



MARCHING ALONG



WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT) Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 4

Sep – Oct 2021



Newsletter of the WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT)
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WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT)

September – October 2021

WRANS - Naval Women Association (ACT)

WRANS - Naval Women's Association (ACT) - Activities

Summary

Due to CIVUD-19 lockdown restrictions, all of the activities scheduled for September and October were cancelled.

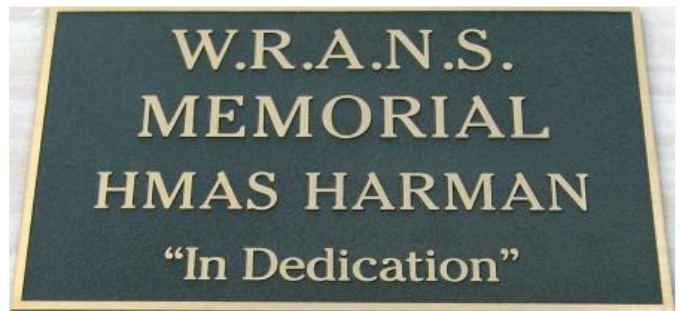
However, with the easing of some lockdown restrictions we will resume our monthly morning teas and lunches. These activities are invaluable with members being able to enjoy each other's company while having a return to some sort of normalcy. Spouses, family and friends are always welcome to come.

The ACT WRANS remain in contact through Facebook, emails and the website. Pat McCabe posts photos on the wransact.org website and Rose Van Dijk (Wood) posts items of interest onto WRANS-Naval Women's Association (ACT) facebook page. If you have, any photos send them in so we can all enjoy them.

WRANS Memorial HMAS Harman

While the WRANS Memorial service was cancelled for 23 October, attached is the speech that would have been given by Pauline Gribble (McCormick) President.

Speech begins:



'This year marks both the 80th and 70th anniversaries of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS). On 28 April 1941, the first fourteen women enrolled into the WRANS and reported for duty at the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) wireless transmitting station near Canberra, (later commissioned as HMAS Harman). Legally these civilians were not subject to the provision of the Naval Defence Act, but they were nevertheless a part of the naval organization and subject to 'on duty' conditions twenty-four hours a day in line with the enlisted rating. In October 1942, the RAN officially gazetted the enlistment of the WRANS as a non-combat branch of the RAN, to perform jobs previously designated as male-only. The WRANS freed men to go to sea, and enabled the shore establishments to maintain their full strength. On formation of the WRANS, King George VI granted the title Royal as an honour not afforded to the Army or Air Force at that time.

During World War 2, the WRANS gained respect from all areas they worked in due to their ability to adapt easily to naval work and discipline. They came from varied backgrounds and adapted to living as part of a group, shift work and to keeping secrets. They did not see their role as a career but wanted to contribute to winning the war and felt privileged to be doing useful work. Over the years, the WRANS developed the ability to handle the toughest jobs they were given.

The WRANS did not serve at sea or on overseas postings however, they worked in twenty-seven naval occupations such as telegraphers, clerks, drivers, cooks, stewards, sick berth attendants, intelligence and cryptanalysis. In addition, some of the WRANS worked for the intelligence organisations and as domestic staff at Government House in Yarralumla, Canberra. The servicewomen had fun; laughed at themselves, and mostly they laughed along with the jokes about them. The men who had never had women in their ranks treated the WRANS with understanding and respect. In 1946, the WRANS were disbanded and in 1948, the last wartime WRANS discharged. After demobilisation, the women commenced civilian life slowly and a little hesitantly.

- Many experienced feelings of loss after removing their uniforms;
- Some missed the hectic pace of service life; and
- The friendships and the sense of belonging they had formed.

The WRANS were re-established seventy years ago due to a work force shortage. Ironically, in September 1950, Margaret Curtis-Otter who disbanded the wartime WRANS was appointed by the naval board to re-establish the service. In early 1951, three wartime WRANS re-enlisted and posted to HMAS Harman. Just like their predecessors, the women of the re-established WRANS faced many challenges and hurdles.

