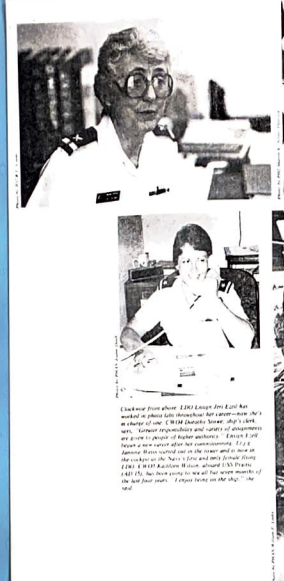
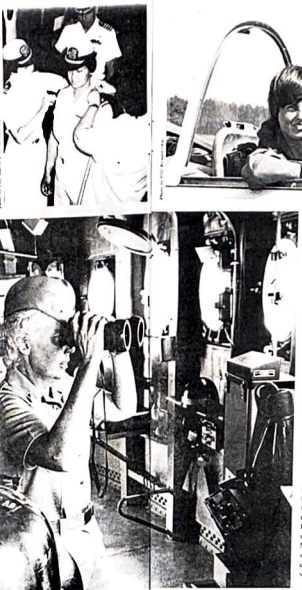


Clockwise from above: LDO Ensign Jeri Ezell has worked in photo labs throughout her career—now she's in charge of one. CWO4 Dorothy Stowe, ship's clerk, says, "Greater responsibilities and variety of assignments are given to people of higher authority." Ensign Lynn Weiss was started out in the mess and is now in Jacksonville, Fla., has been going to sea all her worth of the last four years. "I enjoy being on the ship," she said.



Women CWOs and LDOs

Larger Horizons and Brighter Sunsets

"Quality is what we're looking for. It makes no difference whether it's male or female, the selection board is looking for the best person," said Lieutenant Commander James F. Parks, limited duty officer/chief warrant officer community manager, in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. "We look for sustained superior performance—which is primarily experience, types of jobs held and a reasonable sea/shore rotation.

Today, women compete for LDO and CWO programs on an equal basis with men. There are no designators closed to female applicants. But it wasn't always that way.

Dorothy J. Stowe, on active duty longer than any other female chief warrant officer, said: "Customarily we go to the second mile while everybody else is going the first. It's been that way. It isn't fair, but by the same token until we reach a certain comfortable point in an integrated service, it isn't unfair either.

Women CWOs and LDOs

"Despite the fact that throughout most of my 30 years we had less than equal opportunity, this has been one of the richest fields of opportunity that I could possibly have worked in."

Ensign Jeri D. Ezell, former chief photographer's mate recently commissioned as an LDO, said, "I think women are hesitant about applying for the programs not knowing what they're in for. When I found out they were selecting only one (LDO photographer) and there had never been a female LDO in photography before, I thought my chances were pretty slim. When I found I made it, I was ecstatic!"

'Quality is what we're looking for. It makes no difference whether it's male or female, the selection board is looking for the best person.'

Chief Warrant Officer Kathleen M. Wilson, repair department planning officer aboard the destroyer tender USS *Prairie* (AD 15), said, "It is difficult in many ratings for women to make chief. To apply for the commissioned warrant officer program you first have to make chief. A lot of times it is discouraging to people who say, 'Well, I finally made chief, but now I've got 18 years in and I could retire in two years. But if I make warrant, I can't do that.'

"I've talked to a couple of women who are in that category," Wilson added. "My recommendation is if you want it—go for it! Even if it takes you more than 20 years, it's worth it."

The first warrant officers were "boat swains," oldest known sailing masters or seagoing officers, more than 200 years ago. They were appointed by warrant.

The first woman was not permitted to join this proud community until 1943.

Limited duty officers have been around only since 1947. The LDO program was established as an advancement ladder for outstanding senior enlisted people and CWOs to achieve higher management level positions requiring a technical background.

FISCAL YEAR 1983
MALE vs. FEMALE CWO SELECTIONS

Designator	MALE Apps	MALE Selected	MALE %	FEMALE Apps	FEMALE Selected	FEMALE %
712X (Operations)	166	40	24	1	1	100
734X (Air Maintenance)	230	25	11	1	–	–
741X (Ship's Clerk)	82	27	15	3	–	–
749X (Security)	49	4	8	1	1	100

Total applications: Male – 1,477 Female – 6
Overall percentage: Male – 28% Female – 33%

The first woman was selected in 1981. Before that, women were excluded by law. In 1980, a new law was passed admitting women to the LDO program.

