

1998

No1

Lioness





THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960- No 206184

Founded in 1919

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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT, GCVO

VICE-PRESIDENT

Brigadier H G MEECHIE, CBE

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Colonel C E Hammond CBE

Colonel V K Stead OBE TD

Miss M M Thomson TD

Mrs F M White

Mrs A H S Matthews

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Honorary Treasurer:

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Brigadier H G Meechie, CBE

Lieutenant Colonel M W Soames MBE

Mrs A H S Matthews

Cover Photographs

Front Cover

**Our Patron Arriving For Council Lunch
at the Army and Navy Club, June 1997**

Back Cover

"Dolly Mixture"

(courtesy of Sgt Rick Brewer Rub Rel)



Member of the Association of Service Newspapers

Contributions for next issue by 14 MAY 1998

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ATS AND WRAC HANDPAINTED WALL PLAQUES

These are available from Cavalier
Supplies, PO Box No 2, Gilberdyke,
BROUGH, East Yorkshire HU15 2TN or
telephone 01430 441315 or 01459
115560.

Branch Secretaries may obtain a discount
for bulk purchases and the Benevolent
Fund could receive some commission.

EDITORIAL

It takes 3 months to produce Lioness and no sooner is one put to bed than I am searching for copy for the next issue! I shall endeavour, as requested, to capture articles from serving members during the next few months to keep us up to date with life in the Army today.

I much enjoyed the London Reunion in September and was made to feel most welcome by Eileen Carter and the ladies.

Mrs Matthews and I went up to Scotland to the Scottish Reunion. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting the ladies and staying in Dumfries.

On the Association's behalf I attended the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey. Brigadier Anne Field laid the wreath and many of our members attended.

Christmas will be over by the time this magazine reaches you but we should like to wish all members and friends of the Association a Very Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

AN EASY WAY TO GIVE

Are you one of us?

By which I mean do you receive a pension from the Paymaster?

If so, we are, especially if over sixty, very lucky - many of our former comrades rely solely on the State Pension - and for single people living alone, life can be very hard, especially as age increasingly takes its toll. We all know of the excellent work done by the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund to ease some of the burden of our less fortunate fellow ex-servicewomen, and much is done by many branches in fundraising activities.

However, not all of us are able to attend these functions and individual donations although gratefully received, are less than they are able to be because they do not, when sent in the form of cash or cheque, attract a contribution from the Inland Revenue.

This is where the Paymaster enters the calculation. Through an organisation called South West Charitable Giving it is possible to have a monthly sum from your pension which sum, plus the tax which would have been paid on it, is then paid over to the Benevolent Fund. As an example, a monthly deduction of £4 from your pension would result in a gift of £60 a year to the Fund - less than £1 a week to each donor, but a great help on the receiving end.

The General Secretary holds notes on this scheme, but bearing in mind the slender resources of the office staff it would be preferable to obtain details of the "Paymaster/South West Charitable Giving Scheme" from its director at:

Church Town
Peter Tavey
Tavistock
Devon
PO19 9NN

THE ARMY TAUGHT YOU NEVER TO GIVE UP, SO DON'T

So there you are in civvy street. Completely at a loose end. But...why?...The Army's what you're good at. What about joining the TA? It's part of the British Army so you'll still be a soldier.

There are two options open to you. First, you can join one of the Territorial Army Independent Units based in the TAVRA region in which you have decided to settle. An ideal route for those who wish to serve locally. Which Unit you join will depend on those available in the area you live in. Second, if you are leaving a Corps, you could retain your capbadge and become a member of either an Independent Unit as above, or a TA Specialist Unit. In either, you can maintain and extend the special skills that you have learned.

The minimum commitment as a member of the Independent TA is 6 weekends, a two-week Summer Camp and some weekday evenings. As a Specialist we ask only 15 days training and 2 weekends. In return, you will earn Army rates of pay and an annual tax-free bonus.

Anyway, I can't imagine you in a suit and tie all of the time. Go on! Phone or write. We need you.



BE THE BEST

Phone 0345 300111, or write to The Territorial Army, Freepost 4335 (Ref: 9100), Bristol BS1 3YX.

Vice President

VICE PRESIDENT

Brigadier Helen Meechie took over from Brigadier Anne Field as Vice President of the WRAC Association on 1 November 1997.

On behalf of the Association we should like to welcome her and wish her an enjoyable term of office.

BRIGADIER HELEN MEECHIE CBE MA LLD

Brigadier Meechie was born on 19th January 1938 in Dundee. She was educated at Morgan Academy and St Andrew's University. She was commissioned at Hindhead in 1960.

She served initially with 12 Battalion and 23 Company WRAC followed by postings in Cyprus and Hong Kong. She attended the National Defence College at Latimer then went to MOD before becoming ADWRAC in HQ BAOR. In 1982 she became Director WRAC until 1986 when she attended the prestigious Royal College of Defence Studies. Her final position was as Deputy Director Personal Services before retiring in 1991.

During her service Brigadier Meechie was also ADC to Her Majesty The Queen. She was the Honorary Colonel of

Tayforth University OTC and a Freeman of the City of London.

Her interests include golf and gardening. Currently she is bringing up 2 puppies - Penticharm Celsiana and Penticharm Chianti - otherwise known as Duffy and Clyde.



*VICE PRESIDENT
with Duffy and Clyde*

IF YOU WANT ARMANI JEANS LOOK NO FURTHER

If you are looking for Levi's, Adidas, Seiko, Umbro, Fila, Reebok, Diesel, Armani or Calvin Klein but do not want the hassle of a Saturday afternoon in the high street then Naafi Select is the catalogue for you.

Naafi's second mail order catalogue has been expanded to 300 pages and now includes leading branded menswear, womenswear, electronic goods, jewellery and toys.

The catalogue offers free world wide delivery which is normally guaranteed to mainland UK within 72 hours and to Germany within 5 days. Select also guarantees lowest home shopping prices and has introduced two new credit offers; interest free credit on selected items and spread payment plans.

**GET YOUR COPY BY PHONING
LO-CALL 0345 023 753**

Naafinews

Officers' Lunch

OFFICERS' LUNCH - 13 SEPTEMBER 1997

The Officers' Lunch on 13 September 1997 was held in the Officers' Mess, Worthy Down. After coffee, at 1100 hours, when all took the opportunity of chatting to anyone they knew, there was a presentation on Bosnia by the then Commanding Officer, Lt Col Jeff Little, of 27 Regt of what we used to call the RCT but is now the RLC and his assistant Ops Officer at the time, Lt Becks (short for Rebecca) Walker RLC. It was an interesting presentation and gave us an insight into some of the missions undertaken by 27 Regt in Bosnia.

After that Lt Col (Retd) Rosemary Cornwell presented Brig (Retd) Anne Field with the Standard carried by WRAC officers at the final march at Chichester. Since three of the four officers who participated in the march were present, namely Rosemary herself with Maj (Retd) Ann Maskens-McIntyre and Capt Pat Cooper, it was a fitting moment for the Standard to be presented. It will now reside in the Sgts' Mess at the AGC Centre.

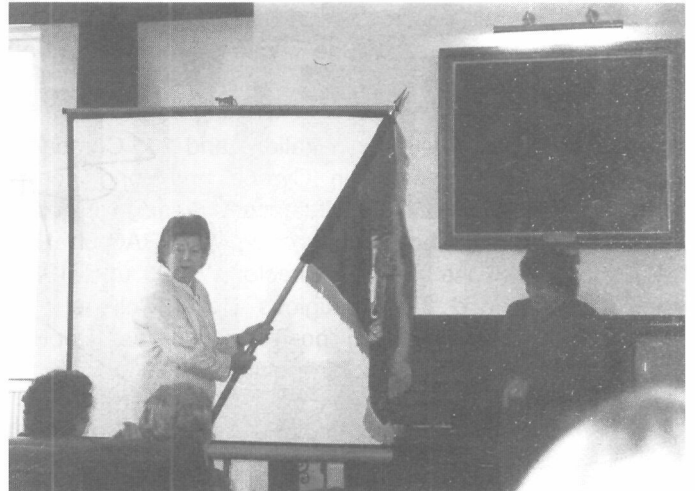
We then had pre-lunch drinks served by the staff of the Officers' Mess and - wonders will never cease - sat down, with a seating plan, to lunch. For someone who has attended this event in the past, including queuing up at hotplates, I can say without hesitation or any fear of contradiction that this lunch was the best ever. I do know that, having been hesitant about going this time, I shall certainly be going next year.

My thanks, therefore, to the Regimental Secretary, Fiona White, who organised it all.

HGM

OFFICERS LUNCH

The next Officers Lunch will be on Saturday 19th September 1998 in the Officers Mess Worthy Down. (Proforma in next Lioness).



WRAC Association

(Incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps
and Auxiliary Territorial Comrades Association)

In 1917 during the First World War women were recruited for service with the Army in a non-nursing capacity for the first time and saw service overseas winning three Military Medals for gallantry. In 1919 Queens Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC) formed an Old Comrades Association.

In 1942 the Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS) was added to the title and the word 'Old' was dropped! In 1949 when the Womens Royal Army Corps (WRAC) was formed, the Association took on its present title.

There are now 82 Branches of the Association in the United Kingdom. The Association publishes a magazine twice a year which is included in the subscription.

Branches meet monthly as a rule and Groups of branches have an annual reunion. On 19/20 April 1997 there was a Grand Reunion in BLACKPOOL.

Why Should You Join

The Association exists to keep serving and ex-service women in touch with each other, and to help them in times of hardship and trouble. The strength of the whole depends on the individual, and you can help by joining NOW.

How to Obtain Help

If you are in need for help the Association may be able to help you through its Benevolent Funds, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, SO21 2RG, giving name and number while serving, dates served, and details of the trouble, or contact your local Soldiers, Sailors, Airmens Families Association (SSAFA) whose number will be in your local 'phone book

Officers' Dinner

WRAC OFFICERS DINING CLUB - THIRD DINNER - 1 NOVEMBER 1997

The third, and, judging by the many complimentary letters received, the most successful yet WRAC Officers Dining Club Dinner was held at the Army and Navy Club on Saturday 1 November 1997. One hundred (members and a few guests) attended, all apparently in a party mood from the word go. Pre-dinner drinks, this time held in the Library, seemed to set the scene for the whole evening. The volume of chatter and laughter rose considerably as more members arrived and the allotted hour passed all too quickly. A five minute call for dinner (for the necessary loo stop!) could hardly be heard above the noise level, but fortunately the message got through.



Dinner was served in the Pall Mall room. A top table (necessary with six ex Directors attending) of 25 together with six sprigs of 12, with 'gunners' at the end of each spring, provided ample seating for all. The seating plan was great, allowing for all ages and people's wishes. Dinner itself was quite excellent. Indeed the Army and Navy Club excelled itself.

After dinner, loyal toasts and of course speeches on this occasion, since we were dining out the Vice President of the Association, Brigadier Anne Field, we then repaired to the Ladies Lounge where we had a bar extension until late. It is gathered that this was very necessary since the last to



leave, left at approximately 4a.m! The after dinner time gave those who had not met up with or sat with old friends at dinner the chance to meet them. The noise level again said it all.

The only disappointment was not at the dinner but beforehand. Why some people think that, if they do not answer a letter, it will be taken that they are not attending, is simply beyond belief. So, if the cap fits, wear it, all 40 odd of you.



And, on a similar note, please will all members of the Dining Club (who have not already done so without waiting to be asked) send their £5.00 for administrative costs for Dinner Four onwards until asked for more(!) to the Chairman, Lt Col V E Trout. Cheques, if sent, should be made payable to the 'WRAC Officers Dining Club'. And, should anyone not intend to remain as a member, will they please let Val know?



Officers' Pension Society

OFFICERS' PENSIONS SOCIETY

Just after the Second World War, a small group of officers of all three Services banded together "to promote, in every way, the interests and welfare of members and former members of the Armed Forces." Such was the birth of the Officers' Pensions Society (the OPS).

The concerns for the welfare of ex-Service people, which prompted the creation of the OPS just over fifty years ago, sadly persist to this day and so the OPS remains as important and as relevant as ever. Today, the OPS - part lobby group, part investment company and part charity - is the only organisation which exists specifically to protect and promote the pension interests of ex-members of the Armed Forces of all ranks and their dependants. Indeed, the range of tasks which now fall on senior military commanders are so extensive that their ability to discharge their traditional responsibilities for caring for their subordinates has been seriously curbed. In addition, serving officers in the personnel policy branches of the Ministry of Defence have a main duty to those still serving and, not surprisingly, they are more likely to be involved in broader policy issues than in serving the pastoral interests of retired Servicemen and women. To these MOD officers, it will be more important to give priority to strategic manning and structural matters - such as the need to attract sufficient men and women into the Services, to create career opportunities and to encourage the more able to serve full careers. These are crucial issues for the Services, but the sad and inescapable fact is that serving and retired Servicemen and women can no longer blindly rely on their superiors, or expect a grateful Government, to give their well-being sufficient priority. In particular, it increasingly falls to Service charities and organisations like the OPS - organisations to whom people are paramount - to protect ex-Service people's interests and to fight for their fair treatment.

The OPS is a membership organisation with some 55,000 members. The Society has two main roles: first, the Society campaigns to remove the many inequities and anomalies which still permeate the Armed Forces Pension Scheme and from which so many Armed Forces pensioners suffer. Many of these veterans, men and women, are old and are in real financial hardship: the nation still has a debt to pay them.

Secondly, the Society gives expert advice on Service Retired Pay, Forces Family Pensions, invaliding and disability benefits, widows' and widowers' pensions, and on a host of related matters. Much of this information is revised and published six-monthly in the Society's popular journal "Pennant" and 19 meetings are held each year at various locations in the UK when members can meet the staff and can discuss policy issues and personal pension problems.

In addition to campaigning and to providing advice, the Society offers many other significant benefits: for example, the Society operates a most efficient Affinity Card Scheme

and the Society's members enjoy many special discounts and special offers.

Membership of the Society is made up of mainly retired male and female commissioned officers and their dependants but, in reality, the Society's campaigning activities directly help the whole military community. Over the years, the Society has successfully secured many significant changes to the rules of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme. For example, the Society played a central part in securing the indexation of pensions, comparable pensions for Service women, the increase from one-third to a half-rate Forces Family Pension from 1973, and the payment of pensions from 1978 to the widows of post-retirement marriages. During the Society's campaigns of 1989 and 1995, the Society brought unendurable pressure on the Government to win important changes to the pension rules for War Widows as a result of which the lives of many elderly ladies were literally transformed. From this success rate, it will be clear that - as the Government has frequently discovered - the Society packs a punch. Indeed, Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Department of Social Security in the last Conservative Government recently commented on the impact of the Society's activities on his Department. During the course of a debate in the House of Lords on 11 June 1997, he offered the following advice to his successor in the new Labour Government, Baroness Hollis of Heigham: "Perhaps I may mention just one organisation to the noble Baroness. I refer to the Officers' Pensions Society. It works extremely hard I caution the noble Baroness that if she finds that the OPS is running a campaign against her, she had better be pretty careful. As I found to my cost, it is quite the most effective of ambushers of any organisation I have come across."

All retired officers and their dependants should be members of this powerful organisation: they need to protect their positions by being part of a corporate body which fights for the collective pension interests of all ex-Service people, and the Society also needs their support - to maintain a large membership and so to increase the Society's lobbying strength. From the Society's past campaigning record, it will be clear that the Society is especially attentive to the needs and problems of Servicemen and widows.

Much work still needs to be done to provide fair pensions for all members of the ex-Service community and many challenges to existing provisions have also to be countered. Indeed, on 17 July 1997 the Government launched a wide-ranging review of pensions and only the OPS is making a contribution to the pensions debate on behalf of the ex-Service community.

For further information about the OPS, please telephone (0171 - 820 - 9988) or write to the Membership Secretary, The Officers Pensions' Society, 68 South Lambeth Road, Vauxhall, London SE8 1RL.

WRAC Luncheon Club

W.R.A.C Luncheon/Dinner Club

Application for Membership

Surname:
(Stating Miss/Ms/Mrs/Rank)

Christian Names:

Address:

Postcode:Telephone No:

Serial Number:

Surname when serving:

WRAC Service: From:To:

Last Rank held/still holding:

Decorations

Please return to: The Membership Secretary
WRAC Luncheon Club
Mrs Ann Deakin
'Cobblestones'
2 Chesham Road
Stafford ST16 3JP

I wish to join the WRAC Luncheon/Dinner Club and enclose:

	Entrance Fee	£ 2.00	Must always be added	£2.00
*	1 Years Subscription	£ 2.00		£
*	3 Years Subscription	£ 5.00		£
*	Life Membership	£10.00		£
				£
*	delete as appropriate			

Cheques/Postal Orders to be made payable to: "W.R.A.C Luncheon Club"

Signature: Date:

A stamp/stamped addressed envelope (medium size) would be appreciated

Annual General Meeting 1998

The Annual General Meeting of the WRAC Association will be held in the Victory Services Club, 63/67 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF at 2.30 pm on Saturday 18th April 1998 (admission to AGM by Membership Card).

Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of Minutes of AGM held at Norbreck Hotel, Blackpool on 19 April 1997
4. Business arising from the Meeting
5. Report of Council
6. Financial Report
7. Editor's Report - Lioness
8. Reports of Committees
 - a. ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund
 - b. Executive Committee
9. Resolutions
 - a. Motion of urgency
 - b. Council Resolutions
 - c. Branch Resolutions
 - d. Elections
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

CAPTION COMPETITION WINNER

"Honest I did have a platoon following me
ma'am!"

Sent in by:

Miss G Norfor
102 Parham Road
Gosport
PO12 46E

PROGRAMME FOR AGM 1998

- 1030 - Stalls Set Up
- 1130 - Meeting of Secretaries - Carisbrooke Hall
- 1215 - Members of Council meet in Trafalgar Room
- 1230 - Secretaries join Council in Trafalgar Room
- 1300 - Lunch for Council and Secretaries in Trafalgar Room
- 1430 - AGM of Association in Carisbrooke Hall for approx 350 members
- 1600 - Tea in El Alamein Room

HOW DOGS AND WOMEN ARE ALIKE

Both look stupid in hats

Both can eat five pounds of chocolate at
one sitting

Both tend to have 'hip' problems

Neither understands football

Both look good in a fur coat

Both are good at pretending that they are
listening to every word you say

Neither believe that silence is golden

Both constantly want back rubs

Neither can balance a cheque book

You can never tell what either of them is
thinking

Both put too much value on kissing

Letters



LETTERS PAGE

Ladies please use this page to air your views, good or bad.

Dear Editor

What a splendid idea to have a "Letters Page" for members to comment on a wide variety of subjects. It will open up an area in which people who feel they are unable to submit an article for publication but have many items of interest can bring them to the notice of all.

The writer of the first letter published has been brave enough to speak on behalf of all of us who have long felt the same way about the appearance of branch members at the Cenotaph Remembrance Service, or indeed at other parades.

The idea of members wearing a green beret is a very good one, to bring some sort of uniformity. May I suggest that a sash bearing the words "Women's Royal Army Corps Association" incorporating perhaps "ATS" in the wording, might be appropriate?

Mrs Joan Awbery
66 Park Lane
Norwich
NR2 3EF
Tel: 0603 661394

Dear Editor

The Nottingham Evening Post recently carried an article on a Reunion of some ATS. This was very sentimental, except for one line which said these girls had worked for the Auxiliary Territorial Service. With my late wife an ex-ATS I rang the newspaper complaining of that wording and in all innocence I was asked what was wrong. I explained they would never say a soldier worked for the army or a sailor for the navy. The ATS girls were part of the British Army and that's how they should be reported, so girls you have we ex-soldiers looking after your interests.

Mr W Court
Marsh Acres
High Lane
Sloothdy
Alford
Lincs
LN13 9NR



Dear Editor

The photograph I have enclosed was taken in Bristol about 1943. It was a celebration of the ATS, fifth birthday. Queen Mary took the salute. The photograph is of 515, HMAA Bty. I was then Cpl L Healey. I thought it might be appropriate for the birthday celebrations in 1998.

Mrs L Cropper
4 Pleasant Street
Walshaw
Bury
Lancs



*515 BATTERY
Marching through Bristol
ATS Birthday Parade
Queen Mary taking the Salute*

Dear Editor

May I draw your attention to the letter in 'LIONESS' No 2 1997 re the Blackpool Reunion, signed by a member as Leicester Branch.

This letter contained the personal views of that member and NOT of the members who travelled as a group from Leicester Branch. Our Chairman and the members who attended the Reunion are concerned that this point be made clear.

Apart from some confusion at Birmingham with the coach and a 'bomb alert' delay on the motorway, those of us attending from Leicester Branch fortunately encountered no problems at Blackpool and enjoyed a lovely weekend.

We chose not to stay at the Norbreck and so were unaware of the problems faced by some of the members there. It is never easy organising such a big event, but we are sure the views and points expressed in the various letters will be taken into account for future reunions, so that those disabled and others needing assistance can also fully enjoy these events.

Mrs L Hollis (Hon Sec)
3 Parklands Avenue
Groby
Leics
LE6 0BL

Dear Editor

I enclose a photograph which might be of interest to your readers.

It was taken in late 1943 or early 1944 just before Princess Elizabeth, as she then was, joined the Service. The Queen and the princess visited No 11 ATSTC at Newbattle Abbey, Dalkeith and delighted everyone. I was at that time Assistant Adjutant.

In front is J/C Ruth Whittaker followed by C/C Helen Nimmo (on left) and C/C Aylmer (right).

Mrs D J Coleman (nee J/C Alison Clark)
Moat View
Carnwath
Lanark
ML11 8HW
Tel: 0555 840 542



Dear Editor

I was interested in Hilda Crossley Doll (ATS) Page 18 No 1 Issue 1997.

Please find enclosed a photograph of my two ATS Dolls made by me in 1941. The 'grubby one' on the left of the picture was taken to N Africa by my husband and travelled with him right through the War and then safely back to me to join the one I kept at home.

These dolls stand 8½ ins high and are now 57 years old. My name before marriage was Sgt Elsie (Sue) Serle and I worked in the Infantry Records Office Exeter from 1939-1946. My name now is Elsie (Sue) Vaudin.

I have never read any news from the girls who served in Exeter 1939-1946 in the "Lioness".

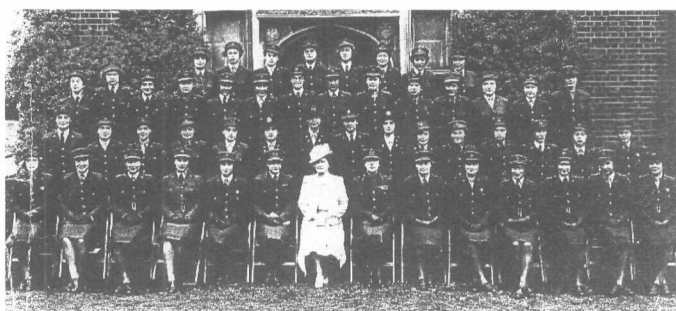
Mrs E Vaudin
"Squirrels Corner"
17 Hornbeam Way
Colehill
Wimborne
Dorset
BH21 2QE
Tel 0202 882622

Dear Editor

Thought you may like this photograph taken in WWII. It is a lovely photo of our dear Queen Mother when she was Queen - also HRH Princess Royal who was then Controller Commandant and Chief Controller Whateley. The enclosed was taken at the visit of Her Majesty The Queen to the ATS Wing Staff College 31st July 1944.

It was given to me for my work in Bagshot Park as QM for about 3½ years. So many memories and such companionship. I'll never forget.

Mrs Millie Watkins (nee Millie King (Cpl))
64 Vale Road
Portslade
Sussex
BN41 1GG



Dear Editor

I would be interested in seeing an article in each issue of the Lioness, which showed us what our female counterparts of today are doing in the 'Professional' modern army.

With the WRAC now 'disbanded' and our women part of male regiments, it would be really interesting to read about their duties, developments and stories.

I served in WRAC 1972-1980 in various parts of England, NI and Germany (W/Cpl 443546).

Katy Swietlicka B.H.
11 Brendon Laindon
Basildon
Essex
SS15 5XJ



Dear Lioness

I was interested in reading "A Postal Worker Remembers" issue 2 1997. I was working there on SOII from 1956 up until the end of 1958. I also remembered running for the coach on early shift with a piece of toast in one hand. We had meals at the barracks beside Wormwood Scrubs (I don't know the writer Maureen Brown).

What I would like to know is when did the sorting office move to Garst Road?

I would be grateful for any information on that please.

Mrs M I Rowling (W/389754 Pte Willey)
14 Lee Green
Newton Aycliffe
Co Durham
DL5 5HN

Dear Editor

This is my first letter to the Lioness.

I enjoy reading all the news and information, the letter from Maureen Brown issue 2 1997 about the early days of the Postal Service was interesting although a few years before my time, but I do remember Colonel Reading.

Through reading an article in the Lioness I have made contact with one member, but there are so many people I have lost touch with, which brings me to the letter from Peggy S Bush of Shrewsbury, also in issue 2 1997.

The comments about the lack of contributions to this magazine prompted me to wonder with some consternation about how many more ex-members of the WRAC who served during the 60s and 70s are still unaware of the Association. I cannot accept that we are the only two.

I served in the WRAC from January 1959 to December 1965 in the Courier and Postal Unit, also serving in Cyprus from 1961 to 1963. At no time during or after my army service did I have any information about the Association.

Some years later I read an advertisement in the Plymouth Herald inviting ex-WRAC to join the Plymouth Branch. Thank you Plymouth for putting me in touch with the Association.

It did occur to me and I am sure we all realise that since the disbandment of the WRAC it is certain that we have lost even more members and as there must be many other people from my generation and younger that are probably still unaware of the Association, then I feel we should make more effort to attract those people into the Association to secure its future.

Perhaps suggestions can be put forward from each branch. I think media advertising is a good idea with voluntary contributions from members towards payment. I do appreciate that this idea has been used before but perhaps an update is needed.

I spent six very happy years in the WRAC and I look forward to being a member for many years to come.

Eugenie Crook (Crookie)
W/400212 Corporal
3 Southern Close
Ferndale Road
Weston Mill
Plymouth
Devon
PL2 2BQ

Dear Editor

First of all may I on behalf of the 'Berlin Belles' (ATS who served in Berlin during the 1940s) say what a wonderful weekend we all had at the Grand Reunion held at the Norbreck Castle Hotel Blackpool in April and what a marvellous turnout altogether of ex-ATS and WRAC.

We rated it a tremendous success and do hope everyone who attended enjoyed it as much. Our Blackpool Branch worked extremely hard, so to them and all the organisers we say a BIG THANK YOU.

Mrs D Eastham (nee Hart)
11 North Houses Lane
St Ann's
FY8 4NT
Tel: 01253 722081



*BERLIN BELLES
from left to right
Front Row: Jean Eastham, Elsie Wilkinson, Dorothy Nixon,
Vina Fraser.
Back Row: Mickey Corstin, Margo McCue, Netta Gibbons,
Dorothy Lyle*

Dear Editor

Perhaps you would be good enough to insert the following in the "Lioness":

Best wishes from Corporal Bush (now Mrs Olive Warner) who was in 'J' Company ATS Garelochhead 1942-1946. Her address is 34 Greenwood Parade, Leongatha, Victoria, Postcode 3953 Australia for anyone who wants to get in touch.

This old ex-ATS wrote to say she'd be honoured and proud to take the last copy of the Lioness that I posted to her to her local Returned Service Womens Group in Australia.

Grace Gibson
Tweedville
14 Eastfield Road
Dumfries
DG1 2EQ

Dear Lioness

Enclosed photo taken in 1944/45 on the occasion of the wedding of Sgt Audrey Evans to Sgt Evans at Reading.

Many thanks for the excellent production of the Lioness.

Mrs Sylvia Prior
26 Lea Road
Wyke Regis
Weymouth
Dorset
DT4 9HT



*Standing - Sgt Abbot, Unknown, L/Cpl K Parkinson (Post Clerk)
Centre - J Comd, P G Ford, Sub E Gilbert, Pte ? Dayton,
Pte Pina Vieri/Rankin
Kneeling - Cpl Robinson and Pte Nee Eeles*

Dear Editor

I joined the army in January 1942 and trained on Northampton Race Course. Need I say it was covered in snow and bitterly cold. There were 20 of us to a hut with I believe one round stove in the middle. We never got warm!!

Then I was posted to Leicester and worked in the RAA clerical office in Pay Section. We had great big books called binders, I could hardly lift mine, as in those days I only weighed 6½ st. A bit more now. I worked in Prisoners of War Section from the Far East. It was 18 months before any names were released. Then their rank and names were entered in these binders and wages also. We then had to write to their loved ones with this information. These big binders were taken down the cellar every night, I can say there was a nice big soldier on our section and he took mine down for me and brought it up in the morning. I forget his name but I remember he was good to me. We were stationed in some nice flats in Stoney-gate Court. After a while I went into private billets with my Colchester friend Peggy Hearum (now Mrs Lawrence). The family was called Mr and Mrs Atkins. I think I was up there for about 2 years and then posted to Westcliffe.

My single name was Joan Constable and remained a private all the 4½ years I served. I will say I enjoyed my service years and made good friends.

Mrs Joan Scanlan
39 Meyrick Crescent
Colchester
Essex
CO2 7QY

Dear Editor

It has been my intention ever since the 50th Anniversary of VE Day to send you the enclosed snap - at last I've got down to it!!

All five of us were members of the Allied Commission for Australia. We first formed up at St Paul's School, Hammersmith and went to Italy in 1945, then on to Vienna. We have all kept in touch since and have met a few times, mainly when Carol (in the centre) came over from America. It was actually on her instigation that we had this little celebration.

It was a beautiful sunny day on the Saturday we'd arranged to meet and we had a wonderful lunch. We then went on to my home and spent the afternoon sitting in the sunshine in the garden. We didn't stop talking!!! When we meet we all feel as though we haven't changed at all - until we look at the greying hair!! We are still young at heart!

This snap will probably interest Ann Scott who was listed in the members of the Norfolk and Suffolk Branch. I hope you will publish more lists of other branches (with addresses for contact).

