

JANUARY
FEBRUARY } 1940

Old Comrades



Association

GAZETTE

GENERAL SECRETARY: Mrs. Johnston, Q.M.A.A.C., O.G.A., 5 Chesham Place, London, S.W.1.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Old Comrades Association will be held on Saturday, February 24th, 1940, at the hour of 3 p.m. at the ex-Service Women's Club, 5 Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1.

It is hoped that members will make every effort to be present.

Branch Secretaries' Meeting.

The Branch Secretaries' Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 24th, 1940, at 5 Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1, at 2 p.m. This will be preceded by the usual lunch for Branch Secretaries at 1 p.m.

The General Secretary will be glad if those Branch Secretaries, who hope to be present, will kindly notify her of their intention.

ANNUAL DINNER

It has been found difficult to hold an official dinner of the usual kind this year, but enquiries made have shown that Old Comrades do wish to have an opportunity of meeting each other on the day of the Annual General Meeting, on February 24th. It has therefore, been arranged to hold a re-union Dinner (6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m.) at **St. Erwin's Hotel, Westminster, S.W.1** (adjoining St. James' Park Station). Tickets 6s. (six shillings) each. Application for tickets, together with **remittance and stamped envelope**, should be sent without delay to Miss W. Binks, 72 Harold Road, Norwood, London, S.E.19. Applications must not be later than February 15th.

HEADQUARTERS REPORT FOR DECEMBER, 1939.

A Meeting of Council was held on Saturday, December 16th, at 5 Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1, the hour being changed from 6.15 p.m. to 3 p.m. on account of the difficulty for members coming from a distance in the black-out. Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan was in the chair, and the following members present: Miss Davy, Miss Cliff, Miss Saunders, Miss Bilbrough, Mrs. Garrard, Miss Longman, Miss Turner, Miss Haines, Mrs. Powell, Mrs. Fardon, Miss Rogers, Miss Warrior (by invitation), Miss Billington (hon. treasurer), and the General Secretary, Mrs. Johnston. Apologies for absence were received from Miss Thompson, Miss Ireland, Mrs. Grundy, Miss Batty, Mrs. Pratt-Barlow and Mrs. Skellington.

The General Secretary reported that, owing to the cancellation of the usual ceremony at the Cenotaph and of the British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall, no ballot for tickets had taken place and members had been individually informed that these events were not to take place.

The O.C.A. wreath, in the form of the Q.M.A.A.C. Badge, had, however, been laid, as usual, on the Cenotaph by Miss Bilbrough and a detachment from London Branch.

The Agenda for the Annual General Meeting was considered, and this should be in the hands of members by the time the January issue of the Gazette is printed.

The date of the Annual General Meeting will be Saturday, February 24th, 1940, as fixed at the A.G.M. last year. It is hoped that all members who can possibly do so will attend the meeting, though it is feared that in these days of uncertain travelling the numbers present may be smaller than in normal times.

The Gazette also came before the Council for consideration. It was agreed to issue the Gazette each two months instead of monthly. The difficulty of finding sufficient material and the question of finance were both factors in coming to this decision, as well as the heavy work entailed in the distribution. Miss Warrior, who very kindly undertakes this work, is now living out of London and carrying on without a committee. It was agreed that the price should remain at 3s. 6d. a year, as it was felt that members who value the Gazette will not mind, under the circumstances, paying this sum for the six issues.

Branches. The General Secretary was glad to be able to report that some Branches are still carrying on meetings, though maybe not quite so frequently, despite the black-out and the fact that many members have been transferred or are again on active service. Exeter has, unfortunately, had to close temporarily, but when brighter times come again it is hoped that the Branch may be revived with success.

The Benevolent Report for August, September, October and November was presented. All applications which came within the scope of the Service Women's Benevolent Fund had received assistance. The number was fewer than in normal times, and it is presumed that many ex-Service women are serving again or that the need has not been so great since the outbreak of war.

The date of the next **Council Meeting** was fixed for Saturday, February 10th, 1940.

