

Career Opportunities

U.S. Soldier In Iraq Clicks Toward Dream Career From Across The Globe

(NAPSA)—When U.S. Marine Captain Kimberly Johnson arrived in Iraq, she knew a lack of sleep would be an inherent part of her tour of duty. But it wasn't the gunfire, mortars, airplanes or giant camel spiders that kept her up late at night—it was the Geological Institute of America's (GIA) School of Business.

While serving an eight-month deployment with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2004, the 29-year-old Johnson was also working toward achieving a dream.

"I've always had a passion for jewelry," she said. "So, I decided to get a head start on my next career."

GIA, the world's leading educator to the gem and jewelry industry, made it convenient for Johnson. Through the online learning environment GIA embedded in its School of Business curriculum, she could attend lectures, complete her assignments and participate in classroom discussions—all at the click of her fingertips from across the globe.

"I couldn't have asked for anything better," Johnson said. "I could do the work at my own pace, get instant feedback and move on after I checked my answers."

For more than 70 years, GIA has helped to professionalize the jewelry industry through worldwide education. Known primarily for its renowned gemological



Marine Captain Kimberly Johnson (left) practices grading diamonds using a loupe with GIA instructor Louisa Turner (right).

training, GIA branched out and opened the world's first jewelry-oriented business school in 2002. The GIA School of Business teaches real-world business skills that apply specifically to the jewelry industry.

The program can be completed online or on campus.

While taking her business courses in Iraq, Johnson was also learning how to grade diamonds through the Institute's Graduate Gemologist (G.G.) diploma program. Suddenly, she found herself the resident gem and jewelry expert in Iraq.

"People in my squadron would ask me to examine gemstones and give jewelry recommendations," she said. "I was teased about find-

ing diamonds in the desert."

During her time in Iraq, Johnson's unit lost 14 Marines in combat, including an intense battle against members of a radical militia group.

"Losing these Marines was very difficult for us," she recalled. "And GIA was very flexible and supportive during hard times like that. Everybody was absolutely great, and that speaks highly of GIA's staff."

In February 2004, Johnson finished a Diamond Grading and Colored Stone Grading class to complete the practical lab Extension portion of the G.G. diploma program.

"I love being behind a microscope looking at gems," Johnson said. "And GIA has set up an excellent balance between book study and hands-on learning."

So what, exactly, is Captain Johnson's dream?

"In a perfect world, I would be designing my own jewelry," Johnson says with a smile. She is planning to take the Jewelry Design class at the Institute's Carlsbad world headquarters once her military term ends. The program annually boasts award-winning designers.

For more information about GIA's education services, both online and on campus, call 800-421-7250, ext. 4001. Visit www.gia.edu or e-mail eduinfo@gia.edu.