

## The participation of women in the Naval Academy's Graduate Courses

Hercules Guimarães Honorato <sup>i</sup> 

Núcleo de Implantação do Instituto Naval de Pós-graduação, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

1

### Summary

The Naval Academy (EN) received, in 2014, the first class of female students (Aspirants) in its officer training course for the Navy. The objective of this article is to present the historical participation of young military women from the Naval Academy. The approach is qualitative, with documentary and bibliographic research as exploratory techniques and with longitudinal survey data from 2014 to 2021. The participation of women in various professional occupations, which until recently were male occupations, is on the rise. The history of female achievements is undoubtedly remarkable in the construction of an officialdom that represents a portion of Brazilian society. The future officers are learning desirable behaviors that will emerge in the military profession, of dedication to the Navy, to the Nation, without forgetting that they are female citizens, active members of a society in search of a developed, strong, free, egalitarian, just, and sovereign country.

**Keywords:** Women Aspirants. Naval School. Military Higher Education. Gender Inclusion.

### Participação feminina em Cursos de Graduação da Academia Naval Brasileira

#### Resumo

Em 2014, a Academia Naval Brasileira admitiu a primeira classe de estudantes do sexo feminino (Midshipmen) no seu curso de formação de oficiais para a Marinha. O objectivo deste artigo é o de apresentar a participação histórica da jovem militar da Academia. A abordagem é qualitativa, com pesquisa documental e bibliográfica como técnicas exploratórias iniciais e com dados de pesquisa longitudinal, de 2014 a 2021. A participação das mulheres em várias ocupações profissionais historicamente ocupadas por homens está a crescer. A história das realizações das mulheres é, sem dúvida, notável na construção desta classe de estudantes femininas, que representa uma parte da sociedade brasileira. Os futuros oficiais estão a aprender os comportamentos desejáveis que irão seguir na profissão militar, tais como a dedicação à Marinha e à Nação, não deixando de lado o facto de serem mulheres e cidadãs, membros activos de uma sociedade que procura um País desenvolvido, forte, livre, igual, justo e soberano..

**Palavras-chave:** Cadetes mulheres. Academia Naval Brasileira. Ensino Superior Militar. Inclusão do género.



## 1 Introdução

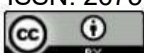
Brazil, you now have women  
Serving also in Arms  
The flag as a shield  
The Navy as a sword  
The example, our mission

(Hymn of the Navy Women's Hymn - Women at Arms. Lyrics  
and Music: CMG (S) Sylvia da Costa Orazem)

The barracks have the characteristic of being a men's territory, "mainly because it involves activities of risk, strength, and strong discipline rigor" (HONORATO, 2019, p.107). However, the effectiveness of the first female contingent in the Brazilian Armed Forces occurred with the enactment of Law no. 6,807, of July 7, 1980, and the creation of the Women's Auxiliary Reserve Corps (CAFRM), composed of a cadre of Officers and another of Squares, which was revoked by Law no. 9,519/1997.

The Brazilian Navy (MB), therefore, was the first to admit women into its ranks, whose main objective was the need to release the operational military for "activities directly related to the preparation and employment of Naval Power" (MENDES, 2010, p.1). At the time, the Navy was growing with the purchase "[...] of modern "Niterói" Class Frigates, among other operative means, besides furnishing, with technical and university-level labor, the Naval Medical Center in Rio de Janeiro, a recently opened hospital complex, which also included the Naval Hospital Marcílio Dias" (HONORATO, 2019, p.106).

With the entry into force of Law no. 9.519, of November 26, 1997, which provides for the restructuring of the Navy's Corps and Staff of Officers and Squares, the CAFRM was extinguished. Women, therefore, began to integrate the same corps and cadres that existed for male military personnel, with equal access to promotions and courses. This legal decision culminated, in November 2012, with the promotion of Rear Admiral (MD) Dalva Maria Carvalho Mendes to the rank of General Officer, and in 2018 Rear Admiral (EN) Luciana Mascarenhas da Costa Marroni. The history of achievements of military women begins to be written.





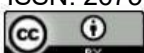
The Naval School (EN) received, in 2014, the first class of female students (Aspirants) in its undergraduate course. "The 'pioneers', as they were called, meant at the time only 1.5% of the total student body, a collective that was unaware, as fellow soldiers, of the female figure" (HONORATO, 2019, p. 120). The purpose of this article is to present the historical participation of young military women coming from higher education at the Naval School (EN), which began in January 2014.