Now for the lighter side of the Headquarters Report. The office has been brightened and the General Secretary greatly cheered by the charming cards and calendars which have been sent. These, as members will know, are addressed to her as representing the whole of the Old Comrades, so in your name and her own she reciprocates all the good wishes so kindly sent and sends sincere thanks and New Year greetings to: Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, Miss Davy, Florence Bragg (Liverpool Branch), E. M. Winter (London), Mrs. Reid, in Montreal, who pops in to say "Chin up" to all O.C.A. members (if she could see our chins she would know that we do not need the reminder!), E. A. Parkinson, Northern Ireland, with a lovely handkerchief edged with Irish crochet lace (but, please, this is for the General Secretary, as well as a very smart Northern Ireland Headquarters card) Margaret Smith, Mrs. Thurston, Mrs. Starkey and "Simmie," so well-known to all members of the First Army Infantry School, Mrs. Fardon, Mrs. N. James, Mrs. Amy Jeff Sims (U.S.A.), Mrs. Glover (Northern Ireland), Elsie Ringrose (Canada), Ex-Service Women's Club, Sydney, Australia.

and lastly, an amusing one in which Billbrough is depicted as one of those "who do the work" at the Record and Pay Office at Ashford.

In addition, most interesting letters have been received from Mrs. R. G. Mundy, of Calgary, Mrs. Sims (U.S.A.), Mrs. Mills (Sydney), Miss E. M. Winter and Elsie Ringrose, of Kingsville, Ontario. To all these kind friends so many thanks, with the hope of an answer in the very near future.

BENEVOLENT REPORT FOR AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

Nineteen cases have been submitted to the Service Women's Benevolent Fund during the four months mentioned above. All applicants have received grants.

The grants have been made for dentures, coal during winter months, arrears of rent, maintenance while unemployed, a small allowance pending the grant of a pension, fees for training at a Commercial College, and for extra nourishment.

The sum of £88 12s. 3d. was received.

The sum of £115 16s. 0d. was disbursed.

There were eight cases in August, seven in September, none in October and four in November. From which it would appear that the need for assistance has lessened with the outbreak of war.

GAZETTE SUBSCRIPTIONS

In order to save expense the usual reminder slip has been dispensed with, but will members please note that **all subscriptions are now due** and should be sent as soon as possible to the Hon. Treasurer, Miss H. M. Billington.

A BACHELOR BILLETING OFFICER

Everybody one meets says, "What an odd war this is!" and the late Secretary of the S.W.B.F. heartily echoes that statement. To begin with, although still below the half century mark, he is told that he is "too old" to do anything active.

And so, in order not to be quite out of everything, he has become the Billeting Officer and, incidentally, Senior Air Raid Warden for his village.

One thing, he never expected to have to do was to billet five small boys on himself. And yet, ten days before Christmas, when a party of evacuees arrived that is what happened. They ranged in age from 6 to 11, and a jolly crowd of pickles they have proved. But it is a bit of a change from settling problems for ex-Service women to bathing small boys and tucking them up in bed.

And not only small boys, mark you; two little girls wandered round to see the B.O., and, with floods of tears, explained they did not like their billet. After much persuasion they agreed to go back for the night and next day arrangements were made for another billet for each of them. But that night their new foster mother arrived on the B.O.'s doorstep and explained that both kiddies were crying their eyes out. For the next hour every kind of guile was used to comfort them, and finally it was done on the promise that the Billeting Officer tucked them up and kissed them good-night. They are both as happy as kings now.

But these are only minor matters. It was a serious problem to deal with a boy who, after being in three billets in one week, was found to have stolen a gold wrist watch from one, an electric torch from another, and other things from the third. There was only one thing to do, as no one in the village would house him, not unnaturally, and that was to send him home and report his delinquency to the L.C.C. Whereupon an irate letter arrived from his mother asking why he had been sent back to spoil her holiday!