Once again, the WRANS attracted women from varied backgrounds across Australia. Most female recruits had a long train ride from their recruitment cities to Melbourne, which allowed them to get to know their fellow recruits. During the trip, there was a mixture of excitement and anxiety, wondering if they had made the right decision?

While work categories were similar to wartime WRANS, there were new categories such as radar plotters, motor transport drivers and technical occupations. By the 1980s, other traditional male dominated categories were open to WRANS such as physical trainers and schoolteachers.

In December 1959, the WRANS received permanent status as a section of the RAN. With changes of women's status in society the RAN started to implement changes, although, sometimes reluctantly such as in 1969 WRANS were eligible for retention after marriage while the wider society gained this in 1966. In 1975, maternity leave was granted to women of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). However, the ADF still wanted pregnant women to go on maternity leave at five months even though Government policy directed that women could serve as long as they could perform their roles. At the time, allowing pregnant women and women with children to remain in the ADF was not a popular decision and caused a lot of resentment.

During the 1970s, the WRANS continued to see significant improvements to their service life such as Officer rank titles, uniforms, categories, postings, promotions and pay and conditions. In 1972 during a newspaper interview with the Canberra Times an Australian Navy representative emphasized that Australia would not be following the United States of America in sending women to sea,

- *Not us.*
- *We only have 700 WRANS in a force of about 17000 and we certainly are not going to send them to sea.*
- *The original idea of having women was so they could release men for more active duties, and*
- *Anyway, the WRANS get to go to sea on an occasional day trip to see how the ship works but that is as far as it will go.*

However, three years later it was recommended women be permitted to serve on active service but not in a combat role.

In 1978, WRANS received equal pay to men. Women attended staff colleges on the same basis as men, and promotion from the common list depending on their qualifications. Every effort to integrate the women's services into the ADF however; women were still excluded from combat units and this inhibited female promotions.

During service in the WRANS, we met many likeminded people. Sometimes an individual would stand out from the rest and be remembered fondly. One such person who affected many WRANS service life was Warrant Officer Agnes Lenore Maiden (service 1956-1984). Warrant Officer Maiden known affectionately as 'Lennie' trained a generation of young women who entered the Navy. Many WRANS remember with affection Lennie as a person who was fair, firm but also warm and humorous. She was a country girl born and bred on the north coast of New South Wales. Lennie trained as a steward and in later years, as the role of trainer. In her role as a trainer, imagine the shock for new recruits arriving at the main gates of HMAS Cerberus to be met by Lennie with *'the two statues at the entrance to Cerberus also sit at the gates of hell'*. The first few weeks for recruits, was the familiarisation with service life, learning a new naval vocabulary and jargon, how to march, salute and receiving your kit. Who better than Lennie to teach new recruits *'Youse sheila's probably never ironed clothes in your life?'* Many recruit WRANS remember how Lennie taught them to use a washing machine, iron, to respect themselves, and always wear your uniform with pride. Many others had the privilege of serving with Lennie in various HMA ships Cerberus, Coonawarra, Penguin, Harman and Albatross.

On 31 August 1985, the WRANS ceased to exist. A new era dawned for female naval personnel by an Act of Parliament; so the WRANS were fully integrated into the RAN. Women were eligible to join the RAN or RAN Reserve and serve in seagoing billets under the same conditions of service as their male counterparts. Women in the RAN now serve in almost every area of day-to-day naval operations at sea and ashore. The WRANS, who achieved a first for women in the RAN, have made the path easier for those who followed. During the past eighty years, the WRANS have served in wartime, the transition from wartime WRANS, peacetime Navy and the integration of women into the permanent Royal Australian Navy.

WRANS look upon your service with pride and tell others about your experiences. However, the one thing that has not changed is the spirit that existed from the beginning of the WRANS.'

100th birthday – Elinor Swan

On 21 October, Elinor Swan (nee Douglas) turned 100 years old. Jill Kelly (Welfare Officer) sent Elinor flowers from the WRANS- Naval Women's Association (ACT) wishing her a happy birthday. Elinor (WR1351) served from 17 May 1943 until 19 February 1946 and was a telegraphist.