## 2 Methodology

The approach of this research is qualitative in nature, with documentary and literature research as initial exploratory techniques and with longitudinal research data[ This is the fourth article in a series by the author. The first article was written in 2014, with the entry of women Aspirants. The second was in relation to the Discipline of Military Organizational Culture. The third text was regarding the graduation of the first class in 2017. The text in question presents, from the beginning, the female participation in the EN until the possibility of choosing the Navy and Marine Corps, that is, from 2014 to 2021. The first two articles were published in the author's book, cited in the References], since this is the fourth study produced and we followed the Aspirants during their academic training, from 2014 to the present day. The methodological research approach adopted was qualitative, which according to Alves-Mazzoti and Gewandsnajder (1999, p. 163) is "characteristically multimethodological, that is, they use a wide variety of data collection procedures and instruments."

Taking advantage of social networks, especially the WhatsApp application, a specific question, listed in a later section of this article, was forwarded and disseminated to current Navy officers graduating from the first class and 3rd year Aspirants, who are the first in the choice for the other corps, i.e., they could be from the Navy and Marine Corps.

### The first "Sentinels of the Seas



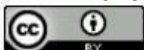


The journey towards female participation in the Naval Academy began in 2004, when the then Director of Navy Education (DEnsM) forwarded the report prepared by a School Working Group, constituted to address the issue of "Admission of women to the Naval Academy". The topic under study was addressed again in 2013, with meetings between DEnsM and EN representatives, who concluded that the 2004 report was up to date and that the observations/suggestions contained therein should be considered and maintained, in particular that the future Aspirants would enter directly into the Marine Intent Corps (CIM), a prediction that was highlighted in the competition notice.

Another important point that was decided, at this first moment, was that they should not take some courses, so that they would be academically prevented from taking the Navy (CA) and Marine Corps (CFN) courses. In the first competition for entry in 2013, there would be no Physics exam, and with that, they would also not have the subject of Physics-1 (FIS-1) in the 1st school year. In the place of FIS-1 another subject was put, and "Military Organizational Culture" was inserted. Thus, the entry process for women into the EN was differentiated from that of men. In the following year, the Physics exam was reintroduced and FIS-1 was again included in the first year curriculum.

The first competition had 3,354 female candidates for the 12 vacancies offered, which represented a ratio of about 279 candidates to one vacancy, two and a half times the male vacancy ratio. In the case of male applicants, there were 4,171 for 41 vacancies, this being the same number of vacancies as in the 2012 competition, when there was no possibility of women Aspirants entering. This highlights the great demand to join the ranks of the first class of female aspirants in the EN, which was corroborated by one of the approved candidates who was at the age limit for entry via the competition and was in her eighth year of Chemical Engineering.

The institution prepared itself to receive the new women, and one of the first concerns was to answer the question: where would they be housed? And after much deliberation, it was decided that not only the box, but everything that would go along with the formation would be as similar as possible to that destined to the other students.



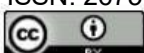


Another major milestone was the adaptation of the Norms of the Aspirant Corps Command (COMCA). No change was needed in its structure, but the uniform for common areas was detailed, procedures for inspection of cabins and quarters (if the Officer was of the opposite sex) were included, rules for the use of the female uniform were inserted, among other necessary instructions (HONORATO, 2019). The first three female Officers were assigned to the COMCA sector, with training in pedagogy, psychology and CIM.

It was on January 12, 2014 that the "pioneer women" arrived at Villegagnon Island[ Villegagnon Island - named after the French admiral and conqueror Nicolau Durand de Villegagnon, who ordered the construction of the Coligny Fort on the island of Seregipe, on November 10, 1555, with the intention of creating the "Antarctic France". He was expelled by Men de Sá in 1560 (LIMA, 2008). (LIMA, 2008). They were asked to present themselves and start the adaptation period, when, for the first time, there would be contact between men and women who were there with the same purpose, to become Aspirants, future Navy Officers.

