



WOMEN in the UNITED STATES NAVY

We literally could not run the Navy without women.

—SECRETARY OF THE NAVY RAY MABUS, 2010

AMERICA'S
NAVY

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Today's women are closer than ever before to achieving equality and equal opportunity in the Navy. They stand on the shoulders of their predecessors who provided outstanding service during peace and war.



Although women have served in and with the Navy since the American Revolution, they did not become an official part of the service until 1908 when Congress established the Navy Nurse Corps. The

◀ *Opposite page:* Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Airman Susan Rodriguezrivera awaits flight operations aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) in the Gulf of Oman, August 2009.

Left: The first Navy nurses were called the Sacred Twenty, shown here on the steps of the Naval Hospital in Washington, D.C., shortly after their appointment in 1908.

Navy's first enlisted women, more commonly known as Yeomen (F), provided primarily clerical support during World War I, but only for the duration of the war.

Nurses remained the only women in the Navy until 1942 when the service launched the program

designated WAVES, the acronym for Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. During World War II 85,000 WAVES served as air traffic controllers, artists, bakers, couriers, cryptologists, draftsmen, hospital corpsmen, lawyers, meteorologists, and translators at naval shore establishments across the nation and overseas, while 11,000 Navy nurses treated patients in 12 hospital ships, on planes evacuating patients from the combat zone, and at stateside and overseas hospitals.

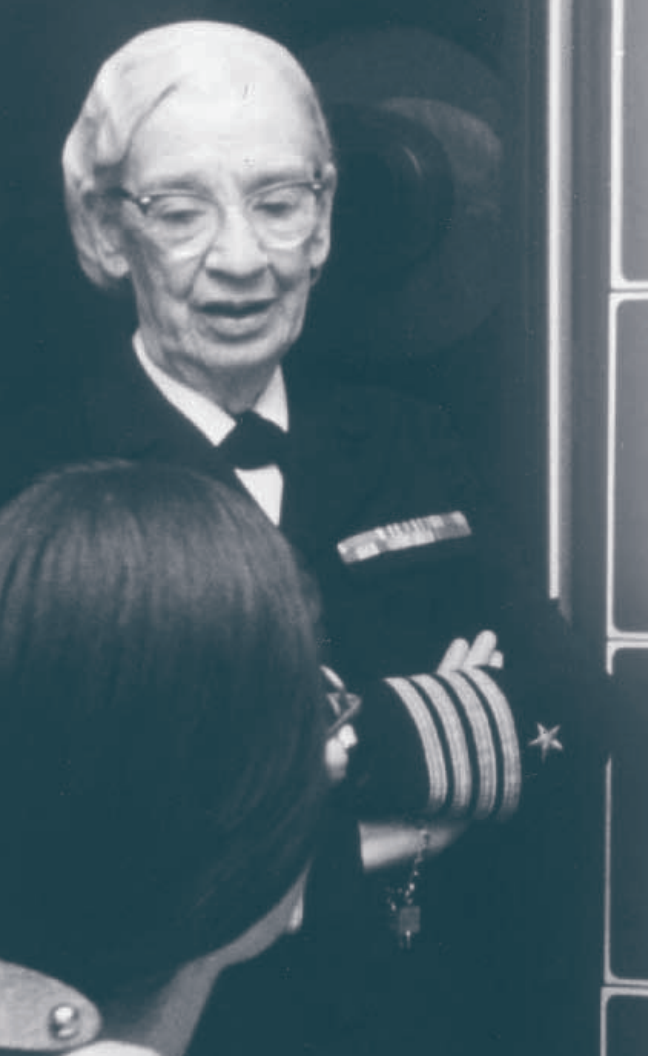
The contributions of these Navy women and their counterparts in the other services convinced military and congressional leaders that women should have a role in the peacetime armed forces. The Women's Armed Services Act of 1948 accomplished that, albeit



◀ *Far left:* Lt. j.g. Harriet Ida Pickens, left, and Ens. Frances E. Wills were the first African American officers in the WAVES program.

Top right: Ens. Jane Kendeigh, the first flight nurse, prepares to evacuate patients from the Iwo Jima battle area during World War II.

Bottom right: Yeomen (F) working at the Navy Department in 1918.



