

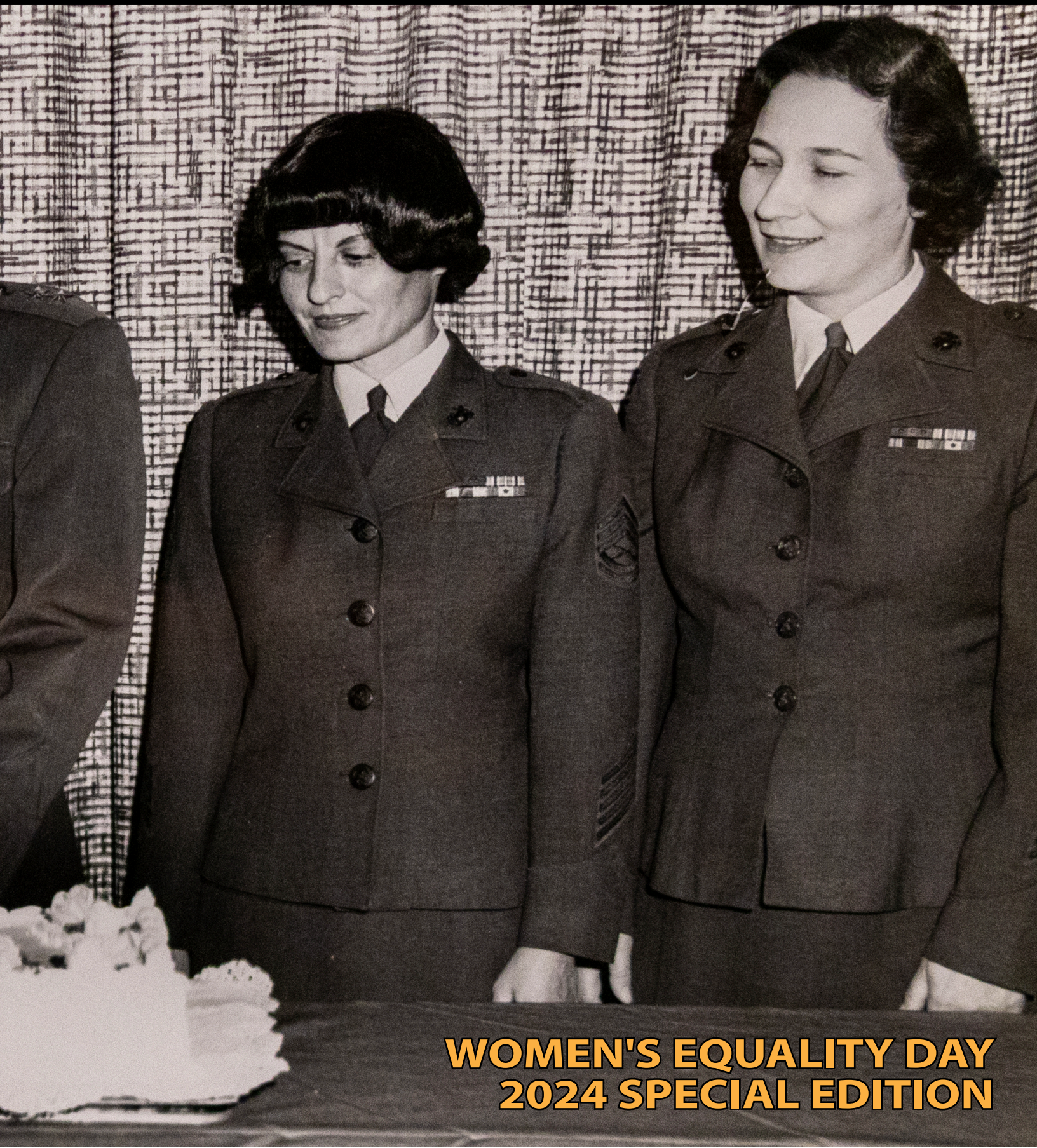
THE PROSPECTOR



Special Edition

Serving the Corps since 1943
Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow

August 26, 2024



**WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY
2024 SPECIAL EDITION**



Oktoberfest

Activities for the whole family



Music | Craft Beers | Food | Contests

Bldg 38 & Outside Area

18 Sep 24, from 4:30 - 7:30

Food hosted by Marine Corps Ball Committee

COVER

Cover and back photo courtesy: MCLB Barstow Historical Gallery

Women Marines celebrate their 24th anniversary with cake, which was cut by base commanding officer, Maj. Gen. John H. Masters. Left to right: Major Vea J. Smith, Maj. Gen. John H. Masters, Gunnery Sgt. Lea E. Woodworth and Gunnery Sgt. Virginia Alemonite, at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow (then called MC Supply Center), February 13, 1967.

At the time of this photo, these women were the only Women Marines at MCLB Barstow. The cake cutting was in celebration of the anniversary of the day women could first enlist in the Marine Corps Women's Reserves in 1943. In 1971, the WM at MCLB Barstow were disbanded and all WM were absorbed into the regular Marines.

The July 14, 1967 edition of The Prospector stated at the end of a short article announcing the arrival of more WM, "the enlisted Women Marines will be quartered across from the NCO/Enlisted Club." Historically, this was building 182, which has since been demolished.



THE PROSPECTOR

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Sgt. Maj. Miller Daceus, base sergeant major
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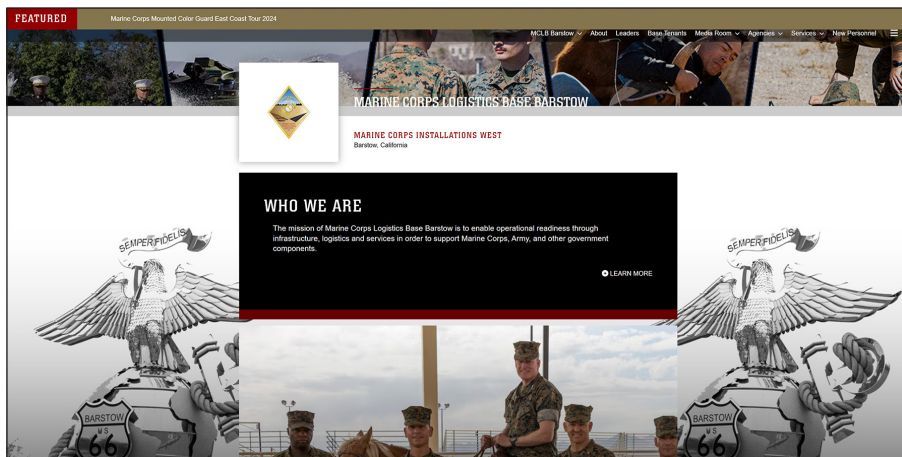




Photo courtesy: MCLB Barstow Historical Gallery

February 13, 1968 - 25th Anniversary of Women Marines. In the pageant, a number of members of the WM Company were attired in uniforms depicting the various uniforms and off-duty garb, from bathing suit to formal gown and utilities to dress blues. (United States Marine Corps photo, taken by an unknown photographer at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, then called MC Supply Center)

CONTENTS

August 26, 2024 is **Women's** Equality Day, celebrating 104 years of the right to vote for **women**. This special edition of The Prospector highlights the **women** aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California and tenant commands.

FOREWORD

Submitted by: Esmeralda Magana-Savatt

Photos courtesy: Esmeralda Magana-Savatt

The observance of Women's Equality Day commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment and calls attention to women's continuing efforts toward full equality. In 1971, the United States Congress designated August 26th as "Women's Equality Day" granting women the right to vote and promote gender equality. The women's suffrage movement was credited for spearheading this achievement.

For decades, the women's suffrage movement fought for women to have the right to vote and for gender equality. It was not until 1965, with the enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, that women of color were finally able to vote. Despite this, the movement created many career and educational opportunities and through these opportunities, women attained positions in leadership contributing to narrowing the gender gap.

In recognition of this day, I would like to acknowledge the efforts the women's suffrage movement made, my accomplishments, and recognizing two extraordinary women in my life. My name is Esmeralda Magana-Savatt and I want to share my story with you.

I came from very humble beginnings. We did not have much, but we had what we needed. My father was a gardener, and my mother was a housekeeper, both with only a primary education, and both from Mexico.

From a very young age, my parents emphasized the importance of higher education to secure a career where we would not have to "break our backs." They knew that with dedication to our studies, good grades, and a strong work ethic, we could accomplish anything we aimed for. They also recognized that, as women, minorities and individuals without social influence, we would have to work twice as hard to achieve our dreams. Pursuing a higher education was a must. It was never a question of "if" I went to college; it was "when." My parents always wanted us to have careers that would help us become self-sufficient and productive members of society.



Esmeralda Magana-Savatt in front of the 4211 United States Army Reserve Unit building, San Diego, California, 2002.



Esmeralda Magana-Savatt (bottom center) at the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy Primary Leadership Development Course graduation, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, July 25, 2003. Magana-Savatt was the only woman in this graduating class.

