

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0411

Maxwell, Barbara Edwina Audrey

(1932 - 1991)

Born	6 October, 1932, Rangoon Burma
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Died	17 May, 1991
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Occupation	Servicewoman
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Summary

Born in Burma in 1932, Barbara Maxwell came to Australia with her family in 1946 and attended Girdlestone School, Perth, Western Australia. She joined the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (RAANC) in 1952, serving in Japan, and was in every Australian Command with the exception of Eastern Command.

While posted to the 11th RAANC, Western Command, Warrant Officer 2 (WO2) Barbara Maxwell gained selection for the Officers' Cadet School. This was after the Military Board gave approval for other ranks of the RAANC to attend the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) Officer Cadet School. Except for the last few days of the course Barbara Maxwell wore her RAANC grey uniform and she won the 'Scarf of Honour' (dux) for the course.

Barbara Maxwell was fourth Director of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps from 5th July 1977 to 14th March 1979. She was the first Director who had not previously served in Australia's wartime army. Following her retirement from the Army Barbara Maxwell pursued a business career with her husband, Bruce Starrett. [1]

[1] *Soldiers of the Queen* by Janette Bomford p. 117

Events

1969 - 1972

Major, chief instructor at the WRAAC School

1972 - 1974

Lieutenant Colonel, assistant director WRAAC Headquarters Eastern Command at Victoria Barracks, Paddington

1974 - 1975

Lieutenant Colonel, commanding officer and chief instructor at the WRAAC School

1975 - 1977

Lieutenant Colonel, staff officer grade 1 at the Directorate of Service Conditions with the Department of Defence (Army), Canberra

1973 - 1974

First servicewoman crew member of service-owned yacht in the Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race

1954 - 1954

Member of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan

1969 - 1972

Involved in organization and conduct of collections for Red Cross, Austcare, etc., with Mosman City Council

1960 - 1960

Awarded top academic cadet prize

1978 - 1978

Awarded National Medal and Bar

1961 - 1962

Lieutenant instructor and platoon commander of the WRAAC School Recruit Training Wing

1963 - 1964

Lieutenant Adjutant and Quartermaster at the WRAAC Barracks, Melbourne

1964 - 1965

Captain Staff Officer at the Royal Military College, Duntroon (Australian Capital Territory)

1966 - 1967

Captain Staff Officer with the Department of Defence (Army Office)

1968 - 1968

Captain Staff Officer and Officer Commanding 6 WRAAC Headquarters Tasmania Command

1969 - 1969

Captain, senior instructor at the WRAAC School

1972 - 1972

Married (Lieutenant Colonel) Bruce Starrett

1977 - 1979

Colonel, director of the WRAAC

1979 - 1991

Colonel in Reserve of Officers Headquarters, 2nd Military District

1951 - 1959

Served with the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (RAANC)

1960 - 1960

Attended officer cadet course at Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) School, Georges Heights

1974 - 1975

Involved in organization and conduct of collections for Red Cross, Austcare, etc., with Mosman City Council

1977 - 1978

Involved in establishment of WRAAC Association

1972 - 1979

Member of the Royal Australian Naval Sailing Association

1954 - 1954

Awarded the British Commonwealth Occupation Force medal

Published resources

Book

Soldiers of the Queen : women in the Australian Army, Bomford, Janette, 2001

Colonel Best and her soldiers: The Story of the 33 years of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps, Ollif, Lorna, 1985

A Stroll down memory lane, WRAAC Association, 2001

Edited Book

Who's Who of Australian Women, Lofthouse, Andrea, 1982

Journal Article

Vale - Barbara Edwina Audrey Starrett (nee Maxwell) Colonel and Last Director of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps, 1991

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia

[Biographical cuttings on Barbara Maxwell, former head of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

Australian War Memorial, Research Centre

Army Minister visits WRAAC School DPR/TV/1513

Author Details

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