

# A History of Australian Navy Health Officer Uniforms and Ranks (Part Two)

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## Purpose

More than a century after its establishment, many Royal Australian Navy (RAN) uniforms and ranks still reflect those used by the British Royal Navy (RN). Previous articles have described the history of Navy sailor uniforms or 'rigs' since 1509,<sup>1</sup> the development of male and female health sailor uniforms since 1879,<sup>2</sup> and the evolution of their rank and rate badges since 1827.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this two-part article is to describe the development of Australian Navy health officer uniforms. Part One described the overall development of male and female RN, Australian colonial and RAN uniforms and ranks since the 11<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>4</sup> while this part focuses on RN and RAN medical, dental, medical administration and nursing officer uniforms.

## Background

Part One described how Navy had two types of officer at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: 'gentlemen' officers who received 'commissions' from the monarch to exercise command on his or her behalf, and 'tarpaulin' officers who received 'warrants' from the relevant Navy Board.<sup>5</sup>

Navy warrant officers themselves, also came in two forms. The 'standing' warrant officers—boatswains, gunners, carpenters, pursers and cooks—stayed with their ships even when they were not in service; while masters, chaplains and surgeons were appointed for ships in service when required.<sup>6</sup>

Some warrant officers eventually achieved commissioned status (surgeons from 1843),<sup>7</sup> while the remainder were abolished in 1949.<sup>8</sup> Commissioned and warrant officers were both divided between 'military' and 'civil' branches (with health officers included with the latter) until 1957.<sup>9</sup>

Hence the title Warrant Officer, used for the RAN's senior sailor rank above Chief Petty Officer since 1971, is completely unrelated to its original use for over 400 years from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, for highly experienced and skilled yet patently subordinate

non-sailor officers, many of whom who were often employed interchangeably between the King's ships and civilian merchantmen.

## Medical Officer Uniforms

English surgeons first went to sea during the medieval period as part of a commander's retinue. They were not appointed to specific ships until after 1509, when Henry VIII founded the RN in its current form.<sup>10</sup>

A common uniform for all warrant officers, including surgeons, was introduced in 1787. No pictures have survived, but it consisted of a blue coat with blue lapels and round cuffs, fall down collar, three buttons each to the cuffs and pockets, lined but not edged in white, with a white cloth waistcoat and breeches. The buttons had an anchor motif, and were the same pattern as that previously used for captains.<sup>11</sup>

The early Napoleonic Wars revealed shortfalls in the number and quality of Navy surgeons. This led to enhanced conditions of service from 1805, including a dedicated uniform that ranked them with Army surgeons, but below Navy Lieutenants.<sup>12</sup> This was consistent with the latter's role as 'gentlemen' officers, who exercised command over the ship's master (and by extension other warrant officers) on their captain's behalf.

There were two uniforms for physicians and two for surgeons. The physician's full dress uniform was similar to Lieutenants, with a plain hat, white cloth waistcoat and breeches, and a blue coat lined with white cloth. The coat had blue lapels, cuffs and stand-up collar, with two rows of gold lace half an inch wide round the cuffs and collar, and three buttons each on the pockets and cuffs. The physician's undress coat omitted the lace, and was worn with and either blue or white breeches and waistcoat.<sup>13</sup>

The surgeon's uniforms were similar, except the full dress uniform omitted the lace, while the undress uniform omitted the buttons. Assistant Surgeons afloat (until then known as Surgeon's Mates), and Hospital Mates ashore, wore a blue coat without lapels, plain cuffs and stand-up collar, with a blue or white waistcoat and breeches.<sup>14</sup>

Surgeons afloat wore uniform buttons with a plain anchor in an oval, while those ashore wore a similar button with the addition of 'HS' (Hospital Staff).<sup>15</sup> However, buttons with an anchor-and-serpent motif had been worn unofficially since 1787; these were made official from 1825.<sup>16</sup>

Further medical officer shortfalls during the Crimean War led to the introduction of the Staff Surgeon rank in 1855, for surgeons with senior appointments. This rank was later extended to all surgeons with more than 20 years' service.

