

NAYWATER

Navy Women (WRANS-RAN) Qld

Sub-Section of the Naval Association of Australia

Volume XXIII #2

June 2023

Eulogy - Patricia Downes, 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



Postal Address:

Navy Women Qld
112-114 Cocos Drive
NINGI QLD 4511

Executive Contacts:

NWExecutive@nwqld.org.au

President:

Helen Yench
0402 239 741
president@nwqld.org.au

Secretary:

Judy Prewett
0428 859 859
secretary@nwqld.org.au

Treasurer:

Lorrae Johnson
0409 638 865
treasurer@nwqld.org.au

Vice Presidents:

Pat Nuss
0439 674 199
Liz Grimes
0438 766 493
Bernie Franklin
0407 372 364
Catherine Leung
0432 227 181

Wellbeing Officer:

Margie Gadd
0438 376 963
margie@barini.com.au

Editors:

Liz Grimes
Lorrae Johnson
Editor@nwqld.org.au

Meetings:

12 noon on the second
Sunday of each month,
except May – third Sunday
due to Mother's Day.

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 trailblazed 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 ranks 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.

Written by Sue Shaw (LCDR RAN Rtd)

Letter from our President



Well, it's approaching halfway through the year and we have met four times officially at Geebung. However, what I am heartened by, is seeing so many of our ladies who are not always able to attend the monthly meetings, attend coffee mornings or lunches during the week. The places are popping up in every corner of the compass, Wellington Point, Ipswich, Bribie and Gold Coast areas. Thanks to those who organise these gatherings and to the ones who attend.

It was good to see so many of the ladies at the ANZAC Day March. We then enjoyed some of the fare from the Ship Inn. I would like to make mention of many of the Navy women who returned to the beginning of the march and joined our Parent Association, NAA Qld, and went around for a second time. Understandably, they were not only weary, but also foot sore. Our member, CDRE Fiona Southwood stood proud on the saluting dais and applauded and saluted our women.

One of our five Pillars, Cadets, has seen no less than eight training ships be the recipients of \$250 each, being proceeds from our Containers for Change initiative. I have attended a few of the "annual inspections" of these Training Ships. All have been very welcoming of the contingent of women from the Association. In turn, we have been able to make contact with serving personnel, Reserve personnel and significant others attached to these Training Ships.

The weekend of the 28 May, Pat Nuss, Jennie Rathbone and myself were Guests of Honour, along with others, who attended the commissioning of TS Brisbane at New Farm. Jennie was called upon during the very formal ceremony, to present our cheque to them. The reception we were given afterwards was warm and encouraging. We got to talk with a WREN who has asked to join our Navy Women.

Keep your eyes on the Calendar of Events to see what is happening in the coming months. On the last Thursday of every month (except December and January) are the Memorial service at the Jack Statue in Southbank. A gathering of attendees occurs at the Ship Inn on completion.

Stay well. Contact Margie Gadd if any of our members are unwell so we can make contact with them.

Once Navy, Always Navy

Helen Yenich

The latest edition of *Navy News* is available at:

<https://www.navynewspaper.defence.gov.au/navy-news/june-8-2023/flipbook/0/>

Previous versions can be located in the Menu, under "Issues"

LIFE Members



Judy Hunter

2001



Barbara Snowdon

2006



Pat McKay

2007



Billie Lake

2014



Jennie Rathbone

2016



Pat Nuss

2016



Wendy Griggs

2022

Diploma of Merit

Cecelia ASHE 2001
Joy MOYNAHAN 2012

Certificate of Merit



Liz Grimes
2021

Honorary Member for Life



Joan Gilbert
2014

VALE - Reata May MOLONEY - WR 1354

Reata Bremner was born on 21 July 1924 in Goondiwindi, to Leslie Gilbert BREMNER and Mary Aitcheson RENWICK.

On 24 May 1943, Reata enlisted as a Wran Group III Assistant Writer (WR 1354) and allocated to HMAS Moreton. She advanced to Writer on 24 August 1943. Reata was discharged on 26 February 1946.

Reata married on 24 September 1948 to **Kenneth Howell COOK** in Brisbane. Kenneth was born about 1926, the son of George Howell COOK and Mary Cecilia HOWARD. They moved to the Sydney suburbs the following year.

This marriage was not successful. Kenneth died on 28 April 1987 in Northbridge, Sydney, and was interred on 30 April 1987 in the Macquarie Park Cemetery with his parents.

In 1967, Reata married **Vincent Jack MOLONEY** in Sydney. Vincent was born on 10 January 1916 in Bermagui, to John MOLONEY and Mary Anne Edith WHIFFEN. Vincent died on 19 February 1990 in Paddington, NSW.

Reata died on the 28 March 2023 in her own home in Sydney and at her request, there was a private funeral service.



Liz, Lorrae, Judy, Letty with White Ensign, Kaye, Penny & Wendy (Poppy Service)

VALE – Betty Janice STOKES - WR 2238

Betty Janice OXENHAM was born on 4 April 1926 in Penshurst NSW to Reginald Philip OXENHAM and Ruby Phyllis PICKERING.

On 24 July 1944, in Sydney, Betty, who was a shorthand-typiste, enlisted as an Assistant Supply Assistant and allocated to HMAS Penguin for training. She advanced to Supply Assistant on 17 January 1945 and was discharged (D.E.E) on 29 March 1946 from HMAS Rushcutter.