Christmas in the bachelor billeting officer's home was a lively one. Paper chains, holly and other decorations had to be put up, small presents found and games planned for the Christmas Day party. Five small boys and three small girls sat down to a tea of various sandwiches, jellies, chocolate cake and Christmas cake, of course; there were crackers afterwards and oranges and nuts and apples; in fact, all the usual things. And when the little girls had

been taken home under escort and the last of the boys had been tucked up with a mug of hot milk for a night-cap, the billeting officer and his business partner tottered to a couple of chairs and ——— left the washing up till Boxing Day. But it is all good fun, and after all, one is really doing something of use.

WILFRED B. HOWARTH.

BRANCH REPORTS

Bristol and West of England Branch.

On Saturday, the 18th November, Miss Arnison very kindly invited all members to tea at the Wayfarers' Club, Bristol.

Fourteen turned up, and we all had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

We took the opportunity to have our Annual Meeting, when the Annual Accounts were presented, and a report was given as to the activities of the Branch during the year.

To our great regret Miss Arnison told us she would have to ask us to fill her place as President for the forthcoming year, and at the unanimous wish of all members Miss Sims was elected.

We were delighted to welcome Mrs. Reed, who has been a member for some time, but had previously been unable to join us at any of our meetings, and her offer to help the Secretary was very gratefully accepted. B. Mould was again elected Secretary.

Miss Fisher brought her photograph of the Annual Dinner in London last February, and this was eagerly scanned for familiar faces.

Miss I. Smith remembered our effort of last year and brought along a parcel for our Clothing Cupboard, and through the kindness of Mrs. Johnston we were put in touch with a member in Doncaster who was in need, and to whom we have since sent two parcels.

During the tea-party Miss Arnison was called away to greet a caller, and on her return brought along an Ex-WAAC, Miss Galbraith, whom the writer remembers meeting at the Depot Hostel, at Bristol, in 1918. Miss Galbraith also had met Mrs. Whiting during her camp days on Salisbury Plain, and there was much excited greeting. The passing of years seems to make no difference when WAACS get together!

Miss I. Smith is the proud possessor of an Illuminated Address, in acknowledgment of her gift of gaiters to the Australian War Memorial. This reads as follows:—

The Board of Management of the Australian War Memorial gratefully acknowledges receipt of W.A.A.C. Leggings and other War relics presented for inclusion in the official collection of war records and relics by Miss I. Smith.

(Signed) J. A. ALLON.

Director.

12th July, 1939.

"They gave their lives—For that public gift they received a praise which never ages and a tomb more glorious—not so much the tomb in which they lie but that in which their fame survives, to be remembered for ever when occasion comes for word or deed."

Edinburgh.

I have not a great deal to report about the Edinburgh Club. We had no activities at Christmas. Shut for New Year week-end. The O.C.A. sent per Miss Lush Christmas parcels to three of our members who are on active service, Misses Crombie serving as a V.A.D. in a hospital in Aberdeenshire, Adamson, A.T.S., and G. Murray also A.T.S.

I may say that Adamson was one of my Q.M.A.A.C. in 1918, and she is now stationed in Haddington with the 4th Royal Scots, where I also served in 1918. She ranks as a Corporal and issues the daily rations to the different sections. There is no large camp now as in 1918; the men are all scattered over the country with anti-aircraft guns and searchlights. Sixteen A.T.S. are billeted in a large house with one of their Sergeants in charge of them.

NEWS OF OLD COMRADES

Miss Janet Payne (Oxford) writes from Adelaide, Australia, of a most interesting trip in September to Darwin, the port in the extreme north of the Continent so often mentioned by flyers from England. She says: "I was away five weeks and did the long journey in the most interesting way possible, viz., went overland and flew back, i.e., a flight of 1,000 miles in 6½ hours — the same journey going took me 6½ days. The other 1,000 miles I did both ways by train in three days and two nights. The train journey itself was unique—quite a modern train with dining car and sleepers—but it stops so often and so long that three hours late was nothing. It is a single line and narrow gauge, and seldom any platform. At the stopping places there often seemed to be nothing, but someone would appear to collect mail and a box of vegetables. Sometimes there was a shop and an hotel—then we had to stop long enough for the passengers to have a drink. At one place there was an encampment of blacks, a herd of camels and a police patrol's house. The country was dry but as the winter has been wet we were lucky to find all sorts of lovely little flowers, and some flowering shrubs by the wayside. In places it was too dry for flowers and was just sand bound together by dry-looking grass. It was difficult to imagine rushing water and torrents which had three times early in the year washed away the railway in parts. The train goes once a week, but alternate weeks only has sleeping and dining accommodation.