As described previously, the use of sleeve stripes to identify rank did not occur until 1856. Lieutenants and their equivalents initially had one stripe, Commanders two, and Captains three, until the introduction of the Sub-Lieutenant rank in 1861 resulted in each gaining an extra stripe. Lieutenants with over eight years' seniority wore a half-stripe from 1877, which became the formal Lieutenant Commander rank from 1914.<sup>17</sup>

The 'executive curl' on the proximal stripe was only worn by 'military' executive seamen branch officers from 1856, in order to distinguish them from 'non-executive military' and 'civil branch' officers. 'Distinction cloths' were added between the stripes for non-executive officers from 1863 until their abolition in 1956, except for medical, dental and wardmaster (later medical administration) officers.

The Assistant Surgeon rank became 'Surgeon' in 1873, and two years later, the rank of Fleet Surgeon was added to identify senior Staff Surgeons.

In 1918, all medical officer rank titles were replaced by those used for executive branch officers with the prefix 'Surgeon'. Although RN medical officers still use this prefix, it was abolished in the RAN in 1992. In addition, all non-executive officers received the 'executive curl', and non-executive Commanders and above received the executive branch 'brass hat' oak leaf motifs on their cap peaks.

Each of the Australian colonial naval forces had their own part-time medical officers, of whom 19 transferred to the Commonwealth Naval Forces in 1901. The first medical officer to be appointed into the Permanent Navy (PN) was Staff Surgeon Alexander Ruan Caw in 1912. A total of 28 medical officers served in the PN during WWI, 16 of whom were appointed only for the duration of the war.

A total of 31 RAN, 84 RAN Reserve (RANR) and 12 RAN Volunteer Reserve (RANVR) medical officers served during WWII, with all reservists wearing 'Wavy Navy' stripes. Seven of these medical officers were killed or went missing in action.



Warrant Officer button, 1787–1895<sup>18</sup>



Left: full dress coat of Surgeon Joshua Horwood, who served as a surgeon's mate aboard HMS Prince at Trafalgar and was promoted to surgeon in 1807.<sup>19</sup>

Right: Dr William Beatty, who witnessed the death of Vice-Admiral Nelson at Trafalgar. He is wearing full dress physician's uniform.<sup>20</sup>



Top Left: Medical Service button afloat, 1805–1812.<sup>21</sup>

Top Right: Medical Service button ashore, 1805–1812.<sup>22</sup>

Bottom: Medical Service button, 1825–1891.<sup>23</sup> Note the anchor-and-serpent motif.



Left: Surgeon's uniform coat, 1825.<sup>24</sup> Note the anchor-and-serpent motif on the collar.

Centre: Surgeon's uniform as worn, 1832.<sup>25</sup> Note the red collar and cuffs as for all other officers (no distinction cloth yet), the left shoulder board and right epaulet, and the single-breasted row of buttons grouped in threes that identified the wearer as a surgeon until 1891.

Right: Surgeon's full dress coat, 1833.<sup>26</sup> Note the red collar and cuffs, and the button pattern.<sup>27</sup> It lacks the left shoulder board and right epaulet.



Left: Staff Surgeon's dress coat, 1864.<sup>30</sup> Note the three stripes without an 'executive curl', red distinction cloth and single-breasted button pattern.

Right: Assistant Surgeon's 'round' jacket, 1863.<sup>31</sup> Note the single stripe without 'executive curl', red distinction cloth and single-breasted button pattern.



Left: Assistant Surgeon's uniform as worn, 1849.<sup>28</sup> Note the single epaulet, no shoulder board or distinction cloth, single-breasted button pattern, and that the red collar and cuffs were changed back to white (as for the rest of Navy).

Right: Assistant Surgeon's uniform coat, 1856.<sup>29</sup> Note the single-breasted button pattern and the thin gold stripe without distinction cloth. It lacks epaulets.



Left: Fleet Surgeon's dress coat, 1891.<sup>32</sup> Note the three stripes without an 'executive curl', red distinction cloth and the double-breasted buttons as for executive branch seaman officers. It lacks epaulets.

Centre: Fleet Surgeon's dress coat, 1901-1918.<sup>33</sup> Note the absence of the 'executive curl'. It lacks epaulets.