I look forward so much to receiving the Lioness, but unfortunately have to get out the magnifying glass to try to recognise some of the photographs - haven't yet found anyone I know.

V H Tunbridge
34 De Havilland Close
Canford Magna
Wimborne
Dorset
BH21 1XU



*from left to right
Margaret Hill (née Mitchell), Elsie Jones (née Earl)
Carol Wilkinson (née Maine) Ann Scott (née Meikle)
Vi Tunbridge (née Buonvino)*

Dear Fiona, Alice and Rosemary

To those of you who thought I would never make it to Paris - I did.

To those of you who thought I would have a heart attack - I didn't.

To those of you who agreed with Pauline that I was mad - you were right.

And to those of you who told me that Picardy in Northern France was flat - you lied.

As you see I did make it and really quite enjoyed it at the same time. The three hundred riders were a complete mix (even a Lord Lieutenant took part) but the esprit de corps and the humour throughout was terrific. Most of the riders were dedicated with only a few nutters like me. I rode with the slow group, keeping at the back most of the time, only of course to encourage any stragglers!

The ride was superbly well organised. We never had to stop at a road junction anywhere. In Kent the police were extremely efficient and low key. In France, on the other hand, we were accompanied by a group of fifteen noisy and excitable motorcyclists. For three days they raced up and down the column, which was spread out over several miles at times, tooting their horns (the most important piece of vehicle equipment for a Frenchman), revving their engines, cheering and clapping (with you on the move if they could). It all added to the fun of course.

At the start of each day a short wreath laying ceremony took place at our over-night stops at Calais, Abbeville and Beauvais, at which we were joined by members of the Office National des Anciens Combattants. On the last day two hundred French cyclists joined us outside Paris and we all rode in one group through the Bois de Boulogne, up Le Grande Armee to the Arc de Triomphe, accompanied by our motorcyclists and half the Paris police. Fingers on their horns, naturally, there was a great deal of noise and much excitement and, for me, relief. Pauline and the French Foreign Minister met us. He led us in the final wreath laying ceremony, this time at the tomb of the unknown soldier.

All in all it was a great experience. I'm glad I did it. Unless my memory fails me I probably won't do it again. I found it hard at times, especially on the last day when all the hills seemed to go up. Fortunately I never got saddle sore, the training clearly paying off.

Thank you very much indeed for sponsoring me and making it all worthwhile. There is no doubt that your very generous



Headquarters, Alice, Rosemary and Fiona personally sponsored Col Jonathan Collins the County Field Officer from Norfolk/Suffolk to cycle to Paris in aid of the Poppy Appeal - Editor

donation spurred me on. You may like to know that the total amount I will be paying to the Poppy Appeal is almost £4000. This far exceeds my original target. Thank you so much for your marvellous support. For those of you who have yet to pay please make your cheques payable to The Royal British Legion.

Please give me a call if you want to buy a bike or perhaps some other piece of cycle equipment!

With best wishes and very many thanks.

Colonel Jonathan Collins
Woodlands Farmhouse
Pixey Green
Fressingfield, Eye
Suffolk
IPP21 5SX

Dear Editor

It was with a certain frisson that I read of the death of Mary Byers, so I thought, during my sixteen years service in the ATS and WRAC that I was the only Mary Byers. I send my condolences to the Plymouth Branch.

I would like to say to those who may remember me during my years in service that I am still in the land of the living.

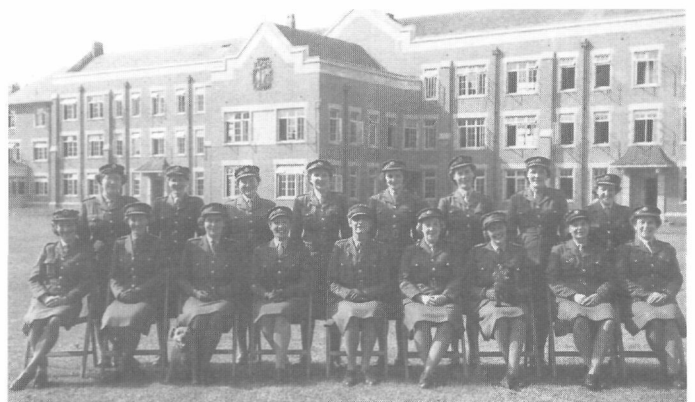
Mary Aggleton (Major A M H Byers)
7 Clare Mead
Rowledge
Near Farnham
Surrey
GU10 4BJ
Tel: Frensham (01252) 794464

Dear Editor

I am sending you the enclosed photo which was taken at about the same time as the "Wings for Victory" Lioness 1/97. My wife is right of centre, standing. She was right marker for numerous parades whilst Drill and PT Instructor at the OCTU, including her own passing out parade, after service in Brussels and Germany. This was taken by Princess Elizabeth. Unfortunately she cannot put names to those in the photo. Perhaps some of your readers can.

Her final posting was to the PT School at Aldershot as Chief Instructor (Sub M C Bird).

Mr L K Rayner
3 Willfield Lane
Hale
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA15 8LP



Dear Editor

On the 30th June 1944 the Welsh Guards were holding an athletics meeting at the Metropolitan Police Sports Ground at Imber Court when tragically a "doodlebug" dropped, killing 18 Welsh Guardsmen, one Physical Training Instructor and our own ATS - W/148928 Pte Jean Jefferies.

The Metropolitan Police have laid out a small garden in remembrance and Frankie Fox and I were invited to a short, moving commemorative service on this anniversary.

Afterwards the police provided an excellent buffet lunch and we swapped memories with former colleagues. We found that they remembered us, since we were such a small platoon, they could hardly miss us.

Our day concluded with a tour of the stables and the small museum.

Doris E Lee
5A Burbank
71 Dukes Avenue
New Malden
Surrey
KT3 4HP
Tel: 01 949 5060

JANKERS AT HALSEY HOUSE, RBL, CROMER

Four Residents Ex-WRAC/ATS were called into action to shell their own 'Home' grown broad beans for the freezer.

Combined ages - 332 years

From ENID COX
HALSEY HOUSE
CROMER



*from left to right
Trudi Love, Enid Cox (née Mallard), Maud Poulton (née Gage),
Mabel Lees*

Editor: Sadly Enid Cox died on 30th December 1997

Dear Editor

Seeing the photograph and letter from Mrs G Hansford in the "Lioness" (No 1 - 1997) brought back happy memories of my time stationed in HQ FARELF with 4 Indep Coy WRAC at Tanglin Barracks from Nov 1963 to May 1965. I am sure Miss Attwood was the Chief Clerk and I had come from FVRDE at Chertsey, coincidentally the Chief Clerk there was Elaine Anton. Enclosed is a photograph of us outside the cookhouse we had just enjoyed a Christmas Party which we gave for children from the Salvation Army children's home. I am standing next to the pillar with the plant pot in front, (Cpl Pat Dickinson W/413300), I do not remember any of the girls other than Hilda Moulton and Mavis? - both in Signals.

I started my army career in Lingfield November 1961. I missed out on the Passing Out Parade and photograph, I was in the sick bay. I then did my Bill Clerks Training at the Drivers and Clerks Training Depot at Yeovil, before being posted to FVRDE. This was the happiest time of my career, working in the Orderly Room with Miss Anton and Staff May. They both taught me a great deal and I often think about them and their friendship. I read with interest the accounts of life in the ATS. I think the War Years gave people a greater sense of belonging and friendships seem to have been longer lasting. I would not have missed my time in the WRAC and keep up the link with the army by working at the Regional Depot RLC, Thatcham. I have been married for 32 years and we have four children and three grand-children, so life is never dull.

Mrs Pat Harpin
32 Paynesdown Road
Thatcham
Berks
RG19 3RU



*SOME OF THE 4 COY WRAC
OC and 2 Lt in front*

LIONESS

We are compiling bound editions of Lioness and have the following missing:

No's 3 & 4 of 1951

There are several spare copies for sale.
Please apply to HQ.

Letters From Abroad

Dear Editor

There is a real lack of 1949 recruits writing in, or on the register,

So come on all you forty niners, lets hear from you.

Do any of you remember the Idiot (ME) who knocked a glass shelf full of bottles off the wall in our Group Hearing Test at Guildford Training Camp, 2 Platoon 3 Com?, May 1949. We were all sent out for giggling by a very irate doctor

Or the telling off we got for being Improperly Dressed sitting outside the billet in rolled up PJs in the sun on a Saturday afternoon?

Or the dress rehearsals we had in the Pink, Blue and Khaki knee length Knickers and Shapeless Bras but then didn't everyone have one of those hilarious nights?

Hoping to see more write-ups and more names of you forty niners on the register.

Mrs Joyce Mary Booker (nee Kelly)
8 Lindisfarne Road
Hackham West
South Australia 5163

Mrs Mary Arnold née Molly Mayberry receives a Community Star Award for 'dedication support and caring' during the 50 years she has lived in Commerce City, Colorado USA.

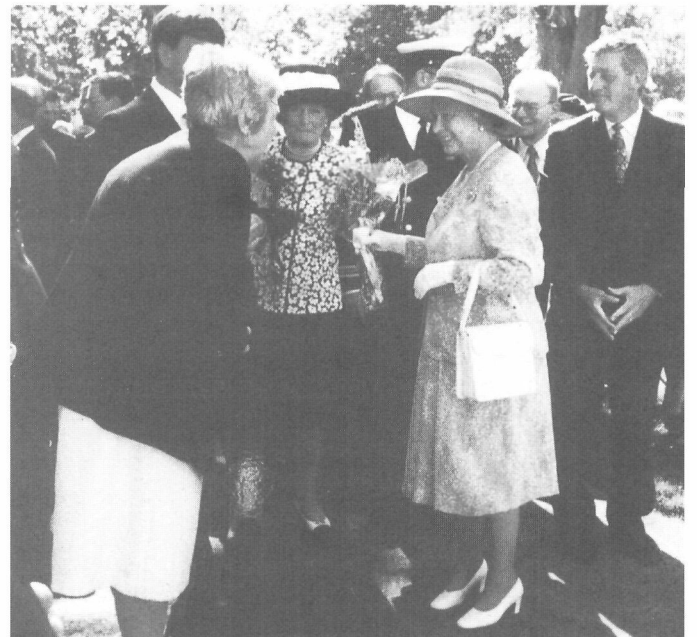
Mrs Mary Arnold
760 East 72nd Place
Commerce City
Colorado 80022
USA



Members of the ATS Reunion Association gather to meet the Queen during the Royal Visit to London, Ontario, on June 26 1997

The 10th Reunion of the ATS Reunion Association will take place in London, Ontario, on September 11th, 12th and 13th 1998.

For information contact: B Anderson - 389 Wharncliffe Road, N London, Ontario, Canada N6G 1E4.



Betty Anderson (née Day) of the ATS Reunion Association chats with Her Majesty during the Royal Visit to London, Ontario, on June 26 1997

IS THERE LIFE AFTER THE WRAC?

If you served in the WRAC – and on retirement moved to a new career – tell us about it!!

Reunions

Wales And The West Area Reunion.

Priory Hall at Coventry University was the venue for 1997 Area Reunion on Saturday 20th September, when more than 200 association members assembled for their annual get together.

The Town Crier, Mr Stan Bacon, opened the reunion with a 'ringing' welcome to Coventry. Mrs Purkis, Area Chairman, welcomed Brigadier Anne Field who was our guest.

In her speech, after lunch, Brigadier Field told us that this was her last Association Function before standing down as our Vice President on 1st November. She had attended various meetings on our behalf. The Association contingent at the Remembrance Service and Parade in Whitehall would be in Column B and would have Parade Marshalls this year.

Brigadier Field announced that the Grand Reunion for the Millenium Year 2000 is to be held in Cardiff (this news was greeted with enthusiasm) Brigadier Field asked if we would consider having the Sunday morning church service in a large hall instead of Llandaff Cathedral which was some way out of Cardiff. She thanked Coventry Branch for inviting her and wished us all well.

The raffle did well, also the tombola and craft stalls (which sold out), the 'Nostalgics' a group of singers, entertained us with a varied programme of songs in which we joined with our usual enthusiasm.

Congratulations and thanks to Coventry Branch for hosting this excellent Reunion from which a donation of £400 has been sent to the Benevolent Fund.

E FRANCIS

Wales and the West Area Reunion for 1998 will be held on the 12th September at Wolverhampton University, Compton Park Campus, Compton Road West, Wolverhampton. For further information contact Miss Mary Davies at 4 Carol Crescent, Lyndale Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 3JF. Tel: 01902 733184.

THE 60's 16ers

The 60's 16ers 2nd re-union organised by Chris Bartlett was held from 19th to 23rd September 1997 in Bradbury Barracks, Krefeld, now home to 7th Signal Regiment.

On 19th September 36 of us were met by SSgt Simon Norris and Cpl Steve Peacock, who, due to our re-union name, were expecting wheel-chairs and zimmer-frames! Once inside Bradbury Barracks our feet never touched ground, a full itinerary was in place for us, the first of that day being the freedom of Krefeld parade for 7th Signal Regiment, a great occasion, attended by the Master of Signals Maj Gen Sprackling, SOinC Brigadier Wood and Krefeld Burgermeister amongst others. As the dignitaries left the podium after the parade, we claimed it for a photocall, persuading the Master, SOinC and Burgermeister to join us (not sure what the local press made of us!) After drinks in the Rathaus - tickets courtesy of our local inside man Barry Clerehugh - we were taken back to the

Sergeants Mess for their LS and GC presentations and lunch. A few faces amongst serving members of 7th Signal Regiment were recognised. An enjoyable start to our visit was topped up by a visit to a local 60's haunt, 'Gustavs', though Gordon (REME) Harper sat for an hour and a half in the 'Widows' convinced he was in Gustavs! Back in camp a few voices were heard to mutter how they had tried for years to get in the WRAC block and here they were invited in but it didn't hold quite the same excitement. (Did one voice belong to Trev Davies?)

A great first day and as Simon and Steve (the SS) were to learn, we would not be tucked up in bed by 11 each night.

Saturday was the Bradbury Fair, a tradition now ably kept up by 7th Signal Regiment. The band of the Royal Corps of Signals taking part after their successful reception at the Freedom of Krefeld parade. The usual stalls, beer tents, etc were visited though there was some concern that one of us might win the mountain bike in the raffle. However, Roger Stebbings offered to ride it back to the UK if we did. Saturday evening was an All Ranks Function, after re-arranging the tables (a habit we got into) it was a great evening, the Corps Band coming out on top yet again. All the 'Fun of the Fair' was at hand and after a second turn on the Bucking Bronco, REME Harper suffered a slight embarrassment, at least he was covered with his E111 if not his trousers.



PODIUM OUTSIDE KREFELD RATHAUS

Rear left to right:

Cpl Steve Peacock, Chris Bartlett, Mike Shledon, Jim Brooks, Gordon Park, Bill Higgs, Roger Sparks, John Farrell, Trev Davies, Dick Burt, Brian Peel, Jan Radford.

Front left to right:

Sue Harper (née Gallentree), Gordon Harper, Evelyn Terri Crow (née Terry), Jackie Farrell (née Hurley), Hazel Hebden (née Crockett), Joyce Nicholls, Evelyn Radford (née Bertie), Chris Sheldon (née Bufton), Anne Ferrier (née Fossett), Elizabeth Gibb (née Evans), Barbara Peel (née Blackburn).

Sunday was Church service which very few of us made - our recovery rate isn't as quick these days. Most made it to brunch and Hazel Hebden (née Crockett) still can't believe she ate chicken nuggets at 10.00am. The AGM followed, with a tentative agreement made to return to Germany for a further re-union - the 1998 re-union to be held in UK. Business and finance dealt with, we were off to watch a hockey-match, after which we took part in a penalty shoot out. The two team captains were John Farrell

and Jackie Farrell (nee Hurley), RSM Pete Griffiths wore enough padding to repel a rocket attack, apologies to his wife Trish for delaying his return home. SSgt Patrick H-Mogg then took us on a short tour of camp and Jan Radford even recognised his old corner in the NAAFI cellar! 'The Hole' was also visited, the only thing recognisable now were the pipes in the ceiling, though John Farrell thought the lino looked familiar but not as highly polished - a night shift duty with hand-bumpers (don't recall seeing him with one!) We then made our way to Krefeld where a street fashion show was taking place, though most of our party were hunting for well remembered bars, 'The Jazz Cellar, Ceilen Bar and Herbst to name a few. Many a glum face met up in the 'Vierzug' as most of the other haunts had disappeared.

Monday we were taken to 16th Signal Regiment and it was sad that at present, the Regiment is spread around Rheindahlen and not in Krefeld where our memories lay. However that didn't stop 16th Signal Regiment from entertaining us, it began with Lt Col James taking time out of his busy schedule to give a welcome introduction to his Regiment in the 90's. From there SSgt (YOS) Broughton took us round 252 and 255 Signal Squadrons and the equipment they now use, but where was all the clatter of the teleprinters, tape factory, reams of tape? Our questions were patiently answered by all especially those readying their wagons for annual inspection. One of our party thought putting the back of the hand to a wagon was testing for wet paint! To be fair, not many WRAC went on exercise in the 60's! We were treated to lunch in the Sergeants Mess with members of the Regiment where a plaque was presented to RSM Boyle and we received one in return. We also visited the PRI shop and coffee bar where we had our breaks during the day and our thanks to the manager for coffee etc and also the 16th Signal Regiment mugs. A most enjoyable and appreciated day with 16th Signal Regiment, we'd like also to thank all those involved in organising the day for us.

On our return to Krefeld, some had to leave for the UK but for the rest of us, it was further presentations to and from 7th Signal Regiment this time. Our final evening was spent at 'The Widows', a great night and on returning to camp we decided not to scale the perimeter fence as 'in days of yore', (a) we didn't have to, and (b) its now covered with barbed-wire!

Tuesday RSM Pete Griffiths had one further surprise for us, within 2 minutes of hearing his 'lilting tones' we were outside our block in ranks of 3 and marched through the



60's 16ers being put through their paces by RSM Pete Griffiths, or is he granting the Freedom of Bradbury Barracks?

camp, panic setting in as we passed the square in case that was his target. Late comers Pete Weedon, Dick Burn and Anne Ferrier were called out of hiding and Cpl Steve Peacock was ready with his camera, sorry Evelyn Radford and Terri Crowe (nee Terry) missed it. Even Ray Gilks kept in step.

A brilliant re-union for all of us and there are numerous people to thank, SSgt Simon Norris who rose from his sick-bed to look after us, Cpl Steve Peacock and his wife Lorraine, we took so much of Steve's time, (though we suspect he enjoyed himself!) and of course 7 and 16 Signal Regiments as a whole, especially at such a busy period with soldiers away on exercise and in Bosnia, from all the 16 Signal Regiment reunion group, thank you.

WITH THE NORMANDY VETERANS TO FRANCE

On 8th June, 1997 our little band of ATS/WRAC set off on our trip to France, with the Normandy Veterans Association, Redcar Branch.

We set sail from Dover and arrived at Calais in just over an hour, not a long trip but to me, a land-lover, long enough. We arrived at our hotel in Lille and settled in.

In the morning at 9.00am we boarded our coach to visit a WW1 cemetery. Our standard was paraded and after a short service, we each laid a small cross on a grave - each with their own thoughts. At times we felt very humble.



MENIN GATE

Ann Mahony (née Edwards), Edith Cook (née Carrington)

Our visit to the Menin Gate is something I will never forget. I paraded our standard with standards of other associations and my friend, Edith Cook, carried the Lions Stick of Normandy. The buglers of the Belgium Fire Brigade played the Last Post. Our standards were dipped and in the two minute silence you could have heard a pin drop. This ceremony is carried out at 8.00pm every night of the year.

Not all our trips were to cemeteries. We had a day out at Ostend, in thunder, lightning and lots of rain, - not a coat between us. We got very wet.



TYNE COT CEMETERY
from left to right
E Cook, G Slack, A Mahony, A Ford, M Marsayd

On Sunday, my friend Amelia and I went to Mass. We could follow the Mass but couldn't understand why this lady kept standing in front of our little group and conducted the singing. Sing they did, very professionally, but not us. We didn't understand the language and we found out later, to our horror, we had been standing with the choir.

Our trip finally came to an end with a visit to RAF Honnington, with lunch and a tour of the camp.

We had visited large and small cemeteries at St Omer, Arras, Ypres, Mons, Cambrai, Armentiers and less known places. Our little group felt proud and I, as standard bearer, knew it was an honour to represent our Association. I carried out standard with pride, on your behalf, to pay our respects to those who gave so much.

I hope I did a good job.
ANN MAHONY

150th ANNIVERSARY - Dumfries



This photograph is of the Dumfries Branch of the ATS and Woman's Royal Army Corps Association's 50th Anniversary held on the 7th May. We all felt proud.

Sadly like other branches we are losing some of our dear members. Miss Lavinia Vaughan who was a guest of honour and was the daughter of Captain Boyd later Vaughan - who was the first treasurer back in 1947

DORAH MUNDELL

LONDON AREA REUNION LUNCH

The photograph taken at the London Area Reunion Lunch which was held at the Union Jack Club on 20th September 1997 shows sitting at the table Ilfra Mooney (née Hodgson) and standing behind her Marion Bailey (née Blackmore).

We had not seen each other in over 40 years so it was a lovely surprise not only to find that we were both attending the Lunch but that we were sitting at the same table.



We were together all through our service from training to demob. We kept in touch after we both married and then Ilfra went to live in Hong Kong and we lost touch. Since the lunch we have got together again and caught up on all our news and did a lot of reminiscing.

If anyone reading this issue was a Plotter at the 7th Ack Ack (GOR) Belfast or Royal Signals Records Office in Reading and remember us would like to get in touch we would love to hear from them. Margaret Wilson, who is my sister-in-law, was also with us and is now living in America would also love to hear from anyone who can remember us so I can pass on any news to her.

Mrs Marion Bailey, 34 Bentleys Meadow, Seal, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 0DB.

SOUTH WEST AREA REUNION

17th June 1998. Abbey Hall, Plymouth.

CORPS DAYS

Please note that the Adjutant General's Corps will, in future, be hosting Corps Days every two years.

The next Corps Day will be in June 1999.

WRAC PT REUNION - SECOND EDITION!

Following the success of the last WRAC PT Reunion held in June 1995, it has been decided to hold another Supper Evening on Saturday 6 June 1998 at the ASPT Aldershot. The event is being organised by Captains (Retd) Kate Bettison and Nikki Rochelle. Tel Nos: 01252 873174 and 01252 815661 respectively.

The cost of the evening to include a four course dinner with wine will not exceed £18 per head and limited accommodation at the ASPT is available. Those who attended or registered, in 1995, will automatically receive a letter and application form, but any newcomers including AIPT's CI's, SOPT's and PTI's are requested to contact one of the above telephone numbers.

NETLEY VETERANS REUNION AND DISPLAY - 14 MAY 1998

Plans are well advanced for a Reunion and Display at Royal Victoria Country Park Netley on 14th May 1998. Although the Reunion is partly to mark the 100th Anniversary of the RAMC all people with connections with Netley are being invited not just members of the Army Medical Services. It is hoped therefore that Hospital Cooks, Chaplains, Ambulance Drivers, Red Cross, Netley Civilian Staff etc will also attend. Exact format for the day cannot yet be given but is expected to include a Church Service, Historical Displays, Sunset Ceremony and Veterans March Past. We will also remember Queen Victoria's visit to Netley to award VCs to Private Vickery (Dorset Regt) and Piper Findlater (Gordon Highlanders) as 14th May 1998 is the exact 100th Anniversary of this event.

Further details on how to obtain tickets will be issued. Please let any Netley Veterans you are in contact with know of this event.

ROYAL MILITARY POLICE ASSOCIATION

My wife Doreen allows me to read your most excellent magazine. I am amazed at the interest it creates.

This Branch, Royal Military Police Association, Bristol and Somerset, was formed about three months ago, and as yet has only one ex-WRAC Provost lady member, and we would like to have more.

We would like any ex-ATS/WRAC Provost ladies living in the Bristol and Somerset areas to pop along and join us. Details obtainable from: 23 Fulmar Road, Worle, Weston-Super-Mare, BS22 8UU. Tel: 01934 512009.

Branch Membership costs £3 for Life. I assure the ladies they would be made very welcome.

JOHN THOMPSON
CHAIRMAN



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The Army & Navy Club
36 Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5JN
Tel: 0171 930 9721
Fax: 0171 930 9720

lness97

Gunners' Corner

566(M) HAA BATTERY RA

Joyce Humphreys (née Watts) of 50 Alderton Way, Trowbridge, Wilts, BA 14 0UH, would like to hear from anybody who remembers 566 Bty at Heaton Park, Manchester or Fort Borstal, Rochester, between 1942-1945.

The girls on the picture, taken at Ty-Croes firing camp, are as follows:

Back row from left to right

Peggy Wigger : Lynn Wharton : Anna Porte : Esther Artley :
Maureen Pond and Edith (Chooks) Melleney

Front row

Joyce Watts : Joyce Crockett : Barbara (Dinkie) Horne and
Irene Bambridge.



SHOPPING LIST

The Association Badge is available for sale from the WRAC Association HQ. These cost £2.50 including postage and packing.

If branches order 10 - 20 badges they may deduct 5% from the cost.

For all orders over 20 they may deduct 10% from the cost.

All cheques to WRAC Association please and sent to:

WRAC Association HQ
Block 10
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Winchester
SO21 2RG

548(M) HAA BATTERY

Mrs Mary Young (née O'Connor) of 29 Florence Longman House, Weymouth Street, Apsley, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP3 9SN is looking for anyone who was in 548(M) HAA Bty stationed around Scotland from 1942-1946.



Perhaps someone will recognise themselves in the group photograph. I am in the middle row, second from left.

Mary would like to find: Ann Main from Nairn, Scotland -
Betty Ray from Gateshead, Newcastle (not in group).



Mrs Sue CROOK

What a joy it was to attend the York reunion and meet so many of the ladies whom I have put in touch since 1988. Yet there are still so many whom I missed. My lists could supply double the numbers if space at Imphal Barracks was not restricted but I have been warned that reunions would probably be stopped if I overstep the mark!

Nevertheless I have had many new links during the past year (now 1,500) and though getting behind with existing correspondence all new ones have been dealt with. Through someones Bty photo I espied a pre-war friend from 607 Bty, who helped me dress for my wedding in '44. A Bedford newspaper traced her but sadly she had died. Another Bedford lady contacted me and I was able to send her six names. Coincidentally her husband is related to my local friend - a small world.

A lady from Frome wrote to say she had worked for a local doctor before joining up and that my son is now living in that same house.

A gentleman living on Hayling Island has requested info from anyone who served on sites in the Havant/Hayling area. Can anyone help him in his search regarding a bombing incident when one girl was killed and received a posthumous award. Please write to: Mr Victor Pierce Jones, 'Rosamund', 7A Seagrave Avenue, Hayling Island, PO11 9EU. I have already written to ten ladies who were there. Mr Pierce Jones will appreciate any correspondence.

One of my first Ack Ack friends - Kay Jarrold - 606 Bty died in May '97. She it was who passed messages between Bill and myself during our secret affair on site. Her latter years were spent writing poems - with one printed most months. I have included one - 'Spit and Polish'. This is the sad part of 'linking' - all of you are my friends - nay - Family. The files have had to be extended into No 12 - yet still full up.

As this goes to press I learn that my house repairs will start 10th November so hopefully I will move back early in the New Year, in time for Lioness 1/98. It has been quite traumatic packing up my belongings ready for storing somewhere. At this stage may I wish you all a Happy New Year.

Mrs Sylvia (Sue) Crook, 14 The Larches, Horsell Vale, Woking, GU21 4RE.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT COMMAND - DEMISE OF (M) HAA RA

I was RSM at 2nd HAA Training and Practice Camp, Burrow Head in 1940. The all male Training Camp was changed with the advent of 'MIXED'. The camp was turned upside down in preparation for the first Mixed Regt, an event eagerly looked forward to by the male members of the Permanent Staff. At the time Permanent Staff ATS were under canvas (Bell Tents) the men in huts.

The mixed regiments were wonderful - they trained hard - inter Battery rivalry in number of Sleeves shot down the main aim, although all aspects of training counted for a good report. It was often their first experience of GUNFIRE. To capture a Sleeve was a great trophy - yards and yards of beautiful fine red material if lucky might be white, used to make underwear and costumes for concert parties. Burrow Head closed in 1945.

I was later commissioned - posted to 291/104(M) BTY RA Ryhope, RHQ at Washington. The Regt went to Weybourne Practice Camp May 1948. The weather was stormy we were under canvas, girls in marquees, Officers Bell tents, I slept with a mallet beside my camp bed. We were called out every night to go and rescue the girl's tents from blowing away. They had been pitched on the breast of a hill. On return to Washington disbandment started.



2ND AA PRACTICE CAMP STAFF
October 1945

Next posting 311(Ind) M HAA Bty RA, Weybourne Practice Camp. This Battery was responsible for Gun Park Duties, alas Disbandment caught up and in November 1948 personnel were posted mainly to 46 Regt Carter Barracks Bulford myself included, staying there until leaving to get married in May 1949.

Thus ended my having witnessed the birth and the demise of MIXED. Later I visited a Holding Unit and this tribute was paid to the AA Girls "No matter what duties they had to carry out it was always done with a smile and often a song."

629(M) BATTERY HAA

Mrs A J Sturland, 48 Longfield Avenue, Walton, Stone, Staffs, ST15 0DN writes, calling ex-ATS from 629(M) Battery HAA. I would love to hear from you, to become pen-friends. I was Sgt Ada Eccles W/198333. In the photo Sgt Londragon, myself and Sgt Vanderpump - sorry can't name others. Other names remembered, Flora Dingwall, Kath Reardon (now Lennon I think), "Tommy" Tomkinson, Clare Butler, Mary Abrahams, "Smithy" from Bridgend. Sgt's (ATS) Vera Gaston and Kath Tudge, now sadly deceased.



