One Woman’s Journey as a Leader of Marines

*Story by KSU student Timothy Callaway.*

*Photos provided by Captain Chambers*

Alicia Chambers is a commissioned officer in the United States Marine Corps. She has been in the Marine Corps for nine years and currently holds the rank of Captain. She is the Officer Selection Officer for the State of Georgia with her primary job being a Communications Officer.

Captain Chambers grew up in Sacramento, California and attended San Francisco State University. She studied Information Systems and was a track and field athlete. She decided to join the Marine Corps her junior year of college. She was accepted and attended Officer Candidates School for ten weeks after graduating college. She then went to the Basic School for six months, where newly commissioned officers learn to lead Marines in combat as provisional rifle platoon commanders. After completing the Basic School, she then attended the Basic Communications Officers Course. After completing her training, she then went to Okinawa, Japan for her first duty station. Following her tour in Japan, she then went to Recruiters School and became an Officer Selection Officer at Kennesaw State University.

When asked what her biggest challenge was in becoming an officer, Captain Chambers replied, “Being a female.” Around 2010 to 2011, the time she was attending San Francisco State, the Marine Corps was only around 6% female. However, she did not want “females don’t join the Marine Corps because it’s difficult” to be her excuse. She would always get questioned, “Why would you do that? That’s so hard.” However, she never understood why people would ask her that, but would never second-guess a girl becoming a ballerina. She hated the fact that women and young girls were being pushed by society to “do only some difficult things, but not the most difficult things.” Friends and associates would often question her decision to join the military. Her track coach did not want to write a letter of recommendation for her due to his dislike of the military and did not understand why she would want to join.

However, despite these obstacles, she refused to give up her aspiration. She even used it as inspiration to accomplish her goal of becoming an officer. Throughout her application process, she trained exclusively for the male physical fitness standard. She believed there were not separate male and female standards, but only one standard: The Marine Corps Standard.

Captain Chambers’ role model was Lieutenant Uhura, the communications officer from the Star Trek television series. She grew up watching Star Trek with her father and, although fictional, the portrayal of Lieutenant Uhura by the actress Nichelle Nichols was very influential to her. She was inspired by the character’s intelligence. Captain Chambers loves
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