
The Missile Express

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First Female Dept. Head Reflects on Earle's History

By NWS Earle Public Affairs

In June 1944, Matawan High School Senior Joanne Hiller was looking for a job after graduation when her father, a New Jersey state dairy inspector, mentioned the U.S. Navy was building a base on Route 34 in the woods of Atlantic Township.

That same week, before even graduating High School, Hiller was hired as a clerk at Naval Ammunition Earle's Ammunition Department. The starting salary for a CAF-02 at the time was \$.50 per hour.

"I was making \$1,200 a year and I was on my way," said Hiller.

From that meager start, Hiller worked her way up the civilian employee ranks at Earle to become the first female civilian department head on the station, deputy supply officer of NAD Earle's Supply Division.

She was an active member of the local chapter of Federally Employed Women, an advocacy group dedicated to improving the status of women serving in the federal government.



Joanne Hiller, as she appeared in the Earle Missile newspaper in Sept. 1956. Hiller was an NWS Earle employee from June 1944-Jan 1979.



Photo by Bill Addison/NWSE Public Affairs

Joanne Hiller, former Naval Weapons Station Earle Deputy Supply Officer, smiles as she looks at a photo of herself from 1956 as it appeared in the Earle Missile.

"We had a few sayings, but I remember two in particular," she said. "Women belong in the House... and the Senate too. And the other was Adam was a rough draft!"

In a time where women generally struggled for equality in the workplace, Hiller said she never encountered issues with her male counterparts. She noted that in general, her coworkers and supervisors were all very supportive of her.

That support became apparent when she noted she achieved her position as Deputy Supply Officer without a college degree.

"My boss was very supportive of women in the workplace. He encouraged me to go to Brookdale and get my (Associates) degree."

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Civilian Spotlight: Andrew Eldridge

This month's spotlight is Andrew Eldridge, a railroad dispatcher for Naval Munitions Command Detachment Earle. The Jackson, New Jersey native started working for the Navy 15 years ago and is the third generation of Eldridge's to work NWS Earle.

Did you always know you wanted to work at Earle?

"I really wasn't sure when I was younger. It just kind of happened. My father still works here as a forklift operator, and my grandfather and my aunt also worked at NWS Earle."

What do you like about working here?

"I like the atmosphere here, it's very friendly. It's a really great place to work. Good hours, the pay is decent, plenty of vacation time. Its all good stuff."

What does a typical day look like for you?

"I come in in the morning, begin to update any of the work that was done the night before. Then I start giving the guys out on the railroad the work for the day. Whenever a car or locomotive move, it needs to be called in over the radio.

How often are trains moving at Earle?

"We may not be loading ordnance every day, but there's still a lot of work that needs to be done here in the ordnance area on a daily basis. So there's trains moving nearly every day."

How did you get your start here at Earle?

"I started as a Wage Grade-05 over at the shop as a mechanics helper. While I was there, they sent me over to the railroad department to train as a brakeman or a helper here

at the railroad. I got that position here, started at the bottom again over here and gradually grew. I recently got my Army certification as a conductor. I had to attend a school down at Fort Eustis, Virginia to get it. Now I'm able to operate the locomotives as a conductor when the command needs me to."



Photo by Bill Addison/ NWSE Public Affairs

Andrew Eldridge, a NMC Det. Earle railroad dispatcher is a third generation NWS Earle employee who spends his free time fishing and with his family.

Did you ever think you'd be working on a railroad growing up?

"Absolutely not. No way. We always hung out around the railroads growing up, but I never once thought I'd be working for one, let alone one for the Navy. But it's a cool job to have. It's different, not a lot of people do this, you don't normally hear of this."

What does it mean to you have a job so integral to the mission of NWS Earle?

"It's pretty cool to know how valuable the railroad is to the base. Without it, we really wouldn't be able to function. We can move so many tons of ordnance to the waterfront, you really can't do it any other way."