At Alice Springs—the half-way town where the railway ends, I joined the overland mail truck. This mail is run by a family named Johannsen. Mr. J. Senior drove a 10-seater 28 h.p. Studebaker car. I sat with him in front; on the next seat were his daughter, Trudy, and daughter-in-law, Kathleen, with her infant of six weeks, and the rest of the car was piled high with mail and baggage. Mr. J., jr., or "Kurt," Kath's husband and father of the baby, drove a big 4-ton truck, and the two vehicles set off together on the track—it really cannot be called a road. By now it was getting hotter and ant-hills became the feature of the countryside—these vary from a few feet high to 15 or 20 and suggest tomb-stones, melting snow men, or any other shapes one likes to see in them. From Birdwin I continued by train, much more primitive than the first, and thus we finished the last 400 miles to Darwin. Here my nephew, Geoffrey Payne, met me. He had seen none of his own people for ten years.

The population of Darwin is about 1,600, having increased enormously in the last three years. There is a garrison three miles out of the town, an expanding air force and a big department of the Government called "Railways," which included the jetty and all the shipping. In pre-war days six flying-boats a week arrived there (three from each way) to connect up with the overland plane service which forms a network all over Australia. Most of the shops are run by Chinese. Living is very dear and wages are high in consequence (girl clerks get £4-£6 a week). There is no drainage, no fresh milk or butter. Cabbages and cauliflowers are 3s. 6d. each. People who live there seem very happy, but I hated the place and would not live there at any price. Sea-bathing was the redeeming feature.

Geoffrey took me out into the bush, where he has men working for him, where we saw many interesting animals and birds, especially round lagoons and water-holes. We saw buffalo herds, dingoes (wild dogs), kangaroos, bandicoots, a snake, all sorts of cranes and storks, hawks, eagles and herons, parrots and budgerigars, and glorious large pink water-lilies, sweetly scented.

I have accepted a temporary job for three months as single-handed Almoner at the Adelaide General Hospital, the biggest in South Australia—about 800 beds.

(Miss Payne was for many years Almoner at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford).

From Miss Louie Saffery, 620 Pacific Building, 744 Hastings Street West, Vancouver, B. C.

No doubt, with the new war activities, you are finding life generally very busy and also extremely interesting. I should like very much to be in England now and join up again and do what I could for my country. For the first few days of the war, I was very unsettled and wanted to pack up and return to England, but on further consideration I decided that I would be foolish to give up a good position, realizing also that in this country we are perfectly safe and shall not have to face the strict rationing and constant fear of raids that you are experiencing in the Mother Country. We can only hope that some peaceful settlement will be made quite soon and that all the small countries who have suffered so much in this conflict will have their independence again.

In Canada, we do not realise there is a war on. There is no shortage of food, and everything is very cheap. We are all very anxious to get the newspapers every day, of course, and never miss a radio announcement of news. There is certainly a lack of tense excitement and nervousness here, or probably it is interest, and only those of us who were over in England, and, of course, the ex-service men, know what war really means.

I regret very much that I have not kept up my annual subscription to the Association, and promise to keep up the good work in the future.

I notice Dame Helen is again taking her place at the head of the women's group. She is just wonderful. I was at the Dinner in London on January 3th, 1935, and met so many of the Old Comrades, and of course met Dame Helen then. I shall never forget the jolly evening spent, and the thrill of meeting the comrades of the Great War again.

Wishing the Old Comrades' Association continued success, with the inclusion, perhaps I should add, of the new Comrades.

From Miss Catherine Crombie, V.A.D., R.N. Auxiliary Hospital, Kingseat, New Machar, Aberdeenshire.