On 25 April 1946, at Woollahra, NSW, Betty married **Robert Leo Thomas SPENCE**. Robert was born on 22 September 1925 in Geelong, Vic, to William Thomas SPENCE and Lily Rose May WOODBURGRESS. Robert enlisted on 17 February 1943 in the RAN (PM5778) and was discharged on 11 October 1946 as a Sub Lieutenant, from HMAS Lonsdale. He then enlisted in the Army. Robert died on 8 May 1948 when he fell from an army truck. On 11 May 1948, he was buried in the Geelong Eastern Cemetery with his parents. Robert left Betty with a small daughter.

On 1 August 1956, Betty married **Warren Milton STOKES**. Warren was born on 21 May 1923 in Glenbrook, NSW to Albert Edward STOKES and Florence Nightingale WRIGHT. Warren enlisted in the Australian Army (NX115198 (N236211)) on 31 August 1942 at Northbridge, and discharged on 17 September 1946 as a Lieutenant from AHQ HQ 1 AUST ARMY

Warren died on 6 May 1988 in Brisbane and was buried on the 10 May 1988 in the Hemmant Lawn Cemetery.

Betty joined our Sub-Section in April 1987, and was a Life Subscriber. She was a Committee Member and a Delegate to the CESWA between 1889 and 1995.

Betty died on 13 May 2023 and her funeral service was held on 20 May 2023, with a private interment in the Hemmant Lawn Cemetery. Her WWII service hat took pride of place on her coffin.



Reflections – Honouring our World War Two Veterans

Around the Traps with Liz

ANZAC Day

Is it or isn't it going to rain? We arrived to march with Group 2 ahead of the Army and RAAF ladies and behind the Defence Nurses. Helen Yench and Liz Grimes headed the Navy Women in a golf buggy. Off we went, heads held high, arms swinging to the marching band.

As we marched down Adelaide Street, we had to evade hazards on the road, swinging right then left just before the official dais. CMDR Fiona Southward, who took the salute, stood alongside the Governor as we marched passed. Then it was eyes left at ANZAC Square and on to Creek Street and then Queen Street where we dispersed. Ann Nichols did us proud, marching the whole distance in Brisbane and still looking fresh at the end. >>>

A number of the ladies then rushed back to the starting point to march with the Naval Association in Group 7. A 96 year young man, the only Merchant Seaman, marched the full length of the parade. BZ Sir.



Brisbane – Navy Women lead by Cadets marching in Group 2

A number of ladies attended services prior to the city march. Pat Nuss and Jennie Rathbone attended the St Johns Church Service at Northgate, Liz attended the Corvettes Service at Newstead representing Navy Women and NAA Qld. Lorrae and Barb attended the Bundamba Dawn Service while Jan English attended a service at Woodgate Bridge. Judy, Terri and Andrea did us proud at Hervey Bay. BZ to all our ladies who attended ANZAC Day Services and marches throughout Queensland.

Centaur Memorial Service

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the 2/3rd Australian Hospital Ship (AHS) Centaur. On 14 May 1943 *Centaur* was en route from Sydney to Cairns when she was sunk by a Japanese submarine south of Moreton Island, off the Queensland coast. From the 332 people on board, only 64 survived. Cadets from TS Centaur attended the flag party and were excellent. The Governor attended the service as well as representatives of the Medical Branch of the Navy, Army and Air Force Reserves.



Hervey Bay - Andrea, Judy & Terri / Janet at Woodgate Bridge



Brisbane – Navy Women marching in Group 7 with the NAA(Q). Note the 96 year young man in top right – he marched the full length – the only Merchant Seaman

Indigenous Day – 27May2023

A service honouring Indigenous Service men and women was held at the Eternal Flame at ANZAC Square on 27 May.

Kaye Morgan represented the Naval Association, Wendy Griggs represented the Council of Ex-Service Women, Liz Grimes represented the Navy Women Qld Sub-Section and Rudi Bianchi represented the Far Eastern Strategic Reserve (FESR).



Brisbane – Navy Women marching in Group 2 behind Defence Nurses



Liz, Rudi, Wendy & Kaye

Commemoration of Victory in Europe

Victory in Europe Day - or 'VE Day' - signalled the end of almost six years of terrible fighting between the Allies and Germany on 8 May 1945. Each year a service is held at New Farm (the only one in Australia) honouring all Allied servicemen and women who served during that time. Many civilians were affected during those terrible times. The service is held on the nearest Saturday to the 8 May.



Liz representing Navy Women (WRANS-RAN) Qld; Wendy representing the Council of Ex Service Women Association; and Helen representing the NAA(Q) laid wreaths at the RSL New Farm on 13 May 2023

Pine Rivers Sub-Section

Pine Rivers Sub-Section held its pre-ANZAC Day and Absent Friend service to commemorate all members who have crossed the bar and to dedicate a plaque to Chris White who crossed the bar earlier this year.

The service was attended by Hon Peter Dutton, leader of the opposition, and Councilor Yvonne Barlow.

The ceremony at the Naval Memorial on ANZAC Avenue Kallangur was attended by State Vice President Marg Dean; State Secretary Kaye T Morgan and members from the local defence community.

After the Anzac Avenue Ceremony the members and guests moved to the Anchorage for a small ceremony and the awarding of Certificates of Merit to a long serving Sub-Section Treasurer Peter Bowler and Sub-Section Vice President Colin Billingsley. The certificates were presented by State Vice President Marg and State Secretary Kaye. There was recognition of shipmate Paulus "Paul" Toonen who was recently award a Medal of the Order of Australia. The Sub-Section now has two recipients in Paul and Secretary Pat Ringold.

We were represented by our Vice President Bernie and Secretary Judy.



