



MARCHING ALONG



WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT) Newsletter

Volume 17 Issue 2

Mar – May 2023

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WRANS - Naval Women Association (ACT)

President's Note

Changing the morning teas to rotate from Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday has meant that we are able to catch up with many more of our members. It is always a pleasure to meet friends and relatives who sometimes accompany the member, the more the merrier.

We had a good turnout for the ANZAC day march in Queanbeyan. The clapping and loud 'thank you for your service ladies' was quite special. Being invited to participate in the HMAS Harman celebrations is also special. It will be an awesome weekend.

It was heartening to see so many attend the general meeting and lunch on Saturday 27 May, it is much easier for members to attend a daytime meeting rather than an evening.

With winter well and truly on the way I wish you all good health. Please do ring me if you need a chat or have a problem 0400304878. Yes, you can email me but, I am not very prompt at reading my emails. Poor Judith messages me to tell me there is an email waiting for my attention. It works.

Sigi Kropp
President

Newsletter of the WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT)
PO Box 402
Woden, ACT 2606

President: Sigi Kropp (nee Engel)
Tel: 02 6254 7281
Email – president@wransact.org

Secretary: Mrs Judith Rowe (Knight)
Tel: 02 6247 3448
Email – secretary@wransact.org

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

WRANS Memorial Service at HMAS Harman on Sunday 2 July 2023

The service has previously been held in October around the anniversary of the formation of the WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT) but, for this year only, has been moved to July to be part of the celebrations for the 80th Anniversary of the commissioning of HMAS Harman.

The service will commence at 1100 and will be held at the Bonshaw Mess as the weather is expect to be very cold and there is a slippery surface near the memorial where we would normally hold the service.

After the ceremony, coffee, tea and light refreshments will be served in the Bonshaw Mess. The bar will be open for those wishing to purchase a drink. The cost of the refreshments will be \$10 per head paid in advance.

If you plan on attending the service, please pass you name and the name of any guests to Pauline Gribble at pegribble@gmail.com before Tuesday 20 June so that we can arrange entry to the base.

If you plan on staying for refreshments after the service please also advice Pauline as above and forward \$10 per person before Tuesday 20 June.

You can 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/Mem Svc 2023

or

by cheque made out to WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT) and forwarded to

The Treasurer,

WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT),

PO Box 402,

WODEN ACT 2606

Freedom of Entry to the city of Queanbeyan

The WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT) have been invited to take part in the Freedom of Entry to the city of Queanbeyan by HMAS Harman on Saturday 1 July 2023. Participants in parade will be in the following order:

Guard & Band; HMAS HARMAN; Navy Cadets; WRANS; followed by 2 cars for participants who cannot march.

Plan for event:

0900 Begin Marshalling at Wanniasa Park, Queanbeyan

0925 Platoons Form Up

0940 March Off

1000 Finish and cutting of the Cake and other Defence Related Stands just off Lowe St.

Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Association

Save the Date. A lunch will be held in the Bonshaw Mess at HMAS Harman commencing at 1200 on Saturday 21 October 2023 to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the WRANS – Naval Women's Association (ACT). More details will be provided in due course.

Naming of Campbell neighbourhood park, ACT

In late 2022, the ACT Place Names Advisory Committee invited the community to offer suggestions to name the Campbell neighbourhood park. The decision has now been made to approve the name, **Violet McKenzie Park**. The name commemorates the legacy of Mrs Violet McKenzie OBE ('Mrs Mac') and her important contribution to the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service during the Second World War.

The naming instrument is a 'disallowable instrument' which means it must be presented in the ACT Legislative Assembly within 6 sitting days of being notified on the ACT Legislation Register and then tabled for 6 sitting days. During this time the instrument can be subject to a motion to amend or disallow the naming determination.

Following the completion of the statutory process, commissioning of new signs for the park to explain the origin and significance of the name will be undertaken.

We will be kept updated about any decision to publicly launch the park name to coincide with the installation of the new sign.

Anzac Day 2023

On Anzac Day we marched in Queanbeyan again as the renovations at the Australian War Memorial are still ongoing. We were joined by other ex-navy women from the area and marched at the front of the veterans group. It was a lovely sunny day and the short march was supported by a large cheering crowd along the route. Merle Hare and Dot Weston were driven behind the march in a car.