As I was growing up, I did not see many women who looked like me working in white-collar professions or high-ranking executive roles. Now, I see numerous women holding positions of authority and influence within our military, city, and state government, and Judiciary branches. As a woman, it fills me with great pride and hope to witness these achievements within our military branches, communities, country, and my family.

I was the first person in my family to graduate high school, earn two college degrees, and join the Army Reserves as a 91B Combat Medic (HOOAH!). In addition, I obtained my certification as an Emergency Medical Technician-Basic from the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. During my time in the reserves, I was activated and served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. I attended the Primary Leadership Development Course and was promoted to Sergeant. I concluded my military career with an honorable discharge.

I obtained my Associate in Arts and Bachelor of Science in Human Service degrees. I worked in Child Welfare, where I investigated suspected Child Abuse with the Emergency Response Unit, protecting and advocating for one of our most vulnerable populations - children. Additionally, I held the position of Bilingual Forensic Interviewer, conducting in-depth interviews admissible in a court of law for county workers, law enforcement and the FBI.

My two younger sisters, Jennie and Arcelia, earned their college degrees. Jennie is a PICU-Clinical Nurse Specialist, holding a BSN, MSN, and DNP in Nursing. Arcelia became a lawyer practicing as an Associate Attorney in management-side employment law. I share this not to boast about my siblings (okay, maybe just a bit), but to show that despite facing obstacles like inequality, race, and gender bias, you can still succeed.

Thanks to the courageous efforts of the women's suffrage movement, they secured voting rights, allowing women the opportunity to pursue higher education and participate in the workforce challenging gender stereotypes. However, we still need to make constant efforts to achieve and or maintain full equality for our daughters, and granddaughters. I want nothing more than to see them reach their goals and dreams. Happy Women's Equality Day!

*“I can promise you that **women** working together – linked, informed and educated – can bring peace and prosperity to this forsaken planet.”*
- Isabelle Allende



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Captain Elizabeth Kemp assumes command of Headquarters Company, during a Change of Command ceremony held aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, July 12.

Captain Elizabeth Kemp
Headquarters Company Commander and Mounted Color Guard Officer in Charge
Two months on base
Favorite things: Dancing, jiu-jitsu, quality food, reading, and messing with my husband at all opportunities, including this one.

I grew up with a single dad and two sisters living off food stamps and MediCal. I made it through college off sheer will, determination, and God’s grace to prove to my younger sisters that their dreams were possible to achieve with effort – that effort being multiple part-time physical labor jobs every year.

A year after graduating college, God called me to join the Marine Corps and I knew that would provide my family and me with financial stability we had not experienced in over 10 years. I met a recruiter, signed the dotted line, and was at Officer Candidate School three months later where I was met with the cultural shock of a lifetime. Competing physically and mentally for success while grossly outnumbered by men is a different ball game entirely. Grit and determination overcome all perceived limitations when failure is not an option.

I did it for me and I did it for my family. I will not pretend it has been easy. I have had my share of successes and failures.

But being a great Marine is not about winning always, it’s about what you do in the face of failure, as well – do you quit or do you stand up, dust yourself off, and get back in the fight?

The Marine Corps changed my life. I would not be the woman that stands before you had I not joined. From running demolition ranges and building SWA huts to leading convoys and standing before companies, I have gained so many opportunities and abilities. I have seen poor leaders as well as phenomenal leaders and learned valuable lessons from both. The woman that has inspired me the most is Lt. Col. Yuliya Omarov, a woman who pushes her people to succeed beyond any self-imposed limitations. You should consider yourself lucky should you ever get to meet her.

And what has the Marine Corps given me in return? The best husband ever. More confidence than I could have dreamed of. Communication skills. Leadership skills. Courage. Accountability. The ability to be both honest and kind with myself while embracing change. And two awards. A certificate of commendation for the first platoon I commanded, a training platoon that saw over 550 Marines in a four month span, and a Naval Commendation for my three years within the 1st Marine Logistics Group. My husband would tell you I rightly earned them and more but I lack the cockiness to be so grandiose. I will, however, say I am immensely proud of them.

I desire, more than anything, to inspire others – to push those around me to succeed beyond their wildest imaginations. To look at the world of impossibilities as challenges instead of dead ends. To build windows in the face of closed doors. And to praise God for the ability to do so. For if I had succumbed to society’s expectations, I would not be writing this article. And though they did not directly inspire me, I thank God for the women that paved the way for me to be here today.



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Capt. Elizabeth Kemp is accompanied by her husband, Capt. William Kemp, 1st Force Storage Battalion supply technician, during the Headquarters Change of Command ceremony aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, July 12.



Rizza Shelley
Defense Agency Commissary Officer (MCLB Barstow Commissary)
1.5 years on base
Favorite things: Play with my doggies (my fur babies)

I am a hard-working and driven individual who isn't afraid to face a challenge. I'm passionate about my work and I know how to get the job done. I was born and raised in the Philippines. Growing up I have multiple job experiences which I all enjoyed. At this point of my life, I say I have accomplished things that I wouldn't think I could but I did!

Women that influence and inspired me are my mother, sisters, friends and co-workers. These women are strong and confident. I have received multiple awards and recognition from our organization. It's a huge change for me moving from the Philippines to the United States. All I can say is that I am grateful and blessed.



Photo courtesy: Rizza Shelley

Rizza Shelly, Defense Agency Commissary Officer, August 23

Clarissa Mattig-Smith
Program Analyst
14 years on base

I started in a general series, as part of a group that was hired as process improvement specialists. Then in 2017, they converted us to program analysts. We wore dual-hats, because we were still doing process improvement and analytic work. So, now I am doing process improvement, program analyst, and digital integration right now. We're implementing some 5.0 business industry, which are new upcoming technology, into both sides.

I am also in charge of the internship program. There are seven interns starting in Albany and then seven interns will start here in Barstow. There is someone at MCLB Albany

managing the interns there, so we're sort of tag-teaming the program and I will manage the interns here. The vice president of Barstow Community College brought all the professors here and we asked them to recommend some students for interns. It is unpaid, but they'll gain valuable hands-on experience and better qualify for the pathways program in federal service.

In 2010, I came in here as a pathways student, started at the very bottom and within four years rose very quickly. But that was the last time that program was done. Now I want to see someone else do that and so we can have more younger people in the workforce. This internship program is a way for young people to get their foot in the door, because it's so hard to get hired by the government and it's also important for the community around us.

Kelly Castillo
Painter
14 years on base

I didn't start as a painter, but started as a contractor, for about ten years before getting a permanent position for the Department of Defense. I was a contractor until 2008, then I was term (temporary position but with full federal benefits and pension), then a couple of years ago I finally got a permanent position.

I've been a painter for most of the 14 years, but I started in a different shop, then went to the warehouse for a little bit. Around 2012 or 2013 I came to the paint shop where I have been ever since. When I started in the paint shop, I was a masker, masking parts of the vehicles before they were painted.

Before starting here, I didn't have any experience as a painter. I learned on the job, but when you're in a male-dominated industry, you have to work harder to prove yourself.

Earning the Employee of the Year award in 2023, Castillo was raised by a single mom who showed her the value of hard work. Her daughter will soon transfer to a 4-year college in Santa Barbara, California.



Photo by: Vanessa Schell

Kelly Castillo, painter, paints military vehicle at the paint shop, Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

Vanessa Morasky
Supply Technician
14 years on base

I was raised by my grandma, who was not related by blood. I learned old-fashioned values and was given a unique perspective on life, including the importance of being honest, owning up to mistakes and putting in hard work.

I was brought in as a management assistant and then when we merged with our sister base in Albany, I became a supply technician. My last department was property, for seven years, then I crossed over to this side of the house for procurement.

I have a very supportive team (*editor's note: they're all women!*) and they made the transition of coming over here very easy. I can go from my supervisors down to one of my coworkers and just bounce a question off them, or try to get a better understanding of something and if they don't have an answer, they go to the next person to get answers, so we're never left hanging over here.

When Morasky is not at work, she enjoys spending time with her family, and aims to make two out of the country trips a year, the most recent of which were to Canada and Italy.

Melisa Nowicki
Production Shop Planner
18 months on base

I was a stay at home mom, but as my kids got older, I wanted to go back to work. My previous job was for a car auction. The work I did at the auction was very similar to a production shop planner. At auction, we had weekly auctions to sell cars, and it was really a lot of fun. Sure enough, when I started here, the work was really in line with what I did at the auction. We get vehicles ready for sale.