Enclosed please find my Gazette subscription for this year. I do hope the Gazette can keep going, even if it is only possible to produce it quarterly. I look eagerly for its coming, in this solitary place. Such a lot of Old Comrades seem to be worried about having no specific war work to do. But probably they'll all be needed before this show is over.

It is most interesting being with the Navy, and I don't in the least regret not changing to the A.T.S., when the chance came last summer. It is grand to be nursing our sailor boys, who are as brave and splendid as ever. Our sick-berth attendants accuse us of spoiling the boys, but we all think they deserve every scrap of the little spoiling we give them.

Good luck to the O.C.A. in 1940.

From Miss R. L. Brown, Warthill, Near York.

When my copy of the Gazette came last week I counted it as the first favourite amongst my New Year blessings. I had missed it so much between the months of September and December, but quite understood the reason was a genuinely excusable one.

With the Editor and others being engaged on important work for National Service, it was impossible for them to give up so much time for the O.C.A. as peace time allows.

I'm afraid I haven't any interesting news to help fill up the columns of its pages. I only wish I had and envy more than I can say those who are glib with the pen and have lots to write about.

My war work consists of helping a lady to look after four evacuees and twice a week I go to help at the local communal kitchen. For this (latter) I joined the W.V.S. (C.D.) and have got my badge.

With best wishes for the New Year.

BRANCHES

Adelaide	Mrs. M. Scott, 16 Elizabeth Street, Evandale, Adelaide.		
Birmingham.	Miss E. I. Dipple, 17 Somerset Road, Handsworth.	Offices, Band of Hope League, Martineau Street.	Wednesday 7.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
Blackpool.	Mrs. K. Fry, 136 Albert Road, Blackpool.		
Bournemouth.	Miss F. E. Lever, A.T.C.L., Craighurst, 7 Church Road, Parkstone, Dorset.		
Bradford.	Mrs. A. Goodman, 2 Tivoli Place, Little Horton, Bradford.		2nd Wednesday.
Brighton.	Mrs. E. C. Jolly, 107 Preston Drive, Brighton, 6.	Aqua Restaurant, Old Steine, Brighton.	2nd Monday and 4th Wednesday, 7.30 p.m.
Bristol and West of England.	Miss B. Mould, 11 The Tynning, Bath.		Not fixed.
Cheltenham.	Mrs. Mann, Cornerways, Churchdown, Gloucester.		
Exeter.	Mrs. Vicary, Castle House, Powderham, near Exeter.	16 Dix Field, Exeter.	First Thursday of the month, at 3.30 p.m.
Edinburgh and East of Scotland.	Miss Lush, Edinburgh.	Women's United Services Club, 12 Drumsheugh Grdns., Edinburgh	1st Tuesday of each month, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Glasgow and West of Scotland.	Miss E. M. Gilchrist, M.B.E., 13 Royal Terrace, West, Glasgow.	251 Renfrew Street, Glasgow.	Every Wednesday, 7.30.
Headquarters.	Mrs. Pratt Barlow, O.B.E., Q.M.A.A.C., O.C.A., 5 Chesham Place, S.W.1.		
Irish Free State.	Mrs. O'Meara, M.B.E., 23 Ailesbury Road, Dublin.		Not fixed.
Leeds.	Miss E. Mair, 27 Virginia Road, Off University Road, Leeds.		5 Park Square, first Wednesday, 7.30 p.m.
Liverpool.	Miss F. M. Bragg, 59 Victoria Road, Liverpool, 13.	30 Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane.	Alternate Friday, 7.30 p.m.
London.	Miss Bilbrough, 132d Sutherland Avenue, W.9. Abercorn 2476.	1st and 3rd Thursdays in each month at the Ex-Service Women's Club, 5 Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.	Thursday evenings, 7.30 to 10 p.m.
Ilford.	Mrs. Taylor, 15 Stanhope Gardens, Ilford, Essex.	Mrs. E. A. Thomas, 94 Whyteville Road, Forest Gate, E.7.	Alternate Tuesdays, at 8 p.m.
Manchester.	Miss L. Teat, 76 Preston Street, Hulme, Manchester.	Raglan Café, 24 Mosley St., Manchester.	2nd and 4th Thursday, 7 to 10.30 p.m.
Newcastle-on-Tyne.	Miss C. W. Maunder, 31, Norwood Avenue, Heaton, Newcastle.		Members notified individually.
	Mrs. B. Jester, Gourock, Redewater Road, Fenham.	Interviews at British Legion, N.E. Area Offices, 10 Leazes Terrace, Newcastle.	
New South Wales.	Mrs. E. Mills, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer	Ex-Service Women's Club, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, N.S.W., Australia.	
New York.	Mrs. G. Rose. Phone Nevins 8-5250.		
Norfolk.	Mrs. L. W. Chilvers, 32 Grove Road, Norwich.		Monthly. Members notified individually.
Northern Ireland.	Mrs. Nora Hughes, 17 Adelaide Park, Belfast.	107 Victoria Street.	Third Wednesday in the month at 8 p.m.
North Staffs.	Mrs. G. H. Clough, 3 Eleanor View, Newcastle.	Nell Gwynne Restaurant, Newcastle.	Second Tuesday in month 7.30 p.m.
Notts.	Mrs. Skellington,	20 Burns Street, Nottingham. Tel. 76614.	First Wednesday in the month, 7 to 9.30 p.m.
Oxford.	Mrs. Jackman, 23 Grays Road, Headington, Oxford.		Members notified individually.
Plymouth.	Mrs. O. Foster, 2 Notte St., Plymouth.		
Cardiff and S. Wales.	Mrs. Diana Foster, 7 The Grove, Runney, Cardiff.	Y.M.C.A., Cardiff.	Second and last Tuesday at 7.30 p.m.
Shoreham-by-Sea.	Mrs. A. D. Croydon, 65 The Drive, Shoreham-by-Sea.	The Café, 5 The Street, Old Shoreham.	2nd Tuesday each month at 7.30 p.m.
St. Leonard's.	Miss E. Taylor, 58 West Hill, St. Leonards-on-Sea.	58 West Hill, St. Leonard's-on-Sea.	Not fixed.
Transvaal.	Mrs. Widdicombe, 8 Gascoigne Street Observatory, Johannesburg, S. Africa.		

