



## My Life My Story



# CAROLE



# UNITED STATES NAVY

# Carole



I was born in southern California in 1924. I was an only child. My whole life was about “What are we going to do with Carole?” I am still asking, “What am I going to do with Carole?”

My life was about as happy as could be until I was about eleven years old. My parents decided to get a divorce. That was a bummer. After my parents divorced, I ended up living with my father and a housekeeper.

I went to high school at John Marshall High School in Los Angeles. My father had me all signed up to go over to Occidental College. But as it happens, the Air Force had a base in Burbank, and the P-38 pilots were there. Well, they were the ones to find, and I found one.

I met my husband, Mark. He was a first lieutenant in the Army Air Corps. We married four months after we met. I was nineteen and worked for the So Cal Gas Company doing IBM work. We got married in Santa Monica, California in December 1943. He had to ship out right away. He died in May 1944. We weren't even married six months when they turned up at my office with a telegram. That was awful!

I transferred and worked at the Army General Office doing IBM work and running the machines. One of the girls had a husband who was a Marine. She said, “I really want to join the Marines,” but she didn't have a car. I said, “That is ok, I will take you”.

We go to the recruiting office. We get there, and there was the handsomest chief you'd ever saw in your life. He said, “Hello ladies.”



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By the time we got out of there, I was a Wave, and she had changed her mind completely. I was just taking her down there. I didn't plan to sign up at all. He had convinced me to join, and I wasn't a bit sorry.

I was twenty years old when I joined the Navy in 1944. I did one clever thing. I said, "I don't want to do what I am doing now. I want to go in the hospital corps. I want to save a life." That's what I did. I became a corpsman which was fun and games.

During November 1944, I went to basic at Hunter College in New York. Boot camp was a shocker. In November, it was colder than heck. I was from California. They said to bring a warm coat. What I called a warm coat was a nice little powder blue coat which they called a spring coat.



I will never forget it. I thought I was going to freeze. I darned near died.



We had to go out and march in the snow, a hideous experience. We all went in a group to New York City. We went to the Empire State building and talked to the boys. I talked to this really cute boy, a French sailor. I didn't even know the French had a Navy till I met him.



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I went to Corps School at Bethesda. I think it was the National Naval Group Medical Hospital. Now, I think, it is Walter Reed Hospital. A big, beautiful hospital. After school they said, "Where do you want to go?" I decided that the east coast wasn't my style. I wanted to go to the beach. They sent me to Long Beach, California. That is where I was the rest of the time I was in the Navy.

Naval Hospital Long Beach was a unique experience. I wore a nice little wrap-around seersucker dress, regular hose, and flats. I worked hard. I mainly processed the paperwork for the lab; but if there was a bed to be raised, I did that too.

Back then, to raise the bed, you used a wooden stick to raise the head of the bed. The patient had to grab hold of me and then, I had to lift the back of the bed up. I weighed less than a hundred pounds. Boy, that was interesting. Now, they just push a button when they want to raise the bed.



I got all these American prisoner of war guys. They had been in the Japanese prison camps. They came off the hospital ships. They all had wounds. They were repatriated.

As I look back at Long Beach Hospital, it was really for the mental patients. You know now, they have fancy names for it; but the bottom line is, the war wasn't meant for American boys. It really wasn't. The hospital had many neuro-psychiatric wards. Yeah, even a locked ward, but I never worked there.

The American prisoners were such fun. They taught me to count to 10 in Japanese. We played a lot of ping-pong. They would tell jokes about stuff that happened while they were imprisoned that only they understood. They were so happy to be back. Their attitude was they could do almost anything they wanted because what could the Navy do to them now.



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They had never seen a Wave. We were like queens. They couldn't imagine a girl sailor. Well at Long Beach, there were 3000 sailors and 150 Waves. It was an experience. Some of the Marines were taken prisoner the first day of the war. They were at the embassy when they were taken and imprisoned. They weren't kids anymore either. I remember a couple of them had wives, and I just imagined the adjustment.