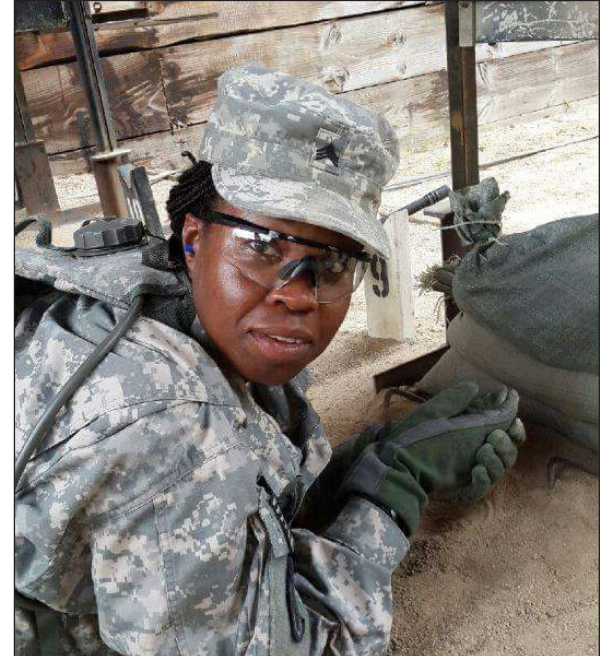
My husband and I are both on the board for Hesperia America Little League. He's the president and I'm the secretary. Earlier this year we received the President's Volunteer gold award, for the volunteer work with the little league. My mother was a single mom who worked hard, and my stepmother has the biggest heart and gives the best hugs. My mother-in-law had an incredible career and is great with the kids. They all inspire me.



**Photos courtesy:
Paula Tipton**

Left: Paula Tipton, Supervisory Supply Management Specialist, 1st Force Storage Battalion, poses for a photo on the day of her graduation, July 27, 2022.

Right: Paula Tipton, Supervisory Supply Management Specialist, 1st Force Storage Battalion, engages in training, while serving in the Army, August 2015.



Paula Tipton
Supervisory Supply Management Specialist |
Operations Officer
Six years on base
Favorite things: Being connected with organizations
that support warfighters

After 15 years in the Army and a short two-year retirement, I opted to get back in the fight on the contract side, and then landed where I am currently, at 1st Force Storage Battalion. While in the service I obtained two bachelor's degrees and later completed my master's degree program for Transportation and Logistics Management in 2022.

As a black woman and leader in the Army there were inequality challenges and difficulties, just as being a

black woman and leader on the government civilian side has its adversities; but with God I am strengthened and encouraged to stay the course. I am certainly confident in my ability to navigate through and overcome any and all adversity. I was blessed to have a great mentor, and anchor in my mother and although she passed away some time ago, I carry her inspirations and teachings within and share with my own children.

I do my best to remain positive, share kindness, and speak life into those I encounter regularly. I've learned that, as a woman in the workforce, achieving greatness and success in positions, education, and personal growth is a mindset. Set your goals high, so when you shoot for the stars and land on the moon you've still conquered magnitudes over what you may not have even thought you could.



Photo courtesy: Alicia Florez

Alicia Florez, SF Facilities director, speaks with former base commanding officer, Col. Gregory Pace, and Assemblyman Tom Lackey, Assembly District 24, regarding waste water treatment, aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, July 2023.

Alicia Florez
SF Facilities director
15 years on base

Alicia Florez, a native Californian, started her career path in Engineering when she graduated from California State University, Long Beach. She took her degree to General Motors where she worked as a controls engineer and gained the beginning of her experience in an industrial plant.

Christine Rodriguez
Painter Worker
15 years on base

I started in 2009 as an emergency hire, then I was laid off, and then brought back in 2010 as a contractor. I worked as a contractor for many years, then I switched to the Department of Defense around 2018 (as a term employee) with Production Plant Barstow, Marine Depot Maintenance Command on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow. When I first started, as a contractor, I was in the steam rack on the night shift, then I came to the paint shop, and then I went to the body shop for about two years.

As an emergency hire, I was able to learn on the job. Once I was here, I was able to work in the different shops and develop skills. There was always at least one other woman working with me in the shops."

Outside of work, Rodriguez is busy with grandma duties. She recently welcomed her first granddaughter (after four grandsons).

Jessica Tafoya
Cable Splicer
20 years on base

Tafoya has spent the entirety of her time on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, working in the cable shop at Production Plant Barstow, Marine Depot Maintenance Command from which she plans to eventually retire. Her father worked at a moving company and her mother was a teacher, but is now retired. Her mother motivates to keep going, and to not give up when times are tough.

She moved back to California and started working at the Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow in Public Works in 2009 and then transferred to Production Plant Barstow, Marine Depot Maintenance Command working in production and overseeing the Army National Guard workload. She was promoted to the Engineering manager where she managed Facilities and Production Equipment Maintenance, Environmental, Material Handling Equipment and all the projects for facility and production equipment sustainment and improvements.

Florez was instrumental in the construction of several new buildings for PPB to include the Combat Vehicle Maintenance facility which proudly displays her name on the plaque on the building. She was again promoted to the S-F Director making a full circle back to where she started on the base by working from the bottom to the top position. She had to work through many challenges in her career as one of the few women in a male-dominate industrial facility. Her experience, knowledge and intelligence has paved the way for her to become one of the few top females in leadership at MDMC and now at MCLB Barstow. She has set her mind on competing with herself and to making herself better through learning every aspect of her department and how it supports the base and by working with others to gain knowledge of how the rest of the departments operate.

Florez is now passing her vast knowledge on to her subordinates through teaching and mentoring and helping others strive to be the best they can be. She has balanced her career and family life, raising three children, working full time and coaching soccer in her spare time. To say she is busy all the time is an understatement, but she is one you can count on to solve a problem or get sound advice from when you need help.



Photo by: Vanessa Schell

Christine Rodriguez, painter, paints military vehicle parts at the paint shop, Production Plant Barstow, Marine Depot Maintenance Command, on the Yermo Annex, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

Doreen Flores
Inventory Management Specialist
19 years on base

Flores started off as a contractor at the warehouse as a supply technician, then moved to building 573, Production Plant Barstow, as a supply technician, where she has been ever since. She needed a change from her old job, and says it has been good for her at PPB. Some of her team has been working together in the same area, that whole time. "I like my area, and I like working with all of the women here."



Photo by: Vanessa Schell

Sylvia de la Paz, non-destructive testing inspector, works the large magnet and light that helps her look for flaws in machinery, at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 20.

Sylvia de la Paz Non-Destructive Testing Inspector 10 Years on base

Before starting on base, De La Paz had prior experience as a welder, as an inspector and as a supervisor but unfortunately the plant she was working for closed down. Throughout her career, she has done water pipe welding and wind tower welding. She is a certified welder and a certified welder inspector. Thirty years ago, she started a restaurant business, which has since been passed down to her son, Richie's Diner in Victorville. As De La Paz got older, she stepped back from welding, because the physical toll is hard on the body. "I don't weld as much anymore, because it's hard for me to do all the grinding and all that, but I liked it. It was like art, when it all came together."

De La Paz also volunteers at the High Desert Church. "I go to classes there, in my spare time. I also like to visit my grandkids. The newest little one is a week old. I'm very blessed with my family."

Several of the women who have worked with her mentioned that they were inspired by her because she is humble, but also highly supportive of her coworkers. "Don't give up. That's number one thing. We all have our struggles, but, just keep going. Hope for the best, things will get better."

Teaghan Cardoza Supply Technician 5 years on base

In 2018, I started here as a contractor. For the first four years I worked as a contractor, including being a material handler. I have only been in this supply technician position for the past four months. When I was a material handler contractor, I worked on the (assembly line) floor and also in the warehouse. In the warehouse, I felt like I was so tucked away, and that trying for positions would be more challenging. I knew that

coming here, to the floor, would just be a stepping stone to something better, and it was.

All the women in my department are so nice and kind and helpful. They are all very supportive and I am very happy here.

Growing up, I didn't have the best influences, from either men nor women, so now I feel that after 31 years, I'm just me. I figured it out on my own and changed the trajectory. The big thing is being a mom, now I have an option: Do I keep this going, or do I change it? I didn't have any [good] influences, but I changed it. I go to work and the rest of the time, I'm a mom.

Rosanna D Hinds 1st Force Storage Battalion Maintenance Company Commander 15 years on base Favorite things: My Children (Angel 23, Alina 19, Jeremiah 14, and Dominic 12)

As a female leader, I have enjoyed breaking down barriers and empowering future female leaders to create a more inclusive culture and drive positive change. My experience working with such a diverse workforce is my most valuable asset. Embracing my role and utilizing my voice to make a positive change is important.



Photo courtesy: Rosanna Hinds

1st Force Storage Battalion Workforce Recognition Information Day 2023. Lieutenant Colonel Matthew S. Hall, 1FSB commanding officer, awarded Maintenance Company Commander Rosanna Hinds with Company of the Year.

