

Noah Guzman

Dr. Maxwell

Advanced Composition

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**Service Before Self:
An Interview with Staff Sergeant Lyndsay Danielle Cribb**



While I was speaking with Staff Sergeant Cribb, it was obvious to me that she is passionate about being a Marine. She explained, “I feel like I am exactly where I am supposed to be. I just always felt the need to serve. I’ve just been honored to be a part of this organization for as long as they’ve let me be apart of it, and I hope I can stay in as long as they’ll keep me.” Staff

Sergeant Cribb’s desire to serve, learn, and grow within the Marine Corps has taken her on a journey all over the world, and she has used her experiences in various roles as both a trainee and an instructor to pass on the knowledge she has acquired to current and future Marines.

Lyndsay Danielle Cribb was born on August 14th, 1992, in Charleston, South Carolina. Although she was born in Charleston, Staff Sergeant Cribb moved to Beaufort when she was two years old. I asked her what she was like as a kid, and she replied, “Definitely adventurous, loved to get dirty, loved to be outside, kind of the same thing I love to do as a Marine.” Staff Sergeant Cribb also told me about her family and the role her stepdad has played in her life: “When we did move to Beaufort, after my parents got divorced my mom [...] met my stepdad, who I consider my dad.” It was Staff Sergeant Cribb’s father who was the first Marine to really impact her life. “He raised me, and he was actually a Marine at Parris Island, so I got a lot of my traits and motivation to become a Marine from him,” she explained. When I asked if her dad’s being a Marine led her down that path too, she agreed, saying, “My dad is an extremely important person in my life, definitely my favorite person, [and] I’ve always wanted to make my parents proud.”



From speaking with countless veterans, it is clear that Marines are not born, they are made. That process of making a Marine happens at Parris Island, South Carolina, during a grueling 13-week boot camp. When I asked Staff Sergeant Cribb about her time there, she replied with a lighthearted, “It was definitely interesting,” but then admitted that it was “the

hardest thing I had done in my life up to that point.” She then spoke about the challenges with isolation, the physical tasks, and her experiences with her Drill Instructors. “They naturally have to break everybody down to build you back up,” she told me. During her time at Boot Camp, Staff Sergeant Cribb could see her improvements, becoming stronger, more mentally resilient, and a better leader overall: “You go from this scared recruit on training day 1 to a Marine at the end of the 13 weeks.” Staff Sergeant Cribb found that through all the training she received, she learned new lessons and skills that she could add to her “toolbox and [...] keep moving forward,” an attitude that I truly admire in the soon to be Second Lieutenant. Upon graduating



from Boot Camp, Staff Sergeant Cribb received orders to her first duty station in Cherry Point, North Carolina, where she was promoted to Lance Corporal.

While Staff Sergeant Cribb was describing the role of her MOS, which is to be responsible for the administrative side of aviation, she expressed how proud she was of that MOS. Staff Sergeant Cribb made it clear that it really takes a team of various occupations within the Armed Forces to ensure that the United States can pursue its national interests across the globe. When I asked what led her to that MOS, Staff Sergeant Cribb explained that she was an “open contract,” which meant that she “wanted to serve in any capacity.” Her willingness to serve in whatever way the Marine Corps saw fit is a testament to her commitment to the Marines and the idea that it takes a consorted effort of many different jobs and Marines to accomplish the mission.

One of the many highlights of her time spent at the Cherry Point duty station was when her unit got deployed to the Marine Air Station of Iwakuni, Japan, in February of 2013. “That was super exciting,” Staff Sergeant Cribb recalled. “I remember growing up, asking my dad about his experiences, and one of his favorite duty stations was Iwakuni...I was excited to go back and tell my dad. He was just so ecstatic for me.” After seven months in Japan, flying Prowlers and experiencing the Japanese culture, Staff Sergeant Cribb felt that she had grown in her leadership style and in her personal development.



I was curious to know how being in the Marines and traveling around the world affected Staff Sergeant Cribb’s relationships with her family as well as her peers. “You get used to talking to old friends and family on the phone,” she said, “and it’s okay because you have that Marine to the right and left of you going through the same thing.” The camaraderie and support of her fellow Marines are clearly of great importance to Staff Sergeant Cribb, and she attributes that support system with helping her deal with the adventurous lifestyle of a Marine. When I asked Staff Sergeant Cribb about what it was like being both a full-time mother and full-time Marine, she explained that “Here at The Citadel, in Charleston, it has been fairly easy to be a mother, and a student, and a Marine. I’ve been able to juggle that with no problem; however, when you are out in the fleet, or on a deployment, it is going to look very different.” While Staff Sergeant Cribb continues her career in the Marine Corps, she says of her four-year-old son Jeremy, “I just hope that one day that he can look back and just appreciate the sacrifices, because I do it

all for him and I do it to make our lives better. Not only that, but I love what I do, and just because I'm a mother which is the most important role in my life... doesn't mean that I have to let go of my dreams."

When I asked Staff Sergeant Cribb about what it was like being a leader and instructor, she said that "my favorite part about the Marines is the Marines... It's really cool to give back and to see what you give back to your Marines flourish and grow." Staff Sergeant Cribb is currently serving as a MECEP at The Citadel, training cadets to become future Marine Officers. When asked about what being a Marine meant to her, Staff Sergeant Cribb talked about all of the benefits and personal growth she has seen while serving: "It definitely gave me the challenge I was looking for. It gave me the motivation to become a better person. It gave me the opportunities to be able to grow both personally and professionally... I'll always look back and be proud that I got to serve." Since Staff Sergeant Cribb is due to graduate from

The Citadel and commission as a Marine Officer in May of 2021, her service to both her country and fellow Marines is far from finished. With her stellar work ethic, strong morals, and invaluable experiences as an NCO, soon-to-be Second Lieutenant Cribb is sure to have a bright future continuing to serve in the United States Marine Corps, inspiring and teaching others along the way.

