

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** AWE0411

## Maxwell, Barbara Edwina Audrey

(1932 - 1991)

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**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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**Created** 12 December 2002

**Last modified** 4 May 2009