Kaye, Bernie, Hon Peter Dutton, Judy & Marg

Jack Memorial Service

The Jack service in April acknowledged our National Servicemen (Nashos) who not only did their service in Australia but many overseas in various ships serving in Vietnam and other areas. Some continued service in the RAN.

In May, the Jack service acknowledged all the naval ships that served in the Vietnam waters. This includes two freighters, Boonaroo and Japaret. Boonaroo was the first ship to be Commissioned into the RAN under the distinctive Australian White Ensign in 1967.



April – Nashos Memorial Service



May – Vietnam Ships

Lunch in Hervey Bay - 31May2023

Judy Hunter reported: Fraser Coast ladies turned out to another successful lunch at the Beach House Hotel. We meet twice a year and love nothing better than to welcome any former of serving Navy Ladies to join us to renew old friendships and to form new ones into the future.

This luncheon we were fortunate to have three ladies (Lorrae, Liz and Barb) join us from the Navy Women in Brisbane. We welcomed three fun loving girls from Bundaberg (Jeanie, Jenny and Sheryl).

Two new Girls joined our group Ann Strawbridge and former NZ Navy Medic Maureen Von Einem. We were all pleased to have our WWII lady *Lillian Coyne* a National Treasure of the finest, with us. Of course, it would be remiss of me not to mention we had seven husbands join us and hold their own little get together.



We have a few regulars on the sick list and we all wish you the best and several regulars who for one reason or other could not attend. We missed you all.

I thank you everybody for your fun and wonderful reminiscences of your time in the service and hope to see you again in November with more wonderful stories.



Gold Coast Brunch

Tuesday before the third Wednesday each month



14 Mar 2023 – Café 63 Coomera



18 Apr 2023 – Southport Surf Life Saving Club



17 May 2023 – Café Michigan

The next Brunch is at 10am, Tuesday, 20 June 2023 at 3 Sixty Restaurant at 360 Marine Parade. All welcome.

Western Suburbs Lunch

First Saturday each month



4 Mar 2023 – Stellarossa Ipswich



1 Apr 2023 – 40 West Café, Ripley



6 May 2023 – Parkview Club, Goodna

The next lunch is Saturday, 1 Jul 2023 at 11am.

Combined Services Bribie Island Lunch

Anita Cooper advised: On the fourth Monday of the month at 11.30am, the Combined Services lunch is held in the Social Café outside at the Bribie Island RSL Club.

A lovely group of ladies who come from near and far. This year we have started collecting money for charity at each lunch – not compulsory – any spare dollars in your purse. At the end of the year it will go to Bribie Island homeless veterans. It was a very good idea of the local Army ladies at the end of last year and I think gives

our very enjoyable lunches a sense of purpose and wellbeing.



April - Jackie, Sylvia, Marion, Diane, Liz, Anita, Joe, Mo, Fran, Valerie, Rhonda, Bev. Judy had left.



May - Army, Bernie, Judy, Army, Anita, Liz with Rhonda

Wellington Point

On the second or third Wednesday of each month, a group of ex serving women meet at Wellington Point for Coffee & Cake.

Servicemen And Servicewomen Morning Tea

Terry Young, MP, Federal Member for Longman, hosted a morning tea for Servicemen and Servicewomen and presented a number of local veterans with 'Saluting Their Service' Certificates. A number of the recipients were Vietnam veterans. Phillip Thompson OAM MP, an ex-RAR soldier and Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence, spoke briefly of his service in East Timor and Afghanistan where he sustained serious injuries from an Improvised Explosive Device. He is a staunch advocate for Ex-Service Men and Women. Morning Tea followed the presentations.



International Women's Day - Karalee



Sandie, Liz, Lorrae, , Helen, Cathie & Pat.

NAA(Q) State AGM at Hervey Bay



Lorrae & Barb Judith



Judy & Bernie



Judy & Sandie Gary & Ronda



Kaye CAPT Paul Luckin & Helen



Sue Marg



Lorrae, Barb, Judy, Sandy, Kaye, Marg, Bernie

NAA(Q) AGM at Hervey Bay

What a weekend!! This report cannot do it justice.

Friday was the long haul to Hervey Bay, to the Charlton on the Esplanade.

Friday evening was the Meet & Greet – and a lot of re-acquaintances of old friends. It was good to see Judith Hill there with her substantive Sub-Section, and Judy Hunter, OAM, our life member, was also in attendance.

Saturday dawned bright and beautiful, typically a great day to be outside and not in an NAA(Q) AGM with seven other sub-sections, but there we were : Bernie, Judy, Lorrae and Barb representing our Navy Women's sub-section, with Sandie Beaumont on the Ipswich etc NAA table, and Marg, Helen and Kaye on the big table – eight of us in all at the NAA(Q) AGM.


NAA(Q) AGM: Opened by Helen (NAA(Q) President); First Guest Speaker was CAPT Paul Luckin, AM, MB BCh, DA, FFA, MMedAnaesthesia, RANR, with a message from CMDR Fiona Southward ADC RAN, CO, HMAS Moreton.

Peta McKinnon, Director DVA, was our second speaker. They are working on combining three Acts into one Act, and ensuring that we do not lose anything from the original Acts, and ensuring it is the best for our veterans. Time will tell.

- One quarter of DVA applicants have served since 2004.
- Register your partner on your DVA membership – keep it current for your NOK
- DVA pays the Gold Card specialist etc based on Medicare codes, which is on an average 40% of their fees.

Ray Stanford spoke on Hidden Disabilities. The Sunflower (badge or lanyard) is used at airports and shopping centre to let the management and staff know that you have a hidden disability and that you may need help. It can be used if you have Alzheimers; Alpasia, Asthma, COPD, Coeliac disease, Crohn's disease; Diabetes; Lupus, Migraine, PTSD, Aspergers, Anxiety, and so many more. It can be used on BCC buses, ferries and on trains.

