

Her passion for flying and for serving her country gives her the strength to blaze the trails in this field. “I don’t really see the difference between women and men,” she shares. “You are either willing to put in the work and you can fly planes, or you can’t. I have never been treated differently for being a female and the expectations were the same for all of us. Sure, there weren’t many females around, but that just fired me up even more to chase my dreams and make them happen.”



**Master Sergeant Sonora Vasquez,
United States Air Force**

Master Sergeant Sonora L. Vasquez is the Superintendent of Military Personnel for the 517th Training Group, Presidio of Monterey, California. She grew up in San Juan Bautista, California and entered the Air Force in June 1999.

“Prior to enlisting, I was on path with no direction. My sister had joined the Air Force roughly nine years earlier but the armed forces didn’t occur to me as an option at the time. It wasn’t easy

growing up in a community that lacked resources. Families in my local community had thrown me a lifeline. Their support coupled with my work ethic has helped me flourish in the military...in a sense I followed in my sister’s footsteps...I chose life.”

MSgt Vasquez deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM/IRAQI FREEDOM. Growing up in a rural town and through her time in the military, she has learned to take responsibility for her actions.

“I have not allowed myself to be shaped by my circumstance rather by the decisions I have made when faced with adversity,” she states. “I have also learned to be thankful for the “nay-sayers”. It is because of them, that I have developed a strong work ethic and a drive for excellence. Although dedication, hard work and service can be acquired outside of the military, I do not think there is any other place I could have developed these attributes with such a greater sense of purpose. I have honorably served my country in the armed forces for over 17 years. My abilities are not defined by my gender but by my will and determination.”



**Rosa Marlin,
United States Air Force**

Born in Chicago, Illinois Rosa Marlin enlisted in the U.S. Air Force on February 1985 and completed the F-111 Integrated Avionics Computerized Test Station and Aircraft Component Specialist at Lowry AFB, Colorado.

Retiring from the military in 2006 and joining the Civil Service thru DoD as an Avionics Test Station and Aircraft Components Instructor, Marlin currently works for the Dept. of the Air Force as Curriculum Development Manager for fighter courses.

“The military promotes you – expectations fulfill the duties commensurate to rank,” she states. “I gained confidence in myself and was able to present views/opinions. I progressed to different levels of leadership – section chief, flight chief, and squadron superintendent. Each position brought new challenges and responsibilities. No private sector/civilian position would have provided such growth opportunity. I do not think I would have ever reached this level had I not joined the military.”

Marlin has managed to handle changes, stress, and so much more from the demands of the different positions held while active duty. Her advice is to “produce the best, work hard, and always be willing to learn. “Never believe that you know it all – there is always something we can improve on/do better. First impressions are hard to eliminate. Don’t put up a facade, people will see right thru you. Most of all – your “word” is gold. Never betray that honor.”



**Lieutenant Katrian Hernandez,
United States Coast Guard**

A native of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, LT Katrian Hernandez was recruited into the Coast Guard College Student Pre-commissioning Initiative Program (CSPI) on May 2003. Upon graduation from boot camp, she returned to Puerto Rico to finish her Bachelor’s Degree and in June 2005 she earned her degree in Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras. She attended and graduated from Officer Candidate School on March 2006.

Hearing rescue stories from her dad who was also in the Coast Guard inspired Hernandez to join. Assigned as Investigation Division Chief at Sector Lower Mississippi River, the best part of her job is to help out mariners and vessel operators. She has learned to be persistent and tenacious, and believes “opportunities are not just going to fall on your lap, you have to take control of your future.”

A proud mother of four-year-old son, Keymani Ruiz, she volunteers at local schools and serves the local community. “I feel my biggest contributions come when I’m contacted by people whom someone recommended they talk to me. These interactions allow me to share with others, whether interested in the CG or not, my experiences and lessons learned which hopefully empowers them to follow their dreams. During my time at CG Sector Lower Mississippi River I have tried to showcase the importance of leadership and diversity within the organization. I have been very dedicated to this and hope that everyone who served with me felt valued and understands the importance of having a diverse workforce.”

**Lushens K. McNamara (Civ),
United States Coast Guard**

An accountant at the United States Coast Guard Finance Center in Chesapeake, Virginia, serving in the Internal Controls Branch, Lushens McNamara knew she wanted to make a career in the federal government during her junior year at Old Dominion University once she completed a co-op internship with the USCG Finance Center in Chesapeake, Virginia.