Deanna Reiber is one of 76 veterinary students who received a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine degree from Oklahoma State University's College of Veterinary Medicine on Saturday, May 3, 2008. She will soon be deployed half-way around the world to serve her country. But this won't be the first time she has been in a United States military uniform.

Upon completion of her B.S. degree in Engineering from the Naval Academy, Deanna Reiber entered the Navy on active duty and served her country for more than 10 years as a Naval Flight Officer. When her career path ran out, she spent four more years in the Naval Reserves. Her unit supported the 7th Fleet, a three-star admiral staff that sails the Pacific Ocean on deployments in Hawaii, Korea, Japan, Guam and Asian countries.

Following her military career, Reiber worked for four years as an engineer in a corporation located in Paris, Texas, before realizing that wasn't what she really wanted to do.

"I didn't care for my job. It wasn't exciting to me," recalls Reiber. "It wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

When talking to a military acquaintance who was also trying to determine his next step, something he said triggered in her mind and Reiber decided her next career move.

"My friend was saying that he was thinking about going to medical school and I said I thought

about going into veterinary medicine once but it was too late now," says Reiber. "He looked at me and asked, 'Why is it too late?' and I thought, I don't know. I better check it out."

Originally from California, Reiber had no idea where to start. She soon found the answers she needed and completed pre-veterinary medicine courses at Texas A&M University-Commerce. She then interviewed at Texas A&M University, Kansas State University, and Oklahoma State University (OSU) for a spot in one of their veterinary medicine programs. Reiber chose OSU where she felt the College dealt better with non-traditional students.

"I didn't plan to enlist in the Army," smiles Reiber. "The Army recruiter introduced me to several military veterinarians. If they were still active, they loved it. If they had moved on to another phase of their veterinary medicine career, they described their military veterinary experience as 'the best time they have had' so I couldn't turn this opportunity down."

Because of her previous military experience, Reiber will enter the Army as a Major. She will begin a three year deployment stationed at Chievres Air Base located in Belgium. She will be responsible for seven bases in four countries—Belgium, the Netherlands, part of Germany and part of France. Her duties will be to provide veterinary services for all military working dogs and for any pets owned by active military personnel. Reiber will also have public health responsibilities inspecting water supply sources and food dispensing sites to ensure the health and safety of our military personnel.

A degree in veterinary medicine can take a person on many different career paths. In addition to military service, veterinarians can choose private practice, academia, public health, state or federal veterinary jobs, pharmaceutical companies, biomedical research, or specialty practice.

The Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences is one of 28 veterinary colleges in the United States and is fully accredited by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association. For more information, visit http://www.cvhs.okstate.edu .