



Interview

COLONEL ANGIE SALINAS

CHIEF OF STAFF, MARINE CORPS RECRUITING COMMAND

Colonel Angie Salinas is the Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, Quantico, Va. She enlisted in the Marine Corps in May 1974. In 1976, she received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Dominican College and was selected for the Enlisted Commissioning Program. She was commissioned in December 1977. She earned a Masters of Arts from the Naval War College and graduated from the Amphibious Warfare School, Naval Command and Staff College and the Army War College. Colonel Salinas was the first woman Marine to command a recruiting station, serve as a combat service support assignment officer, serve as an Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Policies, and command a recruiting district. Colonel Salinas commanded at every rank. She was a Series Commander and Executive Officer with Woman Recruit Training Command; Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Company, 1st Maintenance Battalion, 1st Force Service Support Group; Commanding Officer, Recruiting Station Charleston, W.V.; Commanding Officer 4th Recruit Training Battalion; and Commanding Officer, 12th Marine Corps District. Her personal decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (2 Gold Stars), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (Gold Star), Army Commendation Medal, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (2 Gold Stars). Other awards include a "Ground Breaker" award from Women in Military Service to America; the National Image, Inc. Mission Award; the Federally Employed Women, Military Meritorious Service Award; and the Latina Style Magazine's Leadership Award. Hispanic Magazine named her one of the 100 most influential Hispanics in the country and among the 80 most elite women in the country. Colonel Salinas' mother, Florita, and sister Janie reside in Falls Church, VA. Her brother Amado and sister-in-law Gloria live in Harlingen, Texas. Her sister Irene lives in Stow, Ohio and her sister Rosie and husband Mike live in Nampa, Idaho.

AHHY In what ways are the Marine Corps reaching out to Hispanic youth so that the nation's leadership reflects the diversity of the American experience?

Salinas The Marine Corps reaches out to not only Hispanic youth, but to all young Americans who possess the mental aptitude, physical stamina and desire to earn the title of Marine. Approximately 14% of the Corps' enlisted force is Hispanic, which reflects Hispanics are represented in greater numbers in the Marine Corps than in the general population. Latino men and women find the Marine Corps to be a great place to start. While in the Marine Corps they learn leadership skills and discipline, they mature professionally and personally, and ultimately return to society with a wealth of life skills and better prepared to be contributors to their communities.

We strive to get our message of opportunity to the neighborhoods across the nation.

To accomplish this goal and to reach Spanish speaking influencers and parents, we use a variety of tools to ensure our message is heard. For example, our television

commercials are produced in both English and Spanish, we produce Spanish versions of our recruiter support materials (recruiting brochures) for the parents of potential applicants, we run Spanish advertisements in print publications, and attend national level Hispanic conferences to spread our message of opportunity to the leaders and influencers within the Hispanic community.

AHHY What is the key to improving the educational attainment of the Hispanic population? What role do you think the Marine Corps plays?

Salinas Education is a great equalizer in life. We must continue to push our children and impress upon them the value of a high school diploma. The diploma is the starting point for all future endeavors and education is the key to improving opportunities; not only for Hispanics, but for all youth of America. Approximately 97% of everyone joining the Marine Corps have a high school diploma. The Marine Corps emphasizes education. When a young man or woman decides to become a Marine, they make a decision to gain control of their life and their future. But that's only the

start. To find true potential, one must continue to cultivate the mind. The Marine Corps helps do that by instilling self-discipline, and providing the opportunity and financial means to continue formal education. Marines have access to almost every classroom and independent study option available, making it possible to advance in education. There are many programs that Marines use to further their education, like the Montgomery GI Bill and the Marine Corps Tuition Assistance Program. Several Marines are currently attending some form of education classes in addition to their fulltime military duties. These programs provide financial assistance for Marines to continue their education while also providing a valuable asset to our nation – an educated citizen. These resources are designed to create an environment where a college degree is available to every Marine at literally no financial cost.

AHHY What advice would you offer to young Hispanics interested in a career in the Marine Corps?