In the hospital, there were the wards, the labs, the PX, and a coffee shop. It was my job to take all the urine specimens to the lab. I had this wooden box with a handle; it was like what the milkman carried. I had all the blue bottles and a few boxes.

All the boys were squatted down against the wall waiting as they do. They would all yell "Hi" and whistle at me as I hippidy-hopped on down the hall. I learned to carry that off very well.



On the way back, I would stop in at the coffee shop and say, "What's going on?" That's where I met my husband. He was very handsome. He asked if I wanted to shoot a little pool. I said, "Sure." That was the beginning of sixty-three years together.



We started dating and then, we both got out of the Navy. What do they call it, "Courtesy of the government?" I was a pharmacist mate third class when I got out. I confess, I wasn't too ambitious, so I didn't take many tests. My husband was a gunners mate second class.



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We got out and got married in Las Vegas in the old courthouse in 1946. We were going to go to college. We went up to Santa Barbara but after about six months or maybe one semester, I was burned out. I didn't fit in at all. Got all the little college girls there. Here I was already a widow and newly married. I wasn't comfortable.

As luck would have it, my uncle was working down at Technicolor Motion Picture Company. My uncle said, "Well Jimmie, there is a strike; and when we go back to work, some of them aren't coming



back. If you want a job, go, and apply. The union was a toughie, but he applied. He was there for over twenty years. He worked in the lab at Technicolor, processing film. It sounds glamorous. We bought a little house in San Fernando Valley. In those days, you worked at Lockheed or in Hollywood.

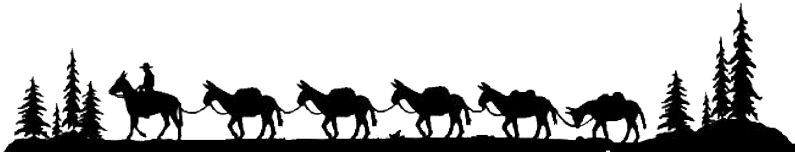
The worst thing that happened to us was our little girl died when she was two and half. I had two girls and one boy. They are all gone now.

I thoroughly enjoyed my kids. I feel sorry; I don't like the way the world has gone. I think some women got off on the wrong foot when they wanted to be treated like men. They don't get the thrill of playing with their baby on a daily basis. You know, I feel they are missing out. I got to stay home with my kids when they were little.

When my son was about twelve, I said to Jimmy, "Why don't you and Marty go do a pack trip on a horse." My husband takes our son and goes on the pack trip. He comes back and says, "Carole, that was the most beautiful place I have ever stayed in my life. The guy wants to sell it." I said, "Let's buy it." My husband said, "You are going to love it." I went up and looked at it.



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It was a ram-shackled place, but we bought it. We ended up with a string of eleven horses and two

mules, and we didn't know the front end from the back end of a horse. My husband wanted to know what the heck a fetlock was. Jimmy was a very handsome cowboy.

Somehow, we ran the Durrwood Pack Station for three years. It was an adventure. We did everything. We had bad luck with the cook. He would get drunk, and I would have to get the fire going and cook the food. It was a comedy in 1963.

Durrwood was on a forest service lease. Anyway, a big flood came and wiped out everything and put us out of business.

We moved back to the San Fernando Valley where we still had a house. We were sick and tired of living in the city and wanted to get out of there, so we moved up to Kernville in Kern Valley where we built a house. Our son graduated from Kern Valley High School, and our daughter got married.

I decided to get a job. I took the test and got the job of librarian. I don't have a library science degree, but I was the librarian in that town for fifteen years. I liked running the library. The school kids all knew me. I even had a little vase that says, "Carole, from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade."

I would say, "If you can find your way around this library, you can find your way around any library because they are all the same." It was kind of a gathering place. Kernville had some interesting retirees.

My husband took a test to drive the patrol boat on Lake Isabelle. He went down and applied, and they hired him. He had to go to the police academy. He was an old guy of fifty.



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He was the oldest guy that had ever been through the police academy in Bakersfield. He drove the patrol boat, and I ran the library. We had high profile jobs, and we had to behave ourselves.