<https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/>

 *The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a simple tool for you to voluntarily share that you have a disability or condition that may not be immediately apparent – and that you may need a helping hand, understanding, or more time in shops, at work, on transport, or in public spaces.*

Rudi discussed “The Good Buzz” which is available on the NAA website – if you are looking for any links, full of good advice, which Margie has been using each month, saving us from looking it up.

The executives' reports were very informative, and as this was my first NAA(Q) AGM, I learnt a lot from the reports.

The Care Report by Peter McDermott, showed the stats of the State, but not by sub-section – they were all in together. There are five advocates ratified at the AGM.

Camaraderie & Ceremonial Report covered the events at the Jack Memorial each month, and the visits to the Greenslopes Hospital by the NAA(Q) executives.

The Navy Women's memorial is still uncertain due to the Olympic plans.

Have you seen “The Way We Were” in the Sunday's papers? Keep an eye out for it.

The State Register reported that in 2022, there were 800 full members with 83 new members. Presently, there are 819 full members, 105 full and partner members and 211 Club members in Queensland in our 20 Sub-Sections. In 2022, the Navy Women Qld Sub-Section had 125 full members (>14%) and 47 Club Members (>22%).

Many sub-sections are focusing on Full and Partner members to increase their membership numbers, however, Navy Women Qld is the largest sub-section in Qld, and we do not need to do this type of recruiting.

The Secretary's report contained interesting items, especially on the Royal Commission deadlines.

Current Projects were listed, and include **COFFEE MORNING at the NAA(Q) Office every Wednesday morning** – all welcome

All Executives were re-elected, unopposed.

A sub-committee has been organised to check on the wording of some sections of the State Regulations.

In General Business, the President asked “*What Assistance do Sub-Sections require from the State (ie NAA(Q))*”? I sent an email stating that I would like to see the use of the NAA(Q) Facebook page being used to advertise events by all Sub-Sections. An example is our Lunch/Brunch dates – how many travellers might drop in if they know where and when any events are being held.

Saturday night was the dinner, and CAPT Paul Luckin was our speaker – an amazing speaker – who spoke on the recovery from a sunken submarine.

There were eleven of our members at the Dinner, including: Helen Yench (NAA(Q) President); Kaye Morgan (NAA(Q) Secretary); Marg Dean (NAA(Q) VP); Lorrae Johnson & Judy Prewett (NW Delegate); Barb Jeffreys (NW Proxy); Bernie Franklin (observer); Sandie Beaumont (NAA Ipswich etc Delegate); Judy Hunter, OAM; Judith Hill, and Ronda Rose.

Introduction to Executives

Helen Yench (President)

I joined the Navy from Brisbane at age 18 and a half. I travelled to Cerberus with four others, and began my basic training under the guidance of 1st Officer BD McLeod, 3rd O Coral Ashby and POWR Liz Beecroft. I was posted to HMAS Harman in January 1969 as a Wran Radio Operator (M). After more theory, I commenced watchkeeping in Bonshaw under the watchful eye of Blue Bushell.

I was posted to HMAS Coonawarra in July. After posting in, I was taken to the Station on the Base. There, on a watch initially led by LS Gerry Bandy, I spent the next year working and living in the tropics. I purchased my first car – a BMC Mini Moke.

Another short stint of about three months in HMAS Harman followed in mid 1970, then it was back to HMAS Coonawarra before the end of the year for another year as a leading hand, being 2IC to Sue Halpin (Hackett).

In mid 1972, I was posted to HMAS Terror in Singapore, living in Sembawang and working at Kranji with Tri-Service (Navy, Army, Air Force) and Tri Nation (Australia, New Zealand and British) personnel. I was promoted to Petty Officer. I took up golf and again played any sport that was going. I left in mid 1973 for the cold of Canberra and the Russell Offices, namely JIO (Joint Intelligence Organisation).

In January 1976, just a year after Cyclone Tracey, I posted to HMAS Coonawarra again and this time worked in the new Shoal Bay Receiving Station as a 2IC and later, Chief of the watch when I was promoted to CPOWRRSS in 1977. Golf, softball and hockey were again played as representative sports with people like Liz Grimes, Robyn Stopford, Helen Louer, Lois Redpath and Sue Bandy to name a few.

I married in 1977 to an ex-sailor and we lived in Tiwi, in a prefabricated house supplied by Dept of Civil Aviation, my husband's employer. We had a daughter in 1979. We both worked shift work and of course, they didn't align, so I took my discharge from the Navy in September 1979 and joined the Reserves. We left Darwin in 1980 for Townsville where our second daughter was born in 1982. Whilst pregnant, I was put in charge of the MSO as a Reservist for Exercise Kangaroo '82. This was my only activity as a Reservist. I moved to Brisbane in 1983 as a single mother of two young daughters. I spent the next six years bringing up my two daughters.

In time, not having an equivalent job role in civie street, I went to Griffith University and gained a Bachelor of Teaching degree and a Bachelor of Education degree two years later while I was full time teaching. I was a Youth Group Leader with the Salvation Army in the early 1990s. As a Primary School teacher for 21 years, I loved spending my time with young people, our Leaders of tomorrow. From 2001 to 2013, I was employed as a Principal or Deputy Principal in a number of schools in Brisbane.

In November 2017, I joined the Sub-Section. I was elected as President in 2021, and as State President in 2022. I have enjoyed my time as a member. It keeps me in touch with today's Navy as well as ex-service women and men from all eras.

