

Stephanie Kwolek

Stephanie Kwolek was tasked with the job of finding a light material that was also very hard and strong.

Born in 1923 in Pennsylvania, USA, Kwolek's father was interested in science and passed this interest on to his daughter, who left university aged 23 with a degree in chemistry.



Stephanie Kwolek

Stephanie created a very hard plastic - in fact, it was 5 times stronger than steel of the same weight! It was also much, much lighter.

As well as in cars, Stephanie soon found that her invention was being used for another very special job. Because this material was exceptionally strong and lightweight, it could be used in bulletproof vests.

The invention was 'Kevlar'. It is still used today in the bulletproof clothing worn by police and armed forces, so it has saved an enormous number of lives. In addition, Kevlar has been included in the manufacture of protective gloves, diving equipment, boots, helmets and fireproof clothing.



"I don't think there's anything like saving someone's life to bring you satisfaction and happiness."