Since fiscal year 1982 LDO and CWO selection cycle, both men and women were subject to the same application and selection criteria. "I just don't feel we've gotten enough applications," said Parks. "Last year 2,400 women were eligible for LDO, only 92 submitted applications."

There are 20 female CWOs and 18 LDOs in the Navy today. They serve in a variety of duties, from flying planes to driving ships to taking pictures. According to Parks, these proud and special women "put the Navy first and everything else second."

CWO4 Dorothy J. Stowe,
Ship's Clerk

Chief Warrant Officer Dorothy J. Stowe, from Gastonia, N. C., enlisted in the Navy on April 15, 1952. "To receive the benefits of the GI Bill and finish college." She stayed in "because there were no dual standards and (there were) superior promotional opportunities."

Stowe elaborates, "I'm proof that you don't have 'to know' anybody. I hadn't the foggiest idea who was on the selection board at the time they selected me."

Starting out as a seaman recruit at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, Stowe went into the personnelman rating as a classifier. "I'm those days," she explained, "all of the aptitude testing was done after you came in. Now recruiters do those things before.

"We had no know every rating, every minor detail of every rate—what kind of talent it took, what kind of brains and academics it took. We would examine all of those details on one-to-one interviews with the individuals to find out their strengths and aspirations. It was really very exciting."

From Corpus Christi, Stowe went on to the Naval Station Charleston, S.C., and then to Richmond, Va., for restoring duty. This was followed by a tour at Bainbridge, Md., where she was appointed a warrant officer. She said, "I haven't been to a lot of glamorous places. I've been one of those 'cog in the wheel' types."

Her first tour as a warrant officer was in the classification department at Naval Training Center San Diego. "Instead of having four or five classifiers working for me, I had 45," she said.

Stowe then volunteered for duty in Vietnam. "My detailer sent me to CinCPacFlt (Hawaii) and put me in an assignment that a woman hadn't had before—which was not unusual for me. They kept doing that," she said. "I was administrative officer for the Blue Eagles airborne command post. As far as I know, I am the only woman ever to have held the job (1969-1971)."

'Excelling—that's what warrants are all about. If I excel in what I'm doing now I feel like a soap-box preacher

Women CWOs and LDOs

Below: Ensign Ezell's pride is reflected in her tailor. Opposite page: CWO3 Wilson at work aboard USS Prairie (AD 15).

"This is a busy time," she said. "I've been averaging around five to six hours of flight time a day—normally two or three flights—five days a week."

She began her career working in the air traffic control tower and base operations at Naval Air Station Miramar, San Diego. After a four-year tour, she served aboard the training carrier USS *Lexington* (AVT 16) this was followed by Aviation Officer Candidate School and then Corpus Christi, Texas, where she flew the T-28 *Trojan* and the T-44A *Navy Air* propeller planes before reporting to Whiting Field.

"I now have verbal orders to *Lexington*," Weiss said. "I have to go to sea on my next tour, and that is the only carrier accepting women."

When asked about her selection, she replied, "I was just following standard LDO guidelines as far as military courses and schools and outside activities. I have no great flight time—which a majority of the people in the flying LDO program have.

"I'd like to see more women in the program a lot more. People treat you differently. Pay is big thing. The respect is just unbelievable once you make officer."

CWO3 Kathleen M. Wilson,
Electronics Officer

"In the entire 15 years that I was on shore duty, I never knew what 'this man's Navy' could do. In the last three years, I found out and became a part of it."

Wilson serves aboard USS *Prairie* (AD 15). Homeported in Long Beach, Calif., *Prairie* flies the Navy's "Don't Tread On Me" jack as the oldest operational Navy ship. Before that, Wilson was aboard the destroyer tender USS *Samuel Gompers* (AD 37) and the repair ship USS *Jason* (AR 8).

"I've been going to sea all but seven months of the last four years. I enjoy being on the ship. I believe that my attitude and enthusiasm may influence people who think being on a ship is drudgery and change their attitude to the point where they can enjoy it."