Elinor Swan

Upcoming events 2021

November

- 04 November morning tea commencing 1000 – Tulips café Pialligo
- 15 November executive meeting commencing 1800 – Southern Cross Club Woden
- 21 November monthly lunch commencing 1200 – Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie
- 30 November WRANS Christmas dinner commencing 1800 – Canberra Yacht Club Yarralumla

December

- 02 December morning tea commencing 1000 – tulips café Pialligo
- 10 December presentation for top female cadet TS Canberra – 1830 HMAS Harman
- 19 December monthly lunch commencing 1200 – Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie

2022 calendar activities

January

- 04 January – Executive Committee Meeting, Sthn Cross Club, Woden commencing at 1800.
- 06 January – morning tea commencing 1000 – Tulips café Pialligo
- 16 January – monthly lunch commencing 1200 – Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie

February

- 01 February – Executive Committee Meeting, Sthn Cross-Club, Woden commencing at 1800.
- 03 February – morning tea commencing 1000 – Tulips café Pialligo
- 14 February – General Meeting and AGM, Sthn Cross Club, Woden commencing at 1800.
- 20 February – monthly lunch commencing 1200 – Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie

March

- 03 March – morning tea commencing 1000 – Tulips café Pialligo
- 20 March – monthly lunch commencing 1200 – Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie

April

- 07 April – morning tea commencing 1000 – Tulips café Pialligo
- 17 April – monthly lunch commencing 1200 – Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie
- 25 April – ANZAC Day march and lunch (TBA)

May

- 03 May – Executive Committee Meeting, Sthn Cross Club, Woden commencing at 1800.
- 05 May – morning tea commencing 1000 – Tulips café Pialligo
- 09 May – General Meeting, Sthn Cross Club, Woden commencing at 1800.
- 15 May – monthly lunch commencing 1200 – Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie

June

- 02 June – morning tea commencing 1000 – Tulips café Pialligo
- 07 June – Executive Committee Meeting, Sthn Cross Club, Woden commencing at 1800.
- 19 June – monthly lunch commencing 1200 – Ainslie Football Club, Ainslie

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Pauline Gribble (McCormick)
Vice President	Heather Milward (Gunner)
Correspondence Secretary	Judith Rowe (Knight)
Minute Secretary	Judith Rowe (Knight)
Treasurer	Leanne Tingey (Kimpton)
Assistant Treasurer/Membership:	Christine Lamb (McNicol)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Events Co-ordinator:	Kerry Holmes (Wallis)
Catering Sub-committee	Kerry Macklin (Franklin) and Trish Goddard (Thurston)
DVA/KOC Liaison:	Pat McCabe
Welfare Officer:	Jill Kelly (Hildebrand)

The full list of elected officials is on the WRANS website.

ACT Office of Seniors & Veterans News

The ACT Office of Seniors & Veterans has many services available to Veterans in the ACT. Information on this is located at <https://www.act.gov.au/veterans/home>

DVA News

Senate Inquiry into Defence Force Retirement and Death Benefits (DFRDB) - Update

Regrettably, there has not yet been a Government response to this Senate Inquiry.

Changes to exercise physiology arrangements from 1 September 2021

DVA has advised that clinical experts routinely provide advice to the department about various musculoskeletal services. Under DVA arrangements, musculoskeletal professions include physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic and exercise physiology. From 1 September 2021, exercise physiology – as a musculoskeletal treatment service – will be considered in a similar way. This means that DVA will not pay for the second service where a person has exercise physiology and another musculoskeletal service on the same day, for treatment of the same condition. DVA will continue to pay for an exercise physiology service on the same day as another musculoskeletal treatment, where the treatment is for **different** health conditions. For more information – <https://bit.ly/3a7NN6Q>.

