

ANNAPOLIS GIRL FIRST ME AT NAVAL JET

Rosalie Clarke Anderson Follows In Her Father's Footsteps By Signing With Navy

Like father, like daughter, might be said of Rosalie Clarke Anderson, yeoman, third class, who is the first WAVE to report for duty at the Naval Academy.

Miss Anderson's father, the late Chief Petty Officer Marinus Anderson, U. S. N., served 38 continuous years in the United States Navy on such ships as the Constellation, Ke&rsarge and Essex. A native of Tunsburg, Norway, he served three years in the Norwegian Navy, entering at the age of fourteen, before coming to America.



by Lisa Hillman

Rosalie Hilton, the Academy's first woman

Rosalie Hilton is one of those women feminist groups of the future will point to with pride. They'll fly her name alongside the banners of all the barrier breakers, the female "firsts" in our nation, the Ella Grassos and Barbara Jordans and Allison Cheeks.

She has all the makings of an ardent feminist, too. At age five she ran away from home. At age twenty-eight she joined the first class of women entering the Navy, and four months later became the first WAVE ever assigned to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis.

The problem, however, is that Rosalie Hilton is anything but a feminist. Today, beginning her retirement after twenty years of civil service at the Academy, she'd probably list herself as a grandmother first.

"I want more time to spend with my grandson," she says of two and one-half year old Robert Alan, "and time to spend with friends, and sleep late if I want to—at least until 8:30!"

The time is well deserved, too, after a career that spans a lifetime associated with the Navy, an association that began even before Rosalie's birth. Her father, a native of Tuhsberg, Norway, joined the Norwegian navy at age fourteen and served three years before settling in America. Chief Petty Officer Marinus Anderson, USN, devoted thirty-eight years to the United States Navy on such ships as the Constellation and Essex, and taught seamanship and navigation at the Academy. The recipient of seven good conduct medals, he is honored today by his rigged ship models still preserved in the Naval Academy Museum.

When the Norwegian born sailor met a slim, fair-haired colleen, the inevitable result was a home and family outside the Academy gates on Prince George Street. Rosalie grew up in Annapolis, and although she's travelled all over the world, and lived in Honolulu after her marriage in 1945, Annapolis is her cherished home.

"Except when I tried to run away at

age five," she comments.

The opportunity was irresistible. The boy next door, age six, had it all planned.

"We tried to sell daisies to make some money, but in those days you didn't need money to ride the trains. We sat by the motorman. I remember I was barefoot, wearing a little pinafore dress."

Upon arrival in Baltimore a policeman found the runaway pair.

"It took them all day to find our parents. My father had airplanes out searching for us, and boats dredging the Severn River. Our pictures even made it on the front page of the local newspaper."

Twenty-three years later her picture made it in another paper, the 'Baltimore News American' under the headline 'Annapolis Girl First Wave at Naval Academy.'

"My instructor in Yeoman's school was the sister of Professor Schwartz at the Academy. She told me her sister-in-law was a writer and she'd want to meet me."

The two did meet, during a period of Rosalie's life she remembers as most exciting, and lots of fun. Pictures of her show a lively, healthy young woman with a vivacious grin and sparkling eyes. They also suggest a little of the assertiveness and the self-confidence which smoothed her transition from civilian to military life.

"Joining the WAVES is a big challenge for anyone without some Naval training," she comments, regarding the advantage of her own background, "It's so different because of the regimentation. A lot of girls have problems there at the very beginning."

Despite the regimentation, which she met head-on in 1941 at the Naval Training School in Stillwater, Oklahoma, Rosalie still managed to stir up a few capers—no slight achievement in an atmosphere heavy with war, and burdened with the urgency of producing the very first class of 750 WAVES. A crew of WAVE officers, hastily trained at Hunter College in New York, drilled their recruits on all Navy subjects, "A to N," shorthand, typing, and English skills, and even marching, in just six weeks.

Nevertheless, there was still time for Rosalie and her roommate to hide under their beds when a fellow pupil, "far too serious and neat and precise," made the nightly bed-check. After one month there the women had to send all personal belongings home. Packing their suitcases the night before, no one could resist the obvious.

"We had a charade," Rosalie laughs, "with mops and buckets and everything else. We looked like an opera, with mop-heads for our hair."

Despite the frivolity, or maybe because of it, their officers cried the day of graduation. It was the proudest day of Rosalie's career.

"It was Armistice Day," she recalls, "and it was the first day I'd ever marched. When you march you experience a great thrill. It's that deep-rooted feeling of being a part of something, of being a part of a great organization."

Her first assignment after graduation was the Naval Academy Dispensary. When she reported for duty, Commander Nielson aboard the USS Reina Mercedes simply asked if her record would be as good as her father's. Constant compari-



Rosalie Hilton, seated, left, in a family portrait.

sons with her father never bothered her, nor did being the only female in an all-male environment. On the contrary, she thrived on it.

"I loved it," she confesses, "I loved every minute of it. Half the people didn't know what I was! I was wearing my long, black raincoat one day when an officer asked me if I was in the Ku Klux Klan."

Her boss at the Dispensary, Roscoe Rowe, after whom Annapolis' well known Boulevard is named, gave her away at her wedding in 1945. Shortly thereafter, she left the WAVES and moved with her husband to Hawaii.

"You couldn't be married and remain in the WAVES in those days," Rosalie comments, "You couldn't even have a dependent and go overseas."

Despite that rule, former Yeoman
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First Class Hilton returned to the Academy in 1958, this time through Civil I Service. For the next eighteen years she served as secretary to three succeeding commandants, and most recently, as secretary to Professor Heise in the registrar's office. Probably more than anyone else at the Academy, Rosalie knows the face of every midshipman. One of her major duties in the registrar's office? Processing every identification card.

After so many years in the military, Rosalie freely admits things are better today.

"Being in the Navy makes you grow up, broadens your views," she says, "and there are so many more opportunities today. The fields are so varied. When I joined our choice was limited to storekeeper, yeoman, or hospital corpsman. Today women can choose from electronics and technical fields to boatswain's mate, actually working on all parts of the ship."

She is also pleased that WAVES can now marry, and that the dress code is a little more relaxed.

"When I wanted to go to my class reunion at Annapolis Senior High, I had to get permission to wear an evening dress!"

At the same time, however, she's concerned for the future of the Navy, particularly at the Academy. Looking at those revered walls from the outside now, she regards them more critically.

"I somehow feel the midshipmen wore their uniforms more proudly in older days," she says, "and I liked the way they looked when they marched to class."

She has a few thoughts on the newest midshipmen, too.

"A military school should be strictly military," she flatly states, "There are many other colleges where women can get the same training. A lot of these girls think they can go aboard ship and they can't. According to Navy regulations that's still a man's job."

Nevertheless, she's willing to give them the same chance she had.

"When the WAVES first came in, the enlisted guys really resented them. They didn't think we were trained," she says.

Meanwhile, she'll be close by to observe the change. An attractive woman with silver-blue hair, she plans to continue her part-time job at Fred's Restaurant in Parole as a cashier and hostess. She's also organizing another Annapolis High School reunion, slated for next year—her forty-fifth.

"Liberated women are proving they can do almost anything," Rosalie Hilton, the "could-be" feminist finally admits, "and I guess, in time, women at the Academy will be accepted, too."