Vickie Robles
Material Expeditor
12 years on base

My grandfather worked on the base, also as an expeditor, and I have five aunts who worked here too. When I first started, I was a contractor (expeditor) and then I switched to permanent with DoD as a mechanic, with Production Plant Barstow, but eventually went back to being an expeditor. I switched to a mechanic role because at the time they were getting rid of the expeditor contract and I was asked if I would like to be a mechanic, which I accepted, then I was a mechanic for six years. Being a mechanic was very rough on my hands and elbows, so when there was an opportunity to switch back to an expeditor, still with the DoD, I made the switch. I loved both roles, but all the impacting from mechanic's work was very hard on my hands.

I was the only girl in the family, so my father taught me mechanic's work. I was a daddy's girl. My mom's side of the family is very large, her mom had 21 kids and a lot of them worked over here, too. Most of the women on that side were workers, a lot of them worked here, but ones who didn't, the sisters, were all stay at home moms. My mom stuccos and paints and she is just non-stop and I learned my work ethic from her.

People wonder what we do out here. On the Employee Recognition Days, when we can bring our families here, I



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Vickie Robles, material expeditor, at the driver's seat of a forklift, at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, on the Yermo Annex aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

brought my parents who are now in their 80s. They were able to see the crane and all the vehicles and how much work goes into everything we do here. My parents were in awe, and my mother was emotional, because she knew her dad worked here, too. My daughter is also an expeditor here, on the Nebo side of Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow.

*“Every **woman's** success should be an inspiration to another, we're strongest when we cheer each other on.”*

- Serena Williams



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Valerie Ashbrook receives a Commanders Coin during Brig. Gen. Jason G. Woodworth's visit to Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, May 7.

Valerie Ashbrook
Executive Assistant
18 years on base

Favorite things: Traveling with my husband, quality time with my daughters and watching my son play baseball.

In 2006, I started working at Marine Depot Maintenance Command as a Heavy Mobile Equipment helper then HME mechanic. I worked on Light Amphibious Vehicles, Amphibious Assault Vehicleless and M88s. It was tough because back then it was mostly male roles, so I had to prove that I could do the job just as good, if not better. Throughout those years I took various positions such as a Tools and Parts attendant, Supply technician, and a Management assistant, which led me to my current position as an executive assistant to the Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow's commanding officer.

My accomplishments are receiving a Commanders Coin from Brig. Gen. Jason G. Woodworth, Letter of Appreciation from the Deputy Commander of MCI-WEST and multiple Certificates for Appreciations, Achievements and Recognitions.

Elizabeth Carroll
DLA Disposition Services Barstow Environmental
Branch Supervisor
24 years on base
Favorite things: Anything true crime, spending time
with family and friends, trying new “hole in the wall”
restaurants and farmer’s markets.

I am a single mom to a beautiful daughter who is currently serving in the United States Navy and a granny to the most beautiful grandson. I am also a fur-mom to two crazy Frenchies named Mater and Doc. Those who know me, know me as the loud, positive, always laughing kind of woman that would do anything to help someone out.

I am also a daughter to two hearing impaired parents, and I had to grow up really fast due to having to interpret for my parents for pretty much everything. This opened my eyes at a very young age to how the world was and how much inequality there was, not only for hearing impaired persons, but for women, as well. I watched as my mother always struggled to find employment due to being hearing impaired and the only employment she was able to find was odds and end cleaning jobs. I would always interpret for my parents and at times I would be interpreting for my father who was a man, people would not take us seriously because all they heard was a young woman speaking at the time.

As the years went on and I grew up, I always vowed to ensure that people saw my work ethic instead of the obvious,



Photo courtesy: Elizabeth Carroll

Elizabeth Carroll poses with her daughter during the daughter's wedding, October 13, 2022.



Photo courtesy: Elizabeth Carroll

Elizabeth Carroll poses with a Desert Rat certificate, presented by Col. Sekou S. Karega,, former base commanding officer, at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, November 10, 2016.

that I am a woman. I first started here at MCLB Barstow as a temp laborer (I basically cleaned up trash around all of the DLA occupied warehouses) for a DLA contractor in 2000 and worked hard to show that I was just as deserving of the positions that I worked in as the men that were in the same positions and I secured a permanent position with the contractor. I worked in many different areas from inventory to quality control and receiving, to forklift operations. I volunteered to work in the hazardous material and radioactive programs to gain more environmental experience.

In 2009, I became the Safety and Occupational Health Specialist and Radiation Program Manager for DLA Distribution as a civilian employee. I then applied for an Environmental Protection Specialist Position with Base Environmental in 2016. I worked for Base Environmental for approximately 9 months and I learned so much about the environmental mission and was eager to further my career in the hazardous waste field. I applied for an Environmental Branch Supervisor position for DLA Disposition Services at the end of 2016. While my time was short with Base Environmental, my work ethic was recognized, and I received the Desert Rat award from Col. Sekou S. Karega, who was the base commanding officer at the time.

I currently supervise seven employees at DLA Disposition Services Barstow, ensuring all hazardous waste removals are completed according to regulations for military units in our area of responsibilities that are as close as MCLB Barstow, and as far away as Creech Air Force Base, Nevada. In all of the positions that I have held, I always remembered the experiences from my young life that pushed me to always do better and be better.

I had many influential women who were in leadership positions that always pushed me to do the best that I could do. One saying, that I remember hearing in my first couple of years of working was, "always be yourself" and "go to work each day as if you were always on a job interview," and that is what I have done throughout my career.





Photo by: Vanessa Schell

Bessy Duque, Heavy Mobile Equipment mechanic, trains Maria Rasmussem, painter (temporarily in the body shop), on rubberizing a metal panel for a military vehicle, in the body shop at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

Bessy Duque Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic 10 years on base

Before starting on base, I was a mobile mechanic. I used to travel around to Orange County, Los Angeles, Hesperia and Victorville. It was mostly to work on people's cars, but also for heavier trucks like what we have at Production Plant Barstow, Marine Depot Maintenance Command. Before that I was working in Los Angeles, in the garment industry, as a pattern maker. Los Angeles had most of the garment industry, before they outsourced the manufacturing overseas around 2009. When the woman who was working in upholstery retired, they knew I could help because I worked here before, for about a year. Now I am helping train new people to work in upholstery.

My stepfather was a bicycle mechanic and because I grew up in that environment, turning wrenches and putting together bicycles, I was already familiar with working as a mechanic when it came to cars. Being able to both work as a mechanic and work in upholstery, was a product of my experience but also because of how I grew up. Everything is a challenge but I never feel like 'because I am not a man and I do not have a man's strength or body, I cannot do everything a man does.' As women, we can accomplish a lot.

When I first started, as a contractor and a mechanic, I wasn't taken seriously because I was a woman. Even my supervisor said he didn't know what to do with me, even though I was the first one to be released into a shop. When I first arrived, during their morning meeting, I told them I was the new mechanic, they all got very quiet.

One day, on my break, I was reading the manual to my son's car. One of my coworkers saw that, asked me what I was reading and I explained that I was learning how to replace the clutch, since we would be working on my son's car that weekend. Two weeks later, he apologized to me, for judging

Maria Rasmussem Painter, Body Shop, Production Plant Barstow 19.5 years on base

For most of these 19 years on base, I was a painter. I love painting, that's my thing. I love making things pretty. I think all of the work here needs a woman's touch. Part of my job is removing the fabric "skin" from the Light Armored Vehicles, sanding it down and taking all the glue out of the wood and fabric. Then I clean all of it up and then put it back together. Buying the "skins" brand new is very costly, and takes a very long time to ship here, so it's faster and cheaper for the Production Plant Barstow to refurbish them.

I love being here, everyone here treats me well. After we finish a vehicle here, when I go home, I'm proud and amazed of everything we accomplish. When I am driving with my family on the freeway, and I see the vehicles go by, I can say to my kids "I did that!" It's very rewarding to work here, because of what we do, the plant saves a lot of money by refurbishing the vehicles.

My mother is a huge inspiration to me, she's 82 now and she's my hero. She raised 12 kids, and she didn't work because her job was raising of all of us. Now that she's older, she can't do as much as she used to, so it has been difficult for us. I'm here, now, working hard, because of her.

me in the beginning, because he's since seen that I am a capable and skilled mechanic. Eventually they all saw that I knew what I was doing and that I had the skills.

As a single mother of three kids, I had no choice but to learn and to gain the experience that I have, I'm not scared of learning, or teaching, or helping other people. Sylvia de la Paz (*editor's note: see her entry on page 9*) and I were hired on the same day. Sylvia was hired as a welder and I was hired as a mechanic, and there was another lady coming on as an expeditor. I saw right away the opportunities they were giving to women here. So, I am happy for this place, because they gave me the opportunity and I am proving, along with all the women here, that we can do it and at the same level and we deserve respect for that.



Photo by: Vanessa Schell

Bessy Duque, heavy mobile equipment mechanic, trains Maria Rasmussem, painter on modifying a metal panel for a military vehicle, in the body shop at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.



Photos courtesy: Mercedita Jauss

Mercedita Jauss, supply technician, with her bible study group, in their uniforms.