Pat Nuss (Vice President)

My family and I arrived in Sydney from England in January, 1962 and I completed my education at Moorefield Girls High School. In 1963 I completed a Secretarial course at Penrith Technical College, moving to a family home in Sydney and quickly finding work in a solicitor's office in Martin place. I really disliked shorthand and had a light-bulb moment when I saw a WRAN walking down the street and thought, 'Could I join the Navy?' Well I did, and joined HMAS Cerberus in September 1965. I trained as a WRRO Teletype, posting to HMAS Harman on 14 February 1966 (decimal currency day). I subsequently posted to HMAS Melville (for Coonawarra) in 1966 where I met my husband Paul. I joined HMAS Harman in January 1968 as LWRROT and on threat of a posting back to HMAS Cerberus instructing, I elected to discharge on marriage in June 1968. After five months working in the radio room of the NSW police I rejoined April 1969 at HMAS Kuttabul for two years, where I was involved in Dial A Sailor for the 1970 Bicentennial Celebrations, then a third year at HMAS Harman as a (PO) WRRST.

With no billet for a POWRRST back in Darwin where Paul was posted, I discharged and joined the Public Service working as XO Admin at HMAS Coonawarra for nearly two years. I rejoined for a third time in August 1974 at HMAS Kuttabul but out-stationed at Command Personal Services Organisation (CPSO) in their Family Services Section where I served for four years. I was proud to be involved in supporting families evacuated from Darwin after Cyclone Tracy, meeting planes and organising their onward travel to family.

I completed a Navy sponsored Social Welfare Certificate in 1978 and on discharge did voluntary work with a Geriatric Day Care group. I rejoined CPSO early 1980 for 10 weeks reserve time filling in for leave absences. I was also seconded from WRANR to Naval Reserve Cadets 1982/1984 to initiate recruitment of female cadets. Our two children were born in 1980 and 1984 and late 1984 we relocated to Brisbane on Paul's discharge from the RAN. In 1988 I joined the Public Service again as a Family Liaison Officer at HMAS Moreton. I held this position for over 25 years relocating several times finally out-stationed at Mitchelton supporting families of deployed personnel from all three services. In 1988 I joined the NAA, WRANS Sub-Section where I was Minute Secretary for many years, co-ordinated the raffles held during reunions and lunches and was Delegate to State for several years. On retiring from the Public Service in 2013, I did voluntary work at the Coeliac Society and was Minute Secretary for NAA State Office until 2023. I am currently Vice Presidents NW Sub-Section and Vice President (Cadets) for State Office.

Joining the Navy has given me a life of many experiences, enabling me to gain employment, travel for reunions and conferences, and most important of all the camaraderie along the way and making lifelong friends around the world. ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY..

Tri Service Luncheon

18 March 2023 Geebung RSL Services Club



Judy



Jennie



Wendy



Gayle & Curls



Ann



Judy



Lorelle



Kaye, Judy & Bernie



Marg & Liz



Cecilia



Lorrae



Janet & Christine



Marie



Helen



Margie



Anne & Diane



Pat



Helen



Phyllis



Barb & Sammie



Wendy, Jan & Jen



Pat



The Choir!



Cath & Sandie



Rae

35 Navy Women



Trish & Rose

CADETS with Pat Nuss

After a quiet time during school holidays, liaising with cadets is becoming busy with invitations to attend Annual Assessment Parades.

Navy Women have approved seven more donations to cadet units that are not supported by any other NAA Sub-Section or are struggling financially. TS **Kookaburra** (Stanthorpe); NTS **Vengeance** ; TS **Brisbane**; TS **Tyalgum**; TS **Toowoomba**, TS **Vampire** (Tweed), and TS **Walrus** (Eagleby). All are very appreciative of this help.

LEUT Chloe Hutton ANC from Moreton Flotilla has put out an urgent call for volunteers to be either cadet staff members or Defence Adult Helpers (DAH) for NTS **Vengeance** at Jindalee, SW Brisbane.

Overall, cadet units are finally recovering after COVID19 restrictions and slowly building up their cadet numbers.

Please contact me if you would like more information.

Pat Nuss
NAA(Q) Vice President (Cadets)
Mobile: 0439 674 199
Email: patrician@netspace.net.au

<https://www.navycadets.gov.au/>
Service, Courage, Respect, Integrity and Excellence



TS Brisbane commissioning - Pat, Jennie & Helen

Helen and Pat represented NAA(Q) and NAA(Q) Cadets, with Jennie representing Navy Women Qld. Jennie presented a cheque of \$250 from our C4C.

Please send your stories and photos to:

Treasurer@nwqld.org.au &

Editor@nwqld.org.au

Containers For Change (C4C)

We have been raising funds for the Cadets through *Containers for Change*. We have a separate account, and the funds raised each year are distributed in April and May the following year as a donation.

Our account number is **C10236300** and all donations gratefully appreciated.



Be A Change Maker



Barcode for **C10236300**



Ex ServiceWomen enjoying morning tea at Caboolture

MAKING A CLAIM FOR SERVICE-RELATED CONDITIONS WITH DVA

Currently, Veterans' service is covered by three Acts, known as the MRCA, VEA and DRCA. Which Act you are covered by will depend on the service that relates to your injury or disease. Generally, if your condition relates to service:

- after 1 July 2004, then the MRCA will apply
- before 1 July 2004, then either the VEA, the DRCA or both will apply
- that spans 1 July 2004, then one or more of the VEA, DRCA and MRCA will apply.

