

# THE TALE OF **2** WAVES AND THE DUTY STATION



*Dimmie Dinwiddie 1944*

by: Dorothy Dormandy  
(Dinwiddie)  
September 1944

On a Sunday evening in September, 1944, Byrdie and I from Navy link Training School, were ready for our first real assignment. The war was going full blast and most of the guys were off fighting. As we would be giving a refresher course in instrument flying to the Navy and Marines pilots, we were only too happy to aid the war effort.

With new Sp (T) 3rd stripes proudly on our sleeves (and fresh lipstick) we sat on our gear in front of the administration building at NAS, San Diego, waiting for transportation to Camp Kearney, wherever that was. Finally, in a screech of tires, a jeep pulled up and a Marine sergeant yelled our names. Byrdie and I climbed a board.

“Where’s Camp Kearney?” I asked.

“Out in the boonies, Sweetheart. Brand new barracks, just for you dolls.”

In the jeep, two huskie girls also with SP (T) 3rd on their sleeves moved over, but only slightly. “We’re gunnery instructors,” they informed us with a scowl. We squeezed in and the jeep raced out of town.

Once we passed the paved roads, the Sgt fairly flew over the scrubby chaparral covered foothills. “Hey, where is this place?” I asked. The Sgt couldn’t hear me, however, over the rattle of the fenders. We gripped the sides of the jeep to keep from bouncing out, while the last rays of sunlight stretched across the sky.

We entered Camp Kearney and passed an oasis of grass and trees around the officer’s quarters. The Sgt didn’t stop; instead he raced at top speed across more scrubby countryside.

In the distance silhouetted against the late evening sky, a two story barracks building loomed dark and forbidding alone on a slight rise. “This is home, toots” the Sgt called out. Cripes, I nudged Byrdie.

No lights in the place! “You’re the first chicks here sweetheart, never had girls stationed on the base before” he said. “We built it just for you.” Sunlight was fast disappearing behind the hills as the jeep screeched to a stop by our new home.

The Taj Mahal of the Sahara desert, the Sgt announced. Dust flew everywhere. Not too eagerly, we climbed out. “Don’t forget your keys sweetheart.” The Sgt tossed it to Byrdie and speed away in another cloud of dust. It was dark and we figured we better get inside. Byrdie unlocked the door and found the light switch, by the duty station. “Who wants to be on duty?” She asked, someone always mans the duty station; it’s the law of the Navy.

The gunnery girls were quick to let us know where we stood. “Don’t ask us,” and they started up the stairs. Since Byrdie and I didn’t have orders to stay all night and guard the place, we passed the duty station, too. We lugged our gear topside and down the long corridor. We chose bunks at the end of the building. The gunnery girls settled across the hall. We hung up our uniforms and hit the showers. I scrubbed my hair to get the dust out and put it up in tight little pin curls. I wanted to look nice in the morning. At 0800 we were to report to the school building, wherever that was.

We were awakened by the distant sound of pounding. “What’s that?” I jumped out of bed, sunlight streamed through the curtainless windows. Loud determined banging continued, “It’s the front door!” I yelled. I grabbed a robe, raced the length of the building, took the stairs two at a time, dashed past the unmanned duty station and flung open the front door.

“Ah!” I gasped. “The Brass!”

Two Marine officers sitting in a jeep parked in the dirt by the door glared at me. I started to salute but remembered the

*“Get over to the Mess Hall,  
young lady. On the double!”*

Navy manual. You must be in proper uniform when saluting.  
“Ah!” I cried again.

A Marine Lieutenant roared. “Don’t you know what time it  
is, young lady?”

“No Sir!” Who’s on duty?” he bellowed. “Nobody, Sir!  
Only four of us here, Sir!”

“Get over to the mess hall, young lady. On the double!”

“Where is it, Sir?” I couldn’t see anything out there but  
hills and dirt.

The Colonel took charge. “Lieutenant, you can’t throw these  
girls in with the men. Sergeant, give these women twenty  
minutes and deliver them to the officer’s mess.”

That sounded mighty good to me. The jeep whirled  
around to leave, stirring up the dust, but before it sped  
off, the Lieutenant said, “These girls are teachers, they  
can’t be up all night.”

A conference took place in the back seat of the jeep, while I  
waited in bare feet and pin curls. Finally the Colonel sang  
out, “Sergeant, get these girls an alarm clock!”

That meant no duty for any of us! I must have been grinning.  
The jeep, with tires spinning, backed up to within inches of my  
bare feet. The Colonel roared, “Damn it all, young lady.  
Don’t you know there’s a war?”

“Yes, SIR!” I gave him my snappiest salute, despite the  
bathrobe, the pin curls and the cloud of dust I was standing in.



**He'll be home  
sooner . . .**



**now you've joined the WAVES**

WOMEN AT SEA  
Navy Recruiting Station or Office of Naval Affairs Proceedings

**Sure, we crochet.  
Check out our nifty hats.**



**Fun lovers everywhere.** Have we got a retirement community for you. At Fairwinds - Woodward Park we've turned the traditional retirement community on its head (and put a jazzy hat on it, to boot). It's a place where fun is a passion. So, call now to schedule your complimentary lunch and tour. Because once you see it, we think you'll agree, Fairwinds - Woodward Park is quite a nifty place to live.

 **FAIRWINDS**  
WOODWARD PARK

*It's More Than Retirement. It's Five-Star Fun.*

9525 N. Fort Washington Road • Fresno  
(559) 434-6444 • [www.leisurecare.com](http://www.leisurecare.com)

© A Leisure Care Retirement Community

LIC# 10720156

*No matter how hot or how cold a room is, it is always room temperature.*