Salinas I would tell them that education and hard work are the critical elements to success. Without an education, little progress can be made for further advancement. Education, combined with hard work, opens



Colonel Salinas is an intrinsic part of the Marine Corps' recruiting effort. Salinas serves as the Chief of Staff for the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, Quantico, VA., which is responsible for accessing nearly 40,000 recruits every year. Photo by Staff Sgt. Marc Ayalin

doors and creates opportunities not only in the Marine Corps; but also in life. I would definitely tell them that the Marine Corps is looking for young people who want a challenge, both mental and physical, who want to better themselves, who want an education, who want to improve themselves and want to be a part of something that is bigger than themselves; someone who wants to make a difference in the lives of many people around the world. The Marine Corps is not for everyone, but for those very few who have what it takes to earn the title of Marine, then the change is forever.

AHHY In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge facing the Hispanic community in the United States?

Salinas I believe the greatest challenge facing the Hispanic community today in the United States is the alarming number of young Latinas/Latinos who fail to earn their high school diploma. According to the Department of Education, Hispanics are twice as likely to dropout of school than any other racial group. Trying to find the right message to convey to our young people to get them to remain in school and understand the long-term benefits of a high school



Colonel Salinas, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, stopped to pose with a group of young participants attending the 27th Annual National Council of La Raza Conference held in Philadelphia, Pa., July 15-20, 2005. Photo by: Tony Rocco



From left to right, Mónica Lozano, NCLR Board Chair and Publisher and CEO of La Opinión, Colonel Salinas and Janet Murgía, president of the National Council of La Raza, pose for photos during the 27th Annual NCLR Conference held in Philadelphia, Pa., July 15-20, 2005. Photo by: Tony Rocco

diploma is a responsibility we must all embrace. We must stress to our young people that education is a means for improving one's life. We need to somehow teach the next generation that with the freedoms we enjoy comes responsibility; a responsibility to making the world a better, safer place for everyone.

AHHY What role will the Hispanic community play in shaping the general direction of the country?

Salinas Hispanics are the fastest growing minority in the country today. As a result, Hispanics, and more importantly Hispanic leaders, will play a critical role in shaping the future of not only the Hispanic community, but of the entire nation. Role models at every level, from teachers and coaches, to policemen and firemen, from councilmen and mayors to scientists and explorers will shape our future. These role models serve to increase cultural pride and give all of us an appreciation for our heritage. Each fall we celebrate Hispanic Heritage month where we celebrate contributions made by Hispanics to this country but more importantly it's the opportunity for us to renew the spirit and confidence that greater things are yet to come.

AHHY What has been the Hispanic community's greatest achievement in recent years?

Salinas Perhaps the most notable that many Hispanics view as a tremendous achievement was the selection of Alberto Gonzales as the nation's

80th Attorney General last year by President Bush.

AHHY What do you value most about your experience in the Marine Corps?

Salinas I value the opportunity to have earned the title "Marine" and all that came with that opportunity. For more than 30 years, being a Marine has allowed me the privilege of serving with so many dedicated and professional individuals. The Marine Corps is much like my Hispanic culture. It's about family. The family is the core held together by tradition, pride, honor and commitment as is the Marine Corps, whose core values are Honor, Courage and Commitment. I have been very fortunate throughout my career as the majority of my experiences have been positive, both as a woman and as a Hispanic. As I progressed through the ranks, I wanted to be recognized as a good Marine rather than as a good woman Marine

officer or a good Hispanic officer. For me, the Marine Corps has rewarded success as a result of performance and not because of gender or ethnicity. Like my family who passes on to the next generation the history and legacy of our roots, the Corps passes the torch to the next generation. Each Marine who wears the Eagle, Globe and Anchor is entrusted with the Corps' rich legacy that spans over 230 years, a legacy that became ours when we earned the title "Marine." This legacy is entrusted to each of us from those who have gone before us on battlefields in distant lands who guaranteed us the freedoms we enjoy today. We Marines rejoice that the bond that binds us is the uniform we wear and the legacy we pass to the next generation. This is my heritage, this is my family, as a Marine, and as a Hispanic.



Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, the honorable Mr. John Molino, congratulates Col. Salinas for winning the 2005 National Image Inc., Meritorious Service Award for her contributions in fostering positive community relations. Photo by: Staff Sgt. Marc Ayalín