If you have an injury or health condition that relates to your service, you are advised to submit a claim to DVA to access medical care and compensation, remembering that one claim can include multiple conditions. When making a claim to DVA follow these 3 steps:

- Step 1: Get your medical practitioner to confirm your diagnosis.
- Step 2: Supply the documents you need to back up the diagnosis, including:
 - clinical notes
 - specialists' reports
 - scans, MRIs or X-ray reports
 - witness statement(s)
 - Authority to Participate in Civilian Sport
 - Hazardous Material Exposure Report
 - Entry Medical Board Questionnaire
- Step 3: Check if you are already eligible for free health care and treatment.

For claims under MRCA and DRCA once liability has been accepted for a service-related condition, a needs assessment will be completed before any compensation can be paid. A needs assessment is a discussion between you and a DVA delegate to identify the types of benefits, services and support you may require.

If you have an injury or disease arising out of, or aggravated by, a period of full-time service when you were covered under the VEA, you may be eligible for a Disability Compensation Payment and medical treatment.

Currently DVA is clearing a large backlog of claims and some delays can be expected. Therefore, if you are thinking of making a claim, you are advised to contact an advocate through your local RSL or NAA Qld who can connect you with an advocate and support you with your claim.

If you require further information please contact the Wellbeing Officer: **Margie Gadd on 0438 376 963.**



Help for Ladies Wishing to Attend Meetings

Ladies, are you having trouble accessing transport to get to our monthly Navy Women meetings?

Our Navy Women Executive has recognised that many of our ladies may not be able to get to our meetings in Geebung due to their being unable to drive; not able to catch public transport on weekends; or simply they may not know another member living nearby who may be able to drive them to and from Geebung.

If this is your situation and you live in the Greater Brisbane Metropolitan Area, Gold Coast or Moreton Bay Region, we invite you to get in contact with us so that we can explore transport options.

Options that we may be able to consider include:

- Linking you with another member who lives nearby and may be able to offer you a lift; or
- Paying for a taxi to take you to and from our meetings, especially if your age, mobility and health limit your ability to use public transport; or
- Arranging for a car-pool if other members are happy to volunteer to take a few members.

If you are seeking help to get to meetings, I invite you to phone me on 0438 376 963 so that I can discuss transport options with you. Your call will be treated in confidence.

Mates Catch-up After 50 Years

In late May 2023, I was thrilled to catch-up with Lyn (Alderton) Baker who called into Bribie Island for a brief catch-up. Lyn had travelled up from Numurkah in Victoria (where she now lives) to visit Patricia Collins



in Bundaberg and her family in Ipswich. By chance she learned that I was living on Bribie Island and made contact.

The years fell away as we talked about our days in Coonawarra and Lonsdale where we both worked as Indonesian linguists. It was a

wonderful catch-up and the first of many to come as my family live down near Numurkah.



I am posting a couple of photos for the many WRANS who served at Coonawarra in 1975 and may know Lynn (Cookie) and Patricia (Trish). Trish has just completed writing a book about her time in Darwin in the mid-1970s and we look forward to seeing it published.

I hope those who remember Lynn and Trish will enjoy hearing about them.

Navy Women (Qld) Memorabilia

Over the years, various items have been donated to our Sub-Section. We had a glass cabinet at the Newmarket Hall, and when we moved to the Clayfield-Toombul RSL Sub branch's premises at Vine Street, Clayfield, these items were placed in storage at various members homes.

They have been collected and sorted by Lorrae Johnson, and the memorabilia belonging to our Sub-Section's history is currently stored at her home.

The memorabilia that belonged to serving women, including the WWII medals (framed) are now on display at the Geebung RSL Club, in the front foyer.

Liz Grimes has offered to care for these items, including the changing of the display, and adding more items as they become available.

Sunshine Coast Ex-Service & Serving Women's Association (SCESWA)



The SCESWA hold numerous C&C mornings at various sites, and many of our members attend.

We wear our shirts so we are easily identified amongst our sisters, and many reconnections have been made.

- 6 July 2023—SCESWA Coffee and Catch up, Caloundra RSL Sub Branch
- 17 July 2023—Bundaberg District Women's Veteran Inc Birthday Luncheon
- 29 July 2023—Council of Ex Service Women's Assn Qld Church Service,
- 7 September 2023—SCESWA Spring Coffee and Catch up,



May – Maroochy RSL – Liz, Judith, Lorrae, with some of the 20 attendees.



We **LOVE** the Number Plate, Judy!!

Moving Homes



Honorary Member for Life, Joan Gilbert, recently moved from her home of many years, into a retirement village. Joan made the decision after spending several days in the garden and realising just how much work was involved. The Ipswich and West Moreton Sub-Section and Mates-4-Mates members who gave up their Saturday

morning to assist Joan move house. Joan is a full member of the Ipswich and West Moreton Sub-Section and our Honorary Member for Life since 2014, and wife of the late former State President Phil Gilbert.

Your Wellbeing

Please let our Wellbeing Officer know if you are not well, especially if you are going to hospital, or if you are dealing with a problem.

We practice support through friendship and camaraderie. If you just need to talk to someone, call any committee member, or one of our ladies.

Don't bottle it up, we do not have the answers, but we have an ear to listen whilst you think out your options.

Sometimes, a chat over a coffee is more beneficial than you may realise, so please, always feel welcome to join any of our groups.



Merchandise for Sale to Financial Members only

Stores@nwqld.org.au

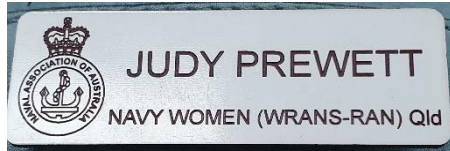
Navy Women (WRANS-RAN) Qld has a 'uniform' so that we can present a uniform appearance when gathered as a group.

