



NEWS RELEASE

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Effingham native – Corps of Engineers employee is Afghanistan bound

Lake Shelbyville, IL – Michelle Smith, a budget analyst for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Lake Shelbyville is en route to a six month voluntary tour in Afghanistan. Smith, a graduate of Effingham High School is no stranger to globe trotting, but this marks her first journey to a wartime environment, she said.

This tour will take her to Afghanistan's largest city and capital, Kabul, where she will employ her budget analyst and auditing experience to financial aspects of construction there. "That's one reason I volunteered," she noted. "This will broaden my background to include construction finance issues."

"I've been to the Middle east," she said. "But that was only a one month tour at a relatively peaceful base in Saudi Arabia while employed with the U.S. Air Force."

Other overseas stints have included two-and-one-half years in Japan and two four-year tours in the United Kingdom – all as an Air Force civilian. It was during her first tour in the UK where she met her Air Force husband, Morris Smith, who served 23 years on active duty before retiring as a Master Sergeant. Morris is currently employed at the Sherwin Williams distribution center in Effingham.

Michelle returned to the area from England after her husband retired so she could be closer to her parents after years of world travel. Her parents, Lyndall and Kathy Woodward are lifelong Effingham residents.

At Lake Shelbyville, Smith brings both her Air Force experience and her chosen degree in business and accounting from Illinois College in Jacksonville to bear on accounting for the flow of funds and their uses at the multipurpose lake project.

When asked why she was taking this task on, Michelle was quick to list her love of challenges and an adventurous spirit as contributing factors. "I'm easily bored and I am sure this will be anything but," she said. "I've always been ready to jump at opportunities to get into the field. During my years as an Air Force civilian auditor I was TDY (deployed away from her employment area) about 50 percent of the time," she said.

"I'll be just fine," she affirmed when asked how she views her upcoming tour. "I'll be with great military people and the 'bean counter' in me is pretty analytical about the probability of a safe return," she added. "I'm just excited about what lies ahead and ready to learn and absorb everything I can."

Michelle Smith will first travel to the Trans Atlantic Division headquarters in Winchester, Va., where she will undergo processing and equipment issue before flying some one-third of the way around the globe to her next challenge in Kabul. She is expected to return to Lake Shelbyville in July.

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