

Editorial



Sometime ago I was sent a link to an article titled: [Women in the RAN: The Road to Command at Sea](#).

It was a very interesting, well written article – however, when I finished it, I noticed that it ended approximately at the turn of the century. Therefore, I thought it appropriate that our editorial should focus on a few of the ‘First’ achievements of our female members of the RAN since 2000.

These biographies are taken from the Navy website and from the book “[Winning at Sea – The Story of Women in the RAN](#)”.

Rear Admiral Robyn Margaret Walker AM RAN



Robyn Margaret Walker was born on 1 July 1959 in Allora, Queensland and qualified as a medical practitioner in 1982. She worked in the public health system in Queensland, Australia until joining the Royal Australian Navy as a direct entry medical graduate in 1991, with the intent to continue her career in diving medicine. Early postings in her career included HMAS *Albatross* (Naval Air Station -

Nowra), the Submarine Escape Training Facility at HMAS *Stirling*, the Submarine & Underwater Medicine Unit at HMAS *Penguin* and HMAS *Westralia*.

In January 1996 Lieutenant Commander Walker assumed the position of Officer in Charge of the Submarine & Underwater Medicine Unit and remained there until her promotion to Commander in July 2000. On promotion she was appointed to Maritime Headquarters as the Deputy Fleet Medical Officer which included significant Sea Training Group responsibilities. In July 2002 Commander Walker was posted to the Defence Health

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Events Calendar

(see [Calendar](#) for full details)

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- 01 Apr** – Recruit School graduation
- 07-11 Apr** – HMAS Canberra visits
- 08 Apr** – HMAS Cerberus Ceremonial Divisions
- 08-10 Apr** – Formula 1 Grand Prix
- 09 Apr** – HMAS Vampire service
- 10 Apr** – George Cross Award Day – Maltese Australia
- 22 Apr** – Recruit School graduation
- 25 Apr** – Anzac Day Dawn service
- 25 Apr** – Anzac Day march
- 30 Apr-01 May** – Lake Goldsmith steam rally
- 01 May** – Battle of the Coral Sea service
- 04 May** – Soundwaves concert
- 06 May** – HMAS Castlemaine service
- 10-12 May** – Navy Seapower Conference

Service Branch in Canberra as Director of Preventive Health. In January 2003 she was promoted to Captain and in 2004 was appointed as Chief Staff Officer Health (J07) at Headquarters Joint Operations Command. In this position she was responsible for coordinating the health care to ADF personnel operating in Iraq, the Solomon Islands, East Timor and for the Banda Aceh tsunami response.

On 4 July 2005 she took up, on promotion to Commodore, the position of Director General Strategic Health Policy and Plans in the Defence Health Services Division. Commodore Walker was posted to the position of Director General Garrison Health Support within Joint Health Command on 11 August 2008 and to Director General Health Capability on 1 February 2010. Commodore Walker was also dual hatted as the Director General Navy Health Service since August 2008.

Commodore Walker was appointed as a Member in the Military Division of the Order of Australia (AM) on 26 January 2010 for exceptional service as a medical officer in the ADF. She was named as the ACT Telstra White Pages Community and Government Business Woman and overall Telstra ACT Business Woman of the Year in September 2011. On 14 December 2011 Robyn Walker was promoted Rear Admiral and assumed the position of Commander Joint Health and Surgeon General Australian Defence Force; thus becoming the RAN's 'First' female Rear Admiral.

Rear Admiral Walker retired from the RAN in December 2015. She is a qualified medical practitioner, a specialist medical administrator, has a Diploma in Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She is also the author of a number of scientific publications relating to diving medicine and is co-author of a major international diving medicine textbook. She remains an avid recreational diver.

Captain Jan Noonan CSC RAN



(Taken from the book Winning at Sea)

Walking Tall

Commander Jan Noonan

For as long as I can remember I wanted to join the Police Force. Year after year at High School I turned the pages of the Career Handbook analysing all the traditional jobs of teaching, secretarial work or accountancy that my girlfriends were being encouraged to follow.

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VIDEOS.....