M. GRACE HOPPER

Rear Admiral M. Grace Hopper was one of the Navy's most accomplished women and a leading computer scientist of the Cold War. After graduating from Vassar College and receiving master's and doctoral degrees in math and physics from Yale University, Hopper taught mathematics at Vassar before entering the WAVES in 1943. Her work at Harvard University's Computational Laboratory led to the development of the service's first large-scale digital computer, the Mark I. She remained with the design team after the war to develop the Mark II and Mark III computers, contributed to the design of the COBOL programming language, and coined the term "bug" for computer malfunctions. Her legendary accomplishments earned her the affectionate name "Amazing Grace." Among numerous military and civilian awards, she received the National Medal of Technology, the nation's highest technology award, presented by President George H.W. Bush. In 1996 the Navy honored her by naming a guided missile destroyer USS *Hopper* (DDG 70).

"For women, the Navy world is the best. In the Navy, I had the same opportunities in training and promotions as the men—and that wasn't always true in the academic or business worlds."

◀ Capt. Hopper headed the Programming Languages Section in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in 1976.



with many restrictions. In 1967 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Public Law 90-130, allowing women to become admirals and generals. Five years later, Alene Duerk, Director of the Navy Nurse Corps, was appointed the Navy's first female admiral.

Opportunities for women in the Navy increased dramatically during the 1970s. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr.—who focused on quality of

◀ *Top left:* Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr. recognizes Capt. Alene Duerk upon her promotion to rear admiral in 1972.

Bottom left: A veteran of two world wars and WAVES director from 1946 to 1953, Capt. Joy Bright Hancock played a critical role in the passage of the women's integration act.

Right: Lts. j.g. Barbara Allen, left, and Judith Neuffer were among the first four female naval officers chosen for aviation training in 1973, with Barbara (Allen) Rainey the first to earn her aviator wings.

life for Sailors, especially equal opportunity for women, blacks, and other minorities—issued a series of mandates for change known as Z-Grams. On 7 August 1972 Z-Gram-116 expanded the role of women in the Navy, opening the Reserve Officer Training Corps, aviation training, Chaplain Corps, and Civil Engineer Corps to women. President Gerald Ford signed Public Law 94-106, requiring service academies to admit women by the fall of 1976. Eighty-one women entered the U.S. Naval Academy's Class of 1980. The Navy started its “women on ships” program in 1978, assigning them to auxiliary ships such as oilers, tenders, and repair ships. A year later the Navy established an office of women's policy to advise the Chief of Naval Personnel.



DEBORAH LOEWER

Rear Admiral Deborah Loewer distinguished herself throughout a 31-year naval career, becoming the first warfare-qualified woman promoted to flag rank in 2001. She holds a doctoral degree in international law from the University of Kiel in Germany. Providing leadership to others as she advanced through the ranks, Loewer established a successful online mentoring program for female surface warfare officers that continues today. Between 1979 and 2000 she compiled 13 years' service on six ships, completing six deployments and six shipyard overhauls. In her later career, she served as senior military advisor to Secretary of Defense William Cohen; as director of President George W. Bush's White House Situation Room; as Vice Commander, Military Sealift Command; and as Commander, Mine Warfare Command, retiring in 2007. At Director Oliver Stone's personal request, Loewer worked as the military technical advisor for his film "W" released in October 2008.

“[Women] continue to push open the ‘door of opportunity’ and assume combat roles nearly inconceivable just two decades ago.”

◀ Rear Adm. Deborah Loewer, deputy to Vice Adm. David Brewer, left, Commander, Military Sealift Command, in 2003.



Above: Naval Academy graduate Ens. Matice Wright, the first African American female naval flight officer, received her assignment to Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 3 in 1993.

Center: Rear Adm. Roberta L. Hazard, a pioneering unrestricted line officer, helped develop policies to increase opportunities for women. She directed two studies on women in the Navy for the Chief of Naval Operations in 1988 and in 1990.

Right: Among the first of her gender to graduate from the Naval School of Diving and Salvage, in 1990 Cmdr. Darlene Iskra became the first woman to command a Navy noncombatant, the salvage ship USS *Opportune* (ARS 41).

The progress of the 1970s provided the basis for the next generation to reach unimaginable heights. In the 1980s Navy promotion boards began selecting women for flag rank. By the 1990s women commanded ships, recruiting districts, shipyards, and training stations and constituted 15 percent of the naval personnel fighting in Iraq and Kuwait during the First Gulf War (1990–1991). A year later, for the first time a woman served as brigade commander, the Naval Academy’s top-ranking midshipman.