Editor Gazette—Mrs. E. E. Garrard, 7 Belvedere Grove, Wimbledon Common, S.W.19. Tel.: Wimbledon 0842.

Adamson comes to supper here occasionally on moonlight nights, laden down with a heavy overcoat and service gas mask. She misses the comradeship and numbers of the last time, but as she says "we are a generation older."

Another former Q.M.A.A.C. who was stationed at Buckingham Terrace in the olden days has come over from America to join up the A.T.S. Porter is her name.

The knitting party has just completed its 533rd garment and is still going strong, and we also sent a donation of £1 to Edenhall Hospital for Disabled Soldiers.

I had a letter from Miss Low lately, saying she was enjoying the Editor's news in the "Gazette." I am glad to say she keeps well and is busy knitting. Miss Lambert and Miss Crabbie had been busy with Canteen Work and if evacuation begins again, may have to undertake Communal Kitchen also. The one here is still going strong and more of the villagers are taking advantage of it also.

At Christmas we dined forty-six and they had a Royal Feast, beginning with chicken soup, then roast turkey, peas, roast potatoes trifle, mince pies, crackers and sweets. I am sure many of the poor mites never had anything like it before. They had also their share in a Christmas Tree given to the village children by Lord and Lady Tweeddale.

We have had no more actual air raids, but have many alarms and wonderful rumours abound. We have a First Aid point and staged an imaginary bombing raid one Sunday, where the resulting casualties were carried in for treatment. One poor chap was supposed to have his hand blown off! They were all given first aid in a skilled manner and sent off to hospital, where we got full marks for our skill.