- *Russian Landing Ship Destroyed in Ukrainian Port*
- *Defence's Lismore flood response*
- *Defence squares away Ipswich recreation area*
- *US Navy sailors join flood clean-up crew*
- *USS Harry S. Truman's Russian Deterrence Mission*
- *Ukraine, Israel, Turkey & Iran show how pesky drones are the 'guerrillas' of today's warfare*
- *HMAS Hobart certification period*
- *Captain Rebecca Jeffcoat has commenced her job as station leader at Australia's Mawson Station*
- *Life at sea as a maritime warfare officer trainee*
- *HMAS Adelaide completes recovery efforts in Tonga*
- *Pangaimotu Island clean up*

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NEWS.....

The U.S. Navy and 26 partners and allies have concluded a final planning conference for this year's Rim of the Pacific exercise, the largest international maritime exercise.

When the Royal Australian Navy's biggest ships rendezvoused in Nuku'alofa Harbour in Tonga in early March as part of Operation Tonga Assist 2022, two Defence families had instant family reunions.

As a child, Leading Seaman Tae Goh remembered hours in the car with his father driving to their favourite Korean barbecue restaurant far from

Sessions with the careers counsellor ruled out any desire for alternative career paths – the Police Force was the only career I intended to pursue. Despite knowing I was two centimetres shorter than the required physical standards, the day I turned 18 years of age I applied. Two centimetres may well have been twenty centimetres – there was nothing I could do to close that gap – a career as a Police Woman was never to eventuate. Lamenting that loss was short lived – I knew there must be another career that would provide diversity, excitement and the chance to leave Tasmania! Joining the Navy and commencing study at the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1998 was one of the pre-eminent decisions of my life and I remain ever thankful for those two centimetres that I didn't grow!

Years of navigation and warfare training both at sea and ashore followed graduation from the Defence Academy. While the number of men pursuing careers in the Executive Branch far outweighed the few women of my class, I felt that we were treated no differently. The fact of the matter is that when I was executing astronavigation, a position fixing technique that evolved several thousand years ago, or manoeuvring the ship to reduce the roll when running with a beam sea, there was no discrimination by gender.

The late 80's and early 90's were a fun time to be at sea, as I participated in joint exercises in Hawaii and Asia-Pacific deployments. The reality of what service to the country meant though was brought home first hand in 1992 when I sailed in HMAS *Tobruk* in support of Operation Solace, Australia's contribution to the international peacekeeping effort in Somalia. Civil war and mass starvation are images that remain with you forever, but equally as strong was the sense of pride I felt that the Australian Navy was in some small way helping this desperate country. While not so naïve to think it equated to restoring the society to a functioning political and social entity, I felt that this was a career that made a positive difference.

Recollecting my time in the Guided Missile Frigate HMAS *Canberra* would have to bring the wryest of grins to my face. With just three female officers onboard, dripping wet we would have been lucky to have a combined weight of 150kg between us. By contrast the other 200 members of the Ship's Company were big, brazen and blokes! We punched well above our fighting weight though, and despite being accommodated in a hucked out boat locker, I felt as 'at home' among that crew as everyone else.

their home in Seoul.

Unlike most of us, Able Seaman Su Lee makes sticky rice on purpose. "I can say I'm the best rice cook in Navy," the chef said. "I don't even need to measure, I just pour in and it always comes out perfect."

The Navy is clear to decommission five Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers following the passage of the Fiscal Year 2022 defense appropriations bill.

Crew members of visiting United States Navy ship USS Frank Cable were presented with the flag of Brisbane in recognition of their efforts in the post-flood clean-up.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has been patrolling waters in Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to help Australia's partners detect and deter illegal fishing activity.

The Royal Australian Navy's HMAS Canberra, her crew and embarked forces have arrived in Townsville following their deployment on Operation Tonga Assist 2022.

Defence needs to change its approach to equip the ADF better and faster.

Defence has formally accepted its first evolved Cape class patrol boat. This will strengthen Australia's naval capability while providing greater reliability and effectiveness to the Royal Australian Navy's patrol force to keep our borders safe.

