



# RHUMB LINES

*Straight Lines to Navigate By*



March 1, 2010

## Women's History Month

*"There is a terrific opportunity for women in the Navy today. Life is about what you choose to make of it, and a woman can do anything she sets her mind to. I'm at a point in my life where I think it is important to reach out to young women in the Navy and help them develop into the leaders of tomorrow."*

– Rear Adm. Michelle Howard, Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 2

This year marks the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual observance of Women's History Month. During March, the Navy celebrates the contributions of women to the Navy and nation. This year's national theme, "Writing Women Back into History," pays tribute to military and civilian women serving in the Navy. Women were first assigned to selected non-combatant ships in 1978, and opportunities were later broadened to include service in combatants in 1994 following the repeal of the combat exclusion law.

### Since the repeal of the combat exclusion law

Navy women's achievements are emblematic of the tremendous strides made since they have been afforded the opportunity to compete for combatant assignments.

- The Navy has 17 female active duty and 8 reserve flag officers serving in challenging jobs worldwide including:
  - [Rear Adm. Carol Pottenger](#) has served as an expeditionary strike group commander, and now commands Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC), one of the critical force providers for the humanitarian efforts in Haiti. NECC forces in Haiti include maritime expeditionary security and civil affairs teams, cargo handling battalions, explosive ordnance disposal teams and Seabees.
  - [Rear Adm. Nora Tyson](#) was recently named to become commander, Carrier Strike Group 2.
- There are 59 female active duty and 14 reserve Sailors who currently wear the rate of Command Master Chief, including Command Master Chief Jacqueline DiRosa. Command Master Chief Jacqueline DiRosa, currently the command master chief at the Navy Information Operations Center in Suitland, Md., has previously served as both a Force and Fleet Master Chief. Her efforts furthered the Combat Meritorious Advancement Program, which allows commanding officers to promote Sailors serving in war zones.
- More than 170,300 women serve across the Navy in a wide-range of specialties as civilian employees. An example of some of the significant contributions they make includes the work by Ahn Duong. In 2001, [Anh Duong's](#) work on the thermobaric weapon supported multi-national forces. This tool was used to destroy tunnels and caves used by terrorist cells. Doung served as the Navy's lead in explosives, supporting government, military, industry and allied nations in the fight against terrorism.

### Expanding opportunities for Navy women to serve – Supporting the way ahead

- In January 2010, the Navy began its second year of [eMentoring](#), which aided the formation of productive mentoring relationships for women throughout the fleet. In a single year, the program has grown from 900 to 1,400 women mentees and mentors from nearly every Navy designator and rating.
- The [Sea Services Leadership Association](#) is an official Navy recognized affinity group that encourages professional development and mentorship among women in the maritime services.

### Key Messages

- Increasing operational opportunities for women has allowed for a more level playing field with male counterparts for opportunity and advancement.
- Navy women deserve the opportunity to demonstrate their talents, compete for key assignments and excel to serve in the senior ranks.
- A variety of programs and policies demonstrate the Navy's commitment to retaining women.

### Facts & Figures

- 120,000 active duty, reserve and civilian women serve in the Navy today.
- This year, the Navy became the first government agency to be named a finalist for the Catalyst Award, an award that honors innovative organizational approaches to recruit, develop and advance women.
- The Navy aims to grow the number of enlisted women from 15.8% to approximately 25% by 2037.