

Women's Progress in the Navy and Marine Corps

1860 - 1918

1862 Sisters of the Holy Cross served aboard USS Red Rover, the Navy's first hospital ship, joining a crew of 12 officers and 35 enlisted providing medical care.



1908 Congress established the Navy Nurse Corps, May 13; and the Surgeon General appointed Esther Voorhees Hasson as the Superintendent. She had service as an Army nurse aboard hospital ship Relief during the Spanish-American War.



1917 Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels approved enlisting women in the Navy on March 17, just a few weeks before the United States entered World War I. During the war 11,275 Yeomanettes had service as office administrators, draftsman, interpreters, couriers, and translators; and another 1,550 women served as Navy nurses. In addition, 307 women served in the Marine Corps, mostly in stateside clerical duties at headquarters and at recruiting stations around the country.



1918 35,000 women served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War I



1940 - 1950

1942 The WAVES [Women accepted for volunteer emergency service] was established with the appointment on August 3 of Lieutenant Commander Mildred H. McAfee, USNR, as the Director of the WAVES. They worked in administration, aviation, Judge Advocate Corps, medical, communications, intelligence, storekeeper, science, and technology.



Over 84,000 enlisted women and over 8,000 officers in the U.S. Navy and 23,145 Marine Corps women served during World War II in clerical work, as parachute riggers, mechanics, radio operators, map makers, motor transport support, and welders.

1943 Captain Anne Lentz, USMCR, became the first woman officer in the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve, on February 14.

1944 Public Law 238 granted full military rank to members of the Navy Nurse Corps; and, Sue Dauser, Director, Navy Nurse Corps, became first woman commissioned in the rank of Captain on December 23.

1945 400,000 women served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II.

1948 Women's Armed Forces Integration Act (Public Law 625), July 30, allowed women to serve in the peace time military with some restrictions and a ceiling of 2% of the total force.

1950 For the first time in history, Marine Corps Women Reserves were mobilized for the Korean War reaching a peak strength of 2,787.

1953 Secretary of Defense George Marshall established a Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service because of low recruiting numbers.

1954 More than one thousand U.S. Armed Forces women served on duty in Korea during the Korean War.

1960 - 1975

1961 Lieutenant Charlene T. Suneson, USNR, reported for duty on board USS General Mann (AP 112) and became the first line WAVE to have shipboard duty. Berta Peters Billeb became the first woman Marine promoted to Sergeant Major.



1967 Congress authorized women to achieve flag rank in the U.S. Navy. CDR Grace Hopper, USN, was recalled to active duty and assigned to the CNO's staff as Director, Navy Programming Languages Group. As co-inventor of COBOL and a pioneer in computer technology, RADM Hopper served in the Navy until 1986.

1970 Captain Alma G. Ellis, USN became the first woman line officer assigned to the U.S. Naval Academy as Director, USNA Museum.

1972 Lieutenant Commander Georgia Clark, USN became the first female naval officer faculty member at the U.S. Naval Academy.

1972 Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt issued Z-116 that authorized entry of women to all ratings, allowed women to be assigned to noncombatant surface ships.

Rear Admiral Alene Duerk, Director, Navy Nurse Corps, and line officer, Rear Admiral Fran McKee become the first women promoted to flag rank.



1973 The first coed class graduated from Navy Officer Candidate School (OCS).

Rae Jean B. Goodman, Ph.D., was appointed as the first USNA female civilian faculty member.

First four women chosen for flight training at Pensacola.



7,500 U.S. Armed Forces women served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

1974 Lieutenant Barbara Allen, USN became the first Navy woman pilot to earn her wings, February 22.



First women commissioned through NROTC.

1976 - 1989

1976 Congress mandated that women be admitted to the service academies including the U.S. Naval Academy and 81 women took the oath in July, 1976.



1978 Brigadier General Margaret A. Brewer became the first U.S. Marine Corps flag officer.



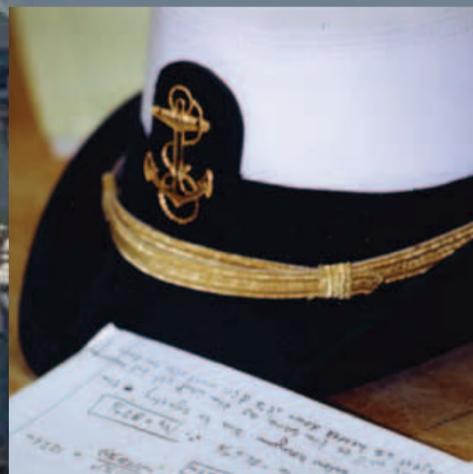
1980 The first fifty-four women graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, 51% of whom later became career officers.



1981 First enlisted women assigned as surface warfare specialists.

CDR Diane C. Durban, USN (Ret.) is the first Jewish woman graduate from USNA.

1989 First woman assigned as Command Master Chief at sea, Janice Ayers.



1990



1990 Rear Admiral Marsha J. Evans, USN, was the first woman to command a Naval Station, Treasure Island.

Lieutenant Commander Darlene M. Iskra, USN was the first Navy woman to command a ship, USS Opportune (ARS 41).