Royal Australian Navy personnel who helped clear flood material from the Brisbane River and Moreton Bay were given a big thank you recently

Despite not following the specialist warfare path, I continued to relish my time at sea in Minor War Vessels, firstly as Executive Officer of the Fremantle Class Patrol Boat HMAS *Warrnambool*, followed by Commanding Officer of the Landing Craft, HMAS *Labuan*. Shortly after assuming command, *Labuan* was deployed to East Timor, and I became the 'First' woman to command a Royal Australian Naval ship assigned to active service.

Editor's Note: *On completion of sea command, Jan Noonan became Officer Commanding the Navy Squadron at the Australian Defence Force Academy. The mother of two young daughters, Lieutenant Commander Noonan was awarded a Conspicuous Service Cross in the 2003 Queen's Birthday Honours List for leadership of her Squadron at ADFA.*

Warrant Officer Deb Butterworth OAM CSM and Bar



Warrant Officer Deb Butterworth was born in Lilydale, Victoria, and for the first ten years of her life she travelled extensively. She then settled into school life in Perth, Western Australia. She enlisted into the Royal Australian Navy as a Stores Naval Sailor in 1989 and has enjoyed serving in various platforms as a Stores Sailor. These include HMA Ships *Jervis Bay (I)*, *Success*, *Sydney*, *Manoora*, *Newcastle*, and a short time in

Parramatta (IV).

In 2003 and 2005, then Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Butterworth deployed in HMAS *Newcastle* on Operation CATALYST, the Australian assistance to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq. She was awarded a Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM) in 2006 in recognition of her service in *Newcastle*.

Promoted to Warrant Officer in July 2007, she returned to Western Australia to take up the role of Logistic Services Manager in Joint Logistic Unit (West). In 2009, WO Butterworth joined the Sea Training Group Major Fleet Units. The role of this group is to facilitate collective training and conduct unit-level assessment of RAN Fleet Units. She left logistics roles after been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for meritorious service to the Royal Australian Navy in the field of logistics management in 2012.

WO Butterworth assumed the role as the Ship's Warrant Officer in HMAS *Success* in December 2011, *Success* was integral Operation

in Brisbane.

As Defence enters into a new space era with the establishment of Defence Space Command, the release of the Defence Space Strategy sets a vector to assure Australia's access to space for civilian and military uses.

Japan says Russian amphibious ships transiting through a narrow strait between its islands could be moving fresh forces from Russia's far east to Ukraine.

Australian-built evolved Collins needed to bridge the gap to nuclear subs

The Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) has unveiled a new world-class cyber and foreign intelligence facility, as the agency prepares to mark 75 years defending Australia from global threats.

China has fully militarized at least three of several islands it built in the disputed South China Sea, arming them with anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems, laser and jamming equipment and fighter jets in an increasingly aggressive move that threatens all nations operating nearby, a top U.S. military commander said Sunday.

Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel assisting flood-affected communities in south-east Queensland have begun returning home.

Sailors on the Royal Navy's polar research ship found an enormous Antarctic glacier vanishing at an alarming rate. The mighty Sunshine Glacier has shrunk by one seventh in 20 years – an area the size of more

SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN, an activity to support the Australian Maritime and Safety Authority to search for Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 in April 2014. In 2014 she deployed to the Middle East and upon return to Australia was recognised with a bar to her CSM in recognition of her service in *Success*.

In July 2017 WO Butterworth was appointed to the role of Command Warrant Officer Training Force until July 2019 where she guided a team to create the Mariner Development Program to continue to develop mariners and warfighters while undertaking specialist employment training.

Deb holds a Master of Military and Defence Studies.

In November 2019 WO Butterworth was appointed as the Royal Australian Navy's ninth and 'First' female, Warrant Officer of the Navy.

Today, our female members of the RAN are working side by side at all levels of the organisation.

MARCH HERO

In keeping with our editorial theme, our March Hero is:
Third Officer Francis Betty Provan



Frances Provan wearing the uniform of the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps

Frances Provan was one of the first 14 females posted to HMAS Harman, the communications station in Canberra, on 28 April 1941, making her one of the first members of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS).