Carer's Allowance - Update

DVA advised on the 9th October 2021 that as of 20th September 2018 the Carer's Allowance is no longer automatic for TPIs and is now income tested using the Centrelink Income test facilities. The Department advised –

“An applicant for Carer Payment and/or Carer Allowance under the Act is required to complete the claimant questionnaire of the ADAT and the care receiver's Treating Health Professional (THP) must complete the Health Professional Assessment (HPA) component (Schedule 1 Part 2).

A minimum qualifying score must be achieved on the THP component as well as a minimum qualifying total ADAT score.

Department of Social Services Policy has confirmed there is no discretion to vary the requirements of the Act when assessing applicants for Carer Allowance and there is no ability to determine a Carer Allowance assessment without a current THP report completed in the format specified within the ADAT.

Carer Allowance has been subject to an income test since 20 September 2018 (see section 957A Carer allowance income test of the Act). The income test requires the carer's and their partner's combined Adjusted Taxable Income (ATI) must be under \$250,000 a year. The same income limit applies if the carer does not have a partner.

Services Australia is not aware of any previous decisions or agreements made in regard to TPI veterans and their partners for assessment purposes regarding Carer Allowance.”

For further information on the income test see <https://bit.ly/2YIXAyf>.

Two reports provide valuable insights into veteran suicide

On 29 September, two reports were published that will help the Government tackle the tragedy of suicide in the Defence and veteran community. For further information on the AIHW fourth annual update and the Interim National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention's report - <https://bit.ly/3la22hN>.

ADF Firefighter Scheme

A new scheme commencing 20 September 2021, will provide better health and wellbeing support for Australian Defence Force (ADF) firefighters who participated in fire training at Royal Australian Air Force Base Point Cook between 1 January 1957 and 31 December 1986. For more information – <https://bit.ly/3BcZ3ee>.

Rent Assistance

As part of the October 2020 Federal Budget, the Government finally agreed, after 15 years of campaigning, and as from September 2022, to allow **Veterans to obtain** eligibility of the Federal Governments Rent Assistance allowance. As part of the May 2021 Federal Budget, this timeline was bought forward so that this initiative could commence on the 1st January 2022.

This provision will enable all eligible Veterans to have their DVA Disability Compensation payment not included as income for the purposes of the income and assets test for this allowance. This will enable approximately 7000 Veterans to utilise this allowance.

Further information on this provision can be found at –

- a. DVA Fact Sheet – Help with your Rent - <https://bit.ly/3wjYlJs>.
- b. DVA 'How-To' Accommodation Information - <https://bit.ly/3AfJQZM>,

Important Dates

Royal Commission started –	8 July 2021
Rent Assistance Eligibility for TPIs begins –	1 January 2022
Royal Commission Submissions close –	31 March 2022
Royal Commission Interim Report –	11 August 2022
Royal Commission Final Report –	15 June 2023



Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling, provides support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Free and confidential help is available 24/7.

Phone 1800 011 046 (international: +61 1800 011 046 or +61 8 8241 4546) or visit www.OpenArms.gov.au

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2022

Membership renewals are now due so if you have not already done so, could you please pay your annual membership subscription of \$20.00 before the next Annual General Meeting either by –

cash or by cheque made out to the WRANS – Naval Women’s Association (ACT) and forwarded to

The Treasurer,
WRANS – Naval Women’s Association (ACT),
PO Box 402,
WODEN ACT 2606

or if you prefer you could pay online by direct transfer. The account details are –

BSB Number 633 000
Account number 120 827 027
Account name WRANS - Naval Women’s Association (ACT)

Payee Reference – your Surname/Mship 2022

**NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME JOINING FEE IS \$10.00 PLUS THE ANNUAL
\$20.00 SUBSCRIPTION
(Application Form on website)
INVITE YOUR NAVY FRIENDS ALONG TO OUR MEETINGS!**

Personal Details - New email address – have you moved?

We need to continually update our contact details so if you have changed address, email etc., would you please complete the following and either return it to the Membership Secretary, PO Box 402, Woden ACT 2606 or hand it in at the next General Meeting.

PERSONAL DETAILS – UPDATE

Surname Given Names
Address
.....
.....
Telephone (Home) (Work)
(Mobile)
(Email address)