I think I must finish this letter with a blackout tale. One of our members who shall be nameless, trying to find her way from the club to Princes Street on a very dark night, felt very lone and afraid. Seeing a man in a light coat in front, she said to herself "follow the gleam," and alas! the gleam turned into a public house, our member blindly following till her olfactory senses told her how far astray she had gone.

With all good wishes for 1940.

ISOBEL H. ANDERSON.

North Staffs Branch.

A very successful Saturday afternoon tea party was held at the Nell Gwynne Restaurant in December. Twelve members turned up, including Mrs. Bettaney (Ford), who has not been to a meeting for a long time. Her husband was called up at the beginning of the war and her son will be called up shortly. We were sorry not to have Mrs. Hulse with us, but we raffled a cloth embroidered by her which made a welcome addition to our funds. Her elder son joined the Army in June. He likes the life and is very well and happy. None of our members have joined the A.T.S. as far as we know. Miss Hudson, from Leek, would very much like to do so, but her doctor refuses to give her any encouragement.

Mrs. Ashworth, one of our associate members, has invited us to a New Year party at her house on January 13th. We hope that we shall be able to muster our full strength and get in quite a few subscriptions. We also hope to start a knitting club and send some comforts for the troops.

H. CLOUGH.

OBITUARY

Mrs. Alice Maud Barnes, Chairman of the Blackpool Branch, died on December 4th, 1939.

She came to Blackpool from Manchester eleven years ago. Whilst in Manchester she was a member of the Manchester ex-Service Women's Association, and commenced the first Blackpool Club in 1932 along with Miss P. Mulligan, who became secretary.

Mrs. Barnes took an active part in social and political activities, being a member of Bispham (Blackpool)

Unionists Association on the committee of the Beaconsfield Habitation of the Primrose League (Blackpool Branch). She was most loyal and energetic in her work as Chairman of the Blackpool Ex-Service Women's Association, and her home was always available for meetings or informal affairs. She devoted both money and valuable time to the interests of the Club and was at all times a worthy and capable chairman. She was elected Club's chairman at the commencement in 1932 and retained that position until her death.

Although she had been far from well since June last, her end was sudden but peaceful.

Her service whilst in Q.M.A.A.C. was as follows: No. 15817, Forewoman Alice Maud Hodson, H.M.; enlisted December, 1917, at Warrington; served at Kimmel Park Camp, Folkestone Depot and Isleworth Hospital. She was demobilised in March, 1920, at Isleworth.

NEWS OF OLD COMRADES

M. Henthorn, writing from Philadelphia (U.S.A.), where she has been with relatives for many months, says she was sailing on November 13th by the "Port Dunedin" for Australia. We hope that she had a quiet and undisturbed voyage and is now safely with her sister at Preston, Victoria. She was hoping that she might have been able to serve again, but, unfortunately, she is not as strong as she should be. It is nearly 12 months since Henthorn left England, during which she paid a long visit to Florida and other parts of the U.S.A. She was particularly struck with the beauty of the cherry blossom at Washington, the trees were a gift from the Government of Japan. Henthorn also paid several visits to New Jersey to stay with an ex-Q.M.A.A.C., Mrs. Speed, who served as Paddy Allen. She met another old W.A.A.C. there, Ray Reynolds, and they had a wonderful time together. Henthorn's nephews are serving in the First Australian contingent and are expecting to leave for England in January; it may be that since the date of her letter they have already arrived. She asks particularly to be remembered to the Manchester Branch, especially to Dr. Wicks, and Miss Davey.

Mrs. Ruby Mundy tells of life in Canada where they are not disturbed by black-outs nor the anxieties we have in this country. Neither are they rationed, although butter, sugar, tea, coffee and flour have gone up in price. The ex-Service Women's Club in Calgary is growing, and they are busy organising means of getting funds for the Red Cross Society and other war activities.