Merle Hare seated in car and Dot Weston standing

ANZAC Day WRANS ACT
From left to right: Sigi Kropp, Judith Rowe, Lyn McCoy (at back) Heather Milward, Jill Kelly (at back), Kerry Holmes, Di Sell, Julie Lewis, Carol Harris, Sue Shaw (at back).



Social Events

Morning Tea Thursday 2 March



Back row from left to right: Lyn McCoy, Judith Rowe, Rae Milfull, Heather Milward, Janice Stewart (at back) Sigi Kropp, Keryn Northrope (at back) and Margaret Manley.

Second row: Pat McCabe, Carol Harris, Sue Wheeler and Kerry Holmes.

Third row: Kate, Beth Roberts, Juanita Strachan, Sylvia Sinfield and Pauline Gribble.

Front row: PO Daryl Ponder, Merle Hare, Gaye Doolan and Dot Weston.

Lunch Sunday 19 March



Back row from left to right: Janice Stewart, Keryn Northrope, Heather Milward, Olwyn Anne Cook and Pauline Gribble.

Front row: Sue Wheeler, Merle Hare and Trish Goddard.

Morning Tea Tuesday 4 April

From left to right: Kathryn Spurling, Carol Harris, Janice Stewart, Alison Gillett, Kerry Holmes, Pauline Gribble, Maureen Jeffrey, Sue Shaw, Merle Hare, Chris Hennessy, Lyn McCoy, and Sylvia Sinfield.



Lunch Sunday 16 April



Standing from left to right: Rosemarie Millar, Olwyn Anne Cook, Dollah West, Dot Weston, Joan Henstock, Trish Goddard, and Sue Wheeler.

Seated: Heather Schmitzer, Merle Hare, and Heather Milward.

Seated at front: Pauline Gribble.

Morning Tea Wednesday 3 May

Standing, from left to right: Julie Lewis, Janice Stewart, Juanita Strachan (at back), Alison Gillett, Sue Shaw (at back), Sigi Kropp, Margaret Manley (at back), Pauline Gribble, Chris Hennessy.

Seated: Sylvia Sinfield, Judith Rowe, Merle Hare, and Gaye Doolan.



Lunch Sunday 21 May



Standing from left to right: Judith Rowe, Janice Stewart, Beth Roberts, Trish Goddard, Heather Milward, Natalie Read, Sue Wheeler, and Leanne Tingey.

Seated: Dot Weston, Merle Hare, and Pauline Gribble.

Change to Morning Tea Days

Currently the monthly morning teas during the first week of the month, rotate through Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday alternating each month. A suggestion was made to also include Friday in the rotation. A vote was taken at the last general meeting and the majority were in favour of including Fridays but for it not to start until next year.

Vale – Patricia Downes 6 February 1947 – 1 April 2023

While Trish was not a member of our association, several of our members were involved in the arrangements for the funeral and also attended, plus the eulogy was presented by Sue Shaw and is printed below.

Eulogy – Trish Downes

Written by Sue Shaw (LCDR RAN Rtd)

Patricia Downes – Trish – L107175, CMDR RAN Retired.

On Monday 2 March 1970 I met a 23 year old teacher from Dubbo at the Sydney Recruiting Office. It was the day Trish Downes and I both swore an oath to serve our Country and signed on the dotted line to start our time in the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS), Trish as an Officer candidate and me as a recruit WRAN Radio Operator.

She completed the initial six weeks Recruit training with the rest of our intake (Class 116) during which time we became friends and she showed her softer and sometimes girly side. She then commenced her Officer Cadet Training with two other girls where her intellectual skills and strength came to the fore. One of her classmates was another strong-willed girl and I believe they did occasionally butt heads together. I remember Trish telling me that the phrase she recalled and which had annoyed her the most from that time was "the trouble with you Trish is", which of course from then on I couldn't resist



throwing into the conversation if I thought she was ever getting too serious, as it was guaranteed to make her laugh.

On completion of her OTC, she then undertook a Communications module to qualify as Communications Officer. She showed complete dedication to the Communications Branch and its people from that day on.