KINE REUNION - TENBY, 1997

The reunion of kine theodolite operators, ATS, with some husbands and friends was arranged for 9th to 11th May but eight of us arrived at the Park Hotel on Thursday 8th May and had dinner together. Afterwards we sat in the bar/ballroom whilst the guests of the previous few days enjoyed their last evening of music and dancing.

There were still only eight of us at breakfast on Friday but all day more and more people arrived until the party, including nine from America and Canada, was almost complete. Others living nearby or staying with local friends joined us on Saturday, bringing the numbers up to seventy.

Some of us went across to Caldey Island on Friday and found it just as serene and peaceful as it was over fifty years ago. There is now a flourishing and well-stocked gift shop and an enlarged café but the Post Office appears unchanged and no new developments spoiled the landscape. We wandered around, looking at the monastery and the churches and exploring the paths before returning to the hotel for a sandwich lunch.

The afternoon was spent greeting old friends and after dinner we all assembled to watch the video of our colleague, Olwen Landin (Williams) at Ty Croes, which had been shown some time before on Welsh TV.



Saturday was our Big Day and after breakfast we were joined by several of those staying locally as we set off in two coaches. We went first to Manorbier Camp where kines were trained during the war and where the gates were opened for us by an armed soldier. Military equipment was much in evidence in contrast to our last visit in 1989 when all seemed to be deserted. We wandered around trying to remember the Manorbier of our day and, after a look at 'our' tree (planted on our last visit), we went on to Lydstep House for coffee. There we found ourselves surrounded by holiday-makers enjoying the 'leisure facilities' of a large modern holiday complex. We were able to look around but were not anxious to stay overlong in this new atmosphere. Many of us walked up through the woods and found our nostalgia increased by the sight and smell of wild garlic, although the hill is steeper and the lane longer than when we sped up and down several times a day! We passed South Lodge, West Lodge and Lydstep Cottage where we lived and ate and met the coach riders at the Lydstep Tavern. We remembered this as The Shop where we spent a lot of time and the little money we had. It is now a thriving pub where we had lunch. After lunch our knowledgeable coach drivers took us on a tour of South Pembrokeshire, showing us places we never reached on our bicycles. We stopped at a steep rocky inlet where the drivers said that if we stood on the cliffs we would be able to see the roof of a chapel built on the beach far below. This, however, was not good enough for

many of our intrepid seventy-plus-year-olds who promptly made their hazardous way down the steep steps cut into the cliff and saw the chapel from the beach. Then they made their hazardous way up again!

On the way back to Tenby we called at Bubbleton Farm where our colleague, Brenda Evans (Callingham), had invited us all to tea. 'I'm not doing much' she said, as she borrowed 70 cups and saucers and a tea urn from the army, but as we beheld the delicious sandwiches, Welsh cakes, many other delicacies and a vast iced fruit cake, decorated with red and blue ribbons and with 'Kines' inscribed on top, we wondered what she would have produced if she had been doing much!

It was a lovely day so we sat in the garden or indoors and we could have stayed indefinitely except that we had more excitement waiting at the hotel.



*From left to right:
Rita Johnson (née Noble), Joan Laeon (née Noble),
Gordon Stapylton, Muriel Webb (née Shaw),
Kay Maule (née Tuckey), John Shuter, Kay Peterson (née Parry),
Phyl Shuter (née Hunwicks)*

In the evening we had dinner and drew the raffle, which contributed £80 to our funds. Maisie and Dilys (whom we knew from the days when they served us with tea, coffee and whatever food they could find at The Shop, presided over by Maisie's mother, Mrs Walters) were amongst our guests and after dinner Vernon Evans (Brenda's husband) brought his Welsh Male Voice Choir to sing to us. This concert was really delightful and we could have listened for hours more if only we had the time and the choir had the breath! We finished with the Welsh National Anthem - Welsh words supplied by Daphne Price (Lynch) whose husband, Vic, gave a charming and humorous vote of thanks.

On Sunday several friends went home but the rest of us took the opportunity to go to church in Manorbier or re-visit places of interest further afield, such as St David's or Aborporth. Several of us returned to Lydstep House for lunch and a last look at that lovely bay - we were all sad to see the abundance of caravans but perhaps we should not begrudge holiday makers the chance to enjoy beautiful Lydstep and the adjoining coast.

Dinner was quieter on Sunday night and breakfast rather hurried on Monday morning as most of the remaining guests said their farewells. A few stayed on, some as late as Thursday, envied by those who had to go home. But there's always next time to look forward to.

Mrs G K Stapylton, 98 Paignton Avenue, West Monkseaton, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear.

ATS ACK ACK COMMAND BRANCH RAA

Our first assembly was held at Imphal Barracks, York Garrison on 2nd and 3rd August and we were presided over by Major (Ret'd) David Robertson without whose expertise we would never have made it. We all hope he will remain our President for a long time to come. After our friend Vee Robinson, our Chairman, who initiated these annual meetings at York some years ago, suggested to the Major that we should have our own association, he took it from there, and getting permission from the Royal Artillery Headquarters at Woolwich, set us on the road to success.

On Saturday afternoon 318 members and 102 guests met in the grounds of the Garrison. It was a beautiful sunny day, and the ladies were able to circulate freely to find friends they had not seen for some long time, and indeed, meet and make new friends. One of our ladies travelled from Australia and to finance the journey sold fridge, gas cooker, jackets and slacks, and remarked that it was well worth it to be able to join the founder members on such a unique occasion.

At 1700 hours we veterans and our guests were welcomed to the Garrison by Major Robertson. We had a sales tent where copies of Vee Robinson's book "Sisters in Arms" were on sale and Vee was signing them as fast as she could. We had all kinds of Royal Artillery Association gifts and our own "ATS Members of Ack Ack Command" gifts. At 1730 hours we all sat down to a buffet meal which was followed by entertainment, courtesy of Major (Ret'd) George Horne and was enjoyed by all.

On Sunday, 3rd August, we all gathered again at the Garrison and were given tea or coffee of our choice. At noon, we were taken by coach to York Minster for our Memorial Service and the dedication of our very own, very new Standard.

Fourteen standard bearers from local branches and areas around York attended and they formed a guard of honour for the arrival of the Lord Mayor, Councillor M Bradley and his wife, and our guest of honour, the Comptroller of the Royal Artillery Association, Major General M C M Steels, MBE DL JP and his wife. We then marched to the west door of the Minster where the parade would enter the building.



*A few of the ladies who attended the inauguration of the
ATS Ack Ack Command Association, Imphal Barracks, York*

Our own standard, carried by Bombadier Claire Swift, and escorted by Beryl Holder and myself, brought up the rear of the standards, and the Bombadier carried it furled as it had not yet been dedicated. She handed it to Rev Geoffrey Holman who conducted the Service, and after Dedication it was laid on the Altar.

In passing, I mention Rev Holman is himself an ex-Ack Ack member, so it was especially appropriate that he should conduct our Service.

At the end of the Service we paraded past the saluting base where Major General Steele took the salute. This time our standard and escorts led the parade. An exceedingly proud moment for the Bombadier and Beryl and myself.

We returned to Imphal Barracks where lunch was waiting following which Major General Steele talked to us about when he was a young boy he used to watch the dog fights going on over London without understanding much of what it was all about but he went on to say he was proud to say we are all his girls now.

The last item on our programme was the Sunset Ceremony. The standards were marched on by Garrison Sergeant Major Ron Smith. I think he was a little overwhelmed by all the ladies, but it didn't take him long to adjust.

The members of the Committee wish to thank Major Robertson for all the hard work he has put in over the last year, to bring our Association to fruition. We could not have done it without him and of course, Philip Sowerby, our membership secretary whose mind must have boggled over the number of letters he sent out and the phone calls he had to contend with.

Thank you Philip.

IT WAS A WONDERFUL WEEKEND

Our re-union next year we hope will be on the 1st and 2nd August. This date is to be confirmed but please keep it in mind until we know for sure one way or other.

Elisabeth Lapham, Secretary, ATS AA RAA.

MRS PAT NEAL

Mrs Pat Neal wishes to thank all 'the girls' who wrote to her following her note on the Notice Board at the Reunion in April.

5041 214A Street
Langley
BC V3A 8K9
Canada

538(M) HAA BATTERY

Elizabeth Mattison writes from 6 Melton Court, 37 Lindsay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH13 6BH that 538(M) HAA Battery have been holding annual reunions since 1947 but their reunion in March this year was, sadly to be their last.

The picture taken might be of interest to readers of the Lioness.

The names are:

Back row left to right

Mary Corfield, Irene Cox (née Dale), Audrey Watts (née Heaton), Pam Rodwell (née Felce), Margery Powell (née Veasey), Anne Fisher (née May), Jean Savage (née Ritchie), Joan Parry (née Slack), Gwen Mahoney (née Lane).



Centre row, sitting left to right

Dora Shaw (née Key), Lina Price (née Rossi), Elizabeth Mattison (née Fry), Paddy Sternizsa (née Mewett), Marjorie Sandham.

Sitting on the floor left to right

Marjorie Ottey (née Hagyard), Lydie Dolman (née Risebury), Reena Leslie (née McEwan).

FORMATION OF COMMANDO GUNNER CLUB 29 COMMANDO REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY

29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery announces the formation of The Commando Gunner Club. Membership open to all who served in the Commando Gunner Regiments for six months or more since their formation in 1962.

For a membership application please write to:

The Secretary
Commando Gunner Club
29 Commando Regiment RA
The Royal Citadel
Plymouth
Devon PL1 2PD

or telephone/facsimilie: 01752 236143

AN EASY WAY TO GIVE

Are you one of us?

By which I mean do you receive a pension from the Paymaster?

If so, we are, especially if over sixty, very lucky - many of our former comrades rely solely on the State Pension - and for single people living alone, life can be very hard, especially as age increasingly takes its toll. We all know of the excellent work done by the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund to ease some of the burden of our less fortunate fellow ex-servicewomen, and much is done by many branches in fundraising activities.

However, not all of us are able to attend these functions and individual donations although gratefully received, are less than they are able to be because they do not, when sent in the form of cash or cheque, attract a contribution from the Inland Revenue.

This is where the Paymaster enters the calculation. Through an organisation called South West Charitable Giving it is possible to have a monthly sum from your pension which sum, plus the tax which would have been paid on it, is then paid over to the Benevolent Fund.

As an example, a monthly deduction of £4 from your pension would result in a gift of £60 a year to the Fund - less than £1 a week to each donor, but a great help on the receiving end.

The General Secretary holds notes on this scheme, but bearing in mind the slender resources of the office staff it would be preferable to obtain details of the "Paymaster/South West Charitable Giving Scheme" from its director at:

Church Town
Peter Tavey
Tavistock
Devon
PO19 9NN

Poets Corner

FORGETFUL

Sometimes I think my subs are due, I just can't remember.
Did I pay them early May or was it last December?
But here's a line to say I'm well and not among the dead,
I'm getting more forgetful and mixed up in my head.

I've got used to my arthritis, to my dentures I'm resigned.
I can manage my bifocals but - Oh God I miss my mind!
Sometimes I can't remember when standing on the stair,
Whether I am going up or coming down from there.

Before the fridge, so often, my head is filled with doubt.
Did I put the food away? or come to take it out?
And sometimes when its dark and with my nightcap on my
head,
I don't know if I'm retiring, or getting out of bed.

If my subs are not yet due, please forgive me for,
I may have already sent them and don't want to be a
bore.

As I stood before the postbox my face was very red -
I didn't post this off to you, I opened it instead!

Author:
Mrs K P Gibson
8 Ainsdale Crescent
PINNER
Middlesex HA5 5SF



I'M FINE

There's nothing the matter with me
I'm as healthy as I can be.
I've got arthritis in both my knees
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.
Arch supports I have for my feet
Or I wouldn't be able to walk on the street.
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin
But I'm awfully well for the state I'm in.
The moral is this as my tale unfolds.
That for you and me who are getting old
It's better to say 'I'm fine' with a grin
Than to let folk know the state we're in.
How do I know that my youth is all spent
WELL, my 'got up and go's, got up and went'
Old age is golden or so it is said
But I sometimes wonder when I'm getting in bed.
With my ears in a drawer and my teeth in a cup
My specs on the table until I get up.
'Ere' sleep overtakes me I say to myself
Is there anything else I could lay on the shelf.

Author:
Mrs Blanche Hope
Crewe Branch

SPIT AND POLISH

'On Parade' the cry rings out
What the heck's it all about
Hair off collar, cap badge clean
Battledress pressed and boots that gleam
At the double or there's trouble
What a blessing we were young
And arthritic joints were still to come.

Author:
Kay Jarrold
606 Mixed HAA Bty ATS RA
Deceased 15th May 1997



WHAT'S A WAC(I)

A WAC(I) was a lady who
Was called upon in '42
To serve her country and her king
A WAC(I) was a wondrous thing

In khaki clad from head to toe
Shoulders back, eyes aglow.
She might be fat, she might be thin
If dressed in blue, she was a WRIN.

Maybe she'd have a stripe or more
Or pips upon her shoulder bore.
She could type or take a letter
Drive a Staff Car - even better.

She could march or mend a jeep
Take a watch and never sleep
Recruitment was another way
An eager WAC(I) spent her day.

A WAC(I) ever on the hop
Could run a Mess, Canteen or Shop.
Relaxing sometimes, tapping feet
Remember "White Christmas" in the heat!

She could crack a code or chart a map
And in between times grab a chap.
She was loyal, sincere and sure
A member of that UNIQUE Corps -
The WAC(I)

INDIA 1942/1946
Woman's Army Corps (India)

Author:
Rhoda Coventry
Colchester Branch

ODE TO 547 M HAA BTY

I joined the Army, I did my bit,
With dozens of others, I got my kit,
A funny hat, a khaki suit,
A badge of brass and lace up boots,
Some shoes that were brown and pants that fell down.
Denims and gloves and "in line there, don't shove",
We had fillings and jabs and FFI's
Hair was deloused (they had to die).
After we learned how to march and stand,
We were put on a train to another land,
They gave us big guns, to frighten the Huns,
The noise of the 'Bang' often gave us the runs,
We ate pickles and cheese and wedges of bread,
Eyes in the tatties and National dried egg,
Jam and bread, fried in batter,
(Some said the cook was as mad as a hatter).
Then came the day that they said it was over,
They gave us some cash and we went home to Mother,
Said "Goodbye" to all our mates,
Promised to meet at a future date.
Now the years have rolled by, and where have they gone?
Grannies and Grandads, everyone.
I didn't forget,
And neither did they,
But we never did meet 'along life's way'
So if you remember Jackie and such,
Pick up your pen,
And get in touch.

Author:
Jackie Jackson (LCpl)
(now) Mrs M Hampton
75 Walter Street
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 3PP

FROM YOUR TREASURER

"The time has come", the Treasurer said,
"to talk of many things,
Of subs, and sales, and Christmas lunch,
And whether pigs have wings!!"

The last is quite ridiculous,
Pigs cannot fly, we know,
But pay your subs, come to the Sale,
You'll help our funds to grow.

The Christmas lunch - that should be fun,
I hope I'll see you there,
The cost is just £9 - not dear,
Good company you'll share.

Subscriptions, they're £5 a year
A bargain you'll confess,
Please send them on as soon as poss
to be sure of your Lioness.

Author:
Plymouth Branch



WRAC Association

(Incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps
and Auxiliary Territorial Comrades Association)

In 1917 during the First World War women were recruited for service with the Army in a non-nursing capacity for the first time and saw service overseas winning three Military Medals for gallantry. In 1919 Queens Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC) formed an Old Comrades Association.

In 1942 the Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS) was added to the title and the word 'Old' was dropped! In 1949 when the Womens Royal Army Corps (WRAC) was formed, the Association took on its present title.

There are now 82 Branches of the Association in the United Kingdom. The Association publishes a magazine twice a year which is included in the subscription.

Branches meet monthly as a rule and Groups of branches have an annual reunion. On 19/20 April 1997 there was a Grand Reunion in BLACKPOOL.

Why Should You Join

The Association exists to keep serving and ex-service women in touch with each other, and to help them in times of hardship and trouble. The strength of the whole depends on the individual, and you can help by joining NOW.

How to Obtain Help

If you are in need for help the Association may be able to help you through its Benevolent Funds, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, SO21 2RG, giving name and number while serving, dates served, and details of the trouble, or contact your local Soldiers, Sailors, Airmens Families Association (SSAFA) whose number will be in your local 'phone book

Where are you now?

ATS SPECIAL PLATOON 1942-42

Where are you now? the ATS SPECIAL PLATOON 1941-42 who were stationed at Queen's Gate Gardens London, writes Mrs Sheila Pantin formerly LCpl Sheila Hull. Pictured below is the Platoon from October 1941-October 1942 who toured England, Scotland and Wales on a recruiting and publicity campaign.

Do you recognise yourself or remember anything about them? The Lioness would love to hear.



Mrs Betty KEMP (née Hill)

Mrs Betty Kemp (née Hill) of 39 Brook Lane, Warsash, Hants SO31 9FF would like to hear from any ex-ATS who knew her whilst serving at Arborfield in 1942/42. Particularly Audrey Baker. Mrs Kemp is shown here in a photograph taken at that time.



Mrs Florence LYONS (née Marshall)

Mrs Florence Lyons (née Marshall) would like to hear from anyone who was a member of 633(M) HAA Battery or old pals from Abassia Garrison, do you recognise yourself in this picture? – The ATS Cricket Team

Contact: 12 Mostyn Avenue, Bury, Lancs BL9 6NP.



Mrs Irene MACLEAN (née Whittaker)

Mrs Irene Maclean (née Whittaker) ex-WRAC wishes to hear from anyone in the photograph taken in February 1963 at Hobbs Barracks, Lingfield at 5 Welldale Crescent, Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 7HU.



Jack HATCHER

Jack Hatcher c/o 91 Dawley Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire TF1 2HT would like to hear from friends on this photo, especially Babs Cecil with RAPC, Reading in 1945.



Troopship “KHEDIVE ISMAIL”

Information is sought by Mr R V France, 38 Camphill Road, Woolton, Liverpool L25 7UG of the Troopship “Khedive Ismail” when it was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. Were you a survivor? Did you know anyone who travelled on it, in or around 12 February 1944.

Mrs P O’CONNELL (née Yeo)

Mrs P O’Connell (née Yeo), ex-WRAC wishes to hear from anyone who might remember her, she served from 1953-1956 and is pictured here at RAEC Beaconsfield any replies to 3 Cumbrae Place, Arahoho, Nanganui, North Island, New Zealand.



Mrs Margaret SLAMON (née Ryder)

Miss Ann Marie Archer writes, my grandmother was in the Army in the 2nd World War, and has mislaid her photographs can anyone help? Her name is Margaret Slamon (née Ryder) known as Peggy, her Army Number was W/196157, and was stationed at Dover in 1945. She would dearly love to hear from anyone who could help. Contact 41 Bordars Road, Hanwell, London W7 1AG.

Sgt Audrey CONSTABLE

Maj(Retd) A W Bayley would very much like to contact an ex-member of the ATS with whom she served during the war. Her name is Sgt Audrey Constable. They served together with 435 HAA Bty RA and 132 HAA RA at Buckhurst Hill. When last heard of Sgt Constable was posted to JHQ Rheindahlen. Contact: 77 Western Avenue, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9NT. Do you recognise the photo?



W/1754 Pte Sadie JONES

I was W/1754 Pte Sadie Jones, ATT 89 HY AA Regiment RA. I was posted to the Crown Key Drill Hall at Sittingbourne and from there went to TBRE Kitchener Barracks in Chatham Kent. I was a telephonist and was billeted at Sally Port. I was posted to Austria and Rome Italy. I was married in June 1945 to LCpl Alfred Sampson of the Military Police. In the photo my bridesmaids were Rhonda Hill and Jean Cross and I would be very pleased to hear from any of my old comrades. Contact: Mrs Sadie (née Jones) Davis, 40A Scaddan Street, Bassendean, Western Australia 6054.



Mrs Marie WADE (née Lewis)

Having recently been reunited with Jackie Knightly, I would like to hear from any old friends who were stationed at HQ AA Command, Stanmore. I am still in touch with Nobby Noble, Haggis Payne, Bunny Bodle and Smokey Horlock, as they were then. I was at Stanmore 1946-49 and we were billeted initially at Highfields, Carpenders Park. Contact: Mrs Marie Wade, 28 Bruton Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5RY.



Friends at AA Command, Stanmore

CORPS DAY

Please note that the Adjutant General's Corps will, in future, be hosting Corps Days every two years.

The next Corps Day will be in June 1999.

Pauline STODDART (née Brown)

Does anyone recognize themselves from this photo?

I was Private Pauline Brown, 2nd row right last one standing.

My friend Lillian Denby is 3rd row, 5th from right end. She is in Australia and I hear from her regularly.

Laurie Bell, 1st row, 2nd left went to USA.

I would like to hear from anyone who remembers me. Contact: Mrs Pauline Stoddart, 52 Keithlands Avenue, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees TS20 2QR.



NOIC NEWHAVEN / FORTRESS CONTROL

WRAC member Mrs Kitty Drew suggests that your Magazine 'Lioness' would be an excellent way of reaching other WRAC members who may be able to further my investigations into a little known, but very important, military establishment at Newhaven during WWII.

The establishment was known to the Army as Combined Operations Headquarters, NOIC Newhaven, or as Fortress Control. Essentially it was part of the shore-based Royal Naval Headquarters, Newhaven Command, known to the Navy as HMS FORWARD, which maintained a Naval plot of the English Channel in association with similar plots at Dover Castle, and Fort Southwick, Portsmouth. Whilst these two latter establishments are well-known, Newhaven's plot and its contribution to the War of the Channel have been allowed to perish in ignominy.

It is with a view to redressing this lamentable state of affairs, that I wish to appeal for any WRAC member who served in these tunnels deep beneath the Guinness Trust Holiday Home, or in the Manor House at Denton, Newhaven, to contact me.

I have learned of Peggy Angel, Bessie Bradley (nee Cook), Chris Carter (née King), Irene Calthorpe, Bobby Champneys, Margaret Curtis, Kitty Drew (née Osborne), Joan Goodall, Joan Harris, 'Johnny' Johnson, Eileen Jones (née Foster), Vera Mitchell, Joan Pearson, Olive Pendred, Joyce Simpson (née Cooper), Kathleen Stevenson (née Prince), and Joan Young. All of these persons served in the tunnels as ATS plotters, switchboard, or teleprinter operators, and I would like to contact them or anybody who remembers them.

In closing may I add that I have just published a book and video entitled THE SECRET TUNNELS OF SOUTH HEIGHTON dedicated to those who served here during the war. My research is on-going. A model of the tunnels and many photographs are on display at Newhaven Local & Maritime Museum, Paradise Park, Newhaven. It is my ambition to have the tunnels declared an Ancient Monument, opened for public tourism. Contact: Mr G Ellis, 11 Fairholme Road, Newhaven, East Sussex BN9 0NY.

WOs & SGTs MESS 27th INDEPENDENT COY, CYPRUS 1957

Do you recognise yourself?

We were the WO's and Sgt's Mess, 27th Independent Coy, Cyprus 1957. I was the Mess Caterer Frances Stone (née Collihole). Please contact: 37 Mosul Way, Bromley, Kent BR2 8JJ



Mrs Iris FENN (née Clemmens)

Mrs Iris Fenn (née Dvr I Clemmens, 158 CMT Coy RASC) of 107 Newman Road, Exeter EX4 1PQ, would love to hear from Mary Cowling, pictured here as a DR, or anyone who might know her.



Pte Hilda CLEWARTH

Mrs Eileen Johnson (née Parker) is looking for Pte Clewarth whom she met at St Joseph's, Guildford, 26 July 1947. Her last known address was Pte Hilda Clewarth, 21 Gorton Road, Lower Openshaw, Manchester in 1947. Please telephone: 01483 893048.

Molly GRANT

Mrs B J Middleton (née Hayford) wishes to hear from Molly Grant. Molly and she were at Gresford as Driving Instructors. Contact: Mrs B J Middleton, 190 Eversley Avenue, Bexley Heath, Kent DA7 6SW.

HURON CAMP, HINDHEAD 1952-55

Mrs Celia Bass (née 'Mickey' Rooney), W/377094 would like to hear from anyone who served at Huron Camp, Hindhead during 1952-55. Contact: Mrs C Bass, 27 Beavers Way, Skelmershire, Lancs WN8 9BF.



Margaret HAMPTON (née Jackie Jackson)

Mrs Margaret Hampton writes from 75 Walter Street, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 3PP, my letter in last Autumns edition brought a response from three ex-members of 547 MHAA Bty.



I have just spent a wonderful four days with ex-Sgt Peggy Miller and her husband. How the memories returned. We each recalled names we had forgotten Alice Sorby, Dorothy Martin, Chrissie Irving, Pat Burrage, Mr Lockhart, Mr Blum, Sgt's Stone and Shaw and many more.

Where are they now I wonder?



RAVENINGHAM 1943

Does anyone remember: Mrs Irene Gray (née Brown) W/93122. Fourth from right on third row

Its 82 S/4 Regt REA, 525 S/L Battery RA taken at Raveningham, Norfolk in 1943.

Contact: Mrs Irene Gray, 9 Vernon Walk, Northampton NN1 5ST.



IS THERE LIFE AFTER THE WRAC?

If you served in the WRAC - and on retirement moved onto a new career - tell us about it!!

Edwina DAVIES

Finally! I have found the ATS Old Comrades Association! I need your help. Please bear with me while I give the background. I was one of the "rich Americans" with the US Army who arrived in England in late 1944, went to Germany, and returned to England for hospitalization after being wounded. In 1992 the Louisiana State University Press published my wartime memoirs under the title of Not in Vain : A Rifleman Remembers World War II. It is not the sort of book which would win awards as popular reading but was well received by historians and sociologists. In 1995 David Reynolds, historian at Christ's College, Cambridge, used a portion of my book to describe my combat experiences and my emotional recovery while at a hospital near Hereford. As Reynolds points out, the key to my recovery lay primarily with the sympathy and concern of a British ATS driver : Edwina Davies.

The LSU Press is planning to issue a second edition of my book and I will be allowed space for a few additions. I would like very much to contact Ms Davies and include a short biography of her in the next edition.

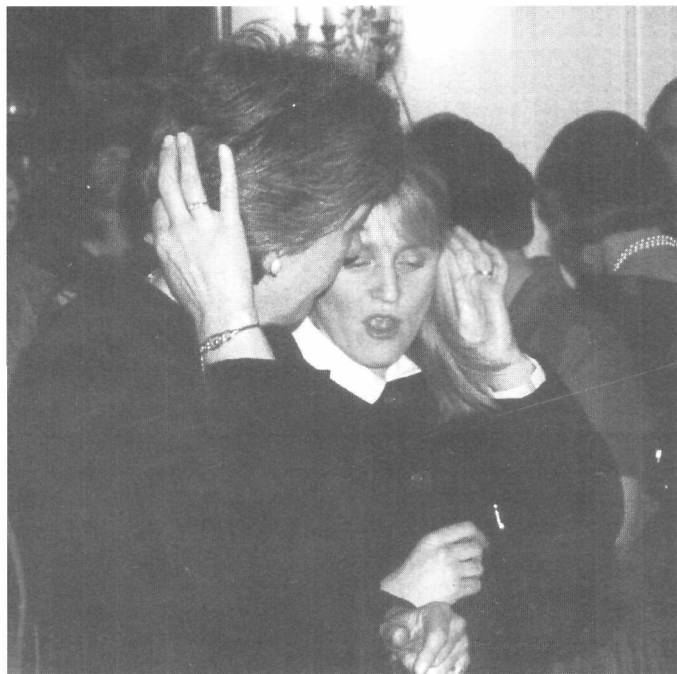
Her 1945 home address was: Edwina Davies, 44 Heathford Road, Bebington, Wirral, Cheshire.

Her military address was: Cpl Davies, E F, "Almeley", Bodenham Road, Hereford.

I don't think Ms Davies would be embarrassed at my trying to contact her. We were both extremely shy, with a strong sense of propriety. We were introduced by her roommate who saw that I needed someone to help me exorcize the demons and Teddy needed to get away from her deep commitment to work. Our total intimacy was that we kissed goodbye - once, when I left. She may not even remember the shy soldier whom she knew for about two weeks. If you are able to contact her and she does not want to write, please tell her that I am deeply grateful for the support she supplied - which I needed so badly.

Contact: Leon C Standifer, 1244 Pastureview Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70810.

CAPTION COMPETITION



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION
AGC Centre,
Worthy Down,
Winchester,
Hampshire SO21 2RG

I wish to join the WRAC Association as a

Life (£30) member and enclose £.....

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Date..... Signature

Subscriptions include "LIONESS"
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Christian Names.....

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Surname when serving

QMAAC/ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number

(Please strike out whichever is not applicable)

Last Rank held (Present Rank if still serving).....

Date of EnrolmentDate of Release

Decorations

Stories

THE ARMY POST OFFICE 1939-1947

Barbara Dante (née Miller)

I refer to the last copy of "The Lioness" and to a letter published therein by Maureen Brown entitled "A Postal Worker Remembers". I too was in the Army Post Office from 1944 until 1947, when it was given over once again to the returning soldiers and we ATS girls had to re-muster for some other trade. Apparently the Army Post Office (APO) began in Mount Pleasant, London but it was decided that as it was in the capital and would most likely get disorganised by enemy bombing etc, it was moved to Bournemouth, and shortly after to Nottingham. This presented a better location for this very important, morale boosting work. The title of Home Postal Depot was therefore adopted -this was a branch of the Royal Engineers, commonly known as REPS (Royal Engineers Postal Section). The move was made on the first day of December 1939, in time to deal with the Christmas rush. We had several offices where three ton trucks could be driven straight down to the basement. Many men who were known to have postal experience were then called in. Unfortunately there were not enough, so the ATS were brought in. The work was often repetitious and exhausting and needed much concentration but the girls soon got used to it and very soon the city of Nottingham and its surrounding areas were playing host to three thousand members of "the gentle sex" but the people of the city never actually knew the kind of work we were doing as it was 'top secret' and we were forbidden to talk about it to anyone - "careless talk cost lives!" and the boys at the front line of the war always looked forward to their mail. Many buildings were requisitioned, among them a lace factory, the Trent Bridge cricket ground, a dance hall called The Palais and grounds and houses in the outlying districts. We too worked the three shift system - 7am till 3pm, 3pm till 11pm and the night time shift of 11pm till 7am. We learned abbreviations such as SEALF (South East Asian Land Forces), EADCU (Enemy Ammunition Depot Control Unit) and hundreds more. Our geography lesson was extensive war zoning, all zones from 1-8 - Asmara, Cairo, Benghazi, Sudan etc. When the second front happened and troops were being moved up to Belgium, a base Army Post Office was hit, and the sorters had to cope with an awful lot of blood-stained mail that was returned for resorting before being sent back to the folks who had written them in the first place. We too had speed training and the faster we got entitled us to a small rise in pay which was very welcome. It was amazing how much insufficiently addressed mail we would get, and just how much we managed to track down and send on its way again.