Right: Surgeon Commander's full dress coat, c1918.<sup>34</sup> Note the executive curl. (courtesy John Perryman)

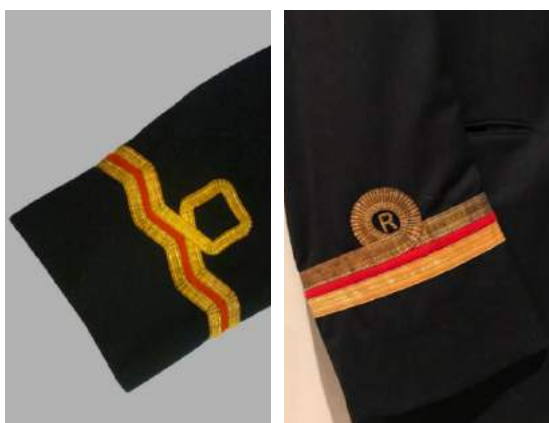


Staff Surgeon Bedlington Howell Morris SANF, 1901.<sup>35</sup> The only distinguishing feature from his RN counterparts would have been his SANF buttons.



Left: Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Donald Ross Macaulay Cameron, RANR, HMAS Kanimbla, 1946.<sup>36</sup> Note the khaki tropical rig (which became the blue Action Working Dress from 1948),<sup>37</sup> and 'Wavy Navy' shoulder boards.

Right: Surgeon Captain William James 'Billie' Carr CBE BA BC (Cantab) MRCS LRCP FRACP, RAN, Director Medical Services 1933–46.<sup>38</sup> Note the absence of 'Australia' flashes on the shoulders.



Left: Surgeon Lieutenant RANR and RANVR stripes, 1921–1973 (courtesy John Perryman)

Right: Surgeon Lieutenant RANR stripes, 1973–1986. (courtesy Paul Myers)

Top Left: RAN Surgeon Lieutenant shoulder slide, replaced by the current 'Old Gold' slides in 1991.<sup>39</sup> (Author)










































Top Right: Royal Navy Surgeon Lieutenant Commander shoulder slide, modified by added 'Australia' flashes, c1988, also replaced by the current 'Old Gold' slides in 1991. (Author)

Bottom Left: Current 'Old Gold' shoulder slide, introduced 1991.<sup>40</sup> (Author)

Bottom Right: RAN Commander MO shoulder slide, introduced 1998 for wear with the Proban® overalls introduced in 1992. (Author) These were abolished with the introduction of Disruptive Pattern Naval Uniforms (DPNUs) in 2009.

Table 1 summarises the ranks and insignia of Royal Navy medical officers since 1805. Table 2 does likewise for RAN medical officers since 1911.

**Table 1: RN Medical Officer Ranks and Insignia Since 1805<sup>41</sup>**

Before 1805	Surgeon's Mate	Surgeon						
1805	Assistant Surgeon	Surgeon						
1832	Assistant Surgeon	Surgeon	Physician of the Navy					
1841	Assistant Surgeon	Surgeon	Inspector General					
1843	Assistant Surgeon	Surgeon	Deputy Inspector General	Inspector General	Director-General			
1856 (first with uniform stripes)	 Assistant Surgeon	 Surgeon	 Staff Surgeon	 Deputy Inspector General	 Inspector General	 Director General		
1859	 Assistant Surgeon under six years	 Assistant Surgeon Over six years	 Surgeon		 Staff Surgeon	 Inspector General	 Director General	
1861	 Assistant Surgeon under six years	 Assistant Surgeon Over six years	 Surgeon	 Staff Surgeon	 Deputy Inspector General	 Inspector General	 Director General	
1863	 Assistant Surgeon under six years	 Assistant Surgeon Over six years	 Surgeon	 Staff Surgeon	 Deputy Inspector General		 Director General	
1873	Abolished	 Surgeon	 Staff Surgeon 2nd Class	 Staff Surgeon 1st Class	 Deputy Inspector General		 Director General	
1879		 Surgeon	 Staff Surgeon	 Fleet Surgeon	 Deputy Inspector General		 Director General	
1908		 Surgeon	 Staff Surgeon	 Fleet Surgeon	 Deputy Inspector General		 Inspector General	 Director-General

1911							
	Surgeon	Staff Surgeon	Fleet Surgeon	Deputy Surgeon General		Surgeon General	Director-General
1918 <sup>a</sup>							
	Surgeon Lieutenant	Surgeon Lieutenant Commander	Surgeon Commander	Surgeon Captain		Surgeon Rear Admiral	Surgeon Vice Admiral

Note a: Stripe width slightly increased for all officers from 1931.