She would have been both amazed and humbled by the number of people who have expressed their sorrow at her passing. I arranged to meet her in August 2020 shortly after I found out that she was ill through a mutual non-Navy friend. In typical Trish fashion she got very cranky with me when I told her I knew she had cancer. She was adamant that I was not to tell anyone else – especially any Navy associates, She did not trust the Navy SIS (“scuttlebutt information system”) to remain secure. It was at this time she told me that her beloved Mother, Nell, had passed away in February of that year after having reached the ripe old age of 100 years. With such longevity in her genes I don’t believe it was in Trish’s plan to leave us so soon.

Her career was highlighted by a number of firsts which I will come to shortly but I would like to share a few of the comments made by the Communicators and others who served with her:

- Lovely lady
- A wonderful person
- As a DO she always made herself available for a chat, regardless of her busy schedule
- Extremely well-liked and respected by Navy personnel and a civilian cohort who worked closely with her
- A wonderful contribution to the Branch and the RAN

An exceptionally clever and dedicated woman, Trish aimed high and pursued a number of postings that had traditionally been a purely male domain.

- In 1979 she was the first woman on, and to graduate from, the inaugural RAN Staff Course
- In 1980 she was appointed as Command Communication Officer at Naval Support Command in the Remington Centre
- In 1983 she was the first and only female Officer to graduate from the Royal Navy’s Communications Technical Course (known as the Dagger course) at Shrivenham, which required twelve months of deep study into Communications Electronic Engineering
- In 1985 she was the first WRANS Officer on the RAN Staff in Washington DC (Staff Officer Communications)
- In 1989 she was appointed as the first female Director of Naval Command, Control and Communications, and
- In 1992 she was the first female Officer to become the Maritime Intelligence Officer at MHQ.

These achievements were the things that most knew about – you could pick them up in Weekly List of Officers Postings. What was not so commonly known was her in-depth understanding of both the operational and technical issues confronting Naval Communications. The RAN was undergoing a period of significant change moving from an Analogue WWII HF communications system to modern digital satellite systems. Trish was viewed as often having a demonstrably superior understanding of these issues than her male colleagues.

She was a trailblazer for the Navy women and girls who have followed, and made it clear that female Officers were not to be ignored either by the Navy Hierarchy or by the sailor at the Guard House who refused to salute a woman as they weren’t “real” Officers. However, there was a lot more work to do to make the Navy a fairer and more equal workplace. To highlight this I want to read to you a message I received from another of Trish’s former Navy compatriots, Graeme White:

“I was fortunate to have Trish – Roxby – Downes, I gave her that nickname whilst she was on board, sea ride with us on HMAS Perth in 1983 from memory. She was with a team from DSTO conducting trials on a UHF frequency hopper. I got on pretty well with her and during the course of the sea ride I discussed my concerns that WRANS were unable to be posted to NCS HEH, My then wife was a LWRROT, I was a senior Kellick Sparker. Anyway, long story short, I presented her with a submission outlining the benefits of posting a married Comms couple to NCS HEH.

Trish took on my case and in 1985, LWRROT and LSRO White were the first married serving couple posted to NCS HEH, LWRROT and LSRO de Maskens were posted at the same time. We trail blazed thanks to Trish. She never acknowledged her success with my submission and our paths did not cross after that. I don’t believe that anybody was aware that she was instrumental in achieving this posting equity. I am eternally grateful for her work, and in my mind she remains the “Quiet Achiever” – the motto of HMAS Perth”

From 1992 she completed more high level courses aimed at preparing Naval Officers for higher rank including:

- Joint Services Staff College, and
- OPINTEL Analyst Course and OBU User Course conducted at Dam Neck, Virginia, USA

Her final posting was a three year secondment to the Office of National Assessments (ONA), helping to provide senior Australian policymakers with the information and analysis they need to formulate and implement policy.

So, her Service History does not reflect her achievements nor the complexity of her work, or her empathy for her people. She was very much a quiet achiever, and this may have been to her detriment. If the “powers that be” had fully understood what this woman had contributed to the RAN she may have achieved another first and become the first female Flag Officer – wishful thinking on my part maybe – but I can’t help thinking that in a Navy that was changing and evolving, trying to keep up with societal changes, being quiet and hiding your light under a bushel was probably not the way to go.

Mind you, it wasn’t all about work for her. Sam Hughes told me that when they served together at HMAS Albatross in the late 70s she had an “Italian love affair” – with a light brown/orangish coloured Fiat Sports car!