Mercedita (Mercy) Jauss
Secretary and Supply technician
29 years on base

Favorite things: Collecting different kinds of plants.

Once a month I volunteer at Hinkley Community Senior Center. We serve breakfast and sometimes a community barbeque. I've been doing it for 11 years. It's a good feeling. I get tired and

my feet may be hurting, but at the end of the day its all worth it.

Every Sunday I go to church and I play music and sing. I don't have a good voice but who cares, right? It's a free country.

I go out with my friends once a month, (The Widows' Night, but one found a husband so we call it "The Giggling Ladies") we eat dinner at a different restaurant each time and talk about our lives, laughing and telling stories about our love life and so on.

After our Bible studies, we eat dinner together while still wearing our uniforms. We share God's word, study it and pray. My activities after work are also my therapy and my life.



Mercedita Jauss, supply technician, with her "Giggling Ladies" group, during one of their monthly dinners.

Cathey De-Vault Donaldson

Environmental specialist

16 years on base

Favorite things: Strong Faith, Trust, and Belief



Photo courtesy: Cathey De-Vault Donaldson

Cathey De-Vault Donaldson, Environmental specialist, Poses with the Burrtec mascot at the Barstow Earth Day festival, Barstow, California, 2023.

Cathey De-Vault Donaldson is a mother, grandma of five, great-grandma of two, and a friend, and co-worker to many. She has raised three grandchildren.

Her granddaughter grew up to be an Aircraft Survival Equipmentman and Parachute Rigger, for the United States Navy and she is stationed at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington. One of her grandsons is a Police Officer aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California. Nother grandson is a Range Operations Specialist, the Army's National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California.

Donaldson is active at the Hi Desert Word Center church where she is an usher and involved in Hospitality Ministry.

She has a Masters of Science degree in Human Services, with a specialization in social and community services, from Capella University, where she graduated with a 4.0 GPA. She also earned a Bachelors of Science degree in Social Psychology, from Park College, where she also graduated with a 4.0 GPA, and Summa Cum Laude Further education includes a diploma in Supernatural Helps, from the Supernatural Ministerial Training Institute, and a certificate in Instructor's Development Course, Train the Trainer School.

"I witnessed the USMC Commandant present MCLB Barstow with the Voluntary Protection Program 1st Star."

Donaldson is the coordinator for the base's Comprehensive Environmental Training and Education Program, within the Environmental Division, S-F Facilities, since 2017. She also acts as the Environmental Compliance Coordinator, and Collateral Duty Safety Officer alternate, Fire Warden, and Voluntary Protection Program member. She is also an Associate Probation Officer and designed, implemented, and facilitated the "Positive Alternatives" Women's Program with the San Bernardino County Probation Department.

Felicia Acosta
Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic
10 years on base

Although Acosta has held the Heavy Mobile Equipment mechanic role throughout her career at Production Plant Barstow, Marine Depot Maintenance Command aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, she started as a contractor before switching to permanent. "I started as a contractor and then I was a supervisor for the contractors. Then the contract ended and that's when I got the offer for the government position. It was about a two-week period in between, so I took the two weeks off and came back as a DoD employee!"

I learned a lot from my father, who was the ultimate mechanic. I was able to learn the basics from him and then I worked for my uncle who owned a car dealership and I did everything there: I sold you the car, I was the finance person, I changed oil, I changed tires.

The strongest women in my life are my mother and grandmother. My mom is very independent and that wore off on me and my grandmother was just amazing."

When she's not at work, Acosta spends a lot of time with her god-children. "I'm not your average godmother. I practically co-parent. I have them every other weekend."

She rescued an American Pocket Bully, who was in bad shape when she first met him, but now he is quite spoiled. One day, she hopes to also have a horse. "I never dreamt about my wedding, I dreamt about a horse."

Felicia is one of the few women mechanics in the plant. "I like when people ask me about my job and I get to tell them and show them what we're working on. Sometimes I get the opportunity to drive the vehicles. Everything we do here is so important. That's why I take pride in my work and what I do. This is for the warfighters out there, so they are safe."

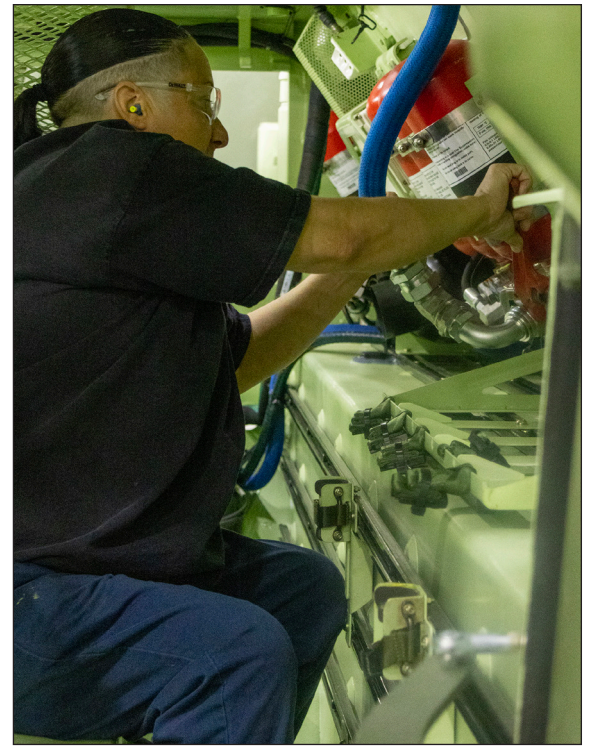


Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Felicia Acosta works inside of a Light Armored Vehicle, at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

Erika Argomedeo
Information, Tickets and Travel Program
Over 20 years on base

Favorite things: Going to amusement parks with my granddaughter, going to the beach, watching movies, drinking wine and relaxing.

I was born and raised in Puerto Rico. We are a military family (Army). My first job here at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow was at the Auto Shop, I never felt different or rejected by being the only female working at the sho. Everyone welcomed me. I am blessed to be here working for this community supporting our Marines and families. This is a small logistics base where everyone can feel comfortable and be respectful of each other.



Photo courtesy: Danielle Wilson

Danielle Wilson, quality assurance specialist, holds her Employee of the Year award, during the awards ceremony in front of the Headquarters building aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, 2022.

Danielle Wilson
Quality Assurance Specialist
10 years on base
Favorite things: Family and food

Let me start with my greatest accomplishment. I am a woman who has raised three amazing children. I come from a line of women with a strong work ethic, determination, and resilience. I started my professional journey with the government back in 2014 as a grounds laborer (WG-3), and in 2015 was promoted to Fire Prevention officer (GS-4), and currently I work as a Quality Assurance specialist (GS-11).

In my current position I received the Employee of the Year back in 2022. No matter what title I held, I maintained the same work ethic, always striving to be the best person I can possibly be. I am super proud of both my personal and professional accomplishments and so grateful to recognize Women's Equality Day to honor the strength, resilience, and achievements of all women.



Photo by: Vanessa Schell

Kandice Hazelbaker, Occupational Health and Safety specialist, and Ernestina Alston, program analyst, pose in the lobby of Production Plant Barstow, Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

Kandice Hazelbaker Occupational Health & Safety Specialist 16 years on base

Kandice Hazelbaker grew up in Barstow and has worked locally throughout her career. She started on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, as a secretary of Safety, the title of which has since changed to management assistant. “I was in that secretary pool for about a year and a half before I took a higher grade administrative advisor position. From there I was placed on an internal placement program because they reorganized and got rid of the administrator advisor positions.”

From there, Hazelbaker took a Voluntary Protection Program position, which gave her direct experience in Safety. When a position opened up in Safety, she took another grade promotion.

Before starting on base, Kandice worked for Barstow Community Hospital. For the eight years she worked there, she never received a promotion or higher pay. “I like to say I was a good employee. I had leave on the books, I was good with my customers, but I couldn’t get them to give me a raise.” Ironically, it was her supervisor there that told her about working at PPB MDMC.

Her mother, who went to school full-time while raising three children, also worked at the hospital, as a night shift nurse while she worked on her degree. Her grandmother would watch them overnight while her mom was working. “In the morning, after we would leave for school, she would sleep long enough for us to be at school and then she would be up to start the next cycle all over again; Dinners, soccer and baseball practices, we were in all of it.”

“She obviously had some kind of super mom powers, because I have only one kid now and I don’t know how she did it.”

Hazelbaker played on the soccer team when she was younger, as well as briefly in the Barstow women’s league. She has recently started coaching soccer for her son’s team.

Ernestina Alston (photo above) Program Analyst 38 years on base

For nearly four decades, Alston has worked on the Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, holding various positions. She started as a data transcriber for Material Management, when they used microfiche. The printed information was shrunk and stored on a card made of transparent film, and required a special machine to view the miniaturized words and images.