One funny thing we did, since we were high profile, was if we wanted to get away, we would go to Tonopah, Nevada. Everyone would say, "Nobody goes to Tonopah, Carole." I'd say, "We do."

Once, we went to Tonopah for New Year's Eve and also to Beatty to gamble at the Exchange Club. That was fun. We would also play golf in Death Valley.

Before I learned to play golf, either my husband would be in a snit because I wouldn't play, or I would sit in the hotel and be mad. So, I thought, "Learn to play golf, you dimwit." I learned to play, and I wasn't that bad.

While I was at the library, I met a couple that came in to look at the Atlas. She said that they had been all around the world. They traveled on freighters. The freighters are all bulk carrying ships. You had to be gone thirty-one days. She told me who to call.

We went on seven freighter trips. One, we flew out of Montreal, and we went across the Atlantic and stopped in Newfoundland. Then, we went to Athens and all around.

The ship was our hotel. It was fascinating because they only carry about eight people plus the crew.





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All the freighters had a bar. There is one for the passengers, one for the crew, and one for the officers. We ate with the officers, the steward, the engineer, and the first mate. I learned to drink red wine. On the table was a pitcher of water and a pitcher of red wine. They diluted their wine with water. To this day, I still put ice in my red wine.

The accommodations were lovely, just beautiful. We would have a bedroom, a sitting room, and a bathroom. It usually cost one hundred dollars per person per day. We were treated well. If you didn't behave, they could just put you off. "Goodbye." That was the way it was.

We went to the Mediterranean, Australia, New Zealand, Holland. We also went to Rotterdam, maybe at that time the biggest port in the world. Miles of shipping going in and out of there.

Anyway, on that trip, we started back; I remember, my son was working in Washington, DC. The captain said, "Instead of going right back to Savannah where you got on, we are going to South America and up the Amazon River." Off we go to Brazil. We also crossed the International dateline. That was fun, very impressive.



One of our last trips was to the Parthenon. We were on a car carrier with ten stories of cars. We were on the third story. You couldn't believe all the cars stacked up on every deck.

We ended up on Greece, and I got to go to Athens again. We hired a cab and went to the Parthenon and all the good stuff. It was so hot. How could I be inspired in all that heat?



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Later, we ended up getting a trailer and drove up to Canada. Everyone was buying bigger campers, but we bought a smaller one. We went up through Idaho. We camped up there several times.

My husband loved eastern Canada. We would fly into Detroit and then, we'd take a train to Quebec. We would stay in old town Quebec. That was fascinating.

When we finally retired, we ended up in Weaverville, California. We built a little house right there on the Trinity River. We knew we wouldn't last there forever. It was great though.

Later, we bought a house between Colfax and Auburn, California. We lived there till Jimmy died. Men like to die in their own house. I was very happy to be able to take care of him. I gave him the best care that money could buy. Believe me, better than money can buy. We loved that house.

After Jimmy died, I moved to Reno. Jimmy and I had discussed it. He knew he was going to die. I loved my house, but I couldn't stay there after Jimmy was gone. I just couldn't do it.

My son died, and my daughter-in-law moved up to Washington to be near my grandson. My grandson is named after Jimmy. He is in the Army. He is a sergeant. He has been to Afghanistan and Iraq. He is the master gunner for the brigade. He married a girl that is also a sergeant, and they have a baby that's a year and a half old.

Again, "It's what are we going to do about Carole?" I didn't have brothers or sisters, but I've never been bored in my life. Like my daughter said once, "You know, Mom, you're like a nice margin around the page."



# Carole

I play cribbage in the afternoons, but I also like my alone time. I paint and do hand weaving. I color and spin my own wool for weaving and knitting. I dye it in my sink in my apartment. I got my spinning wheel years ago.



I had gone to the library near my home by Colfax. There were about forty ladies there spinning. I went home and told Jimmy I wanted to do that. I got the number of a gal who had one for sale. She sent it to me; it is beautiful, really terrific, and fun.

I was part of the 2018 VA Art show. I took home a 1<sup>st</sup> place in Original Design Fiber Art and a third place in Watercolors.

Like I say, “My life has been rather dull.”

