

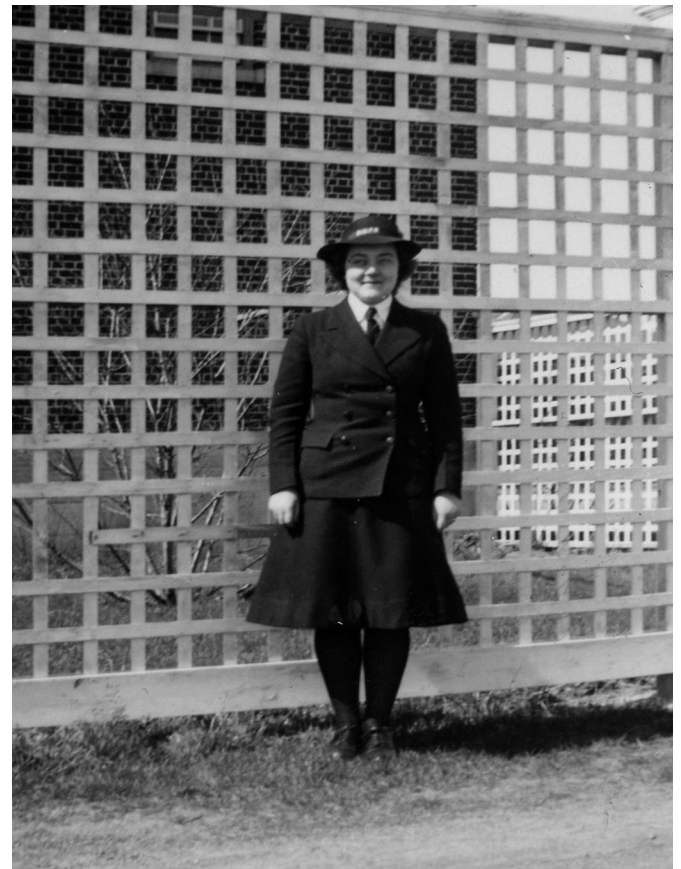


**SUPPLY  
LINE**

## Lorna Stanger

Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service

Lorna joined the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service when she was 20, and spent the war as a photographer.



Lorna Stanger posing for a photograph, in uniform  
George Metcalf Archival Collection  
Canadian War Museum 19790488-005\_4

### Before the War

Born on 13 October 1922, Lorna grew up on a farm in Aylwin, Quebec, 80 kilometres north of Ottawa, Ontario. Like many young women of the time, she was an office clerk, working at Statistics Canada.

She was bored by her job. When the Canadian military began enlisting women, she left her office job and joined up.

She applied to each of the services: army, navy, and air force. She decided to go with the one that accepted her first.

## Navy Photographer

In April 1943, at age 20, Lorna left Ottawa for Galt, Ontario, for basic training with the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service. Once her training was complete, she returned to Ottawa, where she was upset to learn that the navy wanted her take on kitchen duties.

Lorna told her commanding officer that she did not want to become a cook. She was instead sent to take a photography course.

Lorna worked for Naval Information in Ottawa and Halifax before being sent overseas. One of the jobs that made an impact was putting together death notices for sailors. When sailors died, Lorna and her colleagues sent notices – along with original enlistment photos – to the newspapers.

When HMCS *Athabaskan* was sunk in April 1944 – with a loss of 128 men – she worked for 36 hours straight. They had to hurry, she recalled, because the navy wanted to get the news out about who was lost – and who was not – as quickly as possible for those anxiously waiting at home.

She was then posted to London, England where she stayed with British Wrens (members of the Women's Royal Naval Service). Most of her work involved developing and printing photographs taken by sailors, or doing picture assignments for Naval Information.

She took her own photographs as well, using her pass to take pictures of bombed-out areas. Lorna was in London when the war in Europe ended, and took part in the city's Victory in Europe (VE Day) celebrations.

## Return to Life in Canada

After Japan surrendered in August 1945, and the war was finally over, Lorna was posted back to Ottawa and discharged.

Being a photojournalist intrigued her, but it was a male-dominated field with few opportunities for women. Instead, she got a job at the Royal Canadian Mint. When she got married in 1949,

she had to give up this job, too, because married women were barred from the civil service.

When the rules changed in 1953, Lorna returned to Statistics Canada, retiring in 1978. She and her husband, Harry Cooney, had three children. She died in 2010.