“We didn’t have computers, so we had to do everything by card. We worked all with paper. I made the cards, so every time someone changed jobs, I had to make a new card. But I loved it. That was the best job I ever had. I was happy, because I had my own machine. I was doing my own pace, I was important, because if it wasn’t for making the cards, no one would get paid.”

After that job, Alston began climbing the ladder, from a GS-3 all the way to an eleven, from data transfer to a supply clerk to Inventory Management specialist. She was an administrative advisor before moving into her current role as a program analyst.

At one point, Alston was temporarily promoted as

an Industrial specialist supervisor for 120 days to a special team that was sequestered in a separate building elsewhere on base. She’ll never forget it, because during that time, while sequestered away, they watched the Twin Towers fall on 9/11.

While in material management, Alston traveled a lot on for work, to learn the new ordering systems. She has been to places such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, San Antonio, Texas and New Orleans, Louisiana. She recently returned from a trip to Seal Beach, where multiple military bases and companies around California and Arizona sent personnel to work together and share information for an audit.

Outside of work, she played women’s soccer for 14 years, and also coaches soccer. Her husband coached soccer for the high school and also referees the women’s league and together they have coached 18 and over travel teams. “It’s a lot of work, you have to have trust in them and have good communication.”

She has been working since she was 12, and has one of the longest current working records at PPB MDMC. “I’ve always had a job. I’ve never been without one. This place has been good for me. It’s provided for my family, I am blessed.”

Mia Johnson
Supply Technician
15 years on base

Mia Johnson has kept the same role for most of her time on base, but actually started out in the warehouse. "Throughout the 15 years that I've been a supply technician, I've learned a lot in different aspects of the purchasing department. With all the different systems and the changes to the systems, you are always training, in some way, every day. We learn something new all the time, doing what we do here."

Johnson, a mother of three, with a daughter who is 6-years-old, a 10-year-old son, and a 17-year-old son. The daughter is in cheer and both sons are in football. "We're constantly moving, I get home around 5:15 p.m. and then we're at practice by 6 p.m., so by the time I walk in the door and we get ready, it's time to walk right back out the door."

All the back and forth for different activities is a lot of time and effort, but to Johnson, it's all worth it. She and her family make a point of going on trips together, recently to Disney World in Florida, for her daughter's birthday in February.

"I am very appreciative of the training and all that knowledge that I have gained over time and for all the different people that I have interacted and worked with. I'm very blessed to have this job."

As a supply technician, she is part of an all-women team. "With all the women on my team, sometimes we see each other more than our own families. We have a good connection, as well. We learn from each other and support each other to get through our days. Sometimes you have rough days and it may be tough, but I love the different dynamics and that we all came from different backgrounds. We can get through our day together, we can get our job done and we can get our mission done."

*"As **women** achieve power, the barriers will fall. As society sees what **women** can do, as **women** see what **women** can do, there will be more **women** out there doing things, and we'll all be better off for it."*

- Sandra Day O'Connor

Katie Naron
Pneuhdraulics Mechanic
18 years on base

I started as a contractor during an emergency hire. I was originally supposed to be in the motor room, but they overfilled the billets, so they stationed me in the hydraulic shop, which ended being lucky, and now there are only four of us left in this series.

As an emergency hire, I didn't need specific experience, just general knowledge of tooling. But my dad was fairly handy, so before I even applied for the job, my dad and I spent a few weeks going over tooling and cars, so when I arrived here I wouldn't be lost.

I am also a huge Lego fan. I like to collect colorful Lego sets, such as a Voltron set (that I kept) and an Optimus Prime set that I gave away. The largest Lego set I have is 5000 pieces. Also, I don't glue any of the sets. I glued one once, which was a bouquet of flowers so it won't be taken back apart anyway, but gluing it still felt wrong.

I've been in this current role for about 14 years, the longest of anything I've worked on on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow. I also worked on humvees for a couple years. Now, I kind of run my own space, I have my own program and order my own parts.

One of the coolest things I've done as part of this job, is shoot a Howitzer. I may be one of the few women who has ever shot one, and I got the opportunity because I worked on the recoil cylinders. Building the recoil cylinders for a Howitzer is one of the hardest things I've ever built, because it was so precise and everything had to be lint-free. So, getting to shoot the Howitzer was a bit of



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Katie Naron, pneuhdraulics mechanic, works on a part in the Hydraulics Shop at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

an incentive to work on the recoil cylinders. We got to do a full-body rotation and bite the prime, then I was able to keep the bullet I shot, afterwards.

My dad was the one who is mechanically-inclined, but my mother was very book-smart and not into anything hands-on. My mother always wanted me to do anything and everything that I wanted. She wanted me to be happy so was always super supportive.

"I love being here and doing this work. It reminds me a lot about Legos. I think people's interests and hobbies inform their passion about their field of work, because otherwise I probably wouldn't have been here this long."



Photos courtesy: Kyrstin Barela

Kyrstin Barela during her time at the police academy, December 2020.

Kyrstin Barela
Safety specialist
11 years on base

Balancing family life and a demanding career is no small feat, especially for someone navigating a traditionally male-dominated field. For Kyrstin Barela, the pursuit of a career in law enforcement meant making profound sacrifices and embracing challenges that few can truly understand.

As a devoted wife and mother of three beautiful children, Barela embarked on a transformative journey that began with a grueling three-month police academy in Missouri. Leaving her family behind to immerse herself in this rigorous training was no easy decision. Yet, driven by a passion for serving her community and breaking through gender barriers, she persevered. The academy tested her resolve and skills, but it also shaped her into a formidable police officer with a unique perspective and an unwavering commitment to safety.

Her husband and children played a crucial role in this journey. Their encouragement and understanding were vital as she faced the challenges of balancing her career aspirations with her family responsibilities.

"Their love and support inspired me to be a strong, loving mother and motivated me to excel both in my professional life and at home."

Equally influential in her journey was her father, a figure of strength and resilience. His guidance and steadfast belief in her potential were sources of motivation throughout her career. Growing up, her father instilled in her the values of hard work and perseverance, often sharing stories of his own experiences and challenges. His wisdom and faith in her capabilities served as a powerful catalyst, inspiring her to overcome obstacles and strive for excellence.

Raised with three brothers, she grew up in a world where



Family portrait of Kyrstin Barela, her husband and their three children, May 2024.

wrestling, football, and soccer were familiar and exhilarating. Her mother, "a pillar of strength and wisdom," has been her greatest source of inspiration. As a young girl, she admired her mother's level-headed approach to life, which helped mold her into the resilient woman she is today. Her mother's influence extends beyond that of a parent; she is a cherished best friend and mentor, guiding her through every challenge.

In her pursuit of a career as a Safety specialist, her experiences as a police officer and a woman in a male-dominated field inform her approach to ensuring safety and advocating for effective practices.

"My story is a testament to the importance of female representation in all professions. I have shown that being a woman in such roles is not just about breaking through barriers but also about bringing a unique, valuable perspective that enhances the field."

Reflecting on her journey, she finds strength in the Bible's words: "She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come" (Proverbs 31:25).

"This verse resonates deeply with me, embodying the courage, resilience, and grace that have guided me through every challenge."

Her journey underscores the significance of pursuing one's passion despite obstacles, and highlights the power of strong familial support and personal determination. Barela continues to make strides in her career, proving that with resilience and support, it is possible to achieve one's dreams and make a meaningful impact in any field.



Kyrstin Barela and coworkers at a VPPPA Conference, 2021.



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Christina Johnson, production shop planner, out on the floor at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

Christina Johnson Production Shop Planner Seven years on base

Christina Johnson has been a planner since 2020. Before she was a planner, she was a mechanic and before that she worked in trades, at Production Plant Barstow. However, when she first arrived on base as a contractor, she was an expeditor – a forklift driver. Her goal was to move up the ladder, the material department and the requirement for being a planner meant serving as a mechanic for at least a year.

Prior to working on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Johnson worked in corporate America for 15 years.

“Working here was huge change, a huge culture shock. I had no idea what this base was about, no idea what they did, no idea what I was walking into.”

After leaving the stress of corporate work, she opted to focus on being a stay at home mom for five years. Starting at the base was a way for her to get back into the workforce, but also gave her the leniency to spend more time with her family while off the clock.

“I absolutely love working in materials, love what I do on a daily basis, love my purpose. I could not ask for a better job. When I worked in corporate America, it was 60 plus hours a week on salary, phone on 24/7, just very, very demanding. When I walk out of the gate here, I know I’m not going to be bothered or called.”

Christina has a son who is a Marine and she comes from a heavy military family, as does her husband. “Being able to be a part of it from the civilian side, what I do every day, I look at it a little different than some. I think that’s what drives me, what gives me the passion to push as hard as I personally do for myself.”

“I still want to move up the ladder. I have 20 years before I can even think of the word retirement. I want this department to be home.”

