

SHARON DISHER '80



My father was a career Air Force pilot. When the law changed, he knew I was looking at colleges. He also knew that I wanted to be a pilot or a doctor and I wanted to join the military because I loved the lifestyle and I wanted to serve my country.

So he said to me, 'What about an academy?' And I said, 'What's an academy?'

He told me it was a great education, a full scholarship and I

would serve in the military afterward.

Sounded perfect. I applied to all four academies and was turned down by all of them because I have no depth perception. I reapplied and was able to get a waiver to Navy, Coast Guard and West Point. Air Force wouldn't give me a waiver.

I was accepted immediately to West Point, was an alternate at Coast Guard and didn't hear from Navy until early April of my senior year. Because I hadn't heard from Navy, in February, I had accepted my West Point appointment.

But once I got the offer to go to Navy, my parents and I drove down from Portsmouth, NH, and in one day, I completely changed my mind and decided to go to Navy.

I loved that Navy offered individual majors. I loved the campus. I loved the faculty. I loved everything about it.

When I went to King Hall, it was clear that the male midshipmen did not want us to come to Navy. They couldn't understand why I would want to come there. I told them I wanted to come for the same reasons they did. Mainly to serve my country.

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER
SUSAN KELLER KEANEY '80, USNR (RET.)**



By the time I was in high school, I knew I wanted to serve in the military. I just hadn't worked out the details.

I was a senior at Santa Fe (New Mexico) High School in October 1975. I was a member of the NJROTC unit, commanded by Captain J.J. Herrick '44, USN (Ret.). I was also friends with his daughter, Maureen, and he became a kind and encouraging mentor.

Shortly after President Ford signed the Public Law opening

the service academies to women, I received a post card from West Point telling me I was qualified and should apply for an appointment. I showed the postcard to Captain Herrick. His immediate reaction was, 'You don't want to go to West Point, you want to go to the Naval Academy.'

I recall that the application process was fast. Captain Herrick was instrumental in helping my parents and I through the paperwork and interview process. We drove to Albuquerque, NM, for my interview for a congressional nomination.

I remember there were more than a few questions from the interview board regarding how I thought I would handle myself as a 'first' at such a historically male institution. It was the predominant topic of the interview.

I remember lots of forms that we pored over at the kitchen table. We filled out forms as soon as they arrived, and sent them back in the mail the next day.

I also applied for an appointment at West Point, despite Captain Herrick's reaction. In the spring of 1976, I received an offer of appointment from both venerable institutions. The choice for me was easy, I wrote a nice thank you letter to USMA, and declined their offer. I happily accepted the appointment to USNA. ⚓



Sharon Disher '80 was a cheerleader at Navy. She initially accepted an appointment to West Point but after visiting Annapolis, Disher knew the Naval Academy was the right place for her.

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