The adaptation period is "the moment in which the transition from civilian life to military life occurs, the phase in which they learn about the rules and the basic attributes of military-naval training, hierarchy and discipline. By going through these weeks of hard training and learning, they were able to earn their plaques and rise to the rank of Naval Aspirants" (HONORATO, 2019, p.123). As complementary information, this author highlights that of the 236 new Aspirants who started the adaptation period, only eight dropped out, all 12 of the 12 young "pioneer" girls in military life and in the EN continued. When they started the school period, the new Aspirants represented about 1.5% of the total student body, a collective that was unaware, as fellow in uniform, of the female figure.

In December 2017, the graduation year of the "Almirante Gastão Motta" Class, they were declared Marine Guards, and this is the recognition of the Brazilian Navy for four years dedicated to the construction of being a sailor, regardless of their gender. After the voyage on the NE "Brazil", they were promoted to Second Lieutenant and, as foreseen in the Career Plan, they were moved to several Military Organizations and,





according to the Officer's Bulletin, calculation of February 28, 2021, four of them are on board ships of the Fleet and two are in the CFN. One more chapter of the history of achievements of military women was written.

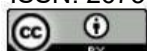
Corvette Captain (IM) Georgia Rita Macieira Ramos Nizer, one of the first officers who arrived at the institution to assist in the integration and development of women Aspirants, reported that:

The 12 Aspirants, managed during these years to get places that we could not imagine, they undoubtedly exceeded the expectations that we placed on them. But, it is also up to me to point out that there are still countless spaces in the Naval School that the next Aspirants of the subsequent classes can conquer, and show more and more the ability that the Military Woman has to perform the same functions as men. (HONORATO, 2019, p.124).

In December 2017, the graduation year of the "Almirante Gastão Motta" Class, they were declared Navy Guards, which is the recognition of the Brazilian Navy for four years dedicated to the construction of being a sailor, regardless of their gender. After the voyage on the NE "Brazil", they were promoted to second lieutenant and, as foreseen in the Career Plan, they were moved to several Military Organizations and, according to the Officer's Bulletin, calculation of February 28, 2021, four of them are on board ships of the Fleet and two are in the CFN. Another chapter in the history of achievements of military women was written.

## The Equal Choice of the Body

The Law for the Restructuring of Corps and Boards that abolished the CAFM, in its article 9, made it clear, in principle, that "Navy Officers of both sexes are equal in rights and obligations under the Constitution, observing the values, principles and rules established therein. However, in its 1st paragraph, item I, it states that the positions occupied by male Officers must be from the CA and CFN. With the advent of Law 13.541, of December 18, 2017, which provides for the restructuring of the Navy's Officers and Squadron Corps, the respective item was changed, with the possibility of the Brazilian Navy's Officers Corps and Squadron being composed of Officers of both sexes. From this moment on, the possibility of opening the other Corps to women Aspirants was opened.





The first contest for the EN with this possibility of Corps choice was held in 2019, with the same 12 openings for women candidates, a constant in previous contests. The participation of 2,746 female candidates left a vacancy candidate ratio of about 229. 19 vacancies were opened in that contest for male candidates. It is worth remembering that the largest contingent of entrants to the institution comes from the Naval College, with an average of 200 students graduating each year.

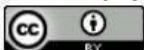
With the Corps choice made at the beginning of the third year of the school cycle and during the 2021 Aspirantex Commission, six were selected for the CA, one for the CFN and three for the CIM, with a total of nine female Aspirants. Regarding the first FN Aspirant, she was asked why she was chosen? And the answer was "[...] I identified myself in relation to my personality [...] and also to the wide range of opportunities that the CFN has to serve the Homeland".

The total number of Marine Guards (GM) trained since the entry of the first women in the EN, from 2018 to 2020, was 634, being 32 GM of the CIM, female. The percentage of women in relation to Aspirants in 2014 was 1.5%, with the ratio of total graduates in those three years rising to 5%, a considered increase. The percentages may be insignificant at first, but they demonstrate that the achievements, even if they are in smaller numbers, may represent victories celebrated with the recognition of complete equality between genders in the Navy's higher education..

## Open word for the Officers and the Aspirants

An article dealing with a subject as important as the history of the first women graduating from the EN could not do without giving voice to those who actually lived and live in the sacred ground of Villegagnon. Thus, the twelve pioneers as well as the current third year Aspirants were invited to answer the question: What did it mean or mean to have been or to be a "Sentinel of the Seas? Two textual seams were elaborated with the answers received.