Trish said of her Naval career that “it gave me everything I had hoped for: travel, variety, camaraderie, challenge.”

I was in awe of her when I first met her, I remained in awe of her throughout her Navy career and I am honoured to have her call me her friend once upon a time.

The trouble with you Trish is - you left us, your Navy family, far too soon. We are so very proud of you.

Trish, the Watch stands relieved

Relieved by those you have Trained, Guided and Led

Trish, you stand relieved. We have the Watch.

Joe Henstock Memorial



Long-time members of our association, Joan Henstock (nee Biscuit Reynolds) lost her husband Joe earlier this year and several of our members attended his funeral on 25 January. Later on 13 May some of our members attended the dedication of the Henstock Pavilion in his honour at the National Hockey Centre. Both Joan and Joe had a long time association with hockey and Joe was a Life Member of Hockey ACT and Hockey Australia.

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

50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War

In 2023, the Australian Government will mark the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War with a national service at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra on 18 August 2023 from 10:00am. Further Information can be found at - <https://bit.ly/42BkceK>



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs



50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
END OF THE VIETNAM WAR
AUSTRALIA REMEMBERS 2023

Throughout the year, Australians will be encouraged to honour and remember the service of some 60,000 Australian men and women who served in the Vietnam War and their families. Tragically, 523 Australians lost their lives in the war, and over 3,000 were wounded.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs will deliver a televised service to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial on Anzac Parade, on Friday 18 August 2023.

The service will be broadcast live across Australia by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and streamed online. The ABC will also make the broadcast available to other networks to provide all members of the community the opportunity to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War in a solemn and dignified manner from their home.

Attendance Passes

All attendees planning to attend the service on 18 August 2023 are required to register for an attendance pass. Entry to the service will not be permitted without an attendance pass at <https://bit.ly/43w3ZJ9>.

There will be a number of road closures and restricted areas in place on the day, so please follow the direction of staff to access the entry points on the day.

Attendees are encouraged to plan their journey and arrival times carefully. We encourage you to arrive early to ensure you have sufficient time to progress through ticket scanning and obtain the best possible seat. Attendees who arrive early will also have the opportunity to view the pre-service program, which commences at 10:00am.

Only 6,000 seats are available for this service. Limited accessible seating will be available for attendees at the service who have health or accessibility requirements. If accessible seating is required, please ensure that when registering for your attendance pass, you nominate and describe your requirements. Those requesting accessible seating are able to have one carer or companion and/or their approved assistance dog with them to provide assistance.

Attendees with an accessibility requirement are to make themselves known to DVA staff on arrival.



Transport arrangements

There is no dedicated parking at the site and there will also be road closures in place on the day surrounding Anzac Parade and Anzac Park between Constitution Avenue and Currong Street/Blamey Crescent. Access to these roads will be by authorised vehicles only with the appropriate accreditation on display. You are therefore encouraged to use public transport where possible, further details below:

Private vehicles and accessibility parking

Travel by private vehicle is not recommended. There is very limited on-street parking available in the vicinity of Anzac Parade.

Limited parking is available on Anzac Park East for attendees who arrive at the service by private vehicle and require accessibility assistance.

Chartered shuttle bus

To help reduce congestion on ACT roads and the demand for limited parking, Transport Canberra, together with the Department of Veterans' Affairs will be providing free chartered bus services to and from the service.

These shuttles will operate from the Canberra City Bus Interchange to the service continuously from 9:00am until 10:00am. Chartered shuttle buses will only pick up from the Canberra City Bus Interchange and will not be stopping at other bus stops en route. Attendees will not need to pre-register to catch the chartered shuttle bus.

The chartered shuttle service will include return services on conclusion of the service. Shuttle buses will depart the site from 11:50am until 12:30pm for return to the Canberra City Bus Interchange.

DVA 2023-24 Budget

The Australian Government is investing an additional \$328.1 million over four years to support the more than 340,000 veterans and dependants accessing services through DVA. This builds on the \$537.5 million invested in the October 2022 Budget as part of the Government's commitment to ensuring a better future for veterans and families.

An investment of \$64.1 million in 2023-24 will retain over 480 DVA staff who are working to deliver frontline services to veterans and families and \$254.1 million over four years has been provided to modernise and sustain ageing IT systems to ensure more timely payments and access to services for veterans and families through DVA.

