

A VETERAN'S STORY

Ruth Jewett NAVY 1958 - 1978

Ruth Jewett was born on August 31, 1938 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls, WI. Ruth was the youngest of four children. She had two brothers and one sister.

Growing up in Chippewa Falls, Ruth attended the local elementary and middle schools before graduating from Chippewa Falls High School in 1956.

The world was experiencing all sorts of changes as Ruth entered her adult years. She decided to choose a career in the Navy to start a "new life."

Ruth lived with her mother for a short period after she enlisted. Then she lived in a barracks, rented an apartment and eventually bought her first home while she was stationed in Orlando, FL.

A career in the Navy was uncommon for women at that time. Ruth went through basic training in Bainbridge, MD. She was the only female in "ABC" school (there were 50 men and one woman). ABC school is a Navy term for the type of training a recruit is involved in. Accession training, commonly known as "A" school, is where sailors go to receive technical training in their selected military occupational specialty. "B" school involves more specialized training that commanders send sailors to because of a specific need and that sailor has a good handle on their primary rate function at the time. "C" school is highly specialized training in one specific task in your rate.

During her time in training, Ruth remembers being known as the "B Girl."

After completing training, Ruth was sent to Naval Base San Diego. From there she served in Newport, RI and then had stops in Orlando, FL and Stockton, CA as well. While stationed in Stockton, Ruth had plans to marry a man who was also stationed there. Two weeks before her wedding date, she was told she either needed to get married or be sent to Paris, France.

Ruth decided to let fate decide her future - she flipped a coin. Heads, she would stay and get married. Tails, she would go to Paris. The coin landed tails - so Ruth decided to go to Paris (she was among the very first women in the U.S. Navy to receive such an assignment).

After 19 years and six months, Ruth retired from the Navy in 1978. She looks back very fondly

on her service time. She truly had a ground-breaking career. She achieved the rank of Yeoman First Class, served as a Section Leader, WAVE advisor, MAA Force and was the first female to retire from Naval Air Station Whiting Field in Northwest Florida.

When she returned home to Chippewa Falls, the Veterans Administration helped put her through school for Marketing at UW-Stout and Chippewa Valley Technical College. Ruth spent a year as a Home Economics teacher before selling Avon for more than 20 years (she was the top seller in the area).



Today, Ruth lives in an apartment at Chippewa Manor Residential Living in Chippewa Falls, WI

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