Commander Rosemary Mariner, USN, became the first woman assigned to command an aviation squadron.

1991 41,000 U.S. Armed Forces women served in theater during Desert Storm.

1992 Navy strengthened its zero-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment.

Brigadier General Carol A. Mutter became the first woman to command Fleet Marine Force, 3d Force Service Support Group, Okinawa.



Rear Admiral Eleanor Mariano, USN became the first Filipino and graduate of the Uniformed Services University of Medicine to become the first woman Director, White House Medical Unit, and Physician to the President.

Midshipman Julianne Gallina became the first woman Brigade Commander at USNA, fall semester 1992.

1993 Congress repealed the Combat Exclusion Law preventing women from serving on combatant ships.



1995 Commander Wendy Lawrence, USN, became the first Navy woman in space aboard space shuttle Endeavor, launched on March 2.

1996 Lieutenant General Carol A. Mutter, USMC, became the first Marine Corps female officer to wear three stars and only the second woman in history of the armed services to do so.

1998 Five women were selected to command combatant ships with Commander Maureen A. Farren, USS Mount Vernon (LSD 39), the first to assume command.

2000-2012

2006 Brigadier General Angela Salinas, USMC, became the first Hispanic woman flag officer in the U.S. Marine Corps.



Rear Admiral Margaret D. Klein, USN '81, became the first female Commandant of Midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy.

2009 All four Sailors of the Year are women: Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Ingrid Cortez, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Shalanda Brewer, Operations Specialist 1st Class Samira McBride, Cryptologic Technician 1st Class Cassandra Foote.

2010 Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus approved women to be assigned to Ohio class submarines, January 9, 2011.

Rear Admiral Nora Tyson, USN, was named first woman to command a carrier strike group.

Rear Admiral Michelle J. Howard, USN '82 is the first female Naval Academy graduate to achieve flag rank. She is also the first woman to serve as Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 2.



Captain Sara Joyner, USN, was selected the first woman to head a carrier air wing.

2012 The highest ranking women in the Navy today are three-star admirals: Vice Admiral Ann Rondeau, USN, National Defense University president, and Vice Admiral Carol Pottenger, USN, deputy chief of staff, NATO Headquarters.

More than 54,000 active duty women and more than 10,000 female reservists are serving in the Navy, comprising 17.1 % of the Navy Total Force.

The Navy currently has 35 active and reserve female flag officers and 59 female command master chiefs.

Celebrating Women's History Month at the U.S. Naval Academy

Women's Education - Women's Empowerment



First Class of Women Midshipmen 1980



Elizabeth A. Belzer, '80
first female graduate



Juliane J. Gallina '92
first female Brigade Commander



Rear Admiral Grace M. Hopper, USN, whose pioneering spirit in the field of computer technology led the Navy into the age of computers, had a lengthy career as a Navy reservist. She co-invented COBOL (which made it possible for computers to respond to words instead of numbers, thus enabling computers to "talk to each other"), and she pursued careers in higher education and in private industry. CDR Hopper returned to the Navy in 1967, as Director, Navy Programming Languages Group, and continued her naval service until 1985, when she was promoted to rear admiral.



USS HOPPER



Dr. Mary E Walker
first and only female
to receive the Medal
of Honor, first-ever
female surgeon.
Served in the Civil
War, Battle of Bull
Run.



USNS MARY SEARS, 2000

CDR Mary Sears, USN, a marine biologist, pursued a lifelong career in the advancement of oceanographic studies. She was a principal organizer of the first International Oceanographic Congress at the United Nations. During WWII, as a Navy WAVE, she provided intelligence reports predicting the presence of areas of the ocean where submarines could escape enemy detection. She also organized the Oceanographic Unit of the Navy Hydrographic Office, which provided the foundation for the current Naval Oceanographic Office.



Matice J. Wright, '88
first African American female
Naval Flight Officer



RADM Margaret D. Klein, USN
'81, first female Commandant
of Midshipmen



Janie L. Mines, '80 first African
American female graduate



Professor Mary A. DeCredico, Ph.D.
appointed first female USNA
Vice Academic Dean, 2004



Captain Wendy B. Lawrence, USN
'81, first female grad selected by
NASA to be an astronaut



Captain Kathryn P. Hire, USN,
'81, first female in U.S. military
to be assigned to combat aircrew



Rear Admiral Michelle J.
Howard, USN, '82
first female grad to achieve
flag rank



Kristine Holdereid, '84
first female to graduate
first in her class



Professor Angela Moran, Ph.D., Dept. of
Mechanical Engineering. Innovator in
STEM outreach programs



Professor Rae Jean B. Goodman,
Ph.D., Department of Economics,
first female civilian faculty member
at USNA.



CDR Darlene Iskra, first
female to command a ship,
and one of first three women
to graduate from the Naval
School of Diving and Salvage.



In honor of the late Kristen M.
Dickmann, '11