

When recruits enter boot camp, they leave more than their friends and family behind; they surrender much of their individuality. The eight-week indoctrination recasts enlistees in an image that conforms to military standards. They are taught the proper way to stand and when and how to talk. They're dressed uniformly in denim trousers with blue button-down shirts and white T-shirts underneath. Women's hair is cut to a length just above their shirt collars. Even bathroom breaks are managed.

“The videos they show you in recruiting offices really, really butter up the experience. The stress level is very high. It's physical and a lot is expected of you.

“It was a culture shock. I was homesick. I missed my family. Everything familiar was gone. There was nobody who knew me or who I could feel comfortable with. It forced me to come out of my shell.”

There were two things the Navy didn't alter for Nancy; they clung to her like her civilian bra and undies. These were her pride in her Native American heritage and her faith.