After completing her education, Frances Provan worked as a trainee-teacher, nurse and governess. She moved from Queensland to Sydney and trained as a wireless telegraphist with the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps, which had

been established by Florence McKenzie.

Provan was one of the first 14 females posted to HMAS Harman, the communications station in Canberra, on 28 April 1941. Her official number was WR/1. In September 1941 Provan was promoted to leading telegraphist and then petty officer telegraphist in December 1942. She attended the first WRANS officers' training course at Flinders Naval Depot, Victoria and was appointed Third Officer on 15 February 1943. In June 1945 Provan was posted as officer-in-charge of the only draft of WRANS to serve in an operational zone, in Darwin.

than 130 football pitches has melted away.

Well done to the ADF's newest chefs graduates from No. 227 Initial Cooks Course at Holmesglen TAFE in Glen Waverley, Victoria.

HMAS Cerberus has a rich history with extensive links to notable personnel and ships from the past. Many of the streets and roads within the base have been named in recognition of individuals who have strong links to the base or ships with geographical connections to Victoria.

USS Frank Cable recently arrived in Brisbane, and some of the ship's company stepped ashore to help Australian Defence Force personnel deployed on Operation Flood Assist with clean-up tasks.

The Royal Australian Navy frigate HMAS Arunta and a Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft recently joined US Navy destroyer USS Momsen and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer JS Yudachi for training in the South China Sea.

The Royal Navy plans to test a laser weapon for the first time onboard a Type 23 frigate, which will be used to detect, track, engage, and counter unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).

Navy, Army and Air Force personnel converged on flood-ravaged recreation areas in Kedron Brook in Mitchelton, Brisbane, to ensure they're safe for the public.

Instead of hanging out with mates and playing sport, at 16, Jack Cummins was fighting for his life in hospital. He had suffered headaches,

Read her full biography on our website:
<https://navyvic.net/heroes/provan.html>

Yours Aye!
NVN Team

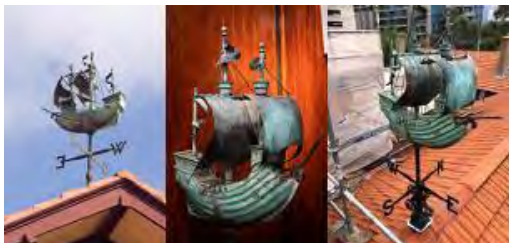


If you know of any of our Navy family that has crossed the bar, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#). We will list their names in perpetuity on our special [Memorial Wall](#) on the website. If possible list their Rank, Name, Number, the date of their passing and their age.

- † CMDR J.E. Ferrier RAN, 18 March 2022. Aged 85.
- † LME M.J. Airey, R36747, 15 March 2022. Aged 90.
- † LEUT G.B. Litchfield, 10 March 2022. Aged 91.
- † SBLT I.C. Heiser, O105881, 09 March 2022. Aged 75.
- † EMP D.R. Taylor, R54617, 08 March 2022. Aged 82.
- † LCDR L.E. Powell, 08 March 2022. Aged 90.
- † CPOCD W.F. Fitzgerald OAM, R30992, 05 March 2022. Aged 92.

Lest We Forget

STOLEN FROM THE ROOF OF THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS IN MELBOURNE - THEIR WEATHERVANE



A 100 year-old copper weathervane in the form of a galleon-style sailing ship has been stolen from its rightful place atop the historic Mission to Seafarers building in

Docklands.

Local master craftsman Henry Alfred Saw crafted the weathervane in 1917, when copper was expensive due to World War I. After a century on the rooftop in high winds, the weathervane was in need of repair. In 2020 through grant from the Victorian Heritage Restoration Fund as well as private and public contributions it was restored and secured to the top of the building.

The weathervane is unusually intricate, and represents the high levels of both craftsmanship and artistry,' Sue Dight - CEO commented. 'The way the metal of the sails curve as though billowing in the wind, the bulging hull of the ship, and the delicate rigging details make it quite a special object for something that is also structurally robust, and was intended to serve use as a meteorological instrument.'

which led to doctors discovering cancer growing inside his skull.

