in Edison, NJ. As a Continuous Operations NCO, she works at the division's 24-hour Emergency Operation Center gathering and disseminating information for anything that involves the 78th Division. After sorting through world news, mission briefs, weather reports, and orders, Sherrie determines whom particular news affects within the division and passes it along to the appropriate people. She also sorts news from various sections throughout the division to construct a daily brief given by the division's Chief of Staff.

Sherrie's 18-month tour is scheduled to end in January 2007, but she says there's always a chance it could be extended for six months or longer. There's also the possibility of being assigned a new position or even being sent to Iraq, although she thinks it's unlikely she would be sent overseas. "It's a huge adjustment to go to full-time military life," she said. "Constant adapting, fast pace, learning something new very quickly - it's a different life, a different culture." This change of lifestyle has not gotten Sherrie down; she is very appreciative of the encouragement she's received. "The department and university have been extremely supportive," she said. Hearing from friends and co-workers also helps to keep her spirits high and she encourages them to keep in touch by sending her e-mail at [skingsto@udel.edu](mailto:skingsto@udel.edu).

"We look forward to her return and having her good humor again be a part of our work routine, said Dr. Carson. "She makes us all better."