On the 7th of May, when the Germans surrendered to the Allies and some signs of peace began to settle, the men returning from the war zones began to take over the postal work once again. We stayed in Nottingham for a further two years and in May of 1947 we were moved lock, stock and barrel to Sutton Coldfield to take over a sorting office that had been used by the United States Army Post Office - we were billeted at Packington Park near Meriden which, I believe, belonged to a Lord Packington - a really wonderful place also used by the American Army before us. From there we ATS girls were sent to Hereford for re-mustering and I was transferred to become a Telephone Switchboard Operator at the Army College at Welbeck Abbey, the home of the Duke of Portland - another great billet but that is another story. I

really enjoyed my years in the Army Post Office.

We have regular reunions which were started about thirteen years ago by about a dozen of the men who had served in Singapore. About three hundred members are on our books, all wartime members (not many when you think what a big organisation we were). We meet up at a main reunion in May of every year for a week and we sing all the old songs and reminisce - it is wonderful - thanks to a hard-working committee, of which I am proud to be one of.

When writing books about wartime experiences, little is said about the work that was carried out by the APO in church halls and cellars etc. Work that helped to keep up the morale of our troops in all theatres of war.

So there you have it, The Army Post Office, 1939 until 1947, as I knew it. There was a lot more to it than I have been able to put down on paper, but I hope it is of interest to Maureen Brown and other readers of your great magazine "The Lioness".

Barbara Dante (nee Miller)
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Nottingham
NG2 5JL

A FOOT IN BOTH CAMPS

By
A V Dodkins
Salisbury Branch

I joined up at Wrexham in the summer of 1943. I had returned to the UK in April 1943 after 3½ years interned in Germany, where I had been a student in 1939. A party of us was repatriated in exchange for German Army nurses captured by the British at Benghazi. We travelled by train through occupied France, Spain and eventually Portugal. I came home to England from Lisbon on a Sunderland flying boat. After initial training and tests, I was told that I would serve as a clerk -I had made no spelling mistakes and clerks were urgently needed! I was not very happy about this. Later I went to London for tests and interviews in German, which I spoke fluently but found the highly technical papers I was asked to look at very difficult. I had also been engaged to a warrant officer in the Luftwaffe at one time, and I felt that did me no good!

After a course at the ATS Clerks School in Golders Green, a party of us were posted to 11 TTC REME in Croydon to take over the clerical duties from the men. They were not very happy about that, as most of them were posted to the Far East. We settled in well. I was billeted out in some requisitioned houses at Shirley next to a gun site. The Training Centre had "C" Company out there in a hutted camp, it was not far to walk into camp for work and meals. This Company dealt with the selection and training of armament artificers, a lot of office work. The guns made an awful noise and vibration and in the summer of 1943, we were assaulted by the V1s and V2s. At first we used our slit trenches, but soon we were too busy to bother, though one hit the parade ground!

In the summer of 1945 one of the ATS officers came over from Group HQ at Chislehurst and suggested I might like to apply to become an Education Instructor. After a course I was made up to Sgt from Lance Corporal, and started work on the resettlement of those leaving the service. When 11 TTC was disbanded I volunteered for overseas. In January 1946 I was sent out to Brussels and from there to Rear HQ 21 Army Group, or HQ BAOR as it became. I was billeted in a large school in Herford. From there I went to HQ Control Commission in Lubbecke for a few months, but then got promotion to WOII as Librarian at the College of the Rhine Army, so I had contact with the re-opening of the university there. There were only 5 members of the ATS on the permanent staff and we lived in a large hotel, where all the ATS students attending pre-release courses were accommodated. Life was good there! November 1947 I was moved to HQ Hamburg District where there were two large ATS units, Second Echelon and District HQ. Those girls signing on in the WRAC had to be assessed, and told about the Regular Army examinations for promotion. I myself transferred there to the WRAC. After 6 months I moved to HQ BAOR at Bad Oeynhausen. April 1948 I was back in London District, promoted to WOI and billeted in a beautiful house behind Kensington Palace, the WOs and Sgts Mess of 12 Bn WRAC. Our Education Centre was a house in Sloane Gardens, but I also gave instruction to the men in the Education Centre in Exhibition Road. In the autumn of 1950 12 Bn moved out to Richmond Park Camp, I got married in December 1951 and lived out in London, convenient as I was often visiting other WRAC Companies in Hounslow and Woolwich..... over the years I had a great variety of Sergeants working with me..... both male and female. I left in January 1954 to have my first child!

WARTIME MEMORIES OF A MEDICAL ORDERLY

By
Mrs Iris Brown (née Holmes)

After being bombed out of London my family moved to Frome in Somerset, where my brother had been previously evacuated and where, until I received my call up papers, I worked in the local glove factory.

In early 1942 I attended my medical in Bath and although a little underweight (not for long though) passed A1. My next destination was Wrexham Training Centre, then home of the Welsh Fusiliers who were responsible for our basic training. Yes, the Khaki issue was very unfamiliar, a colour I hated, but as we were all in the same boat (as the saying goes) we wore it with pride. We were all young enough to accept the challenge of a different life.

The first three weeks were unforgettable, marching, cross country runs, lectures, IQ tests etc. Rushing from one thing to another and marching to meals with my mug, knife, fork and spoon. On the first Saturday I was on fire piquet duty and it was my 21st birthday. As only my mother and my boyfriend, who was in the Coldstream Guards still stationed in Frome, knew my address I only received two cards.

There was no opportunity to choose what trade one would like to do, and as I already had a couple of first aid certificates and previously worked in a first aid post in London, it was "right we need medical orderlies, so after training that's what you will be". I guess the extra seven shillings a week and promotion to a LCpl at the end was

some consolation. The training was a six week course at Wrexham. New members of the ATS were not issued with their uniform at the training centres until they had reported to the medical orderlies to ensure they were free from infection (FFI). Included in this examination was an inspection for head lice, which made some of the girls quite tearful, as they were from all walks of life, particularly the well off type. As the lice were something that anyone could catch, it was up to us to get rid of the little pests. If head lice were found a turban had to be worn on the head for several days or weeks until they had been eradicated, and this caused great embarrassment to the person concerned. Incidentally we had to cover all hair on our own heads while performing this op. I should think it is very rare these days and can be eradicated much quicker.



I was then sent to Maindy Barracks, Cardiff and worked at their medical reception station under the Red Cross and a Queen Alexandra Matron (a right tarter) but wonderfully dedicated. On one occasion she asked me why I walked away from watching a poor man having all his teeth out, I explained that it wasn't seeing the blood that bothered me, but due to the chloroform that had been administered his eyes were so open and fixed, I began to feel a bit faint and didn't want the other three round the bed to have to pick me up. They were all male patients and I was teased somewhat. It was hard to keep a straight face sometimes when the matron was around.

My official posting came through and I had to report to Sea Bank Hotel in Porthcawl as a medical orderly. Most of the hotels on the front were taken over by the army. High up Rest Bay, now a golf course - hundreds of artillery men came on courses.

Sick parade was conducted by a medical officer who came from St Athans every morning. There was just the two of us to prepare for this parade. We had to get the medical history sheets ready etc. We were in charge of that MI room plus one other which administered the treatments prescribed. We dealt with plenty of common ailments, athletes foot, eczema, boils etc. Anything more serious was sent to the medical reception station St Athans.

I have happy memories of Porthcawl; I always remember that the weather was often atrocious in the winter, especially if we had to trek up to Rest Bay. I enjoyed my work and was lucky enough to be excused all the mundane chores. The Reconnaissance Corps stationed in another hotel nearby and their RAMC Sgt shared our medical rooms for his sick parade.

After a winter and summer there changes came and lots of postings. Most of the troops were being moved, including myself. Eventually I was detailed to report to Penarth. I shall always remember arriving in the dark on my own and being put in an empty hut for the night. I had just settled down when sirens were sounded. I could hear scuttling everywhere, then someone came in and said I could stay where I was. I then realised what it was like on a gun site! The next morning I was driven to the twin site which was at Sully, a little place in between Barry and Penarth on the mouth of the Severn. I remained on this gun site for the longest time of my four years service. The girls were a grand crowd, all doing different jobs. The GL girls, MT girls etc, all sharing the same hut. I often wonder where some of them are now, especially Eileen Pike, Mary Howe and many more, (if you are reading this, I would love to hear from you) also of course not forgetting the men who had their own medical orderly. It was a mixed Hy Ack Ack Battery - sorry I cannot remember the number but I do know that it had a four in it 464 or 474?

On the whole the girls were quite a fit crowd so the sick parades were quite short, however I found plenty to do one way or another for the girls' well being. When there was action going on I was privileged to sit and watch the girls in the plotting room, I felt that at least I was around if needed.

We had twenty-four hours leave once a week which was mostly spent in Cardiff. The Welsh were very good to us and cinemas were free to members of the forces. If leave fell on a Sunday, we would sometimes visit a Tabernacle where the Sunday half hour was often broadcast. All the forces were up on the balcony and to hear the Welsh singing was really something. Afterwards we were treated to a light supper, which even included a cigarette. Once a week we had our own dance in the NAAFI, but most evenings (if not duty telephonist or suchlike) we made our own entertainment.

As the war in Europe was about finished the Battery disbanded and we were all sent to a transit camp. The girls went to Portland Bill and the men to Weymouth, which meant that we were all able to meet to celebrate the VE night. I was only there about three weeks when a new posting came through, this time to Guildford, which was the demob centre, along with another ATS member and two

male orderlies. Guildford was quite a big medical centre and there was plenty of work. I stayed there for about ten months, I watched thousands coming and going and then it was my turn.

Then what did I do? On my demob leave I married my guardsman and we celebrated our Golden Wedding last year.

War is terrible and so tragic for some, and especially those that suffered and still have horrible memories. In fact sometimes I feel guilty that my four years in the ATS was such a happy experience which I would not have missed during those dark years. However I would not appreciate managing on three biscuits now!

W/149694 LCpl Holmes
Hy Ack Ack Battery RA
Sully
Glamorgan

Now Mrs I E Brown
32 Falmouth Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 6 UZ

BEFORE I FORGET

Memories of 473 HAA Bty, 135 Depot RA Mrs B Cawthorne (née Sgt B Bowers ATS)

Just as the current generation recall where they were when Kennedy was shot, our generation remember where they were when the chilling words of Neville Chamberlain came over the wireless: "We are now at war with Germany."

His announcement was immediately followed by the wailing of air raid sirens. That moment would change the pattern life for all of us.

Our family lived in the south of England. When the sirens went off, I remember my mother saying: "Go and fill the bath." I suppose she imagined that we were about to be firebombed any minute.

Our family split came fairly soon. My father, who was well beyond call-up age, joined the RAF. My mother and my two younger sisters went with him into married quarters, while my elder sister went off into the Land Army.

I was sent off as an unpaid help to various parts of the family. I was too young to be any use and not trained for anything.

I was sixteen when I saw a poster showing a steel-helmeted girl behind a gun. The poster was recruiting for the ATS, for girls to man ack-ack gun sites. I knew that was for me. But getting in was another thing.

I was under age, but you did not have to produce a birth certificate to get in. So I enlisted and went for the medical. The final part of the induction process was to swear, with your hand on the bible, in front of an officer, to serve King and Country.

While I was doing this, the old major who was conducting the swearing in looked me straight in the eyes and said: "You're not old enough."

I blushed (in those days one did). That gave me away and I was out.

But I was determined to enlist. So I went to the recruitment office in another town, only to be sent to the same centre and come up against the same old major. This time he let me through.

So there I was, just sixteen and being issued with my army kit - khaki bloomers (passion killers we called them), awful pink bras that flattened everything you had, pink corsets (with whale bones), khaki lisle stockings and of course, a skirt, jacket, cap and hideous pyjamas.

The first four weeks consisted of drill, endless marching, button polishing and folding one's blankets in the correct order. You were also given a number - mine was W/75655 - which you would remember for life.

We were a mixed crowd of girls, but most were a wonderful bunch of cockneys. At the end of the first four weeks, I was issued with a stripe - because I was tall. I was now a Lance Bombardier. We were to be in the Royal Artillery, the only women to be part of a regiment.

Our first posting was to Oswestry, where we met up with our male gunners. We were issued with slacks, boots and gaiters, leather jerkins, steel helmets and gas masks and we became 473 HAA Battery 135 Regiment RA. There was more square bashing. But more importantly, we became height finders, predictor operators and spotters.

Then to firing camp on Anglesey in November. I still have memories of standing for hours on the cliffs in the bitter cold, waiting to fire at a target towed behind a plane, and to be marched in squads before dawn to the cookhouse with a knife, fork and spoon. On to one plate was slopped porridge and egg and bacon. We were there for four weeks before going on our first leave.

The whole Battery was sent north to the Sunderland area. All movements were made at night in packed troop trains. We slept in Nissen huts near the gun post. The docks were being bombed night after night. When the alarm sounded the gun post was manned in minutes. The moment the aircraft was spotted, the height finder would shout "on target" and give the height and range of the plane. The predictor girls would work out the fuse and shout this to the gunners who set the shells. Then all hell was let loose as the four huge guns fired at the same time.

During this time, we were credited with bringing down eight enemy aircraft, one of the first mixed Batteries to do so. I was one of those in the regiment to receive an honour for this - I was awarded the BEM.

We remained in the north, being sent to Glasgow when that town was being raided. As the build up for the invasion, we were sent south. Our guns were in the fields near Winchester. The girls were billeted in tents. Another sergeant and I slept in an old chicken house, as it was near the huge generator which we had to start when the alarm went. While waiting for action, we had an inspection by the Princess Royal. I always remember getting the order to prepare the loo for her - one small tent and a bucket, which had to be burnished until it shone. But the final order was

that an inch of sand was to be put in the bottom, so that no one would hear her tinkle.

We had no leave or even a pass during this time. All roads were packed with lorries and tanks, nose to tail. Once the invasion began, we remained on alert and thought our next posting would be in France.

I was on duty the night the message was relayed: "Pilotless planes approaching." That began weeks of trying to shoot down V1s. If the fighters were up, we could do nothing.

We were moved nearer the coast, then near Southampton. Our next move was to London. We were on a site on number two polo grounds at Hurlingham. We were there the day the war ended. So we made our way to Buckingham Palace - along with crowds and crowds of other people.

The war with Germany was at an end and the artillery batteries were disbanded. We were asked to volunteer to retrain in signals to go to the Far East. I was sent to St Neots and trained as a switchboard operator. I was sent with sixty girls to board a troop ship - it was taking three thousand Dutch troops to Java. We were being sent to Ceylon, but at Trincomalee, orders came for us to continue to Singapore.

When we docked there, we were taken to Changi Camp, where we took over all telephone duties from the men. There were Japanese prisoners everywhere. An amazing year was to follow. Singapore was a thrilling place to see. Towards the end of the year, I caught malaria and spent some time in hospital before being sent back to England - amazingly on the same troop ship was the man I had met and fallen in love with. After more time in hospital in England, I was finally demobbed in York.

Mrs B Cawthorne (nee Sgt Bowers)
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KT2 5SE

FROM COLONEL TO CORPORAL

By
Alice Alexander (née Siesel)

I have just joined the WRAC Association. I was once a member of QMAAC Association and between 1946-48 even made contributions to its magazine, though on re-reading I am not proud of my efforts! I also attended a reunion in the Royal Albert Hall on 18th March 1950, the then Princess Elizabeth being present, also Field Marshall W J Slim, Chief of Imperial General Staff and Brigadier Mary Tyrwhitt, Director WRAC, who both gave me their autographs on the official programme!

Enlisting in the ATS in June 1943, I trained in Pontefract. Though leaving the army 5 years later with an "exemplary conduct" certificate, I had some near scrapes, one of which was innocently crossing the parade ground in uniform but wearing a civilian officer-type mackintosh, for which I was pulled up. Having written home that I was short of dusters and rags to polish buttons and shoes, a parcel had arrived at Coy Office. Reporting to the orderly room, I was

confronted by the platoon commander with a torn parcel, from which protruded cotton and woollen material. "Are you not aware" she demanded, "that you are not permitted to wear civilian clothing?" Her face went red, when I opened the package to reveal cleaning rags and brasso!

Next followed a clerk's course in Newark, billeted with 2 old ladies, hostile to having a room requisitioned, never speaking, but fulfilling their duties to me. I spent most of my free time with 2 ATS billeted with a charming sculptor and his Austrian wife, who always made me welcome with apple strudel! While in Newark our platoon attended the funeral of General Sikorski. A posting to E Coy, Welsh Border Sub-district Gp followed in September, working at the Command Supply Depot, Park Hall Camp, Oswestry with the Catering Adviser, later 234 Western Platoon, and the 133 OCTU Searchlight Training Wing, later 124 OCTU, again as messing officer's assistant. Our colonel was the film star Leo Genn and many of us used to peep through the window or visit his office under some pretext. On disbandment of the 124 OCTU in August 1944 I was posted to 2/8 Southern Platoon at HQ Corsham Garrison Group ATS and temporary attached to No 1 Southern Command Holding Unit Anzac Camp, Devizes, later to become North Wilts Group. I attended 2 Army School of Education Instructors Courses at Bamber Bridge, Lancs, then to teach elementary German to officers being posted to Germany.



On a day trip to the Dead Sea, Palestine 1947.

After the liberation of Paris, I was granted compassionate leave on 31st May 1945 and tagged along with the ATS Band, playing there. The French, now well disposed to a British uniform, allowed me a personal tour of the Sorbonne and the Curie Institute. In September 1945 I was posted to C Coy North Wilts Gp, ATS working in admin at the School of Infantry, Warminster, later Southern Command HQ Gp ATS and then at HQ Officers Wing. While in Wilts we frequently saw dishevelled German prisoners of war arriving. Early in 1946 I was posted via Port Said/Ismaïlia to 512 Coy, later Palestine Coy ATS, Middle East Forces in Jerusalem. Then a corporal, I received a letter from France addressed to Col Siesel, my correspondent having mistaken the 'p' for an 'o'. This also needed explanation! I worked in the King David Hotel annex at HQ Special Investigation Branch Palestine & Transjordan, in association with the Corps of Mil Police and the Pal Police/CID, having been promoted to W/Sgt as chief clerk. One of the officers in my office was a nephew of Neville Chamberlain. We had quarters in Allenby Barracks, mid-way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. From January 1948 I worked for the Air Officer Commanding Levant as personal secretary, still maintaining contact with the SIB but living in the RAF Sgts' billet. The Air Commodore sometimes went pigeon shooting with King Abdullah, for which I made the arrangements. I also accompanied the PA on official flights to Egypt. When the Mandate ended after 30 years of British rule, and because of mines and snipers on all sides, I was collected from the police depot by armoured car as part of a convoy to Kolundia airport for the short flight to Haifa port, next day to board the troop ship back to the UK. I had a most happy, adventurous and memorable time during my service and have written at length in case there is still someone who served with me at any of the above postings.

Mrs Alice R Alexander
Ex W/277067 W/Sgt Siesel A R
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London
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FEMALE BRETHREN

In 1941 at the age of 17 years I joined the ATS. I completed training as an aircraft spotter and was posted to 633(M) HAA Battery. There I remained until we were disbanded in 1945.

After a short period stationed in Melton Mowbray where I was working as clerk to the RSM of an Ordnance Depot, I was posted to Abbassia Garrison, Egypt. There I was attached to 2nd Echelon Army Records.

Some of my spare time was spent playing cricket with the ATS Egypt team most of our games played at the Alemain Club. I must say we were never short of spectators - mostly male! I suspect they really came to laugh at us expecting, perhaps, that we would bowl underhand - silly boys.

We played in an area match which of course we won. Our team was also successful against a WAAF eleven. We were all presented with a medal which read 'Presented by Ali-Bey' on one side and ATS Cricket Team, Cairo 1946, on the other.

Florence Lyons (née Marshall)
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BL9 6NP

Photograph of cricket team in 'Where are you now' – Editor

WRAC Luncheon Club

11 October 1997

Six months ago I stepped into an unknown world called 'Luncheon Club organisation'. What did I know about it? Absolutely nothing. I was very lucky because the staff of Tillington Hall Hotel were well prepared for amateurs like me. I advertised the proposed Luncheon via the WRAC Register Newsletter, the Lioness, Teletext - Service Pals and Lost Touch. I then spent a nail biting few days wondering if anyone would actually respond. On 17 June 1997 I received the first cheque and application form from Sue Thomas in Newbury, Berkshire. I heaved a sign of relief - there was no going back. As the numbers increased I told myself that if the applications reached the 50 mark it would be a miracle. The numbers did increase - the final number was 64. There was great disappointment from many ladies who were unable to make it this year but they are determined to make it next. Sue Dyer, Birmingham was heartbroken because she was one of the original group involved in the idea of a Register and Luncheon Club. To make matters worse her two best friends Sue Thomas and Eddie McCague were able to attend.

Friday - I met Laura Kirk, Delia Harding and Kathleen Hughes at Stafford Station and within 5 minutes I knew it was going to be alright. We had lunch at the Soup Kitchen and when we emerged we were all firm friends. At the Hotel more ladies had arrived and were making friends in true WRAC style. The evening saw 14 of us at the Radford Bank Inn enjoying a variety of tasty bar meals. The stories flowed like wine and the clock was turned back so swiftly it made my head spin. 14 'girls' smiled, laughed, listened and shared with each other escapades of their service days. I can still see Kathleen Hughes cooking chicken on the end of a knitting needle. What a night. This was the beginning of the day that was to come.

Saturday - I had so much to do, and so little time, to get the displays etc organised in the Tillington Suite. I needn't have worried. Help was on hand in abundance. I stood at one end of the room and looked at all these lovely, lovely ladies working together to make this Luncheon a success. The feeling of comradeship was tremendous, to the extent that I felt as though I could reach out and touch it. The WRAC No 1 Dress uniform, of Daphne Jervis, displayed on a model (British Heart Foundation). The WRAC Association Standards from Birmingham and Luton proudly flanked the ATS Association Standard from Wolverhampton. The WRAC cake that had been carefully baked and iced by Maureen Deeley (here hangs a tale) was centre stage. Willing volunteers took on the task of selling WRAC souvenirs and raffle tickets. At last everything was ready.

The Luncheon was set for 1.00pm but at 12.00 noon the Bar was full of WRAC members - past and present. The flow of chattering voices didn't pause as old friends greeted each other and strangers introduced themselves. There was no formal seating plan. We didn't need one - the theme was making friends. Val Kemball said Grace and the Luncheon officially began. I had difficulty eating my lunch because I was so busy either listening or talking. Sitting opposite me were Chris Atack and Jenny Nye. I had the pleasure of reuniting them via the WRAC Register. The Luncheon didn't need any structuring because everyone was happy to mix and make friends. Maureen Deeley cut the cake to much

laughter as she took a salute wearing Daphne's No 1 Dress hat. The cake was delicious.

The raffle was such a success that we ran out of raffle tickets. I would like to thank everyone who donated prizes - you were incredibly generous. The star of the raffle was "Dan - the Decorating Man", knitted and donated by Betty Freak from Rochester, Kent. I had planned a Candlelight Finale with songs like "Leader of the Gang" - Gary Glitter but the song that got everyone on their feet was "Land of Hope and Glory" followed by "Auld Lang Syne". The whole room linked hands and sang. It was a lovely sight. The Luncheon was over but the weekend hadn't finished.

45 ladies had booked accommodation at the Hotel for Saturday night. The evening was spent in the Leisure Club Bar enjoying an assortment of snacks and if you were in the know you got to taste Maureen Deeley's secret weapon - home made Baileys. I can assure you it was delicious even if the Brandy did grab me by the throat. Tiredness eventually claimed us all and we very reluctantly retired to bed.

Sunday - The swimming pool, Jacuzzi, sauna and gym was a popular venue before breakfast. I took the opportunity to relax and unwind as did many others. The Jacuzzi was heaven. Breakfast time was spent sadly saying goodbye to those who had to catch trains etc. At 10.30am 18 ladies assembled in Reception for the shortish car ride to Weston Hall for coffee. My apologies to everyone - I failed to provide an adequate map and my appalling instructions caused a few to get lost. Enroute we encountered a long traffic hold up. The Parrot Society was having a 'bit of a do' at the County Showground. I didn't know there was so many parrots in the country. Weston Hall is a lovely manor house near the village of Weston and was the home of 27 Vehicle Recovery Depot during the war. In the lovely setting and atmosphere of Weston Hall we finally said our farewells. I heard Gladys Pope and Frances Green saying "I'll see you next year" and my control cracked. The first ever WRAC Luncheon was over and it had been a success. What I had dreamt about had actually happened. During the weekend I tried to thank everyone for coming. I would like to emphasise that without your presence, without your obvious desire to see the Luncheon Club succeed it would never have happened. **You** are the Luncheon Club.

Thank you for the friendship, the support, the letters, the cards, the telephone calls and the flowers etc. I am overwhelmed. I sincerely believe that the weekend and the Luncheon itself was a success. If you think differently then let **me** know so that we can do something about it for next year.

Would you like to join us next year - complete and return the Membership Form for the WRAC Luncheon Club. The Tillington Hall Hotel has already been booked for the weekend 2-4 October 1998. An allocation of rooms has been made but you will need to book early to avoid disappointment. It is proposed to hold a Business Meeting on Saturday afternoon and the WRAC Dinner during the evening of 3 October 1998. A very tired but very happy

Ann Deakin
WRAC Register/Luncheon Club Organiser

WRAC Luncheon Club



The Venue - Tillington Hall Hotel



The Raffle Prizes



"Thank you for the flowers" - Anne Deakin



Maureen Terry takes a salute



Cooked and Donated by Maureen Terry



***Clockwise:
Daphne Jervis, Chris Jeyes, Val Kemball,
Jenny Light, Maureen Deeley***



***From
Agnes Doig, Betty
Kathy Hughes***



***From left:
Heather Rogers, Janet Beer, Betty Halsey,
Gladys Wolf, Agnes Risbridger (friend)***



*From left:
Irene Hall, Carol Austin,
Janet Greenwood, Margaret Price*



*From left:
Janet Greenwood, Carol Rowat,
Valerie Morgan*



*Clockwise:
Dabs Brook, Averill Williams, Hazel Wilson, Madenne Phillips
Also sharing the tale was: Isabel Turner, Lesley Holt, Joan O'Hagan and Valerie Allan*

***Weston Hall
Coffee and Farewells on Sunday***



***The Happy Organiser
and long suffering Deakin family***

***The Farewell
Left to right: Jan, Jenny, Ann and Chris
Jenny and Chris reunited after 30 years***



Coffee at Weston Hall

When's the next one?



Those present at the WRAC Luncheon Club

			Now known as
W/393603	Pte Valerie Allan	1956-59	Scarlett
W/427069	WOI Carole Austin	1965-87	
W/353475	LCpl Elsie Ballard	1948-50	Howard
W/423687	Pte Ena Barrett	1964-67	Mercy
W/455780	SSgt Lesley Bartlett	1975-97	Holt
W/398968	Pte Janet Beer	1958-61	Cameron
W/327555	WOII 'Bobbie' Brewster	1945-73	
W/340054	WOI 'Dabs' Brook	1946-85	
W/423286	LCpl Pat Buck	1964-67	Truscott
W/416706	Cpl Ann Buckton	1962-67	
W/416734	LCpl Ann Butler	1962-65	Deakin
W/403595	Cpl Anita Davies	1959-63	Turnbull
P/537574	Capt Barbara Davies	1973-to date	
W/440978	Cpl 'Glyn' Davies	1971-77	
W/397413	Pte Jenny Dennis	1957-60	Nye
W/374403	WOI Agnes Doig	1952-85	
W/434632	Pte 'Eddie' Dunn	1969-71	McCague
W/462441	Sgt Anne Evans/Shepherd	1978-93	Hamilton
W/430597	Sgt 'Sandy' Fawcett	1967-76	
W/377077	Cpl Irene Flower	1952-55	Oliver
W/354630	Sgt Jacque Fox	1949-59	Warsop
W/429025	Sgt Sylvia Gardner	1966-75	
W/457077	SSgt Joan Gaskell	1975-to date	O'Hagan
W/385626	WOII Jean Gray	1953-75	
W/350612	WOI Betty Green	1948-83	
W/389274	LCpl Frances Green	1955-58	
W/441387	SSgt Janet Greenwood	1970-86	
W/369015	Pte Madge Grundy	1950-53	Evans
W/424007	WOII Irene Hall	1965-87	
W/362688	Pte 'Gerry' Halsey	1950-54	Freak
W/397016	Sgt Hilda Harris	1957-64	
W/420033	Sgt 'Bobby' Haynes	1964-82	
P/489949	Maj Kathy Hughes	1950-82	
W/405210	Pte Pearl Jewell	1959-62	Hicks
W/397423	Pte Chris Jeyes	1957-60	Atack
W/401188	LCpl Verna Johnston	1958-61	Jennings
W/389156	Cpl Gladys Jones	1955-60	Pope
W/112675	WOII Kath Kenney	1941-52	McCabe
W/418984	Dvr Jenny Light	1963-66	Bryne
W/430494	LCpl Lesley Lloyd	1967-70	Warner
W/388638	LCpl Kathy Martin	1954-57	Kyne
W/414005	Pte Janet Moore	1962-64	Watkins
W/347794	Pte 'Delia' Morgan	1948-50	Morgan
W/429168	WOII Jenny Payne	1966-88	
W/418917	LCpl Madeline Phillips	1963-66	Cox
W/434994	SSgt Jenny Podesta	1969-96	
W/425947	Pte Margaret Price	1965-67	James
P/409315	Maj Daphne Prior/Jervis	1943-67	Jervis
W/445586	Pte Heather Rogers	1973-75	
W/439499	WOI Carol Rowat MBE	1970-92	
W/401107	Pte 'Pat' Ryton	1958-61	Videgrain
W/437274	Sgt Sue Smith	1969-72	Thomas
		1990-1991	
W/388376	Cpl Kathy Sturgess	1954-61	Young
W/405255	LCpl Maureen Terry	1959-63	Deeley
W/427477	Sgt Isabel Turner	1965-68	Jenkinson
W/418720	Pte 'Andie' Verrion	1963-67	Smith
W/421410	Pte Laura Waldock	1964-66	Kirk
P/401861	Lt Valerie Webster	1959-62	Lady Kemball
W/434764	Sgt Avril Williams	1969-78	
W/441540	WOII Muriel Willoughby	1971-94	
W/414251	LCpl Hazel Wilson	1962-66	Finch
W/430114	WOI Josie Windsor	1966-70	
	QA's	1971-88	
W/439997	Sgt Chris Wolf	1971-83	
W/385299	LCpl Gladys Wolf	1953-56	Holding

SECRET DESTINATION LED TO ROMANCE

Taken from S Coldfield News Apr 95

Mrs Majorie Ovadia, nee Craig, from Sutton Coldfield, was living in Grimsby when war was declared.

