

PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICE SOLDIER WELCOMES COPELAND BACK HOME

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FORT BELVOIR, Virginia— Project Manager Soldier Sensors and Lasers (PM SSL) held a Change of Charter ceremony on July 26, 2019, welcoming Col. Douglas Copeland as the new Project Manager to PM SSL, and as a member of the larger Program Executive Office Soldier family.

In his opening remarks, Brig. Gen. Anthony Potts, Program Executive Officer, Soldier, stated that "These are exciting, but tough times within PM SSL. Over the past year, SSL has endured a lot of change and the programs within have become high priorities for the Army."



This change and high visibility stems from the introduction of Army Futures Command (AFC) and its Soldier Lethality Cross Functional Team (SL-CFT) that shook up PM SSL with many organizational changes last year. Col. Christopher Schneider, the outgoing Project Manager for PM SSL, found out abruptly that he would be redirected to the newly created Program Manager for Integrated Visual Augmentation System (PM IVAS). His transition left PM SSL with an acting project manager for nearly a year. Despite this fluctuation in leadership, SSL adapted and the strength of the organization shined through and the team continued to effectively carry out their mission.

Col. Schneider attributed this success in such a time of change to the quality of the Soldiers and employees within PM SSL, calling them a "special group of people who are always committed to Soldiers."

In addressing Copeland, Schneider stated "I could not be happier or more proud that you're coming over to SSL. There is not a better leader to take over SSL and drive it to success." Coincidentally, both Schneider and Copeland share a long history together prior to this Change of Charter.

Copeland is no stranger to PEO Soldier and spent most of his acquisition career here. "Returning to PEO Soldier is like a homecoming. Things have come full circle for me," he stated. "PEO Soldier is my family, my tribe."

He even recounted his experience upon his first visit to Fort Belvoir 14 years ago this summer, recalling his thought then that "this would be the perfect place to be stationed someday as a leader in the Army. With this Change of Charter today, I am living my dream at home here on Fort Belvoir with PM SSL and the PEO Soldier Family."

"Your collective talent, hard work, and dedication to the mission has enabled our forces with the best capabilities on the planet," Copeland stated in regard to the PEO Soldier team. "These are some of the finest acquisition professionals I have ever seen. They expertly execute this mission every day and always give 110 percent and then some."

"I can't wait to serve once again with the best of the best," he added in closing. "I hope I can live up to the high standards you set every day in support of our Soldiers."

PM SSL's mission is to equip the Soldier with sensors, lasers, and precision targeting devices to dominate the battlefield through improved lethality, mobility, situational awareness, and survivability in all operational environments.

PEO Soldier rapidly delivers agile and adaptive, leading edge Soldier capabilities in order to provide combat overmatch today and be more lethal tomorrow.