Table 2: RAN Medical Officer Ranks and Insignia Since 1911<sup>42</sup>

1911						
	Surgeon	Staff Surgeon				
1916						
	Surgeon	Staff Surgeon	Fleet Surgeon			
1919 <sup>a</sup>						
	Surgeon Lieutenant	Surgeon Lieutenant Commander	Surgeon Commander	Surgeon Captain		
1955 <sup>b</sup>						
	Surgeon Lieutenant	Surgeon Lieutenant Commander	Surgeon Commander	Surgeon Captain		Surgeon Rear Admiral
1990 <sup>c</sup>						Position downgraded
	Surgeon Lieutenant	Surgeon Lieutenant Commander	Surgeon Commander	Surgeon Captain	Surgeon Commodore	
1998						Position abolished
	Lieutenant	Lieutenant Commander	Commander	Captain		
2005						
	Lieutenant	Lieutenant Commander	Commander	Captain	Commodore (Part-time Navy only)	Rear Admiral (tri-Service only)

Notes: a: Stripe width slightly increased for all officers from 1931.  
 b: 'Australia' shoulder flashes added in 1966.  
 c: 'Surgeon' prefix abolished in 1992.

## Women Medical Officers

Dr Attracta 'Genevieve' Rewcastle (nee Candon, 1901–1951) was appointed to the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS or 'Wrens') as its medical superintendent in 1939. She was transferred to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) the following year, after the UK Women's Medical Foundation expressed concern that she was not only paid less than her male Navy colleagues, but less than her counterparts in the other women's Services. Surgeon Lieutenant Rewcastle thereby became the first female commissioned officer in the RN.

She was promoted in 1943 and was joined by another 25 female medical officers who together became the only women to wear the same stripes as male RNVR officers during WWII.<sup>43</sup> On her discharge in 1946, Surgeon Lieutenant Commander Rewcastle was awarded an Order of the British Empire for her service.



*Surgeon Lieutenant Rewcastle RNVR, 1940–1943<sup>44</sup>.  
Note the 'Wavy Navy' RNVR stripes.*

The Australian Navy's first female medical officer (Surgeon Second Officer Beryl Violet Turner), was appointed into the Women's Royal Australian Navy Service (WRANS) in 1979.<sup>45</sup>

## Dental Officers

The first permanent uniformed dental officer of any Commonwealth Navy (Surgeon Dentist Milton Spencer Atwill) was appointed into the RAN in April 1918.<sup>46</sup> Dentists wore the same uniform as medical officers, apart from orange instead of red distinction cloth. They received the same 'Surgeon' rank prefix as medical officers from 1918, with the rank suffix (Dental) until both of these titles were abolished in the RAN in 1992.

A total of 33 dental officers served in WWII, two of whom were missing presumed killed in action.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, only seven served in the RANR rather than the RAN; these all joined from early 1944.
















The Australian Navy's first female dental officer (and first female non-nursing health officer) was Midshipman Erica Jean Yates (later Henderson), who was appointed into the RAN in 1977.<sup>48</sup>



*Left: Surgeon Dentist Atwill with Leading Stoker Jack William Christian, HMAS Australia (I), c1918  
(courtesy John Perryman)*

*Right: Shoulder board belonging to Surgeon Lieutenant (Dental) Ronald Wayland Tiver RANVR, 1945–1947. Note the orange distinction cloth between the 'Wavy Navy' stripes and the lack of 'Australia' flashes.  
(courtesy John Perryman)*

Table 3: Royal Australian Navy Dental Officer Ranks and Insignia Since 1918

1918				
	Surgeon Dentist			
1918				
	Surgeon Lieutenant (Dental)			
1924				
	Surgeon Lieutenant (Dental)	Surgeon Lieutenant Commander (Dental)		
1929				
	Surgeon Lieutenant (Dental)	Surgeon Lieutenant Commander (Dental)	Surgeon Commander (Dental)	
1947				
	Surgeon Lieutenant (Dental)	Surgeon Lieutenant Commander (Dental)	Surgeon Commander (Dental)	Surgeon Captain (Dental)
1992				
	Lieutenant	Lieutenant Commander	Commander	Captain