The 1993 repeal of the Combat Exclusion Law for women allowed them to serve on combatant ships. In 1998 Commander Maureen A. Farren became the first woman selected to command a naval combatant, the



JACQUELINE DIROSA

“Any job worth doing is worth doing right and deserves your full effort.” Command Master Chief Jacqueline L. K. DiRosa, the Navy’s senior ranking enlisted woman by position in 2010, lives by these words. A native of Mount Olive, Illinois, she entered the Navy in 1981 and rose to Chief Hospital Corpsman in eight years. DiRosa, who earned enlisted surface and aviation warfare pins, was the first woman selected for both Force and Fleet Master Chief, among the most prestigious positions in the enlisted service. “Opportunities have never been better for those willing to take advantage of them,” she wrote. “It makes no difference if you are a man or a woman. If you are willing to grasp the opportunities the Navy has to offer and give it your full effort, then success will be yours. The question is, are you willing?”

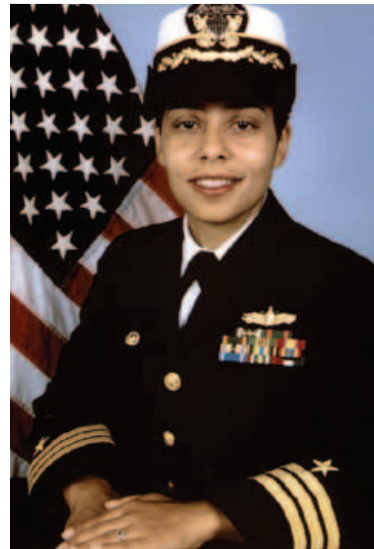
“Any job worth doing is worth doing right and deserves your full effort.”

◀ Jacqueline DiRosa, Command Master Chief for Navy Information Operations Command, Suitland, Md., 2010.

amphibious dock landing ship USS *Mount Vernon* (LSD 39). In the aviation community, female aviators began flying combat missions over the Balkans and Iraq in 1994 and continue to fly combat sorties over Iraq and Afghanistan.

Female naval aviators also joined the elite ranks of those selected for NASA's space program. Wendy Lawrence, a 1981 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, began astronaut training at the Johnson Space Center in 1992. The former helicopter pilot was also the first female Naval Academy graduate to fly in space, logging more than 1,200 hours in orbit.

The 21st century brought new challenges and opportunities for women. In 2008 three female members of Naval Construction Battalion One assigned to a U.S. Marine Corps unit in the Middle



Top left: Chief Quartermaster (Surface Warfare) Stephanie Kotatis stands ▶
Junior Officer of the Deck on the bridge of USS *Freedom* (LCS 1).

Top right: Astronaut Wendy Lawrence completed four space flights, including
two trips to the Russian space station *Mir*.

Bottom left: Cmdr. Michelle J. Howard was the first African American
woman to command a combatant ship, USS *Rushmore* (LSD 37), in
1999. By the end of 2010 she had achieved two-star flag rank.

Bottom right: More than two football fields long, *Rushmore* was designed
to launch amphibious operations, using landing craft stored in her well
deck and helicopters.



EVELYN BANKS

Evelyn “Vonn” Banks, Command Master Chief, Naval Sea Systems Command, graduated from the Air Force Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Academy and the Navy Senior Enlisted Academy. She was the first black woman to reach the rank of Command Master Chief Petty Officer in an air wing. She is well known for her energetic personality, passion for promoting naval service, and a genuine concern for her Sailors. Her supportive family, outgoing personality, a thirst for knowledge, and faith have contributed to her success. She is working on a master’s degree and plans to obtain her doctorate before retiring. She advises Sailors to learn from their mistakes, help others advance as their career progresses, and to “learn the rules, respect the rules and follow the rules,” Command Master Chief Banks is among the highest ranking black enlisted females in the Navy.

*“Learn the rules, respect the rules
and follow the rules.”*

◀ Command Master Chief Evelyn Banks at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, during a 2006 trip to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

East volunteered to search Muslim women and children for explosives and contraband because Muslim law prohibits men from doing so. The Marine Corps had recruited women as early as 2003 to perform these and other specialized duties, such as translation and intelligence analysis.

Today nearly every naval community is open to women. They make vital contributions ashore and afloat in Iraq and Afghanistan and in overseas contingency operations. They

are commanding warships, carrier air wings and squadrons, and Medical and Civil Engineer Corps units, as well as developing plans and strategies for the Navy's future. There are no restrictions on women in aviation; all aviation enlisted ratings are open to women. The first group of female officers selected for submarine duty entered qualifications training in 2010 for integration into the crews of two ballistic missile and two guided missile submarines. By late 2010 there were two three-star





▶ *Top:* The first of the Navy's new littoral combat ships, USS *Freedom* requires small, highly skilled crews. Cmdr. Kris Doyle, the ship's first female commanding officer, led the blue crew from March 2009 to July 2010.