Other measures in the Budget 2023-24 package supporting health and wellbeing include:

- \$500,000 over four years to expand eligibility for the Acute Support Package introduced in the October 2022 Budget to include grandcarers – grandparents who are also full-time carers of children of veterans,
- \$2 million over two years to allow DVA to continue important mental health awareness and suicide intervention training for volunteers supporting veterans.

50th Anniversary end of Vietnam War Medallion and Certificate

To acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will produce a Commemorative Medallion and Certificate of Commemoration.

The medallion and certificate will be made available to every living veteran, widows of veterans and other family members of veterans of the Vietnam War. Further information regarding both the service, and medallion, is available <https://bit.ly/42BJeL0>.

DVA Travel Allowances

Please be aware that travel allowances for transport, meals and accommodation under DVA's Travel for Treatment Program will increase on 1 July 2023 in line with the consumer price index.

Important Dates

Royal Commission started –	8 July 2021
Rent Assistance Eligibility for TPIs begins –	1 January 2022
Royal Commission Interim Report – DONE	11 August 2022
Royal Commission Hearings – Perth –	15 May 2023
Royal Commission Private Session Requests –	28 April 2023
Royal Commission Submissions close –	13 October 2023
Royal Commission Final Report –	17 June 2024

For further information call 1800 331 800

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

WRANS – Naval Women’s Association (ACT) Calendar of Events for 2023

Month	Day	Date	Time	Event	Venue
June	Sun	18	1200	Lunch	Ainslie Football Club
July	Sat	1	0900	Freedom of Entry March	Wanniassa Park, Queanbeyan
July	Sun	2	1100	Memorial Service	HMAS Harman
July	Tue	4	1000	Morning Tea	Tulips, Pialligo
July	Sun	16	1200	Lunch	Ainslie Football Club
August	Wed	2	1000	Morning Tea	Tulips, Pialligo
August	Sun	20	1200	Lunch	Ainslie Football Club
September	Thur	7	1000	Morning Tea	Tulips, Pialligo
September	Sun	17	1200	Lunch	Ainslie Football Club
September	Sat	23	1100	General Meeting and Lunch	Canberra Southern Cross Club, Woden
October	Tues	3	1000	Morning Tea	Tulips, Pialligo
October	Sun	15	1200	Lunch	Ainslie Football Club
October	Sat	21	TBA	Lunch for 20 th Anniversary of the Association	TBA
November	Wed	1	1000	Morning Tea	Tulips, Pialligo
November	Sun	19	1200	Lunch	Ainslie Football Club
December	Sat	2	1230	Christmas Lunch	Yowani Country Club
December	Thur	7	1000	Morning Tea	Tulips, Pialligo
December	Sun	17	1200	Lunch	Ainslie Football Club

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Sigrid 'Sigi' Kropp (Engel)
Vice President	Vacant
Correspondence Secretary	Judith Rowe (Knight)
Minute Secretary	Judith Rowe (Knight)
Treasurer	Rachael 'Rae' Milfull (Cooper)
Assistant Treasurer/Membership	Christine Lamb (McNicol)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Event Co-ordinator	Pauline Gribble (McCormick)
Catering Sub-committee	
DVA/KOC Liaison	Pat McCabe

EX-OFFICIO POSITIONS:

Webmaster:	Pat McCabe
Facebook Manager:	Pat McCabe
Welfare Officer:	Pat McCabe – 0417 291 546
Scrapbooking:	
Newsletter Editor:	Judith Rowe (Knight) & Pat McCabe
Librarian:	Sigrid 'Sigi' Kropp (Engle)

MEMBERSHIP DUES 2024

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 –

**NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME JOINING FEE IS \$10.00 PLUS
THE ANNUAL \$20.00 SUBSCRIPTION
(Application Form on website)**

Payment can be made 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 2024

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

INVITE YOUR NAVY FRIENDS ALONG TO OUR MEETINGS!

Personal Details New email address – have you moved?

Note - All the Grapevine and Homemail email addresses closed on 31 May 23 so if you have been using this, please let us know your new email address as soon as possible.

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 forward to secretary@wransact.org or hand it in at the next General Meeting.

PERSONAL DETAILS – UPDATE

Surname Given Names

Address

Telephone (Home) (Work)

(Mobile)

(Email address)
