

# A VETERAN'S STORY

## Dale Crawford NAVY 1953

Dale Crawford was born on April 15, 1933. His mother's name was Alvina. He had four sisters and a brother. He doesn't remember much about his father.

In 1953, at the age of 20, Dale enlisted in the Navy at the Chippewa County Courthouse in Chippewa Falls, WI. Soon after enlisting, he shipped out to Great Lakes Naval Base for boot camp. His basic training lasted 16 weeks.

Great Lakes Naval Base, located on Lake Michigan, is the home of the United States Navy's only boot camp. The base is located near North Chicago, in Lake County, Illinois. Naval Station Great Lakes is the largest military installation in Illinois and the largest training station in the Navy. The base has 1,153 buildings situated on 1,628 acres and has 69 miles of roadway to provide access to the base's facilities. Within the naval service, it has several different nicknames, including, "The Quarterdeck of the Navy."

The base functions similarly to a small city, with its own fire department, Naval Security Forces (Police), and public works department.

One of the landmarks of the area is Building 1, also known as the clocktower building. Completed in 1911, the building is made of red brick, and has a tower over

the third floor of the building. The large parade ground in front of the administration building is named Ross Field.

While in training, Dale got a headache that turned into a more serious sinus issue. The medical staff at the base said he would be allowed to graduate with his class, but that he would not be able to effectively serve in the Navy because of his medical condition.

There was some confusion in communication of his condition and Dale kept working in the galley and remained at the base. He recalls he kept meeting people who

told him he needed to get out of the Navy. One person in particular he remembers, was a prisoner at large.

While working in the galley, Dale remembers it would get so hot. As a result of the extreme conditions, he got really sick again and ended up back at the same doctor who had originally told him he would not be able to continue to serve.

After seven months in the Navy, Dale ended up receiving his discharge. He recalls receiving 200 dollars, spending it recklessly and then going to look for a job.



*Today, Dale lives in Chippewa Falls. He is currently undergoing rehab at Chippewa Manor Nursing and Rehabilitation in Chippewa Falls, WI.*

Presented 11/10/22