Her father had died when she was just eight years old, from injuries he suffered in the First World War.

The surviving Craigs 'looked forward' to the War with trepidation. The family had already been issued with gas masks and the next step was to black out the windows every night.



At the end of 1940, having reached the age of 20, she decided to join the ATS and in April 1941 she was posted to Cheltenham War Office, now GCHQ. She was chosen with three other girls for overseas service. They were put on board a 21,000-ton liner, with no clues as to where it was going and discovered that there were 100 female service women nurses and signal operators and what seemed like thousands of soldiers and airmen. After eight weeks at sea they finally arrived at Port Tewfik in Egypt, then a journey by train took them to Cairo, the final destination.

They were billeted in what was the Kasr El Nil Barracks, now a hotel, and started work at GHQ in Cairo two weeks

after arrival. The whole unit in Signals at GHQ consisted of 16 female teleprinter operators to cover 24 hours' duty and despite sickness had no replacements for a year.

To combat loneliness she joined a concert party to entertain wounded servicemen returning from the Front which gave many concerts in the main military hospitals in the Cairo area. She was asked to join the Cairo Amateur Dramatic Society (CADMS) and the first show was 'Maid of the Mountains', which was put on by special permission in the Royal Opera House for two weeks. All proceeds went to the Forces Benevolent Fund. Then, one night, on a trip to a local nightspot, she 'volunteered' to sing with the band.



As the applause for 'Yours' rang out the band leader was interested in another number - her phone number - which she duly gave, GHQ 323.

Within six months she and Joe Ovadia, a handsome Frenchman, were engaged and, after a plea to the British Ambassador and high ranking diplomats to cut through army red tape, they were married in Cairo on June 17 1945.

They have now lived in Sutton Coldfield for 35 years and celebrate their golden wedding later this year.

AND MOTHER CAME TOO

By
Joyce Wright (née Wallace)

Reading the story of Joyce Sterio and her mother Amy in the last edition of Lioness was almost identical to my own story but not quite!!!!

In March 1941 when I volunteered to join the ATS I was 17 years 3 months old - filled in the necessary application form only to be told by the recruiting officer 'Oh! Sorry you're too young!' She noticed that my mother was a widow and said 'Does your mother drive?' - 'Persuade her to join up as well and you're in'. So I did - I didn't try to persuade her, I told her it was her duty. She was so amazed to be asked she said "Yes." We packed all the furniture into one room in our flat and advertised it 'To Let'. On getting that fixed up, mother and I had orders to go to Fulford Barracks, York for our 4 weeks training. What a performance when we got there. I had been to girl guide camps so was more prepared for mucking in than my poor mother. Communal sleeping arrangements in a barrack room was a new experience for her and even more so was taking a mug, knife, fork and spoon to the dining hall for meals. After our very first meal, she arrived back at the barrack room without them. I said "Where are your 'tools' Mum?" Well, I went back to find them but needless to say they'd gone. However, on another table someone else had done the same so I cheerfully whipped those and mother was the lucky one.

Getting rigged out with uniform was a real laugh, because at 5 ft, my jacket and skirt were miles too big which I daresay is no new story. Caps were dampened down and re-shaped with a plate inside plus several heavy books on top to get it flattened. After 4 weeks we did finally begin to look more respectable.

Meantime we had to be sharpened up with some square bashing, have medicals as well as lectures on fire fighting etc. One thing which did horrify us was to learn that one barrack room was set aside for about a dozen girls who were found to have head lice and there they stayed until, after several treatments they were clean again. Sad to say we still felt it wiser to steer clear of those girls.

My mother, like Joyce Sterio's was most indignant that she was expected to go marching and she told me I'd have to answer for her. I was petrified in case I'd be hauled over the coals and was amazed not to be caught out. However, a long time later my mother revealed all and I feel able to tell this story now as those concerned are no longer with us!!!

My mother spent her evenings either in the NAAFI dancing, or in the bar - became friends with the two sergeants who took us for marching and lectures. They were aware of her 'absences' so I need not have worried at all.

After 4 weeks at Fulford Barracks, mother was posted to Camberley as a driver in the FANYS - she went through gruelling driving tests but she was an excellent driver and I knew she would pass easily. In fact after 2 months she was chosen to drive the officer i/c - Major Thompson and stayed with him throughout. Her time in the services was cushy compared with mine but it was great fun to have our leaves together.

After my initial training, I went on to Park Hall Camp, Oswestry to become a GL Operator in the first mixed Ack-Ack Battery which was 435 (mxd) HAA Battery RA and after a further 6 weeks moved on to Ty Croes, Anglesey which was a practice camp. Here it was very bleak and very hard work. We were eventually sent to our first gun site at Richmond Park in Surrey. Because we were the first mixed AA Battery we felt rather special when Winston Churchill came to visit us.

After Richmond Park came many other gun sites at Highams Park, Gunnersbury, Hurlingham Polo Ground, Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill. Eventually however, on volunteering for overseas I was posted to 2nd Echelon at Cowley Barracks, Oxford. Instead of this resulting in a posting to Europe I found myself sent to Camberley as Pay Sergeant. Camberley was the very place my mother was first posted, so it was almost like completing a full circle. Sandhurst was a wonderful place to complete my service days - the climax being the ultimate VJ Parade!

It's even more of a coincidence that the reunions for the mixed Ack-Ack 'girls' (says she with tongue in cheek) are now held annually at Imphal Barracks, Fulford Road, York. Fulford Barracks was, where my mother and I did our first 4 weeks together and where this story began.

OLYMPIC ATHLETE BEVIS SHERGOLD DIES IN RICHMOND HOME

One of Britain's finest women athletes has died at the Royal Star and Garter Home in Richmond.

Bevis Anael Shergold (née Reid) the last woman to win the British Championship for discus, javelin and shot putt, was 78. She represented Britain at the 1948 Olympics in London and met the Pope in the same year with her Italian trainer.

Mrs Shergold was brought up in Italy where her father worked as an artist.

She worked for the British Council in Rome and spoke fluent Italian, which she put to good use when she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service during the Second World War in 1940.

During the 1950s Mrs Shergold contracted cancer and was one of the first people to receive radium treatment in 1958.

The procedure cured her cancer but caused complications and led to her being confined to a wheelchair.

Despite this she remained an active and energetic person according to the Royal Star and Garter Home staff.

She took up pottery and worked voluntarily for the Citizens Advice Bureau for 30 years. She and her husband moved to Ancaster Court, Richmond Hill, 21 years ago where she moved freely in her wheelchair in a spacious ground floor flat. But in the past year her husband found it increasingly difficult to cope and she moved to the nearby Garter Home and visited Harold daily.

Mrs Penny Riddy represented the WRAC Association at Mrs Shergold's funeral

Editor

SO LITTLE FOR SO MUCH

By
Miss V C Cole

One day last year my brother-in-law, Roger Pallant, pointed out to me a reunion of 158 Squadron, Bomber Command which was in the British Legion Magazine and stated that he was a Flight Engineer in that Squadron and had been shot down on the 3rd June 1943 whilst flying over Holland. He was never proud of having to bomb and kill innocent people and therefore wanted nothing to do with Bomber Command RAF Association and he could not come to terms with the VE and VJ Parades etc. I was always sorry about this and when his three grandsons grew up not knowing anything of Roger's war effort, I took it upon myself to write to 158 Squadron and inform them of Roger's whereabouts. Once I got the ball rolling so to speak, Roger was very pleased and these young lads now know just what Roger suffered in a German POW Camp for nigh on 3 years. All this took some time and he now has a folder on his RAF days plus his medals etc and has also been in touch with the 3 other members of his crew who survived the crash and he also knows exactly where his pilot and other crew members are buried.

Whilst dealing with all the correspondence for him my mind went back to a day in early June 1943; it was a lovely sunny morning. We were living in a private house; during the laughter and usual chatter, the postman arrived and the mail was handed out by the duty sergeant. I received a letter and immediately recognised my sister Rosie's handwriting. Whenever she wrote to me she always included a postal order, either 2/-, 3/- or sometimes 10/- (old money) and if her writing was a little difficult to read I could always read the postal order. This time, however, there was no postal order and the letter was smudged and quite short but long enough to tell me that she had received a telegram telling her that her husband Roger had been reported missing presumed killed. Suddenly the laughter died down and the girls were all looking at me and asking if I was OK. I smiled at them all and suggested we finished up our ham and chips otherwise we would be late on parade. For myself I thought how quickly things can turn. I remember folding the letter up and putting it in my top pocket. I answered it that evening.

Towards the end of June I received a letter from my dear late mother. She had received news telling her that my brother had been blown up whilst guarding a petrol dump somewhere in Egypt. Lucky for Jack a small army convoy was passing by and an officer found him and got him back to base camp. He was badly burnt and needed a lot of care and attention.

My letters remained in my top pocket and I carried out my transport duties, but my thoughts often strayed to Roger and Jack. One morning I was sent for by Junior Commander Brown and on entering her office I could see an army officer standing near the window, not too sure of his rank other than he had red on his tunic and cap. I was informed by J C Brown that this officer was from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Chipstead and he needed our help. This

hospital, which in peace time was for children only, had been taken over for the treatment of burnt Airman and other servicemen who needed to have their faces and limbs etc rebuilt. He explained that some of the men had reached the stage in their treatment when it was necessary for them to mix with folk from the outside world and he felt that a social night with some ATS ladies might help them overcome their general fears of facing the world. He said that some of their faces were dreadful to look at but their spirits were high. By now my left hand was touching the button on my pocket and I was realising that although I could not help Roger and Jack I could, at least, help these dear men who had given and suffered so much for us all. The officer told me again that it would be a frightening experience but even so I agreed to get some of the girls together as soon as a date was fixed. A date was soon fixed and in the evening I drove the truck round to the billet and picked the girls up. We arrived and walked slowly to the front door. I looked round at the faces of these young girls and asked them to be brave. I was about two years older than most of them and life had taught me a lot. Taking a deep breath I opened the door and heard one lass say "O my God" but a quick prod in the ribs sorted her out. Personally I just wanted to run but common sense prevailed and in I went closely followed by the rest of the girls. I have never forgotten that scene and of course, all I could see in my minds eye was Roger and Jack. Did they look like this, I wondered? I asked the girls to circulate and later found myself talking to a young lad who told me he had been adrift in a dingy for over 3 weeks. His face was indeed a sorry sight, all tight and scarred but he was thankful to be alive. Looking at me he said, "Do you know, Vera, I'd give the world to be able to buy a pint over a pub bar. Time came for us to leave and, having been asked to visit them again the following week, we all said yes. If we were quiet going to the hospital, we were even more so on the journey home but we were all very glad that we had made the effort and agreed that it would be easier next time.

Back on duty the next morning, I mentioned how we got on and the young lad wanting a pint. So I arranged with the owner of a little pub called 'The Mint' in Banstead to take the airmen there for an evening and then got permission from the army officer to do so. We girls set off once again, I dropped them off at 'The Mint' and went to the hospital to collect the men making quite sure that the young lad was amongst them. Actually they were nearly all officers or NCOs but to me they were a group of men who had been to hell and back and rank did not enter into my plans. On reaching 'The Mint' the girls came out to greet them and before long a game of darts was in progress and laughter filled the public bar. Here I must state that we had the bar to ourselves for that evening, thanks to the owner and he was pleased to do his bit to help these young men back on the road to life. Returning them to the hospital they asked us to take them again. On the next visit the owner let a few of the local men into the bar and before long it was as though they had known each other for years and these men could not thank the airmen enough for risking their lives in the defence of England. Later the officer who seemed to be in charge thanked us all for our efforts and kindness and said that the local men wanted to help them and so they had agreed to walk them back to the hospital and from then

on they would look after them. This was good news and the young lad had had his pint and he gave me a quick peck on the cheek for making his wish come true.

The army officer sent his sincere thanks to all concerned who had helped. These men were the first burnt airmen from that hospital to venture out but they would not be the last as they could now help each other. I was glad I had been given the chance to help these brave men and just hoped that Roger and Jack were being helped along the road.

Roger hid for 3 days in a cornfield but had to give himself up because of his burns and spent the next 3 years in a German POW Camp and my brother came home safe but both were scarred inside as well as outside.

I still think of those airmen because, for so many of us, once the war was over all we had to do was to hand in our kit and, hey presto, we were back on the road to a normal life. Not so for those brave men and hundreds like them because, no matter how clever the medical world is, or was, those dreadful scars would remain with them to the end of their lives - they could never forget and the older one gets the clearer past events become. I know because I have an 80 year old ex-Bomber Command Flight Engineer, now wheelchair bound, brother-in-law who does his best to try not to remember.

Miss V C Cole
ex W/185675
Colchester Branch

ONE OF THE FIRST ATS TO LAND IN FRANCE

The late Mrs A Waters (née Joan Farlow) who sadly died in July was one of the first ATS to land in France after the Invasion and her husband has sent the following account.

When the first party of ATS girls to serve overseas with the Liberation Army arrived in France, Joan Farlow was one of them. She was a Lance-corporal and together with 13 other typists and two "Redcaps," one driver and one officer, was attached to the advance section of Rear HQ 21st Army Group.

In the transit camp where she spent her last night in England, she was one of the guests of honour at the farewell party in the Sergeants' Mess.



Some of the 1st ATS to land in France

When the girls reached the embarkation port, the people of the town gave them a wonderful send-off. In a house in a quiet street - the girls call it "The House with the Green Curtain" - the mother and sister of a petty officer in the Navy threw their doors open to them, brought them hot water to wash, gave them huge plates of food.

The girls crossed on an LST. The ship had never carried women before and the officers and men went out of their way to make the girls comfortable. They even had hot showers on board.

Before they left - armed with an excellent nautical vocabulary - they signed their names in the Captain's book. The signatures before theirs were those of officers who had landed in North Africa, Sicily and the Anzio beach-head.



Joan Waters née Farlow - One of the first ATS to land in France

On the beach, some of the boys who had been there since D-Day, 52 days, came and asked "had anyone come from their home town?" Friends were found and made, the girls climbed into their lorries and by the light of the distant gunfire that flashed from the front line, they caught their first glimpse of France. Here were blasted houses and bomb craters and the few French villagers who came out to watch the convoy jolting over the rough roads rutted already by tanks. The ATS girls slept in marquees and were very comfortable and happy. Joan was very proud to wear Monty's flash.

Mr A J Waters
7 Church Lane
Hatfield
Herts
AL9 5HX

REMEMBERING GRETA BAYLIS

Pat Smith
(WRAC/R Signals/Recruiting)

I joined the WRAC in Sept 1960 and after six weeks training at the 'old' Guildford TC with about 20 other recruits, travelled to Catterick for Signals trade training.

By then we had been thoroughly briefed by training NCOs on what to expect at Catterick. "You're not going to like Catterick - it's a punishment posting for R Signals and WRAC permanent staff so don't expect them to be as soft on you as we've been." (Soft? We hadn't noticed soft) "BUT just wait till you meet WO1 Baylis SHE volunteered to serve in Catterick and she'll be your boss!" We believed it, of course. Another comment was a graphic description of Catterick's weather: "After God had created the world, He settled down to rest on the seventh day but an aide pointed to an empty space on the map, in North Yorkshire, that He had forgotten. God was very tired and only had enough energy to give the area a 'bit of this' and a 'bit of that' and that is why Catterick has the worst weather in England!"

Filled with apprehension, we started our long journey, leaving Guildford at the crack of dawn - almost - on 4th November and arriving at the WRAC Hodge Lines at around 2030 hrs. Tired, hungry and cold, we were taken to our barrack room and handed over to our room NCO. An unsmiling LCpl read out the house rules and informed us that the cute little stove in the middle of the room was our sole source of heat and that the coal was strictly rationed per day so it was up to us - heat in the morning, none at night and vice-versa. One of our group asked quite seriously if we could re-allocate, at least go back to 'good old Guildford'. That was received well! The NCO showed us her end bunk room and said that was the last time any of us would ever be allowed there again. We all noticed the blazing coal fire and a generous scuttle full of coal. Out of our ration, we wondered but dare not voice the question.

We were told to report to the cookhouse, eat and be back in 20 minutes. We managed to get back just in time, expecting to go to bed but instead we were ordered to unpack and prepare for a kit-check at 0830 hrs the next morning. Before that, however, we were to standby for a room inspection. Room inspection? We'd only just arrived. Kit check? Our kit had been packed since the day before so we knew bed would be a long way off.

"Stand by your beds" and in strolled Greta Baylis (or 'Ma Baylis' as she was called but never to her face). She swang a pace-stick from her right hand and just stood in front of us, tapping her left palms with the stick while she looked at each of us in turn. She introduced herself, which was absolutely unnecessary as we all knew straight away who she was. As she approached me, she lifted the stick, moved it towards me and lightly prodded my left ribcage. "Ummm, I'll expect you to put on weight: you are far too

skinny, Pte Smith." As she left the room, she told us, "I will be doing the kit inspection tomorrow morning and I expect perfection: this is Catterick, not Guildford!"

We soon discovered that Greta was a superb instructor and someone who could 'do' as well as teach. The Royal Signals and the WRAC held her in great esteem. She was acknowledged as the Tape Relay expert and was regularly consulted by the great and good for advice or troubleshooting. Her experience was especially important during the lead up to the state of the art computerisation of the Allied Communication system in the early 1960s.

August 1962, back in Catterick for my B1 course and Greta was still there, still with her formidable reputation. And yes, another prod in the ribs: No weight gain, Cpl Smith?" "No Ma'am" I replied, quietly promising myself that the day she retired (but not before - a coward? Me? Definitely yes!) I would tell her just how much I hated her doing that! But, what a memory she had! She always seemed able to remember people wherever, whenever she met them despite the thousands she had trained, met or served alongside.

In late 1963, still at 14 Signals Regt we were expecting a replacement Duty Signals Officer to take over one of our four shifts. No rumour, unusually, emerged who it would be. Traditionally, a male officer held the post so it was with great surprise and an even greater sinking of hearts and stomachs that we discovered the new DSO was to be Greta Baylis, newly commissioned.

Greta's posting to 14 Signal Regt (Boddington - known as 'The Barrow') was not going to be easy for her. She arrived at a time of enormous change in international communications which is why she was brought in. Each of the four shifts consisted of a mixture of WRAC, civilians, Royal Signals Regulars and a sizeable number of 'We're very pleased to be here' demob happy National Servicemen. Not an easy mix at times and required good management skills. Greta took on the task of handling such a diverse staffing arrangement and the transition to computerisation with enviable ease. We knew she was under great pressure that aggravated a stomach complaint but she never complained, ever.

The last time I saw Greta was a few days before my posting to Singapore in September 1964. She stopped her car alongside me, leaned out and wished me luck. As she drove off, she called out: "and fatten up, Singapore should do the trick. Bye."

Greta Baylis was a great asset to both the WRAC and Royal Signals. She was a woman of integrity and was loyal to her friends in both Corps. Greta had a wicked sense of fun and many will remember being on the receiving end of her humour.

Editors Note:

Major Greta Baylis died 17th November 1994

Are the Barracks still standing

Regarding the note in the Lioness about Barracks or Camps; what about the lovely country houses which the army took over?

St Margaret's in Dorking was just a large house, it is now (or was the last time I saw it) a motor sales place. I can remember Anstie Grange, off the Dorking to Horsham Road. It was a nursing establishment and I was on detachment there for two or three weeks. I also remember going to Mereworth Castle in Kent. The gardeners were usually kept on and the one at Mereworth told me that Edward and Mrs Simpson used to go there. A lovely old house south of Reigate, our Sgt, Mickey Middleton told the gardener, Mr Middleton the gardener at BBC was her uncle. A JOKE of course.

Mrs I Fern
107 Newman Road
St Thomas
Exeter
EX4 1PQ

In 1946/7 I was stationed at GHQ, Cairo, and I lived in Kasr-el-Nil Barracks, situated on the banks of the Nile. Although the accommodation left a lot to be desired, I believe most of us enjoyed living there as it was such an adventure to be in the heart of Cairo, next door to the famous Cairo Museum, and with a lovely view of the Nile. The ATS accommodation consisted of flats, with usually three girls to a room.

Twenty years later I found myself staying at the Nile Hilton Hotel in Cairo, which now stands on the site of the old Barracks - the view is the same but the accommodation somewhat more luxurious! Many old memories came flooding back and I thought what tales the walls could tell if they could speak.

Muriel Salter
ATS (Private)
4 Pitt Place
Church Street
Epsom
KT17 4PY

Dear Editor

I have just received the No 2 1997 addition of the Lioness. As always, it made for some enjoyable reading, but alas! I didn't see anything about any of my old friends. But! I noticed on page 105 the article "are the barracks still standing"? That statement tempted me to write to you, because

I've often wondered

I did my basic training at the Headquarters of the Welsh Fusiliers in Wales. One of the things I vividly remember that the Fusiliers had a parrot that had mainly red feathers. It had been given the name of Red. This parrot could shout out commands better than any drill sergeant and frequently did so anytime the ATS girls were on the parade ground. Rumour had it that one day Red laid an egg and "his" name was promptly changed to Scarlet. I am not sure if this is true, but I've often wondered.

With my basic training completed I was posted to the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment Records Office in Warwick. Other Regiments' records were housed at the same location as the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment. I have often wondered if those wooden offices were removed and the area restored to the way it was at a previous time. I was billeted in St John's House in Warwick along with other ATS personnel. There was a rumour that there was a tunnel under St John's House that went all the way to Warwick Castle. I never found out if this was true, but I've often wondered. Plus I have wondered if the house was restored after the war was over.

I requested a transfer and was sent to Winchester, Hants. I fell in love with this city. Its history fascinated me. I spent most of my off duty time, poking around various places, such as the maze in St Catherine's Hill in the East Gate, trying to figure out if the Round Table hanging there really did belong to King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. The Cathedral, the Jewry, the Butter Cross, St Swithin, etc held my interest the whole time I was there, and it still does. I was first billeted in Waverly Lawn. This was mentioned by Peggie Dudgeon in the last issue of the Lioness. Peggie and I have been corresponding for some time. Seemed we were both billeted there but at different times. For some reason all the ATS personnel were moved to King Alfred's College. I always thought the reason for this move was so we would be closer to "the huts" where we worked on records. We were marched each morning from the college, up the hill to "the huts" but were allowed to walk down at lunch time, walk back up again after lunch and walk down when our work day was through. Has the hill got any higher or the years, and are those "huts" still there? I have often wondered.



Just a memory - The Kasr-el-Nil Barracks in Cairo, used by British troops since 1882.

While stationed in Winchester, I became ill with arthritis, something that has plagued me ever since (resulting in total knee and shoulder transplants, plus a joint in the middle finger of the right hand. Please don't feel sorry for me, I've done a heap of living in spite of all of this!) After a short stay in sick bay, I was sent to a convalescent home, which was just outside Basingstoke. This was a beautiful home and was called "San Quillo". Rumour had it that a gentleman who had made his fortune in the Philippines owned the house. I remember that the bathrooms in the house were huge. What was said to have been the bathroom of the owner of the house was completely tiled in highly polished black marble. The bathtub and washbasin were black, but on the wall was a map of the Philippines, with a star marking a special spot. Rumour had it that the spot marked "his plantation". The grounds were beautiful. This is where my future husband proposed to me. How many ATS girls remember staying at San Quillo? Was the house returned to its owner? I have often wondered.

Back to Winchester I went but not for long. The arthritis got worse and I was sent to Shaftesbury Military

Hospital. I was there almost a year and underwent numerous tests, surgery, trial medications and therapy. A lady medical officer did a "bi-op" on my groin. This was the first operation she had performed and she was quite pleased with the results. Where is she now and is Shaftesbury Military Hospital still in operation? I have often wondered.

The day before D-Day I was in the Aldershot Military Hospital waiting to be discharged. I lay awake all night, listening to the planes as they flew over and again I wondered.

Where are all the friends I made? I have often wondered. If any of you remember me, W/101889 Molly Maybury, now Mary Arnold, or anyone would care to write, I would enjoy hearing from you.

Mary Arnold
7060 East 72nd Place
Commerce City
Colorado 80022
USA



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ALL OVERSEAS MEMBERS

Please note that under the new distribution system, all copies of the *Lioness* are sent by airmail.

All annual subscriptions for 1998 should have been accepted by 30 November. However, 1/98 will be sent in good faith for this year only to those people who were not aware of the new system.

A small donation towards postage would be appreciated.

Book Reviews

POEMS FOR ALL THE FAMILY

By
Eileen Hobson

Janus Poetry, Janus Publishing Company, Edinburgh House, 19 Nassau Street, London, W1N 7RE. £5.95

Eileen Hobson was born in Lancashire, youngest of 5 children. In 1968 she joined the army, working for the Royal Signals as a data telegraphist and cypher operator. She served mostly abroad including Hong Kong, Cyprus, New Zealand, Germany. She became ill with a rare neurological condition and has been in hospital ever since. She began writing verse and family and friends persuaded her to have the book published.

It's a pleasing collection of serious and humorous poems which will appeal to readers of all ages. Written in a simple, easy to read style, they cover a range of subjects including religion, old age, and nature. Several poems are based on everyday events and experiences of the author, her family and friends.

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THE SECRET TUNNELS OF SOUTH HEIGHTON

By
Geoffrey Ellis

ISBN 1 85770 101 1, SB Publications 1996, Price £5.99. A5, 96pp, 60 illustrations

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After four years extensive research by the author using official archives, and by tracing former service personnel who served here, the full details of conception, design, construction and operation have been revealed.

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Branch News

ACCRINGTON BRANCH

Our membership has increased. We have welcomed three new members to the branch this year.

We have again been busy with civic parades.

Twelve members of the branch attended the Reunion in Blackpool and we were able to renew our friendship with Anne Maher from Brixbane, Australia. We all had a wonderful time.

We had our annual fundraiser at Padiham with satisfactory results.

Shelley, one of our members, got married in July (see photo) to Stephen, both are members of the TA based in Preston. Rev Brian Derbyshire (Padre 4 QLR) did the honours and the Town Cryer was also there so the whole town of Great Harwood was aware that Shelley and Stephen had tied the knot!!



ALDERSHOT BRANCH

This has been a busy and varied year for the branch. There have not been as many local activities as usual due to the Grand Reunion and Corps Day celebrations. Twenty-seven of our members were present at the Grand Reunion dinner in Blackpool, despite the travel problems posed by terrorist threats. Although we offered free transport to Worthy Down, only a mere half dozen attended Corps Day. Other activities have included a talk from an antiques dealer, a "hands-on" evening of hobby ceramics at which some of our members produced very credible clay teddy bears, a quiz night, ably conducted by

our chairman's husband and, last but not least, a fascinating account of the history of womens military uniforms. Our annual dinner is to be held again at the Mill House, North Warnborough, (roughly in the centre of our area) and we plan to end 1997 with a Christmas party. Father Christmas has yet to be detailed, but the committee's husbands are already taking advance evasive action! On a personal note, we are happy to announce an addition to the strength, in the person of Cameron Fleming, born to Dawn and Danny in July; many of you will remember Dawn Maclean when she was a training NCO at the WRAC Centre. Our secretary and her husband celebrated, also in July, their marriage forty years ago, at the garrison church in Rheindahlen, BAOR, and managed to reunite their military bridesmaid and best man, together with one original guest. On a sadder note two of our old established members have died this year, Mary Dewar, who was an RSM at Aldershot during the war and Ruth Hicks, who as Junior Commander Sleight commanded a company of bakers there.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH BRANCH

Since our last report, as year ago, we have had an interesting and varied time. We continue our efforts to track down new members but with little success and the loss of our member, Marjorie Jinks, saddened us all. We have remembered her in our donations to the Association's own charity.

Speakers have entertained us with a range of subjects, including the work of the curator of Melbourne Hall, a travel talk on the USA and we are scheduled to have a talk by the captain of the England Women's Cricket Team in October.

There have been a number of lunches out with husbands and friends; the Christmas one being special. We visited the local TESCO and the Springboard Centre - a local enterprise to help people starting up in business.

We sent ten members to the Blackpool Reunion, several of whom had not been before. They were overwhelmed by the atmosphere and the sheer numbers of their old comrades - known and unknown before. In July, 14 of us went to the Royal Tournament - once again, a first for some.

The highlight of our year was a luncheon in July. This was our main fund raising effort but it was so much more. The organisation was faultless, the venue - our regular meeting place, a hotel which is owned by one of our members - so welcoming and the company, members and relatives and friends, or a very high standard - AND we made some profit.

Now we look forward to the AGM and Christmas - Ah well!! - another summer gone.