Commodore Darren Grogan, Royal Australian Navy (RAN) attaché to the United States, visited NUWC Division Newport on March 3 to gain insight into the work being done by Australian personnel as they contribute to the Heavyweight Torpedo and Submarine Combat Control System Armament Cooperative programs.

The ship's company of HMAS Arunta recently spent an action-packed week at sea testing their warfighting skills with other regional navies on Exercise Milan 2022.

As the Navy Indigenous Development Program (NIDP) enters its eighth year, 13 current participants and their instructors headed to HMAS Cerberus for a taste of recruit school life.

The U.S. Navy conducted an air demonstration with carrier aircraft on Tuesday in the Yellow Sea following the recent launches of North Korea intercontinental ballistic missiles, according to U.S. 7th Fleet.

The Government will invest up to \$4.3 billion to deliver Western Australia's first large-vessel dry berth, creating a world-class precinct at the Henderson shipyard and supporting thousands of local jobs.

Thousands of U.S. Marines and Sailors are scheduled to participate in Norway's Exercise Cold Response 22, the ninth iteration of this exercise, occurring from March 14 – April 1, 2022.

The historic weathervane is included as part of the Mission to Seafarers building's heritage significance on the Victorian Heritage Register, along with its chapel, dome and archives, which is open every day to the public.

Any help would be greatly appreciated, and of course if offered to you, please try to ask them to come back when you have the police on site.

Sue Dight
CEO

Mission to Seafarers Victoria Inc.
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HMAS PERTH(I) MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

As many would know, the 1st of March this year was a commemorative point for HMAS PERTH (I) for on that day 80 years ago HMAS PERTH along with USS HOUSTON the ship was lost in the Battle of Sunda Strait.

And many of you will also be aware that in Western Australia, the HMAS PERTH(I) MEMORIAL FOUNDATION is well advanced in the construction of a formal memorial for HMAS PERTH(I) and an update on the progress of the construction will be forwarded soon.

Among other things being prepared for display at the Memorial site is a photographic and information site detailing all of the crew who were serving in HMAS PERTH on that fateful night. Lucy Bromell of Nedlands Yacht Club has been tasked by the Club to put this display together and to date she has collected the required information on over 230 of the crew members. So you can see that she still has much still to accomplish, and your HELP is needed.

Frank McGovern is the sole remaining HMAS PERTH (I) survivor, and this presents Lucy with a tremendous challenge in chasing down crew relatives and friends to gain the required information.

CAN YOU ASSIST? If you can assist the Foundation with some information on crew members then, the Foundation, the Nedlands Yacht Club and Lucy Bromell will all be most grateful. There is no set format to follow however the type of information being sought can be seen from the attached photos. Come on shipmates, lend a hand.

If you do have any information the point of contact in Western Australia is:
Bob Mummery
Mobile: 0408 811 201
Email: bandi@iinet.net.au

Sailors on a Royal Navy warship have proved a remote Pacific island has been in the 'wrong place' for 85 years. Henderson Island in the South Pacific is one mile south of the position marked on charts used by mariners the world over since 1937.

Austal Australia has delivered the 14th Guardian-class Patrol Boat (GCPB) to the Australian Department of Defence. The vessel, FSS Tosiwo Nakayama, was then gifted to the Federated States of Micronesia.

HMAS Arunta recently took part in the multilateral Exercise Milan 2022. It was the first large-scale multilateral exercise on Navy's calendar this year. The Indian-led exercise was held in the port of Vishakhapatnam, India, and in the Bay of Bengal.

Silentium Defence has entered into an agreement with the Royal Australian Navy for the trial of the MAVERICK passive radar system.

Navy personnel recently commemorated the 80th anniversary of one of the darkest periods of WWII. On March 4, 1942, the sloop HMAS Yarra II was sunk about 500 kilometres south of central Java by the Japanese navy.

***FlyBy** – A periodical of the Fleet Air Arm Association of Australia. [March issue.....](#) (Note: right mouse click link and download document)*

***Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network** [February update.....](#)*

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