

Women's History Month | Dana Eilrich

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As a nearly 14-year team member of MGC, Dana Eilrich's role as the firm's Director of Operations includes setting strategic goals for developing and implementing our operation plans, and evaluating efficiencies while monitoring daily operations. From her upbringing, to her civilian and military career, Dana's strategic mindset, perseverance and persistence has broken barriers and shaped a path for women that was once inaccessible.

Dana was born in Bend, Oregon and raised in Central Oregon. Her father is a U.S. Navy Veteran and retiree from a 50-year career in the Oregon logging industry, and her mother is a retiree from 23 years of service as a public school employee. "I came from very hard working parents, and I learned very early in my life that you have to be honest, have a very strong work ethic and be dependable," says Dana.

In 1992 Dana joined the U.S. Navy and was sent to Recruit Training Command in Orlando, Florida. "This was the only location out of three Recruit Training Commands that trained women," she says. Once Dana graduated, she received her first set of orders to the USS Jason AR-8, headed to San Diego, California. "At the time, women were restricted to 66 non-combat ships in the fleet out of the 480 total ships in the fleet, so about 9,000 women out of 56,000 were at sea—women made up about 10% of the Navy," she explains. But on November 30 of 1993, Congress repealed 10 USC 6015, a law that excluded women from combatant ships. "Admiral Ronald J. Zlatoper stated at the time that the inclusion of women on combatant ships made perfect sense," Dana recalls. "It was, in his words, 'the logical progression after 50 years of service by Navy women.'"

"In 1994 the first women were welcomed aboard combatant vessels," Dana says. "While assigned to the 4-Star Admiral—Admiral Thomas Fargo's protocol team—at U.S. Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, I was offered the opportunity to experience [this myself]. As the Navy continued to retrofit ships for mixed-sex crews, they sought female volunteer crewmembers to offer opinions and advise on planning and real life living aboard. I was then assigned to the USS Port Royal CG-73, a guided missile cruiser."

Through years of reaching benchmarks that women have been barred from for decades, Dana recognizes that challenges are still present—not just in the legal industry where she resides today but industry-wide. She names a few, such as equal compensation, leadership opportunities and organizations being receptive to women's ideas and input. "I feel that [the firm's WIN @ MGC initiative] is important to help women feel comfortable and confident in discussing policy ideas and recommending changes within the workforce," says Dana. She also points out that MGC is "Progressive in their commitment to recruit and advance women in different leadership roles."

As a graduate of Saint Leo University, Old Dominion University, Hawaii Pacific University and Career College of the Air Force, Dana has degrees in Business Administration (with a concentration in Management), Paralegal Studies, Healthcare Administration and Human Resource Management. After spending 12 years in active duty for the U.S. Navy, she was offered the opportunity to be one of four civilian women on the NATO legal team with the responsibility of traveling to the organization's school in Oberammergau, Germany to help train and mentor legal advisors of the Afghan military in legal topics and protocols. In 2009, Dana also joined the U.S. Air Force Reserve and retired just last year.

"This mindset has proven to help me become who I am today, and helped me achieve many great friendships, role models and career success in my military and civilian career," she advises.