



BELIEVE IN ME
CIC



WOMEN AT SEA

During the Second World War, women were needed in large numbers to fill the roles of men. When the Japanese threatened to invade, India was determined that everyone help to ensure that the Japanese were not successful. With India needing to train women, the WAC (I) had branched out a new unit. In 1944 the Women's Royal Indian Naval Service was formed (also known as W.R.I.N.S) which would help the Indian Navy at the time.



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Just like WAC (I), the women in the WRINS were a mixture of women from all ethnicities with the common goal of defeating the Japanese. Training was not easy and often long hours. Women volunteers often had male family members on active war duties.

There were conditions for the women who joined. They had to be aged between 17-50 years of age. They also had to have a good education, with a good comprehension of both spoken and written English.

If a woman was successful in her application, then she would be allowed to attend the Training Centres. Here, women had to undergo a series of tests and lectures. They also had to attend several medical lectures where the importance of hygiene and health was stressed to them. For some of the Indian girls this would also be the first time that they would be wearing knickers under their saris to protect their modesty.

Different parts of India had different training centres. For those volunteering from West or South then training was at Ahmednagar, if from Eastern India then training would be based in Calcutta.

WRINS were housed in hostels across India. The hostels housed the women of different ethnicities such as Hindus, Anglo-Indians, British and Indians.



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There were different roles and different training roles undertaken by the women. In Karachi, was the Naval Gunnery Training Establishment. Some of the tasks women had to undertake were stripping close range weapons and assembling them back again, cleaning the weapons, and recording shoot practices. Women were also typists, loggers, coders, cypher watchers, telephonists and office clerks.

The badges of rank of officers and WRINS are similar to those worn by the Royal Indian Navy. There was also an allowance for uniform – a total of Rs 300 was paid for uniform.

The WRINS were disbanded in 1946 after the war had ended and talks of Independence meant the women were no longer needed.

You can find out more on the website
www.bimcic.com