A previous article described how selected First Class Sick Berth Stewards (equivalent to First Class Petty Officer) were promoted to Wardmaster (equivalent to Chief Petty Officer) after 14 years' service, for hospital duties ashore.<sup>49</sup> In 1900, the Warrant Officer rank of 'Head Wardmaster' was established, which instigated what became the current Medical Administration Officer branch.<sup>50</sup>

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, RN Wardmaster ranks expanded to include Commissioned Wardmaster, Senior Commissioned Wardmaster and Wardmaster Lieutenants. These were renamed Wardmaster Sub-Lieutenant, Lieutenant and Lieutenant Commander respectively in 1956.<sup>51</sup>

RN Wardmasters wore the same red distinction cloth as medical officers from 1911 until 1918, when it was changed to the maroon colour now worn by RAN nursing officers. In 1951 the maroon was changed to salmon pink, until it was abolished in the RN in 1956.<sup>52</sup> The RAN followed suit in 1979, at which point Wardmasters were also renamed Medical Administration Officers (MAO).<sup>53</sup>




















The first RAN Warrant Wardmaster was Frank George William Daisley, who was promoted from Sick Berth Chief Petty Officer in 1926.<sup>54</sup> The first Commissioned Wardmaster was Thomas Edward Mullins DSM in 1929,<sup>55</sup> who also became the first Wardmaster Lieutenant in 1934.<sup>56</sup> Keith Leslie Gordon 'Dolly' Gray was appointed the first Commander Wardmaster in 1976,<sup>57</sup> while the first female MAO was Sub-Lieutenant Zoe Joan Read, in 1987.<sup>58</sup>



RAN Wardmaster Lieutenant shoulder board, 1974. The metal 'Australia' flashes were removed for recycling on promotion. Note the (regrettably somewhat faded) salmon pink distinction cloth. (Courtesy Phil Davies)



Table 4: Royal Australian Navy Wardmaster / Medical Administration Officer Ranks and Insignia Since 1926

1926				
	Warrant Wardmaster			
1929				
	Warrant Wardmaster	Commissioned Wardmaster		
1934				
	Warrant Wardmaster	Commissioned Wardmaster	Wardmaster Lieutenant	
1951				
	Warrant Wardmaster	Commissioned Wardmaster	Wardmaster Lieutenant	
1956				
	Wardmaster Sub Lieutenant	Wardmaster Lieutenant	Wardmaster Lieutenant Commander	
1976				
	Wardmaster Sub Lieutenant	Wardmaster Lieutenant	Wardmaster Lieutenant Commander	Wardmaster Commander
1979				
	Sub Lieutenant MAO	Lieutenant MAO	Lieutenant Commander MAO	Commander MAO

Nursing Officers

A Royal Naval Nursing Service, based on the British Army Nursing Service established in 1881, was instigated for service in RN hospitals ashore in 1885. Their role was to train sick berth attendants, and to maintain continuity of inpatient services in the event of war. Their uniforms were based on the Army Nursing Service, except the latter's red cape was substituted by blue, over a blue dress with scarlet cashmere cuffs. The RNNS was renamed the Queen Alexandra Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) in 1902, with a dedicated uniform badge replacing the red cross.<sup>59</sup>



Left: QARNNS badge.<sup>60</sup>

Right: Replica QARNNS cap badge (1953–1995).<sup>61</sup> Note the red oak leaves and the stylised 'A's enveloping the anchor as per the QARNNS badge.



Left: QARNNS uniform, 1902. Note the rank insignia on the right side of the cape.<sup>62</sup>

Right: QARNNS officer, 2012. Note the standard gold cap badge and the QARNNS badge on the sleeve.<sup>63</sup>

Table 5: QARNNS Ranks 1902; RANNS Ranks 1942-48 and 1964-80

QARNNS / RANNS Rank (latter in bold)	QARNNS Rank Insignia 1953-1995	Equivalent RN / RAN Ranks
Sister		Sub-Lieutenant
Senior Sister		Lieutenant
Superintending Sister		Lieutenant Commander
Matron		Commander
Principal Matron		Captain
Matron-in-Chief		Commodore

### The Royal Australian Navy Nursing Service (RANNS)

77 nursing officers, physiotherapists and a microbiologist served in the wartime RANNS from April 1942 to 1948. They had the same rank structure used by the QARNNS, while their uniform was similar to WRANS officers except for the same gold 'Wavy Navy' stripes worn by male RANVR officers and maroon distinction cloth (as for wardmasters at the time).