Johnson has five children, one son and four girls. Outside of work, she is involved in multiple community organizations. She serves as a Girl Scout leader for two Girl Scout troops, the head chair of the Girl Scout goals committee within the council, the booster club (and unofficial seamstress) for JRTC at Oak Hills High School, as well as participates in community cleanup days, the city parade and the Hesperia animal shelter. Her big heart for community support has passed onto her children, who also help by providing food and items to the homeless.

“I’m a firm believer that just because you are not blood, doesn’t mean you can’t help each other. I give back every chance I can.”

Sara Montez-Diaz Lead Safety and Occupational Health specialist, wife and mother of three 19 years on base Favorite things: Spending time with family, watching baseball and traveling the world

I was raised by a single mom who owned her own business. I watched her dedicate everything into giving me an exceptional life and I learned how to be a hard worker through her long hours keeping a small business afloat. I started at MCLB Barstow as a laborer at the young age of 19 and knew if I wanted to make a career out of it I would have to work my way up through dedication and school in some positions where I only saw men within the department. I have had different jobs throughout my time at MCLB to include a forklift operator, warehouse worker, supply tech, and many more in different organizations and departments.

Eventually I ended up where I wanted to be and that’s in Safety. I finished college, got my degree and later my professional certification in Safety. Nothing came easy out here. Every job has given me knowledge and experience for the next

one. As a female in Safety it can be tough. We only make up about 15 percent of the industry. Being a Special Government Employee can be even harder when you are trying to enforce OSHA standards and codes to high industrial cooperations usually ran by men.

I feel with my experience, my mentors, and the installation, I am afforded opportunities that have placed me in a position where I have obtained many accomplishments and distinguished awards that I never, as a 19-year-old laborer, thought I could do in my career. I still have 25 years left and I know there is much more to accomplish in those 25 years, but most important to me is that I want to show my daughter, who is now 19, that she can do anything in this world if she puts the effort and focus into it.





Photo courtesy: Jacqueline Carrington

Jacqueline Carrington, criminal intelligence analyst, February 2024.

Jacqueline Carrington Criminal Intelligence Analyst

10 years on base

Favorite things: Traveling to new countries and reading

I have dedicated my entire federal career to working for the Security and Emergency Services. I began as a vetting clerk. Due to my educational background and experience, I was given multiple opportunities to advance professionally, which led to my current position. I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and obtained my Master's Degree in Negotiations, Conflict Resolution, and Peacebuilding a few years after joining Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California. Currently, I am in the final stages of my Doctoral Program.

I am the mother of an 11-year-old boy who matriculated from our Child Development Center until kindergarten. Born in Japan to a Navy father and Air Force mother, I was raised in California and pursued my undergraduate degree in Grambling, Louisiana. Having been exposed to diverse cultures in and outside the United States, I have found inspiration and guidance from women of excellence, significantly contributing to my career and academic achievements.

I come from many amazing women who have made significant professional and educational advancements in their respective fields. I am a proud Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. member, serving the county of San Bernardino through my chapter. This also allows me to network with amazing women in our community and nationwide.

Marsha McClaine

Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic

20 years on base

For the past 20 years, Marsha McClaine has been a Heavy Mobile Equipment mechanic, with Production Plant Barstow, but before stepping into the mechanic's role, she delivered parts as a contractor. Her supervisor for that position was very impressed with her work and integrity and urged her to apply for the HME position, which she ultimately was offered.

She grew up surrounded by machines and woodworking. Her father didn't have any sons and because Marsha was the oldest, she grew up learning from him how to build and how to fix machines.

"He had a garage shop where he preferred woodworking, but he also took care of his cars and small engines."

Her parents had a business in Calico, her father was the deputy sherriff of Calico, and they also owned a bar in Yermo. Her mother had children later in life, have her when her mother was 36 and her younger sister was born when she was 40.

"My parents always worked hard, their whole lives and I think they instilled that in me."

Now she builds power packs for the military vehicles, which comprises of the power steering pump, compressor and all the hang-on gear. Once the power pack is assembled, the team will do test runs to check for engine leaks, oil leaks or water leaks. They address problems with the pack as they come across them.

"I've never had a job that I enjoyed this much, but I'm fortunate. I have a great shop. I've always had good leaders, good supervisors. There's a mix of women doing the same



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Marsha McClaine, Heavy Mobile Equipment mechanic, with one of the power packs she built, at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

jobs as men. Women have a different outlook on the same job than men do. We want to get it right the first time and not go back and redo it. We think about it a little bit more. I think all women are very focused in that way. The guys on the floor, that I work with, they're great too, they help me so much. Especially since I lost my husband, they all very supportive."

She and her husband were married for 50 years.

When she's not busy at work, Marsha is happily spending time with her family. She is a grandmother of six: four in Azusa, California, and two in Las Vegas, Nevada and has plans to visit them regularly.



Photos courtesy: Kely Torres

Kely Torres, Sonia and Crystal.

Kely Torres
Container Program Manager and Materiel
Management Operations Group Supply technician
20 years on base

My name is Kely Torres, and I grew up in the small town of Daggett, California. As a kid, Daggett was an exciting place because my father, a mechanic, filled our world with an incredible array of vehicles. We had everything from monster trucks and muscle cars to exotic cars, stagecoaches, shopping carts, and even a giant roller skate to drive around in. My mother is an artist and surrounded us with books, art and interesting experiences. Being surrounded by an artistic family fueled my creativity and helped shape who I am today.

As an artist working across multiple mediums, I've channeled that creativity into my current project, a YouTube program called "Drag it to Daggett." This project, which I work on with my father, aims to share the local history and happenings of Daggett. I feel that there's a missing connection in social media for the older generation, and I want to bridge that gap by expanding our project to include other local storytellers. One of my major plans is to interview people who are about to retire or have retired from the Marine Corps Logistics Base. I believe there's a significant knowledge gap between older and newer employees, and my goal is to create a program that preserves their wisdom and experiences through video interviews.

I have worked at MCLB for 20 years as a contractor and civilian. My father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all worked here before me. I've had the privilege of working alongside my brother and sister, and now my daughter is also part of the MCLB family. We are five generations of people who have been able to provide for our families because of this base, and I take great pride in being a part of this legacy.

Throughout my time at MCLB, I have learned many lessons and faced challenges specific to women in a male-dominated



Kely Torres and Bradlynn.

field. I was always told that this line of work was a "man's world," and I took that personally. Starting as a warehouse worker, I gained foundational knowledge of how everything operated and eventually became an expeditor, helping set up our Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected program. Along the way, I encountered people who doubted my abilities or objectified me simply because I am a woman, but I worked harder, spoke up, and did my best. The few women in higher positions who I was fortunate to work with taught me that they didn't care about societal expectations regarding women in leadership roles. They faced added pressure to perform their tasks thoroughly, completely, and correctly to avoid scrutiny, and I learned from their example.

Women like Jackie Jones, Movita Hernandez, Cheryl Hazlett, Ernestina Alston, Sara Fouts, Ericka Wirick, Denise Orebaugh, Sonia Morales, Paula Tipton, Maribeth Mashburn, Debbie Lopez, Krista Perez, and Ginny Ludwikowski, among others, have been instrumental in my journey. I am grateful for their guidance, the opportunities they provided, and the friendships I have built with many of them.

Currently, I work at the 1st Force Storage Battalion as the Container Program Manager and Materiel Management Operations Group Supply Technician. I am fortunate to be part of a wonderful team. Working here often feels like working with family, and I have established strong friendships with my colleagues. Some of these friendships have blossomed through shared hobbies like hiking, and we've even backpacked the Grand Canyon together. The bond we share makes working together more enjoyable.

All this being said, I am proud of the woman I have become and know that I wouldn't be who I am today without the experiences I've had with the people in this unique environment. I am grateful, thankful, and hopeful. Grateful for this life and the opportunities it has brought, thankful for the amazing people I have met and learned from, and hopeful for the future.

Sharlotte Cordova
Library technician
17 years on base

Sharlotte Cordova has been a library technician during her entire career on base, which involves keeping track of technical manuals, statements of work, schematics and drawings.

Outside of work, she is deeply involved in the Barstow chapter of Kiwanis International, a community organization that helps children by providing clothes, books and scholarships.

"The scholarships go to the youth, the seniors when they're in high school and also in college."

With Kiwanis, she undertakes the planning of events, such as the wine auction that's coming up in September. The theme

is "Once Upon a Time" and each table will be designed after a book. And there is also the annual parade in October. This year is the 90th anniversary and she said it's a lot of work putting together the parade and getting all the people involved.

"My mother instilled discipline and hard work into me; she's a very strong woman and she was always doing. She's been on disability because she went legally blind, so she can't drive or anything like that anymore. After she lost her sight, she went to the Foundation for the Junior Blind and she went to school so she could gain mobility skills."

Her husband unfortunately passed a few years ago due to Covid. She finds support in a widow's group and they take international trips together. Back in April, they went to Portugal and our next adventure will be Greece and Italy.