The members of the first group stated that:





"was to be able to have an improved military-naval training; it was and still is a daily challenge; all the achievements you have together with all your classmates; to be forged during 4 years in Villegagnon marked and defined me; I am grateful for the experience, for the friends I made, for the shyness I lost, for the countless barriers I broke together with my classmates and for everything I learned and could bring to life outside the military".

The Third Year Aspirants affirm that:

"It is an honor to be part of an institution such as the Brazilian Navy, where principles and values are respected and prioritized. To be a sentinel of the seas is a reason for great pride; to be able to contribute to the achievement and maintenance of the objectives of the Brazilian Navy for the country; It is a great pride for both me and my family to be part of the institution and to be able to follow this career so beautiful and admired by society".

## Concluding Remarks

The participation of women in various professional occupations is certainly on the rise, which until recently were mostly male. The structures in the relations between genders have been evolving considerably in the last few years, and, as we are beings resulting from a historical social construction, once opportunities are being opened, women are demonstrating their value and their capacity for decision, leadership, and competence in being military personnel in the armed forces.

The trajectory of achievements in the female participation in the Naval Academy is, without a doubt, remarkable in the construction of an officialdom that represents a portion of Brazilian society. At the time of the initial formation of a small group of "pioneers" in 2014, the Aspirants began to know themselves as military, discovered their vocation, understood the barracks lifestyle and the values representing the Navy. They have learned and are learning the desirable behaviors that they will follow in their chosen profession, of dedication to the Navy, to the Nation, without forgetting that they are women and citizens, active members of a society that seeks a developed, strong, free, equal, just, and sovereign country.

## References

Rev.Pemo, Fortaleza, v. 3, n. 3, e335596, 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v3i3.5596>

<https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/revpemo>

ISSN: 2675-519X



Esta obra está licenciada com uma Licença [Creative Commons](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) Atribuição 4.0 Internacional.





BRASIL. **Lei nº 9.519, de 26 de novembro de 1997**. Dispõe sobre a reestruturação dos Corpos e Quadros de Oficiais e de Praças da Marinha. 1997. Disponível em: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/l9519.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l9519.htm). Acesso em: 17 maio 2021.

BRASIL. **Lei nº 13.541, de 18 de dezembro de 2017**. Altera a Lei nº 9.519, de 26 de novembro de 1997, que “Dispõe sobre a reestruturação dos Corpos e Quadros de Oficiais e de Praças da Marinha”. Disponível em: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2015-2018/2017/Lei/L13541.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2017/Lei/L13541.htm). Acesso em: 17 maio 2021.

HONORATO, H. G. **Relato de uma experiência acadêmica: o “eu” professor-pesquisador**. vol. 1. Curitiba: Brazil Publishing, 2019.

LIMA, J. C. N. (Ed.) **Escola Naval: 200 anos no Brasil**. Rio de Janeiro: Public, 2008.

MENDES, L. C. K. B. **Subsídios sobre a presença da mulher na MB**. Brasília, DF: Centro de Comunicação Social da Marinha, 2010.

<sup>i</sup> **Hercules Guimarães Honorato**, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7340-1532>

Núcleo de Implantação do Instituto Naval de Pós-graduação, Escola Superior de Guerra e Escola Naval.

Bacharel em Ciências Navais. Mestre em Educação. Especialista em Docência do Ensino Superior, Gestão Estratégica e MBA em Logística. Professor-Pesquisador. Autor do livro: *Relato de uma experiência acadêmica: o “eu” professor-pesquisador*, vol. 1, 2 e 3.

Contribuição de autoria: Único autor.

Lattes: <https://lattes.cnpq.br/8129815602916167>

E-mail: [hghhmma@gmail.com](mailto:hghhmma@gmail.com)

**Editora responsável:** Cristine Brandenburg

**Especialista *ad hoc*:** Robson Carlos da Silva

### Como citar este artigo (ABNT):

HONORATO, Hercules Guimarães. A participação feminina nos Cursos de Graduação da Escola Naval. **Rev. Pemo**, Fortaleza, v. 3, n. 3, e335596, 2021. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.47149/pemo.v3i3.5596>

Received May 25, 2021.

Accepted on June 18, 2021.

Published on June 18, 2021.

