

## THEY CAN'T TAKE THE NAVY OUT OF THE GAL!

This article was submitted by NWSA President Jim Romano with intro provided by Mr. Bomi Parakh.

Dear Jim,

My mother-in-law, Dorothy (Dot) Jensen Blanchard, regularly receives The Aerograph. She was a WAVE and one of the first women to serve in the Navy. Both she and her husband (Earl Harrison Blanchard) were Chief Petty Officers. Earl (Doc) was an Aerographer and did tours of duty in London, Hawaii and the US. Doc passed away a few years ago, and Dot is 97.

I'm attaching a brief story on Doc and Dot for the Aerograph....along with their pictures. Dorothy was thrilled to hear their story will be in your newsletter. As they say, they can take the gal out of the navy, but they can't take the navy out of the gal!

Thanks and keep up the good work....Dot loves to read your newsletter!

Bomi Parakh

### DOC & DOT, A LOVE STORY



On a warm August morning in 1943, a young woman from Milltown, NJ boarded a train for New York City. "All aboard" the conductor yelled. As the train pulled out of the station, she noticed a tear in her father's eye. Louis Theodore Jensen was sad to see his daughter go, but proud that his 'Dart' was leaving to serve her country.

Dorothy, as she was known to others, remembered the posters inviting young women to join the Navy; "Join the WAVES" the posters said, "your country needs you now". On her short trip to New York City, and then to Hunter College in the Bronx, Dorothy couldn't have imagined that in a few weeks, she would find herself in full naval uniform, looking much like the smiling young women in those posters.

A student dorm at Hunter College had been hurriedly converted to a modest residence for incoming recruits. It would soon house some twenty nervous female applicants, all wanting to become WAVES. Bunk beds, muster at the crack of dawn, beds to be made taut enough to bounce coins off, surprise inspections, marching in formation, tours of duty in the 'spud-locker'....and one shared bathroom; there was no hint of any of this in the glamorous posters inviting women to become WAVES.

Within a few weeks, Dorothy was told she had successfully completed her training at Hunter College in the top one percentile. Eleanor Roosevelt had been instrumental in creating the WAVES. It was only fitting that the First Lady would grace Dorothy's platoon with a graduation salute. Ceremonies aside, the country was

at war; there was a job to be done. Allied merchant ships had to be routed, watched and protected along 'safe conduct' routes in the Atlantic. A large wall-map decorated the naval intelligence office and showed the location of each merchant ship in transit. Dorothy was asked to report for duty on Monday morning at the Merchant Shipping Intelligence Office.

Before long, she was appointed Private Secretary to Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, and handling all official naval correspondence, including top secret. Dorothy's work gave her a front row seat when the National Security Act of 1947 was passed, and when the Air Force was created. Admiral Burke, or as he was known in the Navy, "31-Knot Burke", was a central figure in the birth of the US Air Force. It was a painful birth; the Navy had its aircraft carriers and the army had its Army Air Corps. Now, they had to be reassembled and reassigned. Dorothy was a witness to the transition.

Valentine's Day 1950 was a fateful day. It was raining hard. At a bus stop in Washington DC, Dorothy was waiting in her havelock. Two sailors heading to West Potomac Park asked if she needed a ride. The Nash they drove looked like a turtle. Dorothy would never accept a ride from strangers. But these were navy men and she had learned to trust that family. One of the sailors was an aerographer. There was some polite banter. They dropped Dorothy off at the women's barracks. She thought nothing of that day; she had an important job in the Navy. The US military had gained a commanding presence on the high seas. Dorothy felt at home in the Pentagon, and was working with officers just a few levels below the President of the United States.

Unbeknownst to her, during the car ride months earlier, she had made a lasting impression on the aerographer in the Nash. He had been trying to locate Dorothy; it took him six months, but his persistence (and naval intelligence, he joked) paid off. The shy aerographer from Orleans, Vermont, decided to follow his instincts and his heart to Dorothy's doorstep. Raised by a widowed immigrant mother, the aerographer, like many of his siblings, had joined the Navy soon after high school. A little more than a year after they met, Dorothy Josephine Jensen and Earl Harrison Blanchard were married at a local church. It was a simple ceremony...just a few witnesses and the reverend. The length of a marriage, they say, is inversely proportional to the amount spent on the wedding. Dot and Doc were married for life.

In 1952, the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland saw Hollywood legend Shirley Temple give birth to her son. In an adjoining room, Dot and Doc became parents to a six-and-a-half-pound baby girl. As was customary in those days, Dorothy had to leave the Navy when Linda was born. But Dorothy never really left the Navy. She promptly joined Doc in his naval tours of duty and meteorological adventures....first to London, then to Hawaii, and back to Ashville, North Carolina.

After their service in the military as Chief Petty Officers...Dot for a decade, and Doc for nearly two...they settled in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Doc went to college on the GI Bill, and Dot got a job at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Doc passed away several years ago; Dot is 97 now and lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Yogi Berra once said, "You have to give one hundred percent in the first half of the game. If that isn't enough, in the second half, you have to give what's left". Doc and Dot did that. They were part of the Greatest Generation.