"It's great having them, because we all understand each other. It's a lot of fun and it keeps me going."

*"We need **women** at all levels, including the top, to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, to make sure **women's** voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored."*

- Sheryl Sandberg

Ryanne Maxwell
Welder
Eight years on base

Ryanne Maxwell started at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command as a contractor before moving to permanent. Before starting there, she was a welder in Texas, where she worked on all the trash trucks for the city. She received her welding certification from Western Tech College, in El Paso, Texas.

"My husband was active-duty military, so I took advantage of the spousal credit to go to school for welding. Then he relocated here when he got out of the Army, and we came here to Yermo. I applied for the contractor position here, and I got it, which was great because it opened up the opportunity for a permanent position."

She is currently the only female welder at PPB MDMC.

"It's not easy, being a woman in a traditional man's role, because we're built different. It's strenuous, but it's also rewarding. When I went to college to learn to weld, we not only learned welding, but blueprinting and metallurgy, and, of course, all of the different processes that encompass welding."

Outside of work, Maxwell utilizes her welding skills to make sculptures in her garage. The welded sculptures are then donated to charities and non-profit organizations, where they are auctioned during fundraisers. When she's not busy at work, or crafting sculptures, she supports her veteran husband who rides motorcycles and is part of the Combat Veteran Motorcycle Association and she is in the auxiliary, which supports the association, not unlike the support she gave as a military spouse.

Unfortunately, she was injured and now handles lighter welding duties, but she has aspirations to shift to non-labor. She is inspired by another woman welder, who also moved up at PPB MDMC as a non-destructive testing inspector, Sylvia de la Paz (*editor's note: see Sylvia's entry on page 9*).



Photo by: Vanessa Schell

Ryanne Maxwell, welder, works on a panel in the welding shop at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 20.



Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

Evelyn Montoya, material expeditor, drives a forklift in the craneway at Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command, Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California, August 19.

Evelyn Montoya Material Expeditor Six months on base

Evelyn is relatively new on base in her current role, but had worked at PPB MDMC in the past, for a couple years as a contractor. Her aunt who also worked on Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, in the fire department, but has since retired.

“The women in my family have always been workers. Not in this type of environment, but the job I had before was very different. The job I had here before was mostly computer work, but over here, everything is constantly moving, which I enjoy. There was also a female mechanic here, that I worked with, who inspired me a lot, too.”

Montoya is also a mother, and has an 8-year-old girl who is in softball.

“Most of my weekends, I’m busy running around to practices and games. We have ‘bring your family to work day’ here, so we can show them everything we are working on over here. I may not be a Marine or military, but I am a part of what they do here and that’s pretty incredible.”



Photo courtesy: Michelle Bledsoe

Michelle Bledsoe, Fire Prevention chief, and family at an amusement park.

Michelle Bledsoe Fire Prevention Chief 31 years on base Favorite things: My Family, my dogs, and traveling

MCLB Barstow has been my home away from home my entire adult life. I have been employed here for over 31 years. I am a graduate of the University of Redlands with a Bachelors of Art in Psychology. There I played four years of college softball earning All American softball honors, and eventually being inducted into the Hall of Fame.

While employed here at MCLB Barstow I earned my



Photo courtesy: Michelle Bledsoe

Michelle Bledsoe and her husband, Jeremy who serves with Barstow Police Department.

Masters of Science in Occupational Safety and Health. I have earned awards throughout my career but most importantly I have gained many friendships. Throughout my career here I married my best friend and raised two daughters. My oldest has earned her Master of Business Administration and my youngest is heading to college this year.

Some goals and guidance I have established for myself and them as women is to be confident, positive, and independent. Most importantly to always do the right thing and be a good person.

Bledsoe is Fire Prevention chief aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow.

Sharmell Samples
Manager of Program Management Division
23 years on base

Sharmell Samples started working on the base not long after retiring out of active-duty Army. She traveled to the area with her husband, who took a job at the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin. She made the decision to retire from the Army in order to support her husband, who was also in the military.

"After we arrived here, I started looking around in the geographical area to see what would be a good fit for me. I saw Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, which was perfect, because it's a logistics base and that's exactly what I did in the Army. My role in the Army was ensuring we had 100% of the gear required if we were to go to war."

Starting on base as General Series 4 clerk, at 1st Force Storage Battalion, was a way to get her foot in the door on base and she was there for approximately one year. Then she served as a GS-5 item manager, also with 1FSB, which involved being responsible for the storage and ensuring the vehicles that came into this plant went back over to PPB MDMC and was also responsible for sending the vehicles back out.

"So, I was at that job for quite some time. My goal was to eventually go over to PPB MDMC. So when they opened a GS-5/6/7, as an interim production controller, I took the opportunity. Most people who take jobs like that, you just want to learn, you want to get all the knowledge in and understand of what we do here."

When a GS-7/9/11 job opened up in Finance, still at PPB MDMC, Sharmell decided to move to that position.

"For the production controller job, I picked it up pretty quickly. I wanted to try the finance side. I started teaching myself about budget, neighborhood capital plans and things like that."

Samples ended up getting the position, after only two years of working on base.

"People said I got here because I knew somebody. No, I didn't know anyone. I got here with my own merits. So, I learned what I needed to learn there, then when a supervisor position for program management came open, I applied for that and got that one, too."

From a GS-4 to a GS-13, was an incredible journey for her.

"Through that journey, I've learned what to do and what not to do. When I worked in finance, the director was very hard on me because she knew I could take it, but I think it worked out for me. It made me a stronger person, a better person because then you have to be strong."

During her time in the Army, Samples saw firsthand how important it is to have the proper, full-operating gear in theater, and she deeply understands the significance of the work at PPB MDMC and what they provide to warfighters.

"I take to heart what we do here, because what we do makes a difference, which is why the sign is up there in the front of the building."

As the manager of the Program Management Division, her role consists of seeking work for PPB MDMC, providing estimates and routes (a plan for how a vehicle is built). They usually work two years out. Samples manages a team of people who are all integral to the mission and the warfighters.

"We're all in there. One good thing about Barstow is, we are a team. There are no individuals here. Nobody ever says 'look at me, look at what I did'. It's all 'let's do this together.' I love it here, I love the output, I love the people."

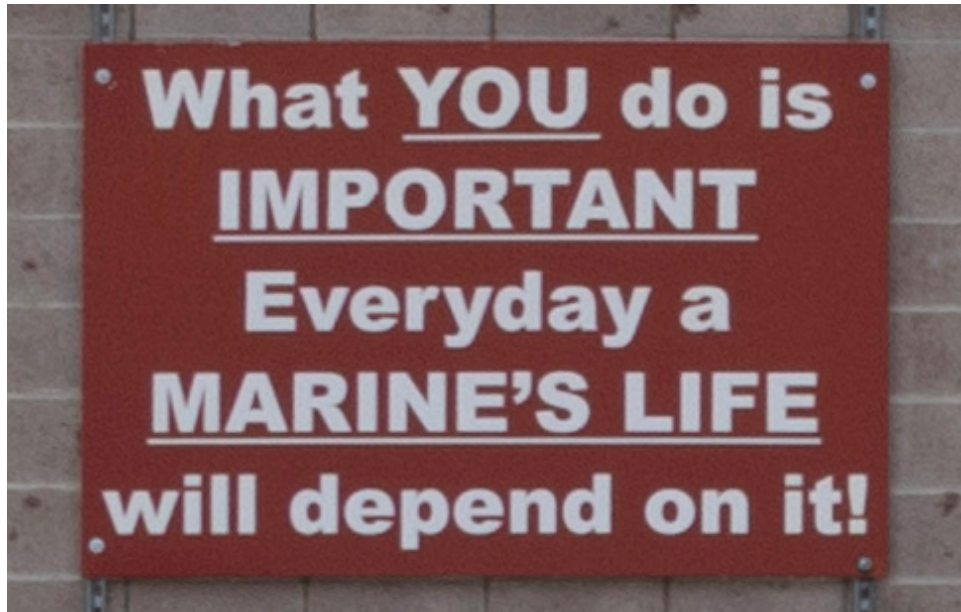


Photo by: Kristyn Galvan

The sign reads: What you do is important, a Marine's life may depend on it. This sign hangs outside of the front of Production Plant Barstow Marine Depot Maintenance Command building on the Yermo Annex aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California.

Editor's Note

By: Vanessa Schell

Thank you for reading this special edition of The Prospector. The idea to make this edition started out small, but turned into a larger project, doubling the usual size of The Prospector. Throughout the course of gathering these stories, I learned a lot about the exceptional women here, and I hope you did, too.

The front and back cover shows women celebrating the 24th anniversary of when women could officially join the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, February 13, 1967. According to a report by the Department of Defense Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, in 2021, women made up .09 percent of active duty Marines and 26 percent of Marine Corps civilian personnel. We've come a long way, but there's still room for progress. Happy Women's Equality Day!