White Hats are a non specific brand of Panama style – acquired from various department stores – Kmart, Target, etc

POCKET BADGE with magnets for Jacket >



^ **TALLY BAND**



NAME TAG with your name and our brand ^^

Formal Occasions:
(Funerals; ANZAC Day)
White skirt, pants or dress, worn with the white shirt, black jacket with the magnetised pocket badge, and white hat with our Tally Band.

Shoes to suit.

Alternatively, the black blouse can be worn in lieu of white shirt and black jacket.



JB POLO SHIRTS with EMBROIDERY on right side



AUSSIE PACIFIC POLO SHIRT with EMBROIDERY on right side

Informal Occasions:
(Coffee mornings, bus trips, social gathering)
Black tops with your choice of bottom half.

Wearing of medals:
Large medals are worn for events that commence in the day time;
Miniatures are worn for events that commence at night.



BIZ OASIS button front SHIRT with EMBROIDERY on right side

Orders for shirts and name tags take 3 weeks.
Payment must be received before orders are placed.

For details of price, and to place orders, contact:
Judy Prewett on 0419 877 594 or email Stores@nwqld.org.au



Calendar Of Events – subject to changes

Date	Event	Notes
1 June	Sunshine Coast Ex-Service and Serving Women's Assoc Inc Luncheon Maroochydore	Civilian dress with name tags
11 June	Navy Women Qld OGM Geebung RSL	Team Trivia Hour Hosted by Navy Women Wellbeing Team
29 June	Qld Maritime Museum Ships Exhibition	Honouring Diamantina, Forceful, Australia, Lucinda
2 July	Reserve Forces Day Wondai	
9 July	Navy Women Qld OGM Geebung RSL	
27 July	Service @ Jack Southbank NAA(Q)	Honouring Coastwatchers
27 July	Korean Veterans Day	
29 July	CESWA Annual Church Service Ann St Presbyterian Church Brisbane	Formal Uniform
10 August	CESWA AGM and GM	Anzac Square Memorial Gardens Delegates attend
13 August	Navy Women Qld OGM Geebung RSL	Annual Team Games Day
15 August	Victory in Pacific Day	
18 August	Vietnam Veterans Day	
27 August	High Tea Geebung RSL	Organised Kathryn Summers
31 August	Service@Jack Southbank NAA(Q)	Honouring Hospital Ships/ Centaur
6 September	Battle of Australia Commemoration	
13 September	CESWA Commemoration to Service Women of Australia	Women's Memorial Pine Rivers Kallangur Formal Uniform
17 September	NAA Golden Rivet 2023	Hosted Ipswich West Moreton Sub-Section
28 September	Service@ Jack Southbank NAA(Q)	Honouring Tobruk Ferries
8 October	Navy Women Qld OGM Geebung RSL	Pink Sunday Breast Cancer Fundraising and Guest Speaker
12 October	CESWA Bi-monthly OGM	Delegates attend
16-17 October	Hervey Bay Birthday weekend	
22-24 October	All Navy Reunion Maroochydore	Held in Maroochydore RSL
26 October	Service@Jack Southbank NAA(Q)	Honouring ships in Battle of Leyte Gulf
4 November	Navy Women Annual Reunion Luncheon	Tattersalls Club Brisbane
11 November	Remembrance Day Service	Shrine of Remembrance Brisbane
12 November	Navy Women Qld GM	
30 November	Service@Jack Southbank NAA(Q)	Honouring HMAS Sydney crew TBC
10 December	Navy Women Qld GM Geebung RSL	Xmas Party
14 December	CESWA GM	Final meeting for 2023
11 February 2024	60 th Anniversary Navy Women Qld Luncheon and book launch	Geebung RSL

Sixty Years of our Sub-Section

In the early 1960s, a group of WWII WRANS were invited to form a Sub-Section of the NAA. The inaugural meeting was held on 10 February 1964, with 31 WWII veterans and 2 from the 1950's signing up.

The Sub-Section began as the *WRANS Sub-Section in Queensland* until 2015, when it was changed to our current name to include women who served in the RAN.

HOW WILL WE CELEBRATE?

1. A **Luncheon** is being planned after the AGM on Sunday 11 February 2024. Keep the day free.
2. A **Book** will be released at the Luncheon, celebrating the life of our members over the last sixty years.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION?

Your life Bio and your Photos are required, (one in uniform, and a more recent one, perhaps in our uniform or at one of our functions).

The book will be published in time to be launched at the Luncheon, so the close off is this year.

We are looking for ALL women who have been a member of our Sub-Section to include an article, or to provide permission for their name, service number, and date of enlistment/discharge to be included in a list.