AYLESBURY BRANCH

As every annual and life member of the Association receives a copy of the 'Lioness', it is my intention to use this column, not only as a report of past and future activities, but as a 'newsletter' to all Aylesbury members. I am sure that other Branches like ourselves have girls who wish to keep in touch with the Association, but for various reasons cannot attend monthly meetings. I term these our 'sleeping members'. Incidentally, will any member who can attend a meeting but was not at a previous one please telephone the Secretary on 01296 630590 to avoid a wasted journey and the resulting frustration as our meetings occasionally have to be advanced and retarded to fit in with our rent free accommodation.

It was interesting to read in the February issue of 'Lioness' how the Manchester Branch gave birth to several new Branches but in so doing were left with a strength of approximately 8 attending members. I know the feeling after Luton and Dacorum (Hemel Hempstead) were formed. However Aylesbury still has an average of 15-20 members who can get to meetings. Need I say, we are all doing our best to recruit new members - and with some success.

At our last Committee Meeting it was agreed that - MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE. THERE WILL BE NO BRANCH MEETINGS IN JANUARY AND AUGUST.

Despite the Association Rule Book stating the Financial year ends 31st October subscriptions are payable on 1st January, the General Secretary, under 'Lioness Report'; at the 1997 AGM requested that subscriptions are paid by November. It all took a little explaining why this request had been made. A case of if you want your Lioness and are an annual member be sure you are a paid-up one by the November meeting each year at the latest!

AG Corps Day, Worthy Down. We managed to muster 8 members who had a most enjoyable day. First time visitors had not been associated with serving members of HM Forces since they themselves left the Forces many years ago.



WORTHY DOWN - JUNE 1997

Back Row from left to right

Olga Harding, Joan Robinson, Alma Stride, Nancy Pearce

Front Row from left to right

Sylvia Clay, Doris Atley, Beryl Pepper, Barbara Hurman

Those of us who attended the Reunion at Blackpool in April had an enjoyable time. The band playing during the evening and the Church Parade on Sunday made it all a most memorable occasion. Our thanks to Madge Evans, Chairman of the Luton Branch, for arranging the transport from this area.

In July we held a Garden Party at the Chairman's home. It was our pleasure to welcome 4 members of the Dacorum Branch. It was nice to see them again as they were all ex-Aylesbury members. One of our brain teaser games was finding the missing name of products from popular advertisements. Kate Booth of Dacorum was the winner. Unfortunately Luton members were unable to attend.



GARDEN PARTY - JULY 1997

Front Row from left to right

Alma Stride, Bernice Fox, Doris Atley, Sylvia Clay,

Joan S. Wolfe, Beryl Pepper.

Back Row from left to right

Freddie Weatherley, Kathy Booth, Bunnie Chilton,

Joan Robinson, Olga Harding, Nancy Pearce

October sees our AGM. I feel sure it will be a mixture as before but we live in hope. What did someone say 'Without hope you are lost!'

Our Christmas festivities include a lunch in the Ex-Service Club followed by party games, etc.

Thank you all loyal members for your support during the past year.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Another year gone already, how time does fly. We have had a good attendance at our meetings. We have 40 Life and 72 Annual members. Unfortunately, not all attend as some are unable to travel. Our welfare lady, Iris Tolley, keeps in touch and visits.

We have sadly lost two of our members who have been with us a long time - they will be missed.

Twenty of our members went to Blackpool in April and all had a great time. We also took our Standard which was on parade with the other branches. We would like to thank Blackpool Branch for all their hard work.

We have also had a boat trip to the Birmingham Canal, it was very interesting as we saw how they are doing all the new buildings, and improving Birmingham. We also had a lady who came and showed us how to do line dancing. I think it loosened up some of the old bones that we never use, but we really enjoyed it.

In May we had our ninth birthday party, Coventry Branch helped us to celebrate it. Instead of a buffet we had chicken and chips in the basket followed by gateaux. For our fund raising we have had a tombola and raffle at our monthly meetings. We are getting ready for our Christmas Fair which is going to be held at our Chairman's house.

Our next big event is at the Coventry Reunion. Thank you Coventry and good luck. Our standard will be on parade at the Festival of Remembrance which is being held at the Festival Hall Convention Centre in Birmingham, also at the Hall of Memory for Armistice Day and then it will be on parade at the tattoo which is held at the Birmingham Indoor Arena. Busy time ahead.

May I now take this opportunity to thank all our members for all their support in 1997. Thank you ladies!

BOLTON BRANCH

The Branch has been a bit disorganised due to the illness of the Secretary who has recently spent five weeks in hospital. She then had some time recuperating at home whilst our Treasurer - Vera, carried on and did a very good job of keeping things going.

In June members paid a visit to the Fire Station, where they were shown round. All the latest technology was explained to them. The visit proved to be both interesting and informative.

In July Nora Carr gave a strawberry and cream tea in her garden, but Mr Weatherman had other plans so we were right royally entertained indoors where in addition to strawberries and tea we were regaled with other delectable goodies, many thanks to Norah.

Several members attended the VJ Day parade and Service where several wreaths were laid by organisations in Bolton, but it is plain to see that numbers are falling as age is creeping up on the Ex-Servicemen and women on parade.

Our annual visit to Fleetwood was a great success, the sunshine raised our spirits. Of course we visited the market which is a real Aladdin's Cave, packed full of bargains.

We have welcomed five new members and hope to recruit from our "write up" in the local newspaper. We are very sorry to have lost two members, one of whom (Peggy Lucas) we have never met owing to the fact that she lived in TEXAS but she was a Bolton girl who married an American Serviceman.

We will be holding our Annual Dinner on October 16th at the local Technical College. Husbands are invited, and our Christmas celebrations will be at The Coaching House on December 4th.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

This branch continues to meet each second Wednesday of every month at the Cadogan Hotel, 4 Poole Road, Bournemouth. Since we have been putting a notice, just before the meetings, in the 2 local papers for this region, our membership has increased a little. It still surprises me that many ex-ATS and WRAC people do not know about us. Seems the papers want news, not history. We must all do something about that in a much louder way.

Bournemouth branch has had a very good programme this year so far. Mostly thanks to Doreen Snell's hard work doing the programme a year in advance, then working tirelessly to implement it throughout. Our Chairperson has a great personality which always comes through, in spite of very great pressures in her private family life. Thank you Vivienne Parsons.

This years programme has been:

January : Miss Pouncey's talk as a Meteorologist at Hurn Airport.

February : A weekend package of how to dress for every occasion on a week-end break with only 5 items of clothing.

March : Major Loasby talked about her life and work in the Salvation Army.

April : Miss De Pledge spoke about her life in Uniform. First a Brownie, then a Girl Guide, into the ATS and finally into the Police force. She was very amusing indeed.



*Miss Joan Vaughan (above) and
Mrs Vera Lovell (née Cooper) (below)
receiving Certificates of Appreciation from
Mrs V. Parsons (Chairperson)*

May : We had a talk by an Independent Adviser, on how to make Wills. He knew we must be getting towards that time of life. At this meeting, Vera Lovall, who had been our secretary for very many years, and Joan Vaughan our long serving treasurer, (both now retired from these offices because of ill health), were presented with Certificates of Merit by our Chairperson Vivienne Parsons, who said she felt very humbled when she presented these, in view of the work these two had put into the branch. (About 15 years each).

In June we met twice! First at the home and garden of Doreen Snell. It was a garden party she had thrown in honour of her 70th birthday. The next week Mrs Nunn spoke to us about the restoration of Highcliffe Castle.

July was our annual visit to the British Legion Hall at Bere Regis, reached via a coach tour of the Dorset villages. There we were served with a very enjoyable sandwich and cake tea.

August we had an Open Forum to discuss next years programme.

September a Bring and Buy.

October our Secretary Freda Brown talks and shows her video and slides of her holiday in Antarctica.

November is the AGM.

December the Christmas Lunch at the Cadogan Hotel.

We also met twice in May, because Joyce Faris invited us to Hengistbury Head where she runs a "Noddy Train" service to the Beach bungalows at Mudeford. We were all driven on this train by Kathleen Brownhill, another of our members who works for Joyce. After, we had a lovely meal at the Hengistbury Head Cafe. Thank you Joyce for that.

Our special thanks go to Blackpool. That was a mammoth task very well performed. It was very cool up there for us Southern folks, but otherwise you even laid on good weather, and if anyone would dare to say they didn't enjoy it, then they must be hard to please.

Enjoyed Worthy Down Corps Day also. Thank for the great efforts made there, catering for all tastes.

Thanks go out also to everyone involved in the production of the "Lioness", I only know those who enjoy it.

BRADFORD BRANCH

Greetings to all members at home and abroad.

Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday in each month with an average attendance of 25-30. Our present roll is 50 with quite a few life members.

There was great excitement in the city in March with a visit from Her Majesty The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh to present the Maundy Money at the Cathedral. Mrs Mildred Foster of our branch was present and told us afterwards how very moving it was.

After a walk about in City Square, Her Majesty met relatives of the victims of the Bradford City fire disaster. Lunch was in the City Hall. They then proceeded to Bradford City Football ground (for which a number of us had received tickets) where Her Majesty opened a new stand and was then entertained by various troops of dancers and bands. Everyone agreed it had been a great day.



In April of course everyone converged on Blackpool. So much has been written about this in the previous edition of the Lioness but I will only say that we thoroughly enjoyed it. Leeds branch joined our branch and we had lots of laughs on the journey.

It was panic stations at Saturday lunch time when one of our members Isabel Toft was taken ill. The hotel staff were marvellous, they rang for an ambulance and stayed with us until it arrived. I was also given strict instructions to ring the hotel and they would send transport for our return journey, (grateful thanks). After three hours waiting for Isabel we were mesmerised (it was just like Casualty!) the doctors allowed Isabel to return to the hotel under orders to keep quiet and not get excited.

The Morning Service was great - more than that it was hilarious, as was the band (great as always) and the parade - I'm sure we would have gone on marching if they had left us! What a grand bunch we were - to be able to still march like that 50 years on - not bad. Many thanks to the Blackpool ladies for all their hard work - you made it look easy but we know it wasn't.

Thirteen ladies attended the Bridlington Combined Services weekend. This is always a 'real good do' and a chance to meet up with friends and have a 'natter'.

Our Standard was present at three Civic Services, in March, May and June.

On Monday 7th July we were invited to City Hall to view a display of 100 years of photographs of Bradford citizens - a large one of Ivy (our Secretary) was in a very prominent position. All this was followed by a light buffet.

Thursday the 10th July was the 100th Anniversary of the granting of the City's Charter and we paraded Standard

and marched in procession to the Cathedral for a service, followed by a luncheon buffet at the Midland Pennington Hotel.



*BRADFORD CENTENARY – 10 JULY 1997
from left to right
Peggy Kenny, Mildred Foster, Norah Kendall*

The Dunkirk Veterans and their wives joined us for our annual lunch and B&B sale at Undercliffe Cricket Club, thanks to Ivy Wheelhouse who arranges this.

On 7th September we joined the Dunkirk Veterans Association on their coach to go to Eden Camp, Malton, Yorkshire for a Veterans Parade and Service. To us who were there for the first time this was a truly amazing scene - almost 100 Standards and 1,500 altogether for a parade and service, and once again a chance to meet up with old friends.

The AGM was held in September with the committee returned en bloc.

Sadly we have lost Mrs Sheila Hoffman who had been poorly and died in hospital. Ten members and the Standard attended her funeral.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Since our last news report we have enjoyed a full year of exciting events. These have included a snowed-under January Meeting and what a day to fall on New Year's Day. We tried to have our photocall in February, but there seemed to be so much business to discuss that the time seemed to end before we had started. The March Talk had to be cancelled, but with so much correspondence to be discussed, the time again ran out. April and Spring came in with a flourish and members enjoyed an afternoon of frivolity with excellent Fish and Chips, beautiful bonnets and a fantastic quiz. Judging by some of the photographs I think all members had an enjoyable afternoon. The May meeting followed and those members present were thoroughly entertained by the talented Whitstable Active Retirement Association. At our June Meeting things got a bit more serious and a member from SSAFA gave a very informative talk. July brought about our budding flower arrangers after



*EASTER BONNETS – APRIL 1997
Mercy Jordan in the centre of the back row was the winner!!*

a flower demonstration by a very talented lady. On to more frivolity with our August meeting which was held at Mavis Middleton's Beach Hut with our bathing belles. The Citizens Advice Bureau gave a very interesting talk in September and the year started to draw to a close with Autumn and rain. We held our AGM in October and the previous Committee was voted in en bloc. The Branch was 50 years old on the 10th October and so we had a 50th Anniversary Party on the 18th October with local dignitaries and members from other Associations in attendance (120 people in all) for an afternoon of dedication, speeches, feasting and merriment - our one founder member, Mrs Jenny Wells gave a brief resume of her career in the ATS/WRAC. As winter draws in we had our annual get together of WRNS and WAAF who joined us at our November Meeting where we had a speaker from the Kent Air Ambulance, who desperately needed our funds and the year finished with our gastronomic Christmas Lunch.

As well as our meetings we have interspersed the year with various other activities these have included our Branch outing which took us to Rye and was a roaring success, a Coffee Morning hosted by the Chairman Doreen Dennis and a Strawberry Tea hosted by Maria Power our Secretary. Some of us ventured to join in the Blessing of the Seas Ceremony celebrated by the Greek Community, we all felt decidedly chilly watching the young boy getting into a cold January Sea. There was concern that Mavis Middleton might enjoy a dip when trying to get his picture! We then attended the Royal Marines Laying Up and Dedication of Standard in March, followed by another quiz night hosted by the RMA later on in the month. Then came what must have been a highlight of the year the Grand Reunion in Blackpool, what an occasion with over a 1,000 ladies present. The dinner was very enjoyable and the band was excellent. The church service was moving and it was a pleasure to see so many of our association standards on parade. It was a pleasant time to catch up on old friends and make new ones during the course of the weekend. This followed with the Italy Star Service of Remembrance in May where we enjoyed a very good meal and a moving parade. The Wartime WAAF then invited members to join them for glass blowing demonstrations in June. We were represented at the Burma Star Association of Remembrance in August and the RBL Margate enjoyed a record turnout for their service of

thanksgiving and dedication at the beginning of September which was very nice to see. We then marched on Trafalgar Day with the RNA. Our members were interspersed around Kent and The Cenotaph for Remembrance Sunday and the year closed with St Barbara's Day Services at Woolwich and Ramsgate. With a Carol Service hosted by The Queen's Own Buffs in December, reminding us of that special time of the year that is celebrated on Christmas Day. This takes us on to events planned for next year, which is another story next time.

To date we have 79 Annual members and 54 Life members.

On a sadder note we lost some comrades this year and would like to remember Dorothy Goodman, Violet Stuart, Molly Iremonger and Jean Bishop.

We hope everyone has a prosperous, healthy and happy 1998.

On a final note thanks must go to everyone that helped make the 50th Anniversary such a splendid event whether it was by donations, raffle prizes, wishing us well, helping behind the scenes or just being there. Thank you.

COLCHESTER BRANCH

Our Branch meetings are still well attended and we now have a membership of 148. Although during the year we have lost some dear and long-standing members we have also gained several new ones including Rhoda Coventry who was attached to the Indian Army. We are sure that she will have some interesting stories to tell us.

During the Summer we have had several enjoyable outings. Our first was a trip to Battisford in May which proved most successful. After a preliminary stop at the lovely old village of Lavenham we went on to Battisford Free Church where we had tea and a great welcome. In June we had a day out visiting Hartest for lunch and then on to Bury St Edmunds. Here we had time for a roam around the shops and a visit to the Abbey.

At our June meeting we had a very interesting visit from a serving army captain and NCO to give us a talk on the army of today. Very different from our day and I think they thought so too after listening to our comments! But we hope they never have to experience the problems and traumas that we endured in wartime.

During July we paid a visit to Ely which again proved a most enjoyable experience. A lovely ride through the countryside and after lunch a wander round the shops and the lovely cathedral. There was no meeting during August but we held a lunch to celebrate the 80th birthday of our Secretary, Vera Cole. She was also presented with a voucher to spend.

A ploughman's lunch has been arranged for September to be held at Clacton Golf Club and a visit to Norwich in October - so we seem to be getting through the year once again. At our October meeting Mr John Boyd will be speaking about his experiences whilst serving in the

Korean War. This should be most interesting - although again much different from 'our War' I expect!

For our Christmas celebrations we are once again visiting Clacton Golf Club where we always have a good meal and welcoming reception. Our Branch meeting during December will probably be our usual friendly 'get-together' with mince pies and a good old 'cuppa'. We are all looking forward to that of course and wondering just where the year has gone to!!

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Meeting held in the British Legion Hall, 2-4pm Tuesday 19th August 1997.

This month's Meeting opened on a sad note. Daphne told us of the deaths of two of our Members. Cathy Willsher, an ex-WAAF, and Miriam Humpherson, a Founder Member of our Association Branch. Some of Cathy's friends from our Branch, together with our Secretary and Treasurer, attended Cathy's funeral. This courageous lady had expressed a wish that she should "go out in style", and so she did"! Her coffin was borne on a carriage drawn by horses. We've lost a great character with the passing of Cathy Miriam died in Hospital, after many months of suffering, bravely borne. As we used to come through the door for our Monthly Meetings, hers was the first smiling face to greet us. She was loved by all, and we shall miss her so much. A very large number of our Members formed part of the congregation at Trinity Church for the funeral of Miriam. If anyone wishes to make an individual donation in her memory, the family have requested that this should take the form of a monetary gift to Farleigh Hospice, Chelmsford direct, or through the undertaker, Mr Pennack, Great Baddow.

Gina led our prayers, remembering all those unable to join us this month, remembering especially the families of Cathy and Miriam, and also a dear friend of Mary's.

Apologies had been received for absence from the following members: Dorothy Turner, Gwen Ryan, Elsa Collins, Olive Keating, Vi Wardlaw, Joyce Wright, Molly MacArthur, Betty Gander, Barbara Rayment.

Minutes. These were read, and agreed as correct, and duly signed.

VE/VJ Commemorative Avenue. Our Secretary has been informed that our TREE No 36 has died due to the dry weather, as have so many others. A new tree will be planted in the Autumn.

Association for the Blind. The office of this association is situated almost at the beginning of Moulsham Street practically opposite the AA office. They have some very nice Christmas cards for sale. Perhaps you would like to call in when you are next in that area.

RAF Association. We have been invited to attend the Annual RAFA Service in St John's Church, Upper Moulsham Street on Sunday 21st September at 3pm. You may like to make your own way to the Church, or join the Parade, starting from RAFA HQ in Hall Street, where there will be refreshments after the Service.

Letter from Audrey. Audrey has written to thank us for the many farewell messages and gifts etc on her move to Derbyshire. She said how much she missed us all. At the moment Audrey is not feeling too well, but she hopes to settle down soon. We do think of her, especially at Raffle time, don't we? We send her our love and best wishes.

Remembrance Sunday 1997. Daphne, our Secretary, attended the Meeting to discuss this year's arrangements. In view of the dreadful weather experienced last year, it was proposed that the Service should this year be held in the Cathedral followed by a march to the War Memorial for the laying of the wreaths. This was defeated by a large majority. The Mayor's Secretary has asked that any casualties being removed from the Parade, should not pass in front of the dignitaries on the Civic Centre steps!

Outings. A rather heated discussion took place on the subject of our Outings. A letter was read from Joyce, our Outings Secretary, who is on holiday in Cornwall. Some misunderstanding had apparently come about regarding bringing "outsiders" on our Coach trips. This year's Anniversary "get together" had, for the very first time been an outing to Harwich, instead of the usual Anniversary tea in the Hall. Through illness, accident and financial reasons, only 35 members were able to join the trip, leaving the Coach half empty, and consequently the Catering was overbooked. After much discussion, and various ideas being put forward, it was decided unanimously by a hand vote, that we should return to our former way of celebrating our Special day for our Anniversary, by having a tea in the Hall, BUT there were obviously no objections at all to inviting husbands, friends etc to our other outings. It was felt that our Christmas lunch and our Anniversary tea should be for WRAC/ATS Members only. Perhaps at the Meeting before, those who wish to help could enter their names on a list stating what they intend to bring. After perusal, if it shows that we shall have too many bringing the same item of food, then some will be asked to alter their offering.

Newsletters. Several members said that they had not received a Newsletter lately. This was because there was no letter for May as it was our May Fayre. In June I was to be on holiday, but no one volunteered to take over for one month (weren't we taught never to volunteer?), and of course there was no letter for July as that was the Anniversary Trip - so you see, you probably haven't missed any letters after all. As long as you have put in your addressed envelope, Joan will send you your letter. It is a tedious job, folding and inserting the letter into each envelope, sticking on the stamp and posting the letters, and we do thank Joan for doing this for each and every one of us.

Congratulations to another Joan - Joan Scrivener, who sent in that excellent Branch Report to Lioness No 2 this year. Who's willing to do the next one?

See you all in September. Don't forget, if there's anything you wish to bring up at the Meeting, and you

don't like to speak up, then write it out on a piece of paper and pop it in the Suggestion Box - you need not put your name on if you would rather not.

Also, remember to take back home any item you bring for the Bring and Buy Table, which does not get sold.

COVENTRY BRANCH

We continue to meet on the second Friday of the month at The Royal Warwicks Club in Coventry, and three of our members travel about 40 miles to attend the meetings.

Sadly we lost 2 of our members this year, Doris and Selena, both members joined the branch in its early days.

The time has simply flown by this year, we haven't had time to go on any outings, but we did have our usual Bring and Buy.

In May we were invited to the Birmingham Branch Birthday Party celebrations, and once again enjoyed their hospitality. We finished the party with a lesson in Line Dancing, many thanks Birmingham.

On a very wet Sunday in May, a few of us did a Fun Run for the British Legion. We thought that we would have to take part using our umbrellas but luck was with us, by the time the Fun Run started, the rain had stopped, and it stayed dry until we had finished. Well done Babs Kerrison for completing the course.

This year we hosted the WALES AND WEST AREA REUNION : at Coventry University. We had Mr Bacon the Town Crier, to open the proceedings, and after our meal we had the Nostalgics to entertain us, we all joined in with our usual enthusiasm. I wish that I had had my camera with me, when the Town Crier rang the first bell the looks on the members faces were a joy to behold, what a picture that would have made for the Lioness.

We now have our feet firmly planted on the ground and have started to think of other things like the Bedworth Remembrance Parade on November 11th and our Christmas Party. We will be going local for that this year. Last year we went to Turners, it was snowing, the coach broke down, and we had to have another, to complete the journey. We did enjoy the rest of the day though.

For the last 2 years all our outings have been in the rain or snow. Is someone trying to tell us something? Better luck next time perhaps.

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CREWE BRANCH

We had taken things at a steadier pace this year but like the tortoise we got there in the end.

We held a Gala Dance on May 15th at the Crosville Club, Crewe, our dances are always jolly evenings. Members were invited to a 50th Anniversary night with the Royal Artillery Association North Staffs on May 27th a party of us attended and were made very welcome. We held our annual Coffee Morning at Nantwich on May 31st we always do well there.

We also had a very enjoyable day out with Rhyl Branch on July 24th when we attended their Welsh Tea.



Members of the Crewe Branch at the Welsh Tea on 24 July 1997 with Rhyl Branch at Rhyl

After a summer break we held another Dance at the Crosville Club on September 11th. A party of us attended the Area Reunion at Coventry on September 20th which was a very pleasant day out enjoyed by everyone. Thank you Coventry for all your hard work and making it a happy day to remember.

We held our AGM on October 2nd and all the officers were returned unchanged. We were pleased we were able to send £400 to the Benevolent Fund this year. We are holding a Charity Market Stall at Crewe on October 11th this completes our fund raising for this year.

Members have been invited to the 8th Army Reunion in Stoke-on-Trent on October 18th. Our Chairman's husband is a member so several of us are going with him.

There will be five of us travelling down to London for the Cenotaph Parade in November.

We are planning to have a Christmas lunch out and we are booked to see the Pantomime at Crewe Theatre in December.

We then have a welcome break until February.

We hope the Association continues to flourish in 1998.

Our Chairman wishes all the 93rd Searchlight Girls a Happy New Year.

DACORUM BRANCH

We continue to have a good attendance at our meetings, which are held, first Tuesday of each month, from 2pm to 4pm, at the Scout Hall, Queensway, Hemel Hempstead.

Since our last report we have had a nice varied programme, in May we held a Quiz, which got our old brains working! Most of our ladies seemed to enjoy it.

June brought us an interesting talk by Miss Baxendale entitled "A Lighthearted Look at Life", the week after on 10th June, sixteen of our members had an outing to Syon Park, in a hired minibus, we all had a lovely day.

July proved to be a quiet month, as most people were on holiday, however we had another Quiz, then spent the rest of the time chatting and getting to know each other better.

August brought us yet another outing to Stockwood Craft Museum and Gardens, in Luton. We were fortunate that the weather was in our favour so we decided to indulge in Cream Teas at the outdoor cafe!

September our AGM resulted in our committee being re-elected en bloc, with the exception that we now have a Vice-Chairman, Social Secretary, a new Welfare Officer as well as a Tea Rota being organised.

October, a musical quiz after our meeting had most of us fooled but caused a good laugh nevertheless.

The coming months are already planned with more talks, quizzes and of course our Christmas Lunch. More about these in our next report.

FIFE AND TAYSIDE BRANCH

Fife and Tayside Branch meet on the last Thursday of each month at The British Legion Club in Perth and have lunch and a raffle. We have 30 Life and 54 Annual members. Our Canadian member, Mrs Ena Vowles, has now come back to Scotland and has moved in to a house here, which is near to her daughter. As there were over 20 members usually turning up for our monthly get-together it was decided to start a news letter and hand out copies to the members. As we each pay voluntarily 50p per month this helps to cover the photocopying and any small expenses incurred. Another member whose son 'helped' her with her removal recently discovered that by mistake some of her belongings had in error been taken to the local skip!!!! Sadly, one of our members Col Abigail Kelly ex-WRAC died in Ireland on the 28th December 1996.

It is a year since Fife and Tayside hosted the AGM at Perth (Scottish Branches) and since then we have had a very busy year. Our own branch Christmas lunch was at The Royal George Hotel, Perth when almost 50 members attended and we will be going back there again this year.

In April five of us travelled to Blackpool. This was the weekend of the IRA bomb scare and we were advised not to travel but after eventually arriving we thoroughly enjoyed our weekend it was well worth the journey so THANK YOU BLACKPOOL.



Fife and Tayside Branch ready for the outing

We had our AGM and lunch at The Royal George Hotel in April. A magician entertained inviting members to take part. We donated £200 to general fund.

Six of us accepted an invitation by the Admiralty Board to an evening with the Royal Navy at Battleby House, Redgorton, Perth. This consisted of a 40 minute presentation film on the Royal Navy and afterwards a question and answer session by two Naval Officers. Then drinks and a light buffet. Altogether a very interesting and enjoyable evening.

In June, Dinah Garret, Head of Corporate Events, BBC sent us an invitation to meet members of the BBC re an expression of views on BBC programmes on TV and Radio. Two members went along to Perth City Hall for this and again drinks and refreshments were provided afterwards. This was another interesting evening.

In July we held a boot sale and donated £100 to funds.

An invitation came to us from Malcolm Fane the BBC writer and journalist to attend the 'Polish Tribute' in



Polish dancers prepare to dance at the tribute to the Polish Forces who were based in Scotland

August. This was a tribute to Polish Forces who were based in Scotland before the allied invasion. A Cairn was unveiled in the grounds of the Peebles Hydro Hotel which had been a hospital during the war and a time capsule was buried there at the Cairn. After a fly past by four RAF Tornados we went in to the hotel for lunch cooked by a Polish chef with help from other chefs. After lunch we were entertained in the ballroom by Polish ladies in their national costumes dancing and singing. To end the day we sang "Auld Lang Syne". It was a day of very mixed emotions particularly for the Polish people but we all thoroughly enjoyed all of it. Our Branch presented Malcolm Fane with a Selkirk paperweight as he and his bride to be were being married the next day by the Cairn in the grounds of Peebles Hydro. Ten of us travelled by minibus to this event.

Our next event was a sales table/coffee morning in September. With contributions of baking and tablet, bric-a-brac and clothes we made £185 with which we were very pleased.

The walled garden at Murray Royal Hospital, Perth to which the Scottish Branches as a whole donated the arbour, seats, plants and two cherry trees is doing very well. Only two plants succumbed to the weather, a jasmine and a clematis so these will be replaced. The arbour and the seats inside it are well used by patients, visitors and also now for therapy as it is such a peaceful place, so we are proud that we have all contributed to be able to bring this about.

On 11th October nine of us travelled to the Scottish AGM and reunion at Dumfries and although we were all up 4-4.30 we felt it was worth it. It was a truly Autumn day, and we had a lovely scenic journey to our destination, and we thank you Dumfries for giving us such a very enjoyable day, the friendly atmosphere and the very enjoyable meal along with the tea or coffee on arrival and departure were much appreciated.

May I take this opportunity on behalf of Fife and Tayside Branch to let you know how much the Lioness is appreciated and to thank you and your colleagues for the hard work which goes in to producing it.



The Top Table at the Scottish Reunion

HARROGATE AND DISTRICT BRANCH

We continue to thrive with more new members and good attendance at meetings. Sadly some members are unable to attend, due to infirmity, but show much interest in our activities.

Seven members went to the National Reunion at Blackpool and fourteen to the NE Reunion held in Cleethorpes. A good time was enjoyed by all. It's very nice to meet up with old comrades!

We have an excellent "speaker-finder", and consequently always enjoy our meetings, which often lead to interesting discussions.

Our Annual Outing this year found us at Bramall Hall Park in Cheshire. We joined the Harrogate Branch of the WRVS Association, and thereby filled a luxury coach. A superb day out for everyone!

Our Annual Luncheon (photograph) at the Green Park Hotel was well attended and much enjoyed.



*Harrogate Members at their Annual Lunch
at the Green Park Hotel, March 1997*

Most regrettably, our two members from Otley now find it hard to join us, due to transport difficulties.