Bottom left: Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau is the senior ranking woman in the Navy and president of National Defense University, 2010. Here she is running with recruits during battle stations on 18 May 2003 when she was a two-star flag officer and Commander, Navy Service Training Command at Great Lakes, Ill.

Bottom right: Cmdr. Sara Joyner, commanding officer of Strike Fighter Squadron 105, dresses out in flight gear aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) in March 2007. She was the first woman to command a strike fighter squadron.



◀ *Left:* Builder 3rd Class Amy Higgins, a member of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 11 Air Detachment Afghanistan, builds a hut at Kandahar Airfield, April 2009.

Center: Navy dentist Lt. Rasha Hanna visits with Iraqi children during a female civil affairs mission to a school in Abu Tiban, Iraq, January 2005.

Right: Lt. Amy Tomlinson, the first female Naval Flight Officer selected for the Navy's Blue Angels, is the organization's event coordinator, October 2009.



Top left: Capt. Kelly M. Johnson, left, salutes Capt. Mary M. Jackson, the new commanding officer of Naval Station Norfolk in August 2010. When Jackson relieved Johnson, she became the first female commanding officer of the largest U.S. naval base. ▶

Far right: Rear Adm. Nora Tyson, shown here meeting a young student in Jakarta, Indonesia, assumed command of Carrier Strike Group 2 in July 2010 aboard the aircraft carrier USS *George H.W. Bush* (CVN 77) in Norfolk, Va., becoming the first woman to command a carrier strike group.

Center left: Cmdr. Yvette Davids, shown here hosting members of the Royal Malaysian Navy, was the first Latina to command a Navy ship, USS *Curtis* (FFG 38).

Bottom left: A newly commissioned ensign celebrates after receiving her diploma at the U.S. Naval Academy Class of 2009 graduation and commissioning ceremony. Of the 1,036 graduates, 203 were women.

Bottom right: The Navy assigned the first women to submarine crews of the *Ohio*-class guided missile submarines, such as USS *Georgia* (SSGN 729), in 2010.



Left: Capt. Kathlene Contres, Commandant of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute and the highest ranking female Hispanic active duty line officer in 2009, signs a Hispanic-American Heritage Month Proclamation.

Right: Chaplain Margaret Kibben, who went to Afghanistan in September 2006 as an individual augmentee and Command Chaplain for the Combined Forces Command, engages in a community relations project.

Photo credits: Blue Angels Public Affairs Office; Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute; U.S. Defense Visual Information Center; Naval History & Heritage Command; NAVY.mil., Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau, USN; Capt. Margaret Kibben, ChC, USN; and Command Master Chief Jacqueline DiRosa, USN.

Front cover: As Officer of the Deck, Lt. j.g. Karen Sankes stands watch on board the amphibious assault ship USS *Kearsarge* (LHD 3), the flagship for an amphibious task force in the Red Sea, supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in February 2003.

admirals among the 31 female flag officers, 52 command master chiefs, and 13 command senior chiefs. The opportunities for women to serve and achieve leadership positions have never been greater.

In the 21st century the Navy's leadership remains strongly committed to diversity. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead declared that the Navy "must embrace the demographic changes of tomorrow and build a Navy that always reflects our country's makeup."

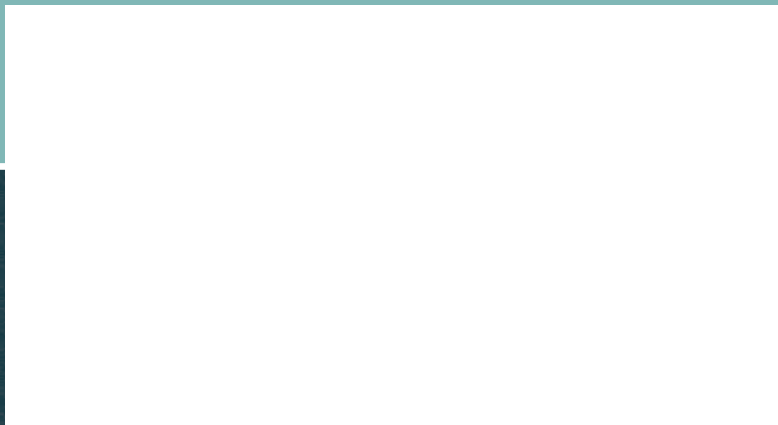
A person who is motivated and hardworking, and has the honor, courage, and commitment to serve, can achieve his or her dreams, regardless of gender, race, creed, color, or ethnic origin.



Navy Diversity Directorate (N134)
Chief of Naval Personnel
www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/Diversity

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