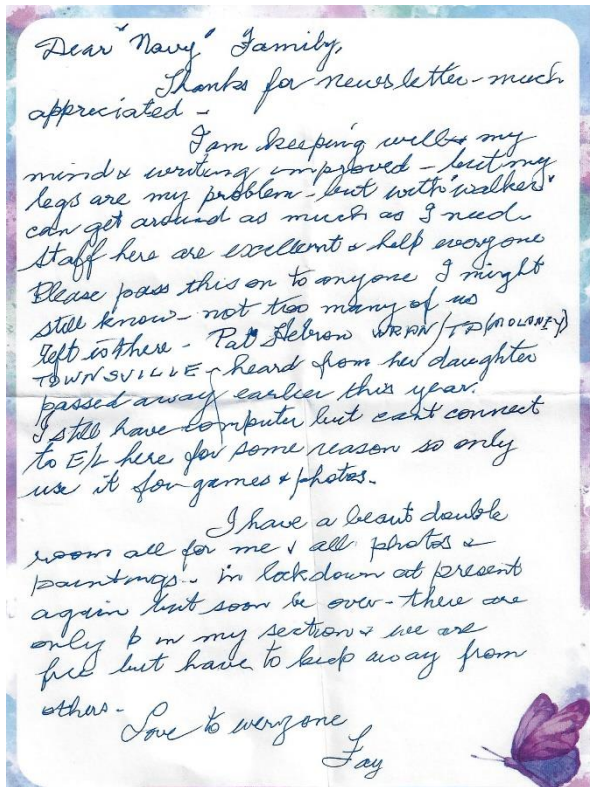
(An example of two Bios that I have been able to do are shown at the Vales on page 3).

New Members – Welcome Aboard

Pepita **CROSS** (nee Mc**CARTHY**) - # R86197 Pepita enlisted in Oct 1965 and discharged in Mar 1967. Pepita was WRAN SBA and is joining as a CLUB member.

Susan **MEEHAN** (nee RADFORD) - # W105580 Sue enlisted on 14 Feb 1969 and discharged on marriage on 2 Dec 1972 as a SWWROT. Sue is a FULL member with the Fraser Coast Sub-Section and joining Navy Women Qld as a SOCIAL Member.

Letters



This wonderful letter has been received from Fay Royle, one of our WWII treasures, who served from 1944 to 1946



Raffles!

Vale

We have received news from interstate, and the notices are included in their Newsletters which are shared via email. We will report the loss of our sisters when we are advised.

Reata May MOLONEY (nee BREMNER / formerly COOK) WR1354 21Jul1924-28Mar2023. Reata served from 24May1943 until 26Feb1946 as a writer at HMAS Moreton.

Betty Janice STOKES (nee OXENHAM, formerly SPENCE) WR2238 4 Apr1926-13May2023. Betty served from 24Jul1944 until 29Mar1946 as Supply Assistant.

Julianna SMITH (nee CULLETON) class of 1971, SBA, 1954 - May 2023

Patricia DOWNES (Trish) CMDR 06Feb1947-01Apr2023

Cheryl SMITH (nee McCONNELL) W123432

Karin LEEPERE - She served from 1981-2019 (WOWRWTR then retired as LCDR) - HMA Ships Harman, Kuttabul, Waterhen, Cairns, Nirimba; and sea postings to HMA Ships Moresby, Tarakan, Adelaide and Kanimbla. Died 28Mar2023.

From: WRANS-RAN WOMEN SA

Carolyn McMILES nee Erickson / formerly DEEM, W105194. 09Oct1950-06Feb2023. She served from 1968 as an RO.

From: WRANS Vic

Eleanor May SUMNER (nee SMITH) WR4372 Aged 89 years - 31May1934-25Mar2023. She served 1952-54 as a Wran Telegraphist at HMAS Cerberus, Harman and Lonsdale.

Thelma Marjorie BROWN (nee SMITH), WR1045. 13Jul1924-Apr2023. Aged 94 years. Terry served 1943-1946 as a Wran Stewardess, at HMAS Lonsdale, Cerberus, Moreton.

Please let us know of the death of any Navy Woman - member or not; from any state and we will mention them in the next newsletter.



The Naval Blockade

Meeting Times

Navy Women Qld meetings are held on the **second Sunday of every month****,

1200 to approx. 1500

Geebung-Zillmere RSL

(323 Newman Road, Geebung - next to Geebung railway station)

**** Except May, when it is the *third* Sunday of the month (not Mother's Day) ****

Arrive by 11am for brunch, to socialise with your sisters before the meeting - stay afterwards for a cuppa.



Email us your Updates & details of Payment

Event:

Special Diet:

Subs : Full Membership \$38 pa
Social / Club Membership \$15 pa.
No more than a maximum of 3 years in advance.

Amount paid:

Date paid:

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Please advise if your next of kin details change.

Bank Details:

Bank of Queensland
Name: **Navy Women (WRANS-RAN) Qld**
BSB No: **124 002**
Account No: **22446885**
Refence: **Surname reason/event**

September Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for next newsletter is 31 August 2023.

Editor@nwqld.org.au and include

Treasurer@nwqld.org.au

RSL Defence Servicewomen's Sub Branch

<https://www.rslsouthqueensland.org/branches/rsldsw/>

The RSL Defence Servicewomen's Sub Branch was formed in Brisbane in 1946 by returned servicewomen who had served in WWII. The Sub Branch has supported the needs of servicewomen throughout its history. It proudly participates in a range of commemorative events.

By 2004, the Sub Branch membership had declined significantly. Through a partnership with the Council of Ex-Servicewomen's Association Qld (CESWA), membership numbers increased and the Sub Branch was saved. The RSL Defence Servicewomen's Sub Branch is once again a vibrant group that continues to meet the needs of serving and ex-serving women.

If you do not belong to your local RSL, then please consider this Sub Branch and support our sisters. Check their webpage for details, and THANK YOU to the women who have kept this Sub Branch going.

If you are looking for an RSL Sub-Branch, check out this one!!



Poppy Service

If you wish your service to our country to be recognised at your funeral, you need to let your funeral director or your family KNOW. It is your family who ask the Funeral Director to arrange to have the Poppy tribute. We cannot interfere with your service.

Smell Free

In 2022, we voted not to wear strong smelling perfumes to our meetings. Perfumes affect the health of many members, so please be considerate of our sisters when you are preparing to attend any functions.