What are your fondest memories of working here so far?

"I think the people. The older guys that are now retired. I got to see how things were like before I got here, and learn a lot from them."

What do you like to do on your free time?

"I like to fish. I like to spend time with my family. I've got a daughter who is getting into gymnastics and two twin boys who like to play and horse around."

If you're interested in featuring a Sailor or civilian in the spotlight, please contact the Public Affairs Officer at colt.wpnstaearelepa@navy.mil

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Hiller credits her success at Earle with her willingness to work hard, and her ability to enjoy the work.

“Every job that I had, I enjoyed it and I did it to the best of my ability. I guess that’s the reason why I was able to work my way up to Deputy Supply Officer,” she said.

She also holds the distinction of naming the installation newspaper, the Earle Missile, which debuted in January 1950.

Hiller’s entry was selected out of 253 sub-

Earle Missile Is Four Years Old



RADM Shepard and Joanne Hiller

missions, and she received a \$15 cash award for her creativity.

“The funny thing was, I was trying to come up with a name from the name Missile, which means a letter or something written,” she said.

Now, at 91 years old, Hiller looks back on the history of the station fondly.

“It was like my second home,” she said. “I spent so much time there, my children spent so much time there, it was truly a second home to me.”

In Memory of Claudia Hall

We express our great sorrow in the loss of a close friend and co-worker, Mrs. Claudia Hall.

Claudia Lois Jane Brown Hall started her Federal career on January 7, 1980 at the Military Ocean Terminal in Bayonne NJ (MOTBY) as a key punch operator. With the pending closure of MOTBY in 1999, Mrs. Hall came to Earle in August of 1997 into the MWR Department as a Supervisory Accounting Technician and eventually as the Accounting and Administrative Assistant for the MWR Director. Jersey City was Claudia’s home where she resided with her husband Richard and raised her children: daughters Surane and Keisha and son Richard Jr who survive her along with 4 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Claudia’s devotion and generosity expanded from her family to her community, especially her church, the Porter Memorial Church of God in Christ, where she served as a missionary, an adult Sunday school teacher, dean of Jerusalem Bible Institute, vice president and coordinator for the Women’s Auxiliary Director of the Pastor’s Aide and assistant to the pastor. She once said, “When I’m not working I love to read about people and help people---and the fact is, I just love people”.

She attended benefits that helped people in trouble and with special problems, just causes and charitable things. Most noteworthy, Claudia earned her Doctorate in Theology and

preached not only at her church but at other neighboring churches as well. At NWS Earle, Claudia performed a myriad of duties in MWR, in addition to filling in wherever needed, which was proof of her willingness to cooperate and her keen sense of responsibility. During her career and especially during this past year through all of her illness, Claudia was never known to complain or be in a bad mood---she came to work every day with that huge smile on her face.

Claudia lived her life to the fullest, devoting her time to her family and church, as well as coming to NWS Earle every day – taking the long drive from Jersey City. To say Claudia was a happy and content person would be an understatement – she was full of joy, her infectious laugh was known by all and will be remembered forever. She was more than a co-worker, she was friend, an advisor, a confidante, a sister, a substitute mom and grandma, who will be truly missed but never forgotten.



Claudia Louis Jane Brown-Hall
April 19, 1952-Feb. 20 2018

Seen Around Earle



Sailor of the Quarter
BM1 Christopher Brasch



Jr. Sailor of the Quarter
MA2 Humberto Laguna



Blue Jacket of the Quarter
MASN Abbie Cabrerra



Civilian of the Quarter
Mary Borree



Welcome Aboard:

- MA1 Darren Javines
- MA1 David Scott
- MA2 Jerry Cardinale

Farewell:

- MA2 Seandrea Williams
- MA2 Daren McNeal
- MA2 Dallas Erickson
- MA3 Dylan LaPlume
- EN3 Jordan Flynn
- MA3 Patrick Whearty

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