For working in the wards, RANNS sisters wore a medium blue dress, while matrons wore navy blue. White starched caps and blue capes with red piping were worn in the winter months. The piping for sisters was narrow while that for senior and superintending sisters was 2½ inches wide. The working rig for physiotherapists comprised a navy-blue skirt, white shirt, black tie and white drill coat.<sup>64</sup>

On its re-establishment in November 1964, the formal uniform for the postwar RANNS was similar to its wartime counterpart, except the felt hat was exchanged for the tricorne hat used by WRNS, WRANS and QARNNS officers. Their rank insignia was based on that used by the QARNNS until 1972, when they were replaced by standard RAN officer stripes (apparently in order to better distinguish them from leading seamen).<sup>65</sup> In 1980, the QARNNS rank titles were replaced by standard Navy officer titles,<sup>66</sup> and on 07 June 1985, the RANNS was incorporated into the RAN.<sup>67</sup>

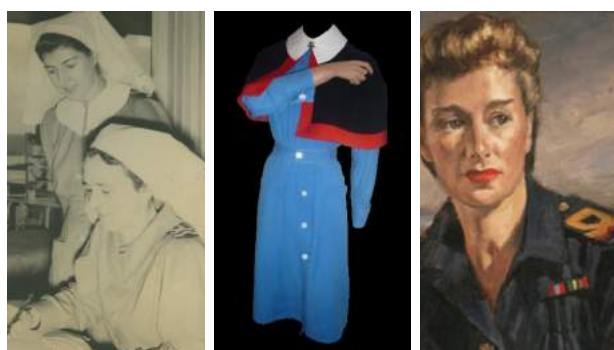
The Director of the wartime RANNS was Matron Annie Ina Laidlaw,<sup>68</sup> while the first Director of the postwar RANNS was Matron Maude Agnes Joyce ('Maudie') Jones ARRC.<sup>69</sup> The first male nursing officer (SBLT Gregory Craig 'Greg' Villani) was appointed into the RANNS in 1984.<sup>70</sup>



Left: Matron Annie Ines Laidlaw RANNS, 1943.<sup>71</sup> Note the same wide-brimmed felt hat as the WRANS.

Top Right: Physiotherapist Mary Margaret 'Peg' Lindon, 1943-1946. Her uniform is that of a Sister RANNS. Note the gold 'Wavy Navy' stripe (courtesy John Perryman)

Bottom: Wartime Sister RANNS shoulder board. Note the 'Wavy Navy' stripe, maroon distinction cloth and lack of 'Australia' flashes. (courtesy John Perryman)



Left RANNS officers in ward working rig, Canonbury Naval Hospital (Darling Point Sydney), 1945. (courtesy Sheena Macdougall)

Centre: RANNS Senior Sister's ward working rig, 1942-1948. (courtesy John Perryman)

Right: Sister Cherry Spence Wilson RANNS, embarked aboard the heavy cruiser HMAS Shropshire for the London Victory Parade, 1946.<sup>72</sup>

Right: Patricia Catherine 'Patty' Vines, HMAS Tarangau 1964, wearing the RANNS ward uniform... and the rather impressive headwear. (Courtesy Sheena Macdougall)



Left: Sister Macdougall RANNS, c1965. Note the QARNNS-like shoulder boards. (Courtesy Sheena Macdougall)

Centre: Superintending Sister Macdougall, RANNS, c1979. Note the gold cap badge and gold stripes with maroon distinction cloth. (Courtesy Sheena Macdougall)

















Right: Commander Sheena Macdougall RAN, c1985. Note the (barely visible) gold half-stripe on the cap band. (Courtesy Sheena Macdougall)



Left: Sister Sheena Frances Macdougall RANNS in summer outdoor rig, c1965. Note the red cap badge and white gloves with handbag. (Courtesy Sheena Macdougall)

Centre: RANNS cap badge, 1964-72. Note the different anchor pattern compared to the QARNNS cap badge. (Author)

Table 6: RANNS Rank Insignia<sup>73</sup>

1942-1948				
1964				
1972				
1980				

### Summary

Part One of this article described the struggle for status throughout Navy's history, firstly between (and within) the warrant and commissioned officers, and later between (and within) the 'civil' and 'military' branch officers. Their uniforms have been a weapon and an expression of these battles.

