


# PROFILES IN SERVICE

The background image shows four service members in silhouette on the deck of a ship. They are positioned from left to right, each engaged in a task. The first person on the left is leaning forward, using a long-handled tool. The second person stands upright, also with a tool. The third person is leaning back, and the fourth is leaning forward. The ship's railing is visible in front of them, and the ocean and sky are in the background under a twilight sky.

The annual Profiles in Service issue is a special focus on those who serve. In the following pages, you'll read personal stories from members of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, harbor police, and others, giving us valuable insight into the people who dedicate their lives to the greater good. These are the folks who make a difference every day, and we're proud to include each of them here.

The editorial staff would like to thank the service members profiled for taking the time to share their stories and photos, and to their respective public affairs staffers for helping coordinate the interviews. Contributing Writer Edward Lundquist conducted the interviews.

Thank you to all who serve!

# Chief Magda Fernandez

PORT OF SAN DIEGO HARBOR POLICE

I joined the Port of San Diego Harbor Police in 2001 and was promoted to chief in May 2022. I'm the first "homegrown" female officer and Latina to become chief of Harbor Police. I came to the department with diverse experience gained while serving in the U.S. Coast Guard.

The San Diego Unified Port District was established in 1962. At the most basic level, and as the public safety section of the Port, we patrol San Diego Bay and much of the surrounding waterfront. We encompass five member cities – Chula Vista, Coronado, Imperial Beach, National City, and San Diego – and we have a very collaborative relationship with those member cities and their police, fire, and emergency responders. We also work with the other law enforcement entities including the Navy, Coast Guard, and Customs and Border Protection. We have concurrent jurisdictions and share enforcement responsibilities. We are also the contracted law enforcement entity at the San Diego International Airport and are engaged in all law enforcement activities there.

## San Diego a Strategic Port

San Diego is a strategic port — one of 18 U.S. ports so designated. We have large infrastructure and attractions located along our waterfront including cargo terminals, major rail lines, a convention center, hotels, restaurants, museums, a busy international airport, cruise terminals, and a number of critical military installations. The Navy has major facilities at 32nd Street, North Island, Coronado, Imperial Beach, Point Loma, and Ballast Point. We have additional vulnerability as a result of our shared border with Mexico.

Our waters have a lot of recreational boaters and are home to several major shipyards. And we're a busy commercial port. We handle liquid and dry bulk cargo and a lot of specialty project shipments such as wind turbine blades and towers for wind farms, as well as breakbulk cargo such as generators and large equipment that won't fit in containers. Dole ships fresh produce



from South and Central America through our port and is our largest refrigerated containerized cargo tenant. Our National City Marine Terminal takes in roll-on/roll-off cargo — ten percent of all vehicles imported into the U.S. arrive there.

## Strategic Relationships, Key Collaborations

Our relationships with partner agencies are key. We have an incredible collaborative relationship with law enforcement across the board (state, local, and federal) and for us, that plays a huge role in the safety and security of our port.

We are active participants in the local Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC), as well as the state-wide California Maritime Security Council (CMSC). Our information sharing takes place at all levels. When



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It's a large collaborative effort between Harbor Police, multiple community groups and stakeholders, and the district attorney, all working together to train our region's hotel staff, airport workers, airline employees and others to recognize human trafficking and act when it's appropriate.



### People Are Priority

My favorite program with the Foundation is our adoption of K-8 Perkins Elementary School in the Barrio Logan neighborhood of San Diego. The school is a historically underserved area of the city and about one-third of the students are homeless. We have supported the school and students by purchasing and installing new classroom furniture, through mentoring, and enjoying community and annual events with the kids like Shop with a Cop, Fish with a Cop, and more.

People are my priority. For the officers and staff in our department, I want them to feel they're valued and that their overall health and wellness is a top focus of mine. Today's police work is harder than it has ever been. Everyone on our team needs to know they're supported so we can best serve our communities, our families, and each other. For our communities, I want them to know who we are and how we can serve them.

I want people to feel confident in being able to approach me and everyone on our force.

The most gratifying part of my job is training our new staff to be leaders of the organization. I tell people that they should put themselves in a position where they can affect change. For me, knowing the decisions I make will affect future generations to come is a responsibility I take seriously. I started here as a rookie cop. Becoming chief is a huge accomplishment for me, and I think it really opens the door for newer officers to say, "I, too, can do that one day." ■

fully staffed, we have around 140 sworn officers. They are more than typical law enforcement personnel who patrol in a black-and-whites and respond to reports of crimes or suspicious activity. They are expected to be police officers as well as marine firefighters and aviation security specialists. They could be on vehicle patrol, and then change into full turnout gear to respond to a boat fire in the marina.

We're co-located with the Coast Guard. Our dispatch center is in the Coast Guard Joint Harbor Operations Center, and their criminal investigators work here in our facility. The Coast Guard sector commander is the Captain of the Port and the chair of the AMSC, and I am the vice-chair. We have different jurisdictions and authorities, but we do support and back each other up when needed. I'm especially proud of our San Diego Harbor Police Foundation, which has adopted as one of its core missions to stop human of trafficking.