In addition to her sea tours, Wilson spent 25 months on Guam, where she endured super Typhoons Pamela in 1976. Other duty stations include Norfolk, Va., Alameda, Calif., and Great Lakes, Ill.

Going to sea diversifies your background more than just being on shore duty all the time. It also is still considered tough for anybody, and a lot of times more so for senior women because they require a little more adaptation than a man who from day one usually winds up on a ship some place.

"I'm always the oddball when I check aboard ship," she says. "There just aren't many female warrant officers around, and you don't usually find two on the same ship.

"I run a different type of a division because I have people of all rates and grades in and out of it all the time. We are the administrative, planning and estimating, technical library center and computer center for the entire repair department. Aboard one of these ships, I don't know of a more demanding position than this one.

"We worked on the USS *New Jersey* (BB 62) from the 3rd of January to the day it left. The battleship is quite impressive. It is a very demanding vessel to work on being the age it is. Our technical documentation here was limited, yet we were called upon to research and solve problems for them."

In addition to her regular duties, she is a qualified command duty officer, stand ing duty once every six days, and she is the ship's welfare and recreation officer.

Aboard *Jason*, Wilson completed a six-month deployment during which the ship spent 69 days operating out of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. She said, "You find out what a ship can really do in a situation like that. We were totally self-sufficient. It was just amazing to see the things that could be done with little or no resources except the imagination and technical expertise of the people."

She visited Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Yokosuka, Japan, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, and Perth, Australia, during the cruise.

Wilson began her career as a trade/man and then cross-rated to electronics technician. She was appointed a warrant officer in April 1980. She earned an associate degree through non-traditional credit from a combination of testing and Navy schools.

Wilson's husband, Robert, is a master chief electrician aboard submarine tender USS *Dixon* (AS 37) in San Diego. She said, "My husband has been my encouragement all the way through.

"We maintained our duty preference sheets up to date. I was either in his home port or we were stationed close by. He was at Treasure Island, and I was at Alameda—both in the San Francisco Bay area." Now, she commutes home to San Diego on the weekends.

"A lot of people rely on a warrant officer. People will come to me—even junior officers—expecting answers, and more than likely if I don't know them I can find them.

"I would encourage women to work hard and make as much of themselves as they can and not to rely on somebody else to take care of them."

Ensign Jeri D. Ezell,
Photographic Officer

"I've been involved in production for over 13 years now and I'd like to get into the administrative end," said Ensign Jeri D. Ezell, one of the Navy's most recently commissioned LDOs.

Ezell, from Jeffersonville, Ind., joined the Navy in 1970 to travel and "look for something new to do."

She got her start as a company commander's aide at recruit training in Bainbridge, Md. It was there that she decided to go into photography. After attending "A" school in Pensacola, she went to work for the Naval Intelligence Support Center, Suitland, Md.

More schooling followed as she attended motion picture school and photographer's mate "B" school. She then transferred to the West Coast and worked at the Fleet Air Photo Lab at North Island, San Diego, and in the Fighter Squadron 63 photo lab at Naval Air Station, Miramar, Back East again, Ezell has spent the last four years with the Naval Audiovisual Center, Washington, D.C.

At every one of her duty stations, she was selected sailor of the quarter or sailor of the year. She also was nominated for the Admiral Callaghan Award for enlisted leadership.

In her spare time, Ezell coaches women's softball teams on both military and civilian leagues. Her Navy team won the Naval District Washington championships for the last four years.

Her next tour will take her to the Fleet Air Photo Lab, NAS Agana, Guam, where she will be officer in charge of the photographic laboratory.

* * *

Through hard work and a desire to excel, these women have achieved officer status and a new challenge of leadership. They serve the Navy's need for both of their technical managers and officer technical specialists.

Are you eligible for either of these highly competitive programs? Do you have what it takes to advance? Do you want to excel? If the answer is yes to any of these, then what are you waiting for? Larger horizons and a brighter future can be yours if you take that first step and apply.

Questions about the LDO and CWO programs should be addressed to the Officer Community Manager for LDOs and CWOs, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-13BL), Navy Department, Washington, D.C. 20350. Telephone: Lieutenant Commander Jim Parks at Autovon 224-5593/4 or commercial (202) 694-5593/4.

—*Story by JO2 Patrick L. Evans*