At our AGM we had a good credit balance, and so were able to donate to our favourite charities. Both our Chairman Mrs Margaret Potter and Hon Sec/Treasurer Mrs Sheila Pantin were re-elected unanimously, as were our Speaker-Finder, Tea-Rota Member, Meeting Subscription Collector, and Sick Visitor. All of these ladies were thanked profusely for their hard work and contribution to the thriving Harrogate Branch.

HEREFORD BRANCH

First of all we send our very best wishes to Brigadier Anne Field, for a well earned happy retirement, as our Vice President and Chairman. Twelve years is a long time to spend as our "guiding light" and to always be so fair but firm and with a great sense of humour too! We also send best wishes to Mrs Rosemary Perry our Chief Clerk, at Worthy Down, for a happy retirement. She was always so cheerful and helpful when asked for advice.

We still meet for our monthly meetings (except December) at the Royal British Legion Hall, Belmont Road, Hereford on the last Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm. We are grateful to the RBL for this privilege. We average 15 members attending and now have 58 members in the Branch. The ATS have been overtaken by the WRAC at last! as 28 ATS and 30 WRAC are paid up members some of the young ones are still serving but we are delighted that we have so many, as they will eventually become the work force. Mind you the older ones are not yet redundant and bring in most of our funds for the Benevolent Fund by their efforts.

We have sent £280 to the Fund this last year and hope to do as well next year. Our Car Boot in July raised over £111 and the one Market Stall netted just over £54 not so much as last year (1996) but maybe we chose the wrong day. We plan another Car Boot and two Market Stalls in 1998 and perhaps a Bring and Buy.

Mrs Vera Denning has recovered well from her operation and was one of the ATS chosen to appear in the wartime film "The Gentle Sex". We wish all our members who have not been so well, "a speedy recovery". Thank you for all those who give so generously to our funds

Outings in 1997 have been numerous. The AGM at Blackpool was a most enjoyable weekend. Eight members attended. Then four went to Corps Day in June at Worthy Down and had a great time. Twelve attended the Area Reunion in Coventry on September 20th and we congratulate Coventry Branch for the arrangements. We all had a good day out. The afternoon started with an announcement from the Town Crier with a welcome to all. Then the hot meal which was excellent. Brigadier Field spoke to us afterwards with her usual humour and interest. Later the raffle and Mrs Nicholls and Mrs Cordner were our winners. We had taken a soft toy as a prize and this was donated by Mrs Maureen Roberts who is an honorary member and daughter of Mrs Lilian Cross. Thank you Maureen and Lilian. We all enjoyed the entertainment provided at Coventry and the community singing and dancing. Always a good way to end a happy day out. Thank you Coventry ladies. Two members had travelled to Germany for 16th Signals Reunion on September 18-21 and had a wonderful weekend. Several members will be representing our Branch at various Remembrance Services and Parades in November. On December 9th we have planned our Christmas lunch and the "Stage Coach" is once again the venue.

Our secretary has applied to the local Councils Parks Department for the garden display to celebrate 60 years since the ATS was formed in 1938. We await their reply.

Our second newsletter is due in October to all members and is applauded by us all. Our thanks go to Miss Nicholls and Mrs Sue Walton for their hard work on it and to Sue's brother for printing. They have also printed cards for us to send to members with a gold WRAC Association Crest on a green background. They are lovely.

To all our members - do keep in touch by letter or telephone especially if you cannot attend meetings and functions.

At Hereford Branch we have a mother and daughter who served in the Forces. The mother, Mrs Mary NICHOLLS, is our Chairman of the Branch and the daughter, Miss Joyce NICHOLLS, is our Treasurer. The photograph of them taken at Worthy Down Corps Day 1997.



*Mother and Daughter
Mrs Mary NICHOLLS and Joyce*

Mary was a member of the NAAFI stationed at Darlington first and then to RAF Middleton Stockton-on-Tees. She joined the ATS on 13th May 1942, and after training at Newcastle went to Chilwell Nottingham. From there she was employed to open private houses for Drivers at West Bridgeford. She then went back to Chilwell and after 3 months in the Cookhouse went to Long Eaton to prepare camp for REME. After a further spell at Chilwell, Mary came to Hereford. She was billeted at the Green Dragon Hotel. Mary passed 1st Class Cookery at Norton Barracks, Worcester and then went on to Bradbury Lines Hereford where she passed two more exams in Cookery. She met and married her husband Ken in 1944 and was discharged from the ATS in June 1945.

Joyce joined the WRAC on 23rd March 1966 and after 5 months spent at Guildford, went to 16 Signal Regt in Germany for 2 years. In June 1968 until November, she served in Northern Ireland as a Switchboard Operator and was demobbed in November 1968.

We also have two ex-ATS sisters who have just joined the Association, Mrs Una Heap and Miss Joan Miller.

HULL BRANCH

Do we imagine it or is time really passing quicker than it did when we were young? Another year nearly gone! Hull Branch soldiers on.

The Reunion in Blackpool was enjoyed but it was a disappointment that the church was too small. Many members squeezed into the entrance porch where they just missed hearing what must have been a very entertaining sermon. The journey to Blackpool was quite eventful. We awoke to the radio telling us Doncaster station was closed due to IRA activity. Well, that's alright we don't go through Doncaster, but a short time later Leeds station closed - now that was serious! So in the event the Hull contingent travelled by train to Selby, bus to Huddersfield and then on again by train to Blackpool where they arrived a bit later than expected but very pleased with themselves.

Our annual outing was once again to Whitby. The weather was very good. On the way we had a short stay in Goathland. Goathland once a sleepy village the home of many sheep, a village surrounded by heather clad moors, a wonderful sight, a village well off the beaten track and not bothered by tourists. Now it is the place 'Heartbeat' is filmed and very much on the tourist trail. The day we visited filming was in progress. Not Goathland Post Office but Aidensfield and parked up on the moor the 1960's police car and a vintage fire engine. We ended the day with a fish and chip meal in Filey.

We are very sorry indeed to lose the services of our Standard Bearer, Mrs Dorothy Mirfin. Our Standard has been carried at many ex-service events and we have been very proud of Dorothy. Unfortunately she has had to relinquish her Standard as her husband is ill. We sincerely hope her husband will improve in health and we wish them both well.

LEICESTER AND NOTTS BRANCH

We started the year with our usual after Christmas Nibble and Natter, followed in February with our now annual Bring and Buy, enabling us to raise money for our funds and helping to determine our donation to the Benevolent Fund at the end of the year.

In March we were invited, along with members of the WREN Association, and ex-Land Army members to a Buffet Lunch hosted by our friends of the WAAF Association, and had a very enjoyable afternoon. April saw us with a speaker giving a talk supported with slides on Ladies Fashions.

Nine members from the branch attended the Blackpool Reunion, and apart from the confusion at Birmingham, created by the Bus Company and a 'Bomb Alert' on the motorway which caused some delay, we enjoyed a super weekend starting with the social evening hosted by Blackpool Branch until we left after the Parade on Sunday.

Twenty five of our ladies paid a visit to Sandringham House and then went on to Cromer to visit the Royal British Legion Home, Halsey House. In spite of arriving much later than we had anticipated, we were given a very warm welcome and after a short talk and refreshments, were given a guided tour round the Home. One of our oldest members - Nell Shadford is a resident at Halsey House and Nell celebrated her 90th birthday this year (1997). Some of our members pay regular visits to the Home and are always welcome. It is a lovely happy Home.

In September we had a 'Puppy Walker' from the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Emma the puppy came as well and enjoyed the fuss and biscuit(s). After a short talk we were invited to ask questions. What a worthwhile job it is.

Nine of us made the journey to Coventry for the Wales and the West Reunion. Coventry did us proud and are to be congratulated. We had a lovely hot meal and then entertainment was provided during the afternoon. We really enjoyed ourselves.

We shall have our Harvest Auction in October when we sell any produce our members have brought along, and then into November for our 43rd (I believe) AGM when we decide our Christmas meeting and also arrange our programme for 1998.

Our Standard will have taken part in several parades by the end of the year, sometimes supported by a few of our members. The other bonus of parading our Standard apart from making friends with other Associations, is that we have been approached by ladies watching the parades who were unaware that we have our own Association and are anxious to join, and hopefully there may be a branch near to them so that they can attend meetings.

We have gained 15 new members this year but as our branch covers a wide area only two have managed to come to our meetings with an average attendance of 25 members. We are finding it increasingly difficult to fill coaches for outings which of course makes the cost more expensive, but we enjoy those we do manage to arrange. Our thanks to all of our members, those who attend and those too far away, for the support given to us this year and our best wishes for your health and happiness in 1998.

LONDON BRANCH

To start with our most recent memory first, we had a very successful London Area Reunion in September hosted by the Greater London and London Branches. We filled the Gascoigne Rooms at the Union Jack Club to overflowing and had to squeeze in three more who had come without tickets! Mrs Fiona White gave us all the Association news and we had two very interesting speakers. Alan Bryett who flew on the PEENEMUNDE raid, gave us a thorough briefing of that most vital event, which no doubt shortened the war by causing much destruction to the Flying Bomb installations and Lieutenant Colonel Graham described his

duties as Deputy Lord Lieutenant of London with great panache and humour.

At our monthly meetings we have been entertained by Roger McKenna with slides describing the once thriving Lesnes Abbey near Woolwich which was the first to be the subject of dissolution by Henry VIII. Alan Bryett continued his story as a POW. When the war was ending he and the rest of the men from Stalag Luft 111 were forced to walk in appalling conditions from the east of Germany right across to a Baltic port where they were finally found by allied forces.

In September, Mary Curtis showed us slides of her holiday in Canada. We had a quiz afternoon which I am sorry did nothing to sharpen our wits as when we again met a team from the RBL Women's Section and the WRNS Association we lost again - bottom score this time!

We have had two coach outings. The first to Groombridge Place Gardens in Kent started in a dreadful downpour but luckily it did cease after lunch and we were able to enjoy the gardens and watch a display of raptors, as were told is the proper name of birds of prey. The second at Petworth, Sussex where we had a lovely day and the weather could not have been better.

During the year we have had 26 new members but sadly have lost ten including our oldest member, Emily Richards, who died in July aged 96 years. Emily had spent her last few years in a home in Aldershot and so she had



*W/276075 PRIVATE EMILY E. RICHARDS
Enlisted 9 June 1943 - Released 18 January 1946
Trained at Glen Parva, Leicestershire and then posted to
Didcot Ordnance Depot as a Storewoman*

not been able to come to our meetings which she missed very much as she had been our most regular member since 1947 - fifty years! However, thanks to the great kindness of members of the Aldershot branch she did attend many of their meetings which I knew she enjoyed and appreciated. She will be greatly missed. Members of the Didcot group will remember Emily well. She served there from 1943-1946. Until quite recently Emily remained very active - here she is playing indoor bowls - not bad for a 90 something year old!



Mrs Emily Richards

LUTON BRANCH

In common with several other branches, Luton missed the 'deadline' for the last issue, so it is quite possible something will be missed in this report - apologies 'up front'.

We are coming up to our 2nd Anniversary in January 1998. Although our numbers tend to fluctuate from month to month, for various reasons, holidays and ill-health in the main, we still have a faithful band of members.

A coach trip was organised to Blackpool for the Grand Reunion comprising of 36 members from Aylesbury, Dacorum, Luton and Wimbledon branches. We stayed at an excellent hotel with good food and comfy beds and our super driver was happy to take us wherever we wanted to go. On the morning of our departure the IRA tried to deter us by planting bombs on our route, but we are made of sterner stuff so they did not succeed. We did have to go by a roundabout route, to avoid the trouble spots, but we got there, albeit a couple of hours late. We all thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Blackpool and our heartiest congratulations go to Blackpool branch for their great efforts in making the event such a success, particularly as they are such a young branch - only a year older than Luton. Well done the Lancashire lasses!

At home we have had some very interesting talks and demonstrations at our meetings, ranging from 'How to

decorate T-shirts' to a talk on 'Old Masters', which sounds rather high-brow, but was very interesting.

A number of members went to the AGC Corps Day at Worthy Down and I am told had a good time - I didn't see much of it, for reasons known to the branch, which I shall not go into. I hope to see a bit more of it next year.

On Sunday, October 26th we are having our Branch Standard dedicated at St Mary's Church, Luton. Hopefully there will be a photograph for the next issue. We then propose to parade with our Standard at our local Remembrance parade. Who knows, we may get some more recruits. Our WRAC element has increased by 33_% - we now have a member from Northampton; Jenny Pain, formerly a Warrant Officer Driver, who drives the 45 plus miles to our meetings.

London Area Group Reunion was attended by four members, who all had a very enjoyable day at the Union Jack Club. Thank you London Branch. See you in Luton next September.

We are in the throes of completing our Branch Nominal Roll of members, showing when and where they served. Congratulations to Norfolk and Suffolk on their initiative. When it is complete we shall distribute copies to those branches who have shown an interest. Should anyone else want one, would they please contact the Chairman, Madge Evans, on Luton (01582) 593720, or the Secretary Eleri Pirie, on Luton (01582) 611759.

MANCHESTER BRANCH

After the huge success of our stay at Norbreck Castle and the excitement of meeting all old friends and making new, we settled down once more. Not for long though, we were invited once again to Rhyl, now home from home for us, we always enjoy a visit to this branch and I would like to put on record we are always made so very welcome and have a great time. Thank you Rhyl branch.

Some of us who were attached to Ack Ack turned up again at York for the visit to the Minster. This is a most popular venue, this year was extra special for the new ATS/RA Standard was blessed. More and more ex-ATS seem to enjoy this meeting not all ex-Gunners but friends are most welcome.

We have settled on the date and venue for our Xmas dinner. This we manage each year and are joined with friends we have made over the years.

The Association is always our toast and although our numbers are small we always keep in touch with our friends who for geographic reasons have had to join other branches.

After all these years we are still hearing from ex-ATS who have been trying to trace various ones, amazing how one never forgets times past does one!?

November looming ahead we will of course be attending various venues to pay homage to those who have their all. LEST WE FORGET.

MIDDLESBROUGH BRANCH

We hold our meetings 1st Wednesday monthly 2-4pm at Steveson House, Middlesbrough.

We have a happy group. We have a tea party every month as well as raffle and bring and buy.

In April ten of us went to the Blackpool Reunion it was very good.

In May some attended the Mayor's Parade and Ball.

September we attended the Battle of Britain March and Service also North East Reunion in Cleethorpes.

In November we will be at the Remembrance Parade.

December we have our usual Christmas Lunch.

All through the year we attended many functions, visited homes and hospitals to see sick members. We wish you all best wishes for the coming year 1998.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Our branch meetings are held every third Thursday of the month with an average attendance of 50 members. At our last meeting we had three new members.

Thirty of our members attended the Grand Re-union at Blackpool for the week-end and thoroughly enjoyed their stay.

Two of our members, Mrs Stephenson and Mrs Herchel celebrate their Golden Weddings this year and have been invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace in July for The Queen's Golden Wedding Celebration.

We send our good wishes to our members who are unable to attend meetings and may we always enjoy the friendships we have made.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BRANCH

We meet regularly, but by the glad cries of greeting and the general hubbub of chatter and laughter at the beginning of each meeting, it seems we have a Grand Reunion every month!

There has been an excellent response from the list of service details published in the last LIONESS and many members were happy to receive letters from old comrades each thought the other had forgotten. Many memories of service days were revived and so successful was the outcome that many more ladies belonging to the Branch have sent in their details for a further list to be published.

Only four of our members were able to get to Blackpool for the Grand Re-union; they have told us of their happy time and how very well organised and successful it had been. They send their thanks to all concerned.

One of our recent speakers had been a member of the WRAC and, at its disbandment, transferred to the Army.

Her account left us with mixed feelings; how fortunate we were in the spirit of comradeship and singular aims of our time, but could we have coped with the rigorous training now required for the new army? Wouldn't we, though, have enjoyed the opportunities for foreign travel in peacetime that is part of service life nowadays?

In combination with our Gt Yarmouth Group we held a service and laid flowers at the site of the plaque on the anniversary of the air raid on 1st May 1943 when 25 ATS girls were killed. This has become an annual tradition and all members of Branches have an open invitation to attend future services.

We hope all members will enjoy a happy summer and if anyone is holidaying in East Anglia we would welcome them to our meetings, held on the first Saturday of each month at 2pm in the St Luke's Centre, Aylsham Road, Norwich. Hope to see you!

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

Having started this year off in such traumatic circumstances with the loss of both our President and our Chairman, Plymouth Branch are just beginning to lift up our spirits and to forge ahead with future plans. Our new Chairman who was plunged so precipitously into the fray as a result of the tragic events in January and February has led us valiantly into somewhat calmer waters.

On 6th July we held our Annual Service in the Royal Chapel of St Katherine-upon-the-Hoe, the Royal Citadel. Over 60 members and friends attended this service which included the dedication of our "Remembrance Book" of past members. Our thanks go to the Rev McKinnel who had to combine our Service with a christening and he managed to make what was a sad occasion for us into a happier forward-looking day. Thanks to the generosity of the Rev McKinnel and 29 Cdo Regt RA the offertory money was donated to the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund. After the Service a delicious Sunday Lunch had been organised in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess.

Our "Day-Out" to Tiverton on July 9th for a trip on the horsedrawn barge was glorious; the peace of the ride on the barge with only the horses hooves sounding on the tow-path was a welcome change from the noise of road traffic. We finished the day with an enormous Devonshire Cream Tea at Dartmeet.

In August, one of our members, Ruth Jennings, was able to arrange a trip to St George's Island off the coast at Looe. Two boat loads of us went and had a fascinating time exploring the island made famous by Eileen Atkins' book "We bought an Island".

Looking ahead we will be holding a table top sale to swell Branch funds and in December the Branch Christmas Lunch will be held.

As an ADVANCE WARNING to all SW Area members Plymouth Branch are hosting the SW AREA REUNION on 17th JUNE 1998

Plymouth Branch wishes a happy and prosperous 1998 to all our Comrades and we hope to see more of our "GROCKLE" colleagues who may be holidaying in the area next year.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

The highlight of 1997 was the Grand Reunion at Blackpool, about 10 members attended and travelled there by train, we had good journeys both ways delayed a bit by the IRA but we arrived in the end. We all enjoyed the weekend and our thanks must go to everyone who worked so hard to make it possible as it was the largest Reunion we have had. The dinner was good and made more enjoyable by the band of the AG Corps. The Sunday Church Service was one we shall never forget. The church was packed and the Vicar gave such a wonderful sermon. Our Chairman Mrs E Metherell was presented with a Certificate of Merit at the AGM.



After a Shopping Trip!

In June we attended several parades one for the 15th Anniversary of The Falklands War which was well supported. We hired a mini-bus and went to the Royal British Legion parade at Sandhurst, this started off very well but half way through the church service the rain and wind came and we all finished up very wet. We were lucky for the unveiling of the Monty and the Boy Soldier statues at the D-Day museum. These were unveiled by the Duke of Kent and hundreds of veterans from all over the country attended so the parade and service was very impressive and moving. In the afternoon we had a free concert at Portsmouth new Band Stand.

June was also a sad month for us as Mrs Jean Tees one of our long standing members died. About 12 members and our Standard attended her funeral. Once again the rain came and our Standard Bearer Mrs P Price got very wet.

The weather was very kind and we had sunshine when we went to the Isle of Wight branch luncheon this was enjoyed by everyone and they always make us very welcome. The rest of the year has been busy with coffee mornings and American tea parties etc at members' homes. These events help to make money for the funds and we are able to meet members who cannot come to evening meetings. We hope to arrange a lunch at the Royal British Legion Club in November; for members who live out of town and those members who cannot attend meetings because of transport problems the one we held last year was a great success. We shall finish the year attending the usual Remembrance Day Parades not so many members can do this now, but our Standard will be carried as usual with great pride and dignity by Mrs P Price, we hope that there will not be any rain.

RICHMONDSHIRE BRANCH

Although we are a small Branch, we still continue to meet on the first Wednesday evening of each month, except August, at Catterick Garrison Memorial Church Hall.

Recently we have had visits to local places of interest including Wensleydale Creamery at Hawes, which is the home of Wallace and Gromit's favourite cheese (!). The Violinist's Workshop in Leyburn, and we had a guided tour round Sion Hill Hall at Kirby Wiske. We have plans to visit RAF Leeming later, depending on their night flying schedule. Our winter meetings have been brightened by talks on Reflexology, A Well Woman's Clinic given by our Secretary Brenda Chappel (née Bagshaw), a talk by Catherine Felton (née Buchanan) on Living in Paris, and slide talks of faraway places given by our Chairman, Mary Nicholson (née Drabble). At our September 1997 meeting we congratulated our Member Agnes Farlow (née Easby) on winning a prize at the Blackpool Reunion.

We look forward to another year of successful meetings, and send Best Wishes to all readers of The Lioness.

ROCHDALE BRANCH

Meetings are still well attended, even taking into account holidays. July saw a group of our ladies join the Rhyl Branch for a visit. Also in July we paid a visit to the Birkenhead Maritime Museum, along with the male ex-service members of the Bury Branch. All three branches represent, Army, Navy and RAF.

On 27 July we once again visited Eden Camp when we had another beautiful day. We took part in the service and march past with the Bury Branch 8th Army Veterans and really enjoyed our visit.

We are now getting geared up for our 15th Anniversary celebrations on 21 April 1998 which will also be the 72nd birthday of Her Majesty The Queen, so it's all systems go after our Christmas lunch, which will be at our meeting place in the lovely Rochdale Town Hall.

We are pleased to report that our sick members are joining us at meetings, even if only for short periods - our prayers are being answered, thank God. Wheels have been put into motion by Oldham MBC to have our ATS badge displayed in flowers next year for our 60th Anniversary.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Our monthly meetings have been changed to the 2nd Monday night, at 7.30pm, instead of the 4th Monday, therefore leaving us free for Bank Holidays, etc, same venue.

We have sadly lost another of our members, Winnie Fairhurst died in June and at her funeral we formed a Guard of Honour. Lucy Bowyer dipped our Standard for her and a donation was sent to the Benevolent Fund.

We all enjoyed the Grand Reunion at Blackpool, our "Happy Band of Pilgrims" had a fabulous weekend at the St Elmo Hotel. Our friend Hazel Gordon came down from the Scottish Highlands to join us.



BLACKPOOL – APRIL 1997

At our April meeting, we had a demonstration of Flower Arranging. In May we went out for a meal at "Cross Gates" in Ford.

We extend a warm welcome to our new members: Pat Norman, Maureen Price, Dorothy Leedham and Thelma Morhall. This is very encouraging for us, but at the same time, we think of our members who through ill-health, or transport difficulties, cannot be with us. We send them our best wishes.

The June meeting included a "Competition for the Prettiest Brooch", which was won by Pat Norman.

Terri and Fred's Barbecue in July was a success, lots of cheer and chatter, the food was good too.

Proceeds from our usual Rummage, Attic and Car Boot Sales continue to boost our funds.

Our AGM in July resulted in the following elections: Nancy Tipton = Chairman. Chris Grigg = Vice Chairman and Social Secretary. Lucy Bowyer = Treasurer. Beryl Lane = Secretary. Joan Purcell = Committee.

Afterwards we celebrated the Branch's 17th Birthday Party, and a donation of £50 was sent to the Benevolent Fund.

No meeting in August.

One of our members - Scott Mills, knows how to 'Soldier On'. She has recently been on 'Manoeuvres', completing a Sponsored Charity Walk of 7 miles with many others, for the Shropshire and Mid Wales Hospice,

accompanied by her comrade 'Pete' (her little dog). Refreshments, and Check Points were manned by Shrewsbury 5th LI(TA). With the help of our branch, Scott herself raised £63, the overall total raised was £11,300.

Lucy Bowyer has done a 'Ton Up' by parading our Standard for the 100th time, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the RA at Oswestry, and she is still willing to "Fall In".

Thank you Coventry for giving us a lovely day out at the Reunion, the lunch was excellent, in a friendly atmosphere, especially with the waitress who wore her 'Bingo Blouse'!!!

On September 28th we attended the Civic Service at Malinslee Church with our Standard, and approx 50 people sampled our Buffet afterwards. In November we will be on parade for Remembrance Sunday.

December will be our Xmas Party month, and so another year goes quickly by. We thank all our members for their support, for without you there would not be a branch.

We now look forward to events in 1998, and give a huge 'Roar' of thanks for the 'Lioness', may she continue to go from strength to strength.



Nancy Tipton recently met her ATS friend, Susan Stewart, after 51 years, in Portree, Isle of Skye, both were at Catterick, 1946

Left - Susan Stewart
Right - Nancy Tipton

SOMERSET BRANCH

The Somerset Branch continues to flourish with the membership gradually increasing. We meet every month at the Royal British Legion in Taunton on the second Wednesday at 11.00am. We welcome any members who may be in the area. Our venue has been changed on a couple of occasions when we had visits out. The first, 9th July, was to The Dunkirk Memorial House, a Royal British Legion residential home set in seventeen acres of magnificent gardens in Somerset. We were provided with a wonderful buffet lunch and a tour of the area. Whilst there it gave us great pleasure to present them with an ATS wall plaque, beautifully made by a member's husband. We were fortunate to meet old and new friends, hopefully to swell the branch membership!

Our latest day out was locally for our annual lunch. It was quite well attended, with husbands adding to our numbers. It seems that husbands also have a good get-together on these occasions.

The Committee met in September and compiled a programme for 1998, so we will be busy keeping the Branch 'ticking over'. November is our next big meeting for the AGM. Will any new faces show to take over the official duties, I wonder?



Members and Husbands at the Annual Lunch



DUNKIRK MEMORIAL HOME



Christine Sloley (Chairperson) presenting ATS plaque to Peter Harris, Manager of Dunkirk House Home.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

We started 1997 with an experiment by arranging a meeting during the day in February instead of the usual evening meeting. This proved quite successful enabling several to attend who in the ordinary way could not do so.

The March meeting had to be cut short to enable members to make their escape home as we meet almost next door to Southampton Football Club!

April saw us enjoying our usual Annual Dinner at which Mrs Sadie Nias was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by Chairman Mrs Audrey Pickett. We have met at the same hotel for well over 25 years now which must be some kind of record! Several members attended the Grand Reunion at Blackpool, all being very pleased with arrangements made, in particular by Blackpool branch. Here Mrs Sheila Clement and Mrs Jean Kingdon were presented with Certificates of Appreciation by Brigadier Anne Field CB CBE.



*from left to right
Mrs Audrey Pickett (Chairperson), Mrs Sadie Nias (née Thomas),
Mrs Jenny Kingdon (née Black), Mrs Sheila Clement (née Parvin)*

Our May meeting saw us enjoying slides of local pub signs plus their history, whilst on the 14th May thirteen of us went over to the Isle of Wight to join them in celebrating their Annual Birthday luncheon which was all home cooking. Always an excellent day out.

June saw us holding our usual American Supper when members always turn up trumps, at which we invite members from the WRENS and WAAF Associations, when, by popular demand, member Margaret Newcombe gave another excellent talk on her experiences when working on the Queens. We also went along in force to Corps Day by minibus on 14th June, dry weather but could have been warmer. Not their fault, of course, but it is always a very enjoyable day out.

July we enjoyed a talk by one of our members on "Life as an Army Wife", and in August we had an additional meeting so that members could meet for a social evening only, at the Secretary's home.

Also held in August was our usual flower and cake stall at Eastleigh which coincides with the start of their carnival week. Again another good day out.

Lastly there were three events in September; our usual meeting at which a member gave an enlightening talk and

demonstration of flower arranging; three members attended the Earl Mountbatten Memorial Service at Romsey Abbey at which our Standard was paraded. Also, of course, additional prayers were said for Diana, Princess of Wales, tragically killed. Four members travelled by train to London enjoying a most interesting day out visiting the Imperial War Museum.

Just around the corner, all too close, is our AGM and Christmas celebrations.

Very sadly we have to report the unexpected death of a valued member, Mrs Maisie Vera Shipp, (née Bruce) on 7th August, aged just 60 years.

Membership stands at 48 Annual, 34 Life.



THE SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

STIRLING BRANCH

The Branch has one Life member and 48 Annual members. Unfortunately five members decided not to continue when subscriptions were increased to £5 per annum. These members had not recently attended meetings.

Due to changes in local Council finances, concessions for use of Community Council accommodation increased. It appeared that the branch would be unable to continue to function and alternative accommodation had been suggested. However, due to the generosity of the Community Council a grant was awarded to enable expenses to be met. Meetings will therefore continue to be held in the Mayfield Centre on the last Saturday of each month.

A donation of £10 was sent to Fife and Tayside branch towards providing plants for the Memorial Gardens at Murray Royal Hospital in Perth. £120 was also sent to Erskine Hospital which now accommodates ex-ATS patients.

Due to branch meetings held on Saturday afternoons, some difficulty is experienced in obtaining services of suitable speakers but we were successful in obtaining several dedicated people willing to spare their time and talents with us. A talk was given on the constitution and administration of the Abbeyfield Association. An organiser of the Victim Support Scheme gave a talk on how it is administered, how Councillors are trained, how the scheme is financed and the number of victims who are supported. A branch member gave a brilliant cookery

demonstration under restricted conditions as no cooker was available. She overcame this difficulty by working on the "Here's one I made earlier" principle. It was a brilliant achievement. Debates were held on a variety of subjects and the winter session ended with a very successful Bring and Buy sale. Four members again travelled to York for the Ack-Ack Reunion and once again the weather was brilliant. Surprisingly more and more attend each year.

Once again the branch wishes to express their appreciation of the work that goes into producing the Lioness twice a year and each issue is eagerly awaited.