Having first gone to sea as part of a commander's retinue, surgeons wrestled for recognition on comparable terms as Navy's other warrant officers from 1509 until they achieved commissioned status in 1843. Having received the same uniform as other warrant officers in 1787, surgeons gained their own uniform in 1805, as a response to recruiting and retention problems. Subsequent changes to their uniforms generally followed the Navy in general, including receiving the 'executive curl' and oak leaf brass hats for Commanders and above in 1918. Yet their red distinction cloth has continued to identify their role for over 150 years, as has orange for dental officers since 1918, and maroon followed by salmon pink for RAN MAOs from 1926 until 1979.

It can be argued that women RN and RAN officers fought the same battle for status all over again during the 20th century, noting that for much of this time they were only 'of' rather than 'in' the Navy. The origins of RAN nursing officers stem from their initial wartime-expedient women-only status, which resulted in the establishment of a separate service from both the RAN and the WRANS. This model initially also applied to the postwar RANNS, with its uniforms generally reflecting its QARNNS counterpart. Yet the RANNS also led the way for Navy women officers in general, by wearing the same 'Wavy Navy' stripes as male RANR and RANVR officers during WWII, and the same stripes as male PN officers from 1972. Their rank titles were standardised in 1980, followed by full integration in 1985.

### Author

Dr Neil Westphalen graduated from Adelaide University in 1985 and joined the RAN in 1987. He is a RAN Staff Course graduate and a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and the Australasian College of Aerospace Medicine. He also holds a Diploma of Aviation Medicine and a Master of Public Health.

His seagoing service includes HMA Ships *Swan*, *Stalwart*, *Success*, *Sydney*, *Perth* and *Choules*. Deployments include DAMASK VII, RIMPAC 96, TANAGER, RELEX II, GEMSBOK, TALISMAN SABRE 07, RENDERSAFE 14, SEA RAIDER 15, KAKADU 16 and SEA HORIZON 17. His service ashore includes clinical roles at *Cerberus*, *Penguin*, *Kuttabul*, *Albatross* and *Stirling*, and staff positions as J07 (Director Health) at the then HQAST, Director Navy Occupational and Environmental Health, Director of Navy Health, Joint Health Command SO1 MEC Advisory and Review Services, and Fleet Medical Officer (2013–2016).

Commander Westphalen transferred to the Active Reserve in 2016.

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### Disclaimer

The views expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of the RAN, or any of the other organisations mentioned.

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- 5 The Navy Board was instituted by Henry VIII in 1546. It was responsible for what would now be referred to as the non-operational administrative management of the Navy (in particular finances, stores and ordnance), while the Admiralty provided operational command and control.  
  
Over various times, the Navy Board acquired up to three subordinate Boards: the Victualling Board (1683–1832), responsible for supplying food, water and alcohol; the Transport Board (1690–1724 and 1794–1817), responsible for moving supplies and personnel, and the Sick and Hurt Board (1714–1806), responsible for medical services and prisoners of war.  
  
The Sick and Hurt Board represented the permanent manifestation of a succession of wartime and post-war Boards instituted in response to a series of Anglo–Dutch and Anglo–French wars during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.  
  
The Navy Board was incorporated into the Admiralty in 1832, which had its own Medical Department until 1990, when it was transferred with the other two Service medical departments to the Defence Medical Services.
- 6 Davies JD. *Peyp's Navy: Ships, Men and Warfare 1649–1689*, Seaforth Publishing: Barnsley UK; 2008. pp. 100–101.
- 7 Lloyd, C, Coulter, JLS. *Medicine and the Navy 1200–1900*. Vol 4 (1815–1900). E&S Livingstone: London; 1963. p 5.
- 8 Wells J. *The Royal Navy: Ann Illustrated Social History 1870–1982*, Bath Press: Avon UK; 1994. p244. A key distinguishing characteristic between these 'historical' warrant officers and the modern Warrant Officer rank, is that the former had the same wardroom privileges as commissioned officers, while the latter are senior sailors who mess with the petty officers and chiefs.
- 9 Wells J. *The Royal Navy: Ann Illustrated Social History 1870–1982*, Bath Press: Avon UK; 1994. p 232.
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