

125 Years of the Royal Australian Navy: Legacy, leadership and a Nuclear Propelled Future

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125 Years of the Royal Australian Navy

RAN First female enlistment. Nancy Bently - Mascot. Nancy was aged just 6 when she was enlisted into the RAN. It was the only way that she could be treated for a snake bite aboard HMAS Sydney. She was discharged on 23rd November 1920 with a "Good Conduct Badge"

15th November 1920

Founded by Florence Violet McKenzie. She was the first woman in Australia to graduate in electrical engineering. In July 1938 she joined the Australian Women's Flying Club in Sydney, becoming an instructor in Morse code.

1939 - Women's Emergency Signalling Corps (WESC) established

First official enlistment of 14 telegraphists into the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) as civilian employees. After McKenzie threatened to take her team to the Air Force instead.

1st October 1941



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23 qualified nursing sisters formed the RAN Nursing Service (RANNS)

April 1942

Approval to form a Women's Royal Australian Naval Service granted. It consisted of 580 personnel (280 telegraphists plus 300 other duties).

24th July 1942

Formal invitations issued to WRANS personnel to enlist or resign.

1st October 1942



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Over 1,000 Women
had enlisted in the
WRANS
By the end of 1942

First female formal officer training
course commences.
By the end of the war 109 women
had graduated as officers.
WR1 was Third Officer Frances
Betty Provan
(Front row 4th from right)
18th January 1943

3,222 women had served in
the WRANS. A peak
strength of 2,600 women -
around 10 per cent of
Australia's naval
complement.
End of World War 2

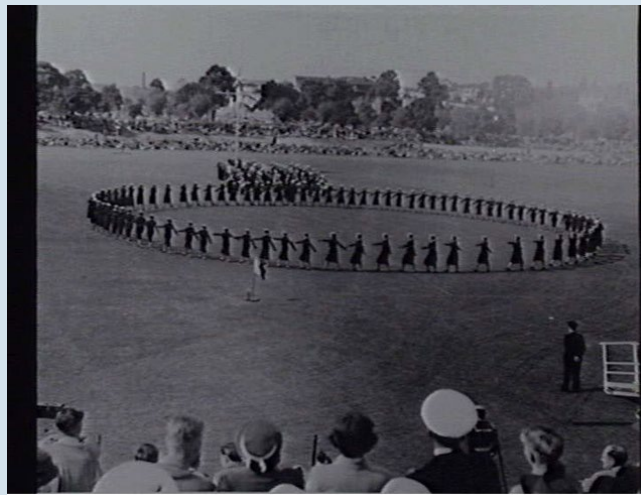


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WRANS Disbanded
1948

WRANS reinstituted due
to an ongoing shortage
of personnel
1951

WRANS made a permanent
part of the RAN
December 1951



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Married women first
allowed to serve
1969

Automatic discharge of
pregnant women was
abolished

1974

Equal pay for women
implemented
1978

Women allowed to serve at sea
1983

WRANS disbanded again and
personnel incorporated into the
RAN following the introduction
of the sex discrimination act
1984



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

NAVYM0785A/07

125 Years of the Royal Australian Navy

Commander Liz Cole
became the first female
Commanding Officer
of a naval shore
establishment -
Reserve Training
Establishment HMAS
Lonsdale.
1988

Commander Carolyn
Brand became the first
female officer to assume
command of an
operational naval base -
HMAS Waterhen
1992

Lieutenant Jennifer Daetz
became the first female to
assume Command at sea.
She was also the RAN's first
female Hydrographic
Officer.
1997



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Royal Australian Navy
becomes the fourth
navy in the world to
permit women to serve
aboard submarines.
1998

Lieutenant Natalee
Johnston (nee McDougall)
became the first female to
graduate from pilot
training
1998

Able Seaman Rachel Irving
becomes the first Australian
female submariner.
1999



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Commander Jan Noonan, became the first woman to command a ship assigned to active service, leading HMAS Labuan on operations in East Timor.
2000

Chief Petty Officer Donna Hayward became the first female aviation technician promoted to senior sailor
2000

Lieutenant Commander Kath Richards appointed first female officer to become a charge engineer of a major fleet unit.
May 2001



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Captain Michele Miller
appointed the RAN's
first female
Commanding Officer
of a Surface
Combatant - ANZAC
Class Frigate HMAS
Perth.
2007

Robyn Walker appointed
as the RAN's first female
admiral
16th December 2011

Rear Admiral Robyn Walker
appointed as the ADF's first
female Surgeon General.
2012



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The last remaining
restricted sailor
category, Clearance
Diver, was opened to
women
2013

All ADF roles officially
open to women without
restrictions.
2016

Commander Tina Brown is
the first woman to take
command of a Royal
Australian Navy destroyer.
2023

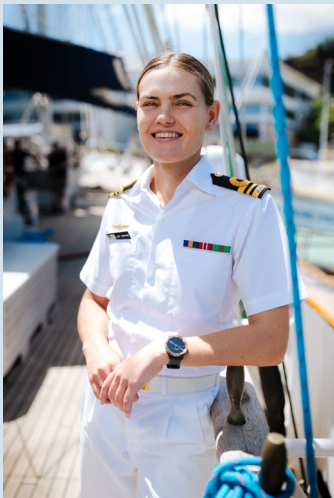


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Lieutenant
Commander Elizabeth
Newman appointed
first female
commanding officer of
STS Young Endeavour
2023

Lieutenant Isabella was
among the first six RAN
officers to complete the
Royal Navy' Nuclear
Reactor Course - finishing
Dux
2023

Of the 15,392 RAN
permanent full-time
personnel, about 24% or
roughly 3,694 are women.
Today



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