SWANSEA BRANCH

After the excitement of Mrs Imogen Corigan's visit last March and the Lord Mayor's visit in April, May saw us in the lovely grounds of Clyne Castle, Blackpill, admiring the wonderful rhododendrons and azaleas planted many years ago by Admiral Heneage Vivian, owner of the Castle and collector of beautiful flora and fauna. In June and July we met as usual in the Guildhall, enjoying the quizzes set by Mrs Myra Norton. We attended two Church Parades, marching with the men and keeping time!! In August we were invited to the home of our President, Mrs Veronica Barrington for what has become an annual tea party to which each member brings a selection of home-baked delicacies making it a feast second to none. This year we were joined by WRENs and WAAFs. Despite heavy 'Welsh' rain everyone had a happy afternoon. Eleven members went to Coventry for the Reunion: we visited the magnificent Cathedral and enjoyed meeting old friends again. We were pleased to learn that the next Grand Reunion will be held in Cardiff. The month (Oct) we discussed the British Legion Armistice Service held each year in the Brangwyn Hall and the march on Remembrance Sunday followed by the formal Remembrance Service in St Mary's Church. The choice was made of a member to lay our wreath on November 11th at the Cenotaph situated on the Promenade where the wind blows very hard and the sand from the beach stings our faces. We shall have our Christmas lunch in an hotel overlooking Oxwich Bay on the Gower Coast and that will bring to an end another year. We all enjoy receiving the Lioness with its many photographs: one of our founder members, Miss Betty Evans, was very pleased to recognise herself on page 120 of the last issue which enabled her to contact an old colleague. BLWYDDYN NEWYDD DDA (Happy New Year) from all of us in Swansea.



Swansea Branch at their Annual Tea-Party at the home of the President, Veronica Barrington

SWINDON BRANCH

News from Swindon isn't good. Sadly Jean Turner who was our Secretary passed away after a very full Army and Association life, we miss her guiding us along in Association matters. Jean (Jeanette Turner (née Speller)) Army Number W2137 enlisted into the ATS on 30th November 1938 and then into the Military Police. She then re-enlisted into the WRAC and served at home and overseas completing 23 years service. During the 70's Jean joined the Swindon Branch of the Association and eventually took on the job of Secretary. Although Jean found it very tiring due to ill health she carried on keeping us together, the membership is spread out over a wide area and many of the members are not so young. Jean did try on several occasions to interest new members, especially those recently having left the WRAC, but to no avail.

Mary our Treasurer took on the task of Secretary but unfortunately became ill and was unable to carry on, she had always supported Jean during her time in office. We shall sadly miss both of them as we are now down to a few regulars who meet during the good weather for a cup of tea and a chat for old times sake. We will continue our membership of the Association and look forward to reading the Lioness.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

The Wilmslow Branch are preparing for our visit to London for the Remembrance Parade on the 7th, 8th and 9th November 1997.

On Friday, the 7th, we will be taking tea at the Grosvenor Hotel, instead of our usual venue The Ritz.

Saturday the 8th November we will attend the Albert Hall, this is always a pleasant afternoon.

Sunday the 9th November the Parade, this is a most moving occasion, when we remember Relatives and Friends who gave their lives for a country they loved.

During the summer months, our members went on days out to Chester, Southport, Blackpool and Buckingham Palace and interesting holidays abroad.

Since our last report, we have recruited two new members and had telephone calls asking for information to join.

One of our members lives in Australia and she keeps in touch, she sends us Christmas cards and presents and we return the compliment by sending her a subscription magazine for a year.

We are planning our Christmas Lunch on the 4th December, this is always a happy occasion, when we reminisce about Christmases spent in the forces during the war and the food we had then.

We still meet on the 1st Thursday of the month at the Royal British Legion, Wilmslow. We usually have a light lunch at 12.30pm and then hold the meeting.

We welcome any new members.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION
Block 10, AGC Centre,
Worthy Down,
Winchester,
Hampshire SO21 2RG

I wish to join the WRAC Association as a

Life (£30) member and enclose £.....

Annual (£5)

Date..... Signature

Subscriptions include "LIONESS"
(Please complete in Block Letters)

Surname Miss/Mrs/Ms

Christian Names.....

Address for Correspondence

.....

.....

.....

..... Post Code.....

Telephone

Units during service

.....

.....

Surname when serving

QMAAC/ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number

(Please strike out whichever is not applicable)

Last Rank held (Present Rank if still serving).....

Date of EnrolmentDate of Release

Decorations

**WRAC ASSOCIATION
WILMSLOW (CHESHIRE) BRANCH**

CONTACT CAN BE MADE THROUGH RBL, GROVE AVENUE, WILMSLOW, CHESHIRE

Name	Name during service	Dates Army Number	Unit and where served
Mrs Marjorie Aplin	Wright	1940 - 1945	Royal Army Pay Corps, Stockport
Joan Broadhurst		1939 - 1951 6644	Second Cheshire Regiment, Coventry Western Command, Donnington Southern Command, Slough
Mrs Marjorie Clarke	Whitehead (Ginger)	1942 - 1945 200791	Lancaster 1952 Edinburgh 1943 637 Command (M) Transport Company Inverness 1945
Mrs Lilian Edwards	Staig	1939 - 1945 9821	Liverpool 1939 Herne Bay 1940 York/Sheffield 1941 Huddersfield 1942-43 London 1943-44 Reigate 1944 Glasgow 1945
Mrs Mary Guest	Tattersall/Guest	1941 - 1945 54430	Lancaster 1941 Reigate 1941 Guildford 1945
Mrs Eva Gillatt	Oppenheim/Gillatt	1941 - 1942 58933	Lancaster Huyton, Liverpool Denbigh, North Wales 4th AV Platoon
Mrs Mary Holmes	Stubbs	1942 - 1945 231055	Port Talbot Kilcraggen Londonderry Gloucester Rye Bouremouth 650 Battery HAA Royal Artillery
Mrs Gwendoline Johnson	Maidment	1945 - 1948 317131	Cardiff Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Middlesex 1945 Palestine ATS 1946 - 1948
Mrs Erin Jenner	Massy/Jenner	1939 - 1944 20078	7th Surrey's Company, Croydon 1939 36 Light AA Regt, RA Staines 1939 5th AA Division, RA Reading 1940 Gunnery School, Hayling Island 1941 Brigade HQ, Chichester 1941 Light AA Battery, Leatherhead 1941 ATS Training Centre, Guildford 1942 OCTU Windsor 1942 6th AA Division, RA Chelmsford 1942 Z Battery, RA Wanstead Flats 1942 26th AA Brigade, HQ Highgate 1943 Light AA Battery, Chequers 1944
Mrs Deena Magee	Fenton	1939 - 1945 27261	Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Chilwell, Nottingham - Heavy Goods Driver

Name	Name during service	Dates Army Number	Unit and where served
Mrs Elizabeth Masterman	Shepherd	1941 - 1946 64487	1941 Fort George, Inverness, 455 Heavy AA Battery, Royal Artillery, Dinibristol, Forth Bridge, Scotland 1942 554 Heavy AA Battery, RA Dumbarton, Helensburgh, Gourrock, Scotland 1944 568 Heavy AA Battery, RA, Portland Bill, Weymouth 189(M) Heavy AA Regiment RA 188(M) Heavy AA Regiment RA 1944 X Company Officers' Accounts, Manchester 1945 Western Command V Company, Longtown, Carlisle 1945 Edinburgh Castle
Elsie Norbury		1942 - 1948 144549	1942 HQ 68 Aa Brigade, Shrewsbury and Colchester 1944 Chief of Staff's Department, War Office, Whitehall 1945 HQ Lines of Communication, 21st Army Group BLA Roubaix, France and Brussels 1946 HQ Hamburg District, Germany 1947 HA Second Echelon, 21st Army Group - BAOR, Hamburg and Bad Oeynhausen, 1948 Germany
Mrs Kathleen Owen	O'Connor	1942 - 1946 138688	Dalkeith FANY Camberley FANY Rochester - Wainscott Workshops, REME 43 Brigade HQ, Heavy AA Royal Artillery, Stockton-on-Tees, Dover, Lydd, Dymchurch
Mrs Hettie Raycraft	Hazlehurst	1945 - 1948 327901	ATS Admin 1945-46 Plumer Barracks, Plymouth Technical Clerk, D&M Wing, Royal Tank Corps, Bovington Camp, Dorset
Mrs Edna Sanderson	Royle	1945 - 1949 334698	144 (Mixed) Heavy AA Bty, RA, Durham, Larkhill, Salisbury Plain
Mrs Joan Scholar	Ashmore	1942 - 1946 119320	Chester 1942 Sutton Coldfield 1942-43 Abergavenny 1943-1945 Egypt 1945-46
Mrs Ellen Elizabeth Trimble	Johnson	1941 - 1945 97384	494 (M) Heavy AA 'A' Company 143 Regiment Royal Artillery, Gloucestershire
Mrs Marjorie Watts	Nattan	1942 - 1945 230968	Royal Corps of Signals Wireless Op - 'ENIGMA' No 7 Wing, Loughborough
Mrs Emmie Wearing	Rhodes	1941 - 1946 67772	473 (Mixed) Heavy AA Battery 135 Regiment Royal Artillery Sunderland, Paisley, Winchester and Acton, Middlesex
Mrs Lucy Woodcock	Williamson	1943 - 1945 231638	Central Ordnance Depot, Derby 1943-44 Royal Army Ordnance Corps 26 Vehicle Depot, RAOC Attingham Park, Shropshire 1945 55 Vehicle Depot RAOC 1945 Church Stretton, Shropshire

WIMBLEDON BRANCH

I am always amazed that our June tea-party leaps to life so quickly, as tables are assembled and laid with seemingly little effort. The tea is a stupendous affair, resembling more of a late lunch, and requiring knives and forks to dispatch it, with wine to speed it on its way.

Our annual Cake Competition in July, was very popular this year, as more members displayed their culinary skills. President Iris Smith judged the competition, and the winners were Muriel Roberts and Audrey Channing. While the cake judging was in progress, members enjoyed an Anagram Competition, won by Vera Neil.

This year, Sunday 24th August, was the day chosen for our annual Garden Party. The weather was temperamental but nothing could deter Iris, our President, and Geoffrey Smith, from entertaining us in their usual generous fashion. The heavens did not notice the delightful Tea Buffet, and twice this was carried in and out of the garden. Eventually, tea was held very happily around the dining room table. After all this, the sun decided to beam forth, and for the rest of the time, we enjoyed the sunshine and the early supper, prefaced by glasses of sherry and warm thanks to Iris and Geoffrey, who so nobly undertake this task. Geoffrey's garden was as ever beautiful.

On the 5th of September, the Chairman, Marjorie Hindley, held a committee meeting in her home. The meeting was followed by a luncheon. At our September meeting on the 12th we enjoyed a talk and demonstration, given by Dorothy Lee a member of this branch, and who is also a senior member of the National Association of Flower Arrangers. Dorothy created two beautiful displays, one for a wall or niche, and the other decoration for a dining table. We were told many interesting facts about flowers, and how they can be cosseted and persuaded to open. After the talk, several members tried to make a flower arrangement, most for the first time. As a prize in the raffle, Dorothy donated one of the flower arrangements, she had made earlier in the afternoon. We were pleased to welcome a new member, Wyn Marin. Twelve members attended the London Group Reunion on the 20th September. This was held in the Union Jack Club in London. It was a very enjoyable day, with two excellent lectures and a splendid lunch. Marjorie Hindley, Chairman of the Wimbledon Branch, was presented with the Certificate of Appreciation, by the General Secretary, Mrs F White.

On 27th September fifteen members travelled by coach to meet members of the Hastings branch. The weather was at its best and after a very good lunch they were given the choice of either being escorted to museums, on a walking tour of the old town or on an open top bus. There was much to talk about when they were entertained to tea by their newly found friends before leaving for a pleasant journey home. Our grateful thanks go to Dorothy Dixon and her helpers for organising a perfect day.

The branch AGM took place on 17th October. The Chairman was pleased to announce that we had four

new members, Wyn Marin, Daisy Preece, Mrs Wagstaff and Joan McCord. The branch currently has 90 members. Marjorie Hindley who had served four years as Chairman, announced that she would not be seeking re-election. The new Committee is as below:

President:	Iris Smith
Chairman:	Bessie Wright
Vice-Chairman:	Beryl Douglas
Secretary	Audrey Channing
Treasurer:	Betty Syrett
Registrar:	Marie Wade
Social Secretary:	Peggy Abbott
Committee:	Jean Collyer
	Vera Neil
	Nan Thomas
	Mary Rulton
	Jean Lloyd

WREXHAM BRANCH

There was no meeting in January as this fell on New Year's Day.

In February all the raffle tickets for Blackpool were given out and the money had to be in for the March meeting. All the tickets were sold.

In April members attended the Grand Reunion in Blackpool. We stayed in the Norbreck Hotel. This was enjoyed by all members and everyone thought that it was a marvellous week-end.

Members attended the funeral of Mary Rickards, who had been a very faithful member of the Branch. Secretary attended the Secretaries' Meeting at Blackpool and brought back all that was relevant.

In May we gained a new younger member - a former WRAC which pleased us. A letter invitation was received from the Rhyl Branch to attend their social afternoon and Welsh Tea. This we did and enjoyed it as we always do. Also in May we were invited to the Mayor's Sunday - this we attended.

We attended the funeral of Vera Price.

August saw members attend the Ack Ack Reunion in York, as they have done for the last 4 years. We all enjoyed the stories they brought back to us and also seeing the photographs taken.

September was the Area Reunion in Coventry. An enjoyable time. Secretary attended the Secretaries' Meeting.

Once again we are nearing Remembrance Sunday. We have been invited by Wrexham Council to attend the Cenotaph Service and to lay the wreath.

On the whole we have had quite a good year and are now looking forward to Christmas.

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

1997 seems to have been a busy and exciting year. Firstly, we had the Grand Reunion in Blackpool in April which for us started off with an hour wait on Wolverhampton Station because of the IRA antics at Crewe and Stoke. But in the true 1939/45 spirit this did not deter us and instead of arriving in Blackpool at 3pm we arrived at approx 6.30pm. In all this I must give a word of praise for the Staff of Wolverhampton Station who looked after us - giving us free cups of tea or coffee and sandwiches and transporting us between platforms when necessary. For me, personally, it brought back memories of 1939 when the Crisis for War, arose I was at Territorial Camp in Cornwall and they brought us back in the middle of the night and the Salvation Army met us in London with cups of tea etc, how it brings out the best in us.

Our outing this year took us to Weston Park, the home of the Earl of Bradford. The weather was not too kind but the meal which Weston Park prepared for us and our visit around the House was very enjoyable. In August we were invited to one of our member's who has moved away to Wellington. It was a very enjoyable afternoon, we were entertained by a cousin of her husband on the organ and a group of singers called the 'Nostalgers' followed by some very enjoyable eats.

Our Fund Raising this year consisted of an Easter Fayre in March and an Autumn Fayre in September. We are rather restricted with our Fund Raising due mainly to the size and position of our meeting room.

We were very sorry to lose one of our members, Pauline Meredith who died in May, she attended our meetings regularly and has been sadly missed.

One of our members, Mary Hodgson, had a painting exhibited in London as part of a National Art competition for the over 60's. The painting by Mary was one of 73 entries out of 3,200 to be shortlisted in the contest and was runner-up in her class.

We are now looking forward to our Area Reunion and the Christmas festivities to follow.



ULSTER BRANCH

The Grand Reunion in Blackpool is but a happy memory for the thirteen members who went from our Branch.

We had our Annual Outing to Coleraine and Portstewart with a lovely meal in Aghadowey Presbyterian Church Hall on the way home.

Twentyfour members travelled to Omagh on 4th October to join Omagh Branch for their annual luncheon and it was nice to meet old friends.

One good friend of many old members sadly died in June - she was CSM of 8th Clerical Company ATS and affectionately known as 'Bessie' Jackson. She served from 1940-45.

SHOPPING LIST

The Association Badge is available for sale from the WRAC Association HQ. These cost £2.50 including package and posting.

If Branches order from 10-20 badges they may deduct 5% from the cost.

For orders over 20 they may deduct 10% from the cost.

All cheques to WRAC Association please and sent to:

WRAC Association HQ
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Winchester
SO21 2RG

New Items

Association Key Fob – £1.80
Association Lapel Badge – £1.50
ALLOW 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY

Weddings

SENIOR-SCHOFIELD. Mrs Alison Schofield (née Senior) and husband John at their Ruby Wedding.



Guard of Honour



Celebrating the Ruby Wedding

HOOPER-CARTER. On 24 December 1947 at St Giles Registry Office, Edinburgh. Bdr Les Hooper, RA 3 AA Group HQ, to Pte Joan Carter, Auxiliary Territorial Service, 3 AA Group HQ. Present address: 32 Ellad Close, Vermont Victoria 3133, Australia.



BEESTON-ALLISON. On 18 September 1948 at Methodist Church, High Road, East Finchley. Fred Beeston, RAF, to Mary P Allison, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 77 Campion House, Heath Town, Wolverhampton, WV10 0PX.



Wedding Day



Now

WOLFE-RODGER. On 20 December 1947 at St John's Church, West Byfleet, Surrey. Eric Wolfe, 158 Company, Portsmouth Section, Royal Military Police, to Necia Rodger, Auxiliary Territorial Service Provost, Southern Command, attached to 158 Company RMP, Aldershot. We met sitting on a mattress in the back of a lorry bound for the 1947 RMP cricket final at Taunton - which 158 Coy won! We have received Golden Wedding greetings from Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness, Prince Philip. Present address: 106 Coventry Road, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 9DA.



Wedding Day

BIBBY-WOOLLETT. On 12 July 1947 at St James Church, South Anston, Sheffield. Arthur Bibby, Royal Artillery, to Ellen Woollett, ex 489 HAA(M) Bty. Present address: 2 Rackford Road, North Anston, Sheffield, S25 4DF.

WOODFORD-HICKIE. On 27 September 1947 at Gilbertfield Church, Cambuslang, Scotland. Ernest W Woodford, ex Sgt, Royal Corp of Signals, to Catherine F Hickie, ex L/Cpl Royal Corps of Signals. Present address: 2 Warnmark Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 3PZ.



The Newly Weds!



and Today



Cutting the cake 50 years on

Obituary

ATKINSON. Ivy (née Peacock) of Sunderland on 27 August 1996. ATS.

BISHOP. J M (née Wakerell) of Dover in September 1997. ATS.

BONE. Mary (née Short) of Newcastle in August 1997. ATS.

BOYDELL. Lt Col Margaret Hall of Caerns in September 1997. ATS/WRAC.

BUCKMAN. Miss Dorothy Frances of London on 19 August 1997. ATS/WRAC.

BUTLER. Mrs A (née Sheepwash) of Chatham on 26 September 1997. ATS.

CHATTERTON. Miss Joan of Coulsdon on 5 September 1997. ATS.

CLARK. Nellie of Putney on 22 June 1997. ATS.

COULTER. M E (née Dilworth) of Ellesmere Port in 1997. ATS/WRAC.

CRONNE. Deborah Frances of Norwich on 29 July 1997. FANYS.

DONALDSON. J R (née McTaggart) of Glasgow on 13 October 1997. ATS.

DRAYTON. Mrs Joyce (née Brook) of Wootton Bassett on 15 September 1997. ATS.

FAIRHURST. Winifred (née Doran) of Donnington on 22 June 1997. ATS.

GERDES. Mrs Heather (née Mugford) of Exeter on 25 September 1997. WRAC.

GLEDHILL. Sally Sarah of Stanningley in July 1997. ATS.

GODOLPHIN. Joan Lt Col MBE of Shaldon Devon on 21 August 1997. WRAC.

GOODMAN. Miss Dorothy of Broadstairs in September 1997. ATS.

GUDGIN. Phyllis Monica of Leominster in June 1997. ATS.

GUY. Catherine B of Glasgow on 30 April 1997. ATS.

HICKS. Jnr Comnd Ruth (née Sleigh) of Farnham on 10 August 1997. ATS.

HIGGS. Olive (née Aubrey) of Muxton Telford on 18 March 1997. ATS/WRAC.

HILL. Muriel Mary of London on 31 March 1997. ATS.

HOFFMAN. Sheila (née Trueman) of Wibsey Bradford on 4 September 1997. ATS.

HUMPHERSON. Miriam Elsie (née Flack) of Chelmsford on 15 August 1997. ATS.

HURST. Tony of London on 18 September 1997. ATS.

HUTTON. Julia Johnston (née Gow) of Solihull on 25 August 1997. ATS.

IREMONGER. Miss Molly of South Africa in May 1997. ATS.

JACKSON. WOI Bessie of Ulster in June 1997. ATS.

JARY. Edna May of Birmingham in July 1996. ATS.

JINKS. Mrs Margery (née Jarrett) of Ashby De La Zouch on 1 July 1997. ATS.

JOHNSON. Mrs Edna Burnyeat (née Mackereath) of Kendall on 5 September 1997. ATS.

JONES. Sybil (née Simpson née Pemberton) of Rhos Wrexham on 2 March 1995. ATS.

LAMB. Miss Constance Margaret of Southport on 3 July 1997. ATS/WRAC.

LANE. Miss Lelia Dorothy of Leeds on 31 March 1997. WRAC.

LAURENS. Mrs Marjorie (née Darbyshire) of Stockport on 9 June 1997. ATS.

LUHT. Sortedel Dora (née Summers) of Newcastle Upon Tyne in August 1997. ATS.

MACAULAY. Miss Edith Heather of Kelso on 8 March 1997. ATS.

MALCOLM. Flora Ann Mary (née Brown) of Upavon in September 1997. WRAC.

MAPP. Miss Eunice Emily of Birmingham on 15 March 1997. ATS.

McCONNACHIE. Agnes Josephine of Bridge of Allan in July 1997. ATS.

MEREDITH. Mrs Pauline Mary (née Brown) of Oxley on 23 May 1997. ATS.

NOCK. Marjorie Scott (née Lamb) of Ryde Isle of Wight on 14 March 1997. ATS.

NORMAN. Lt Col Pat of Cockfield, Bury, St Edmunds on 13 July 1997. WRAC.

PRICE. Mrs Vera (née Price) of Wrexham in June 1997. WRAC.

REES. Mrs J N of Portsmouth on 15 June 1997. ATS.

RICHARDS. Mrs Emily of Farnham on 23 July 1997. ATS.

RICKARDS. Mrs (née Williams) of Rhos in March 1997. ATS.

RIPLEY. Mrs Jean Mary (née Scales) of Scarborough in July 1997. WRAC.

RISK. Mrs Ruth Charlotte (née Tucker) of Ontario, Canada on 7 January 1997. ATS.

ROCHDALE. The Lady Elinor of Keswick on 3 March 1997. ATS.

ROGERSON. Frances Eleanor of Slough on 6 July 1997. ATS.

ROTTON. Lt Dulcie Frederica of Clacton-On-Sea on 2 October 1997. ATS.

SEAMAN. Doreen (née White) of Romford on 13 July 1997. ATS.

SHERRATT. Mrs Joan Margaret (née Whyte) of Tilly-Coultry in September 1997. ATS.

SHIPP. Mrs Maisie Vera (née Bruce) of Totton in August 1997. ATS.

SNELL. Miss Mary Elizabeth of Colyton on 11 August 1997. ATS.

SPENCE. Henrietta Taylor of Edinburgh on 9 April 1997. ATS.

STAGG. Mrs M (née George) of Thetford on 31 May 1997. ATS.

STEPHENS. Major Lavinia M of Ipswich on 17 September 1997. ATS/WRAC.

STUART. Mrs Violet (née Streeter) of Ashford in September 1997. ATS.

TUCKER. Miss Stella of Truro in January 1997. ATS.

TUDDENHAM. Mrs Olive (née Brown) of Gateshead in August 1997. ATS.

WACKETT. WOII Iris A of Sidcup on 10 May 1997. ATS/WRAC.

WAGSTAFF. Mrs Patricia Ruth (née Richardson) of Eastbourne on 20 April 1997. ATS.

WARD. Mrs Ethel Louise (née Webb) of Stevenage on 22 June 1997. ATS.

WILLSHER. Mrs Catherine Bessie (née Jones) of Chelmsford on 10 August 1997. WRAF.

WILLIG. Mrs Joan (née Shuttleworth) of Cheadle Heath on 4 June 1997. ATS.

VINE. Mrs Josephine Ann (née Storey) of Chepstow in May 1997. ATS.

WILLS

You are asked to consider when making or revising your Will to leave a bequest to the Corps Benevolent Funds.

For example words such as "I bequeath the sum of £xxxxx to the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds, presently at Worthy Down, or their successors. I wish my legacy to be used to relieve the current needs of those eligible to receive help from the said funds.

ATS AND WRAC HANDPAINTED WALL PLAQUES

These are available from Cavalier Supplies, PO Box No 2, Gilberdyke, BROUGH, East Yorkshire HU15 2TN or telephone 01430 441315 or 01459 115560.

Branch Secretaries may obtain a discount for bulk purchases and the Benevolent Fund could receive some commission.

LIONESS

We are compiling bound editions of Lioness and have the following missing:

No's 3 & 4 of 1951

There are several spare copies for sale. Please apply to HQ.

**AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
(INCORPORATING QUEEN MARY'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS AND AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL
SERVICE COMRADES ASSOCIATION)**

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS AND AUDITORS

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. It is our responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on our audit, on those statements and to report our opinion to you.

BASIS OF OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by trustees in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charity's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

OPINION

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association at 31 October 1996 and of its net movement in funds for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 1993.

Registered Auditor
Chartered Accountants
The Clock House
140 London Road
Guildford
Surrey GU1 1UW

1998

	Notes	General funds	Membership life subscription fund	Lioness life subscription fund	1997	1996
INCOME & EXPENDITURE						
Incoming Resources						
Life subscriptions			1,236	4,946	6,182	5,979
Annual subscriptions		4,801	-	-	4,801	1,599
Investment income		15,146	-	-	15,146	14,258
Lioness publication income		15,956	-	-	15,956	7,776
Sale of badges and souvenirs		(646)	-	-	(646)	1,678
1997 Reunion income		25,988	-	-	25,988	16,235
Less: deferred income		-	-	-	-	(16,235)
Total incoming resources		61,245	1,236	4,946	67,427	31,290
Resources expended						
Direct charitable expenditure:						
Grants and donations		-	-	-	-	220
Lioness publication costs		21,914	-	-	21,914	20,181
1997 Reunion expenditure		19,842	-	-	19,842	-
Other expenditure:						
Management and administration	3	9,756	-	-	9,756	8,907
Total resources expended		51,512	-	-	51,512	29,308
NET MOVEMENT IN RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS						
		9,733	,236	4,946	15,915	1,982
Transfer between funds		2,485	(1,000)	(1,485)	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR						
		12,218	236	3,461	15,915	1,982
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES						
Gains/(losses) on investments:						
Unrealised		19,944	-	-	19,944	7,997
Realised		-	-	-	-	(599)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR						
	9	32,162	236	3,461	35,859	9,420
Balance brought forward at 1 November 1996		192,889	10,405	19,976	223,270	213,850
Balance carried forward at 31 October 1997		225,051	10,641	23,437	259,129	223,270

BALANCE SHEET
31st October 1997

ACCUMULATED FUNDS	Notes	1997	1996
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments		217,053	194,116
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock of badges	6	2,042	2,779
Association standard		199	199
Accrued Income		1,507	-
Cash at bank and in hand		43,717	46,127
		47,465	49,105
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	7	5,389	19,951
NET CURRENT ASSETS		42,076	29,154
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		259,129	223,270
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	8	259,129	223,270

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for investments which are stated at market value, and are in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

INVESTMENTS

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date. Realised and unrealised gains and losses on investments are taken to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

STOCKS

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and realisable value.

LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Life subscriptions are accounted for when received and allocated to specific designated funds to be released to general funds on a straight line basis over a period of 20 years.

INVESTMENT INCOME

Investment income is accounted for once the dividend or interest has been declared. All investment income during the year was received gross.

	1997	1996
1. INVESTMENT INCOME		
Dividend income	13,065	12,498
Deposit account interest	2,080	1,760
	15,145	14,258
2. LIONESS PUBLICATION		
Subscriptions	14,766	5,230
Advertising revenues	1,190	1,300
	15,956	7,776
3. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION		
AGM expenses	111	2,506
Printing and stationary	-	1,280
Postage	3,434	522
Travel expenses	383	285
Investment management fees	1,988	2,247
Audit and accountancy	2,968	1,300
Subscriptions and donations	115	90
Sundry expenses	757	677
	9,756	8,907

EMPLOYEES

There were no persons employed by the Association during the year.

No trustee received any remuneration for services to the Association in the current or previous year.

No trustee was reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the Association in the current or previous year.

5. INVESTMENTS

At market value:	1997	1996
M & G Charifund Units (£12,495)	113,336	96,255
8% Treasury Loan 2002/06 (£15,000) £2,807 purchased July 1997	15,746	12,506
7.75% Treasury Loan 2012/15 (£6,548)	7,322	6,601
8% Treasury Stock 2003 (£38,037)	41,343	40,442
12.25% Exchequer Stock 1999 (£10,030)	10,834	11,326
4.375% Index Linked Stock 2004 (£8,670)	10,628	10,237
2% Index Linked Stock 2006 (£8,772)	17,844	16,749
	<u>217,053</u>	<u>194,116</u>

The historical cost of the investments, purchased at various dates, is £147,044 (1996: £144,051). All investments managed by Quilter & Co Limited, and are listed in the UK stock exchange.

6. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND	1997	1996
Current account	9,889	8,917
Deposit account	30,240	30,240
Cash held by investment managers	2,477	6,894
Cash in hand	1,111	76
	<u>43,717</u>	<u>46,127</u>

7. CREDITORS

Amounts falling due within one year:

1997 Reunion: Deferred income	-	16,235
Sundry creditors	5,389	3,716
	<u>5,389</u>	<u>19,951</u>

8. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

DESIGNATED FUNDS

	General life funds	Membership subscriptions fund	Lioness life subscription fund	TOTAL
1 November 1996	192,889	10,405	19,976	223,270
Net movement for the year	32,162	236	3,461	35,859
31 October 1997	<u>225,051</u>	<u>10,641</u>	<u>23,437</u>	<u>259,129</u>
Analysis of net assets between funds:				
Investments	217,053	-	-	217,053
Net current assets	7,998	10,641	23,437	42,076
for the year	<u>225,051</u>	<u>10,641</u>	<u>23,437</u>	<u>259,129</u>

Unrealised gains on investments included in unrestricted funds at the year end amounted to £67,016 (1996: £50,065).

