

1979-By the 1970s, the Navy opened more rates to women. Shown here is a quartermaster on the repair ship USS Vulcan (AR-5).



Sailors would serve as an experienced cadre in case of a national emergency.

Z-116

Limited duty remained policy until Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt issued Z-116 in 1971, opening up more opportunities to women. This paved the way for many “firsts” in the 1970s. This included the first female midshipman at the United States Naval Academy the first female unrestricted line flag officer, and the first female Naval aviator.

Modern Navy

By the 1990s, the Navy had opened up more opportunities to female officers and Sailors. Lieutenant Commander Darlene Iskra became the first woman to command a ship in 1990. In 1993, women were allowed on combat ships for the first time, specifically aircraft carriers. This has been followed up by women being allowed to serve on submarines in 2013. Currently women make up seventeen percent of the Navy’s total force.



2009-In 2009, female Sailors swept all four categories of the Navy’s Sailor of the Year competition.



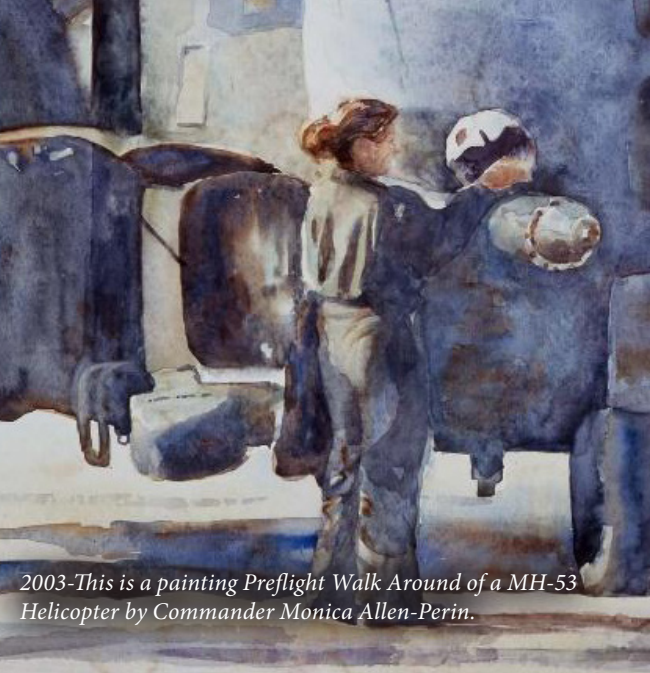
NATIONAL MUSEUM *of the*
UNITED STATES NAVY

(Cover) 1908-Pictured here are the “Sacred Twenty,” the first group of nurses in the newly established Naval Nurse Corps

U.S. NAVY EXPERIENCE

WOMEN IN THE U.S. NAVY





2003-This is a painting Preflight Walk Around of a MH-53 Helicopter by Commander Monica Allen-Perin.

Women in today's Navy answer their country's call in all services and ranks. From the medical fields to aviation and most recently submarines, in almost all of the Navy's areas of service, women can be found.

Early Days

In the early days of the U.S. Navy, all women were supposed to be banned from U.S. Navy ships. The Navy even forbid the captain from bringing his wife on board. A few Naval surgeons proposed a formal program of women serving the Navy as nurses several times in the early to mid-1800s, but were turned down either due to a lack of money or a belief that women should not serve in that capacity at sea.

During the American Civil War and Spanish-American War women began serving as civilian nurses aboard hospital ships such as the *Red Rover* on the

1925-This painting is entitled *Chief Yeoman (F)* by Anne Fuller Abbott.

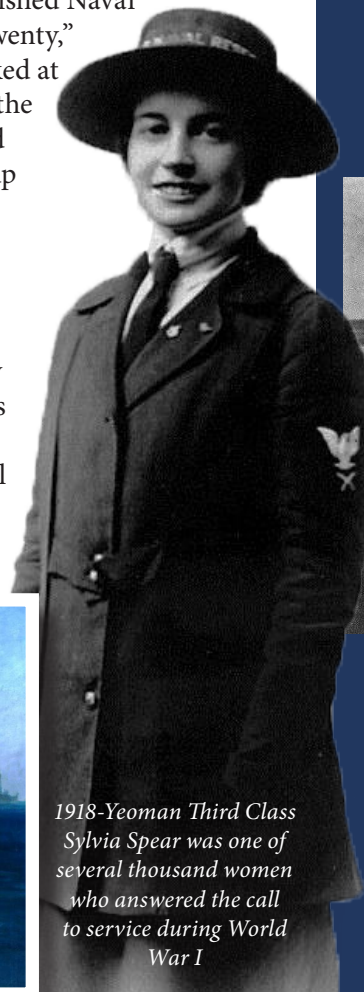


Mississippi River in the 1860s and the USS *Solace* off the coast of Cuba in 1898.

In 1908, the Navy began to formally accept women into the ranks when it enlisted twenty women into the newly established Naval Nurse Corps. The "Sacred Twenty," as they became known, worked at the Navy's hospitals around the world tending to the sick and ill and training another group of eighty-five women to be nurses.

World War I

With the Fleet itself expanding in 1916, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels needed to fill thousands of billets. To solve his personnel issue, he announced in 1916 that some rates would be

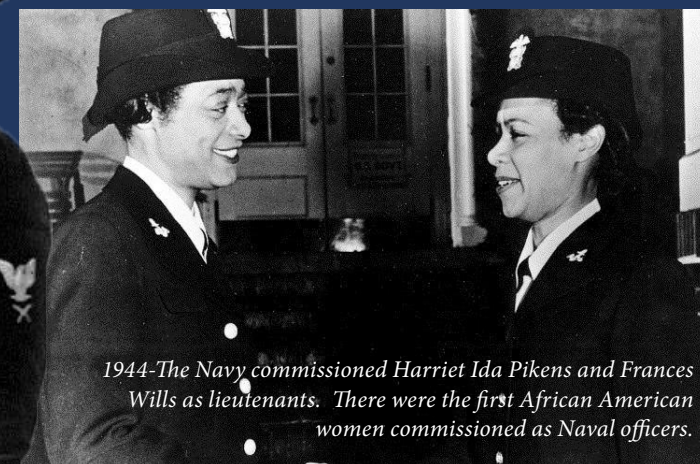


1918-Yeoman Third Class Sylvia Spear was one of several thousand women who answered the call to service during World War I

open to women. Many received the rate of yeoman. These new Sailors freed up thousands of male Sailors from desk duty, allowing them to fill critical billets on board ships. Before the program ended in 1919, several thousand women answered the call and enlisted. Among this group were the first thirty-four African American women to enlist in the Navy.

World War II

With the 1941 entry of the United States into World War II, the Navy found itself once again critically short of human resources. Congress authorized the Navy to allow women to enlist in a women's Naval Reserve in 1942. Called Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service, or W.A.V.E.S., the Navy assigned W.A.V.E.S. to such diverse fields as communication, ordnance, aircraft maintenance, metrology, intelligence, as well as clerical duties. To oversee the thousands new enlistees, the Navy commissioned several dozen W.A.V.E.S. as officers.



1944-The Navy commissioned Harriet Ida Pikens and Frances Wills as lieutenants. There were the first African American women commissioned as Naval officers.

In addition to the W.A.V.E.S., 11,000 women served the Navy during the war in the medical field. Six of them were prisoners-of-war when the Japanese captured the Philippines.

Post-War

The 1948 Women's Armed Services Integration Act made women's presence in the Navy permanent and the Navy set up a program where a group of female