Miss E. M. Winter tells us that she and **Dipple**, of Birmingham, managed to get a short holiday in Brighton in November; they had their annual holiday cancelled on the outbreak of war. In her letter she gives some news of Rouenites: **Machin** is still at her London office, but is on duty every alternate night with the Auxiliary Fire Service, so has very little spare time. **Mrs. Senn**, while in Bournemouth, came across **Mrs. Stocker**, known to London members and also to members of H.Q., Wimereux, as Paterson or "Pat." She has two sons, who keep her very busy. **Mrs. Lang** is another Rouen member with whom Mrs. Senn has kept in touch. Unfortunately, she has been in hospital, when she was delighted to have a visit from Mrs. Senn. Her daughter has recently joined the W.A.A.F. and is now serving in Newcastle.

Mrs. Elsie Ringrose, who does not give the name under which she served, has been 20 years in Canada and is married to a Canadian who served for four years in France. She has four children. She is a member of the Imperial Ex-Service Women's Association of Windsor, but as she lives 30 miles from that town, she is unable to call in very often. She did manage, however, to get there to see the King and Queen, which delighted her as she has not been back to England since leaving in 1920.

Mrs. Ethel Mills sends greetings from ex-Service women in Sydney. They are all anxious to help in every possible way, but the Government is not yet calling for the women. She and **Miss Page** attended the Armistice Day Service—it was strange with no Navy men and only old soldiers of the last war.

Mrs. Amy Jeff Sims, of Aliquippa, is one of our latest Life members, and is most interested in all that is happening in this country. She was very anxious to return home

as her father is very ill, but was unable to obtain a passport. Her home used to be in Manchester, and she had planned to visit the General Secretary at Southport if all had been well. She tells of people all over the U.S.A. who have organised a British Benevolent Relief Association in which every member is working hard to collect money, clothing, blankets, surgical dressings, and so on, for Britain. Her local unit has also collected countless things for the evacuated children from slum districts in London. They are hoping to get permission from the British Customs authorities for the goods to enter this country free of duty. Mrs. Sims was presented with the Coronation medal which had been brought from England for her by the British Consul at a special meeting of the ex-Service organisation known as "The Post," of which she is the only woman member; she is also the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Women's Auxiliary of "The Post."

From **Mrs. D. E. Beardwell**, Holmesdale, Ardleigh.

I am proud to be an ex-Service woman, and I still try to do my bit to serve. I have been through all the lectures of A.R.P. anti-gas. I hold my badge and certificate, and now am having several lectures of three courses in Red Cross, First Aid.

I am a widow; my husband died in 1915. That was why I took up war work. He was not in the Service, so I don't get any pension. I have several years to wait before I get the 55s., and I was only married a very few months. I am housekeeper to the above address—to an elderly lady, 81 years, and have been here nearly 13 years. We do a lot of Parish and church work, and we have several committees to attend, and we belong to the Evacuation scheme here for the London children.

As well as being treasurer for our Women's Legion Branch, I am deputy standard bearer, and we come to London each year to the Queen's Hall Conference. I am always proud to wear my W.A.A.C. badge, and I always wear it on parades. I have a small one, but I still treasure my brass hat badge—I never had a Q.M.A.A.C. badge.

Please excuse me if I am writing too long a letter, but I thought you might like to know who I am and what I am doing. I am the only ex-Service woman in our Branch of 40 members; this entitles me to a man's badge also.

You will be pleased to hear I hold a Command to Buckingham Palace for my war work in July, 1919, and I am proud of that. Also I treasure a lovely illuminated Farewell from our Controller-in-Chief; that also I am proud to show.

From **Mrs. G. H. Castle**, 75 Canons Road, Ware, Herts:

I expect everyone is pretty busy these days. For myself, I have a little girl evacuee of six along with my own two Waaclets of 15 and 8 (girl and boy respectively), so needless to say am not free for war service this time. But am busy knitting comforts for the Services (British Legion work), and it helps me enormously not to "fidget" through being tied at home. I expect there are plenty of Old Comrades in the same circumstances who feel just as I do, and would find the remedy in this way as I have done, and be grateful for it.

With warmest greetings and every good wish to all Old Comrades.

Miss Bilbrough writes:—

I am at "Overseas" on a week's leave and enjoying the rest, and feel I would like to take the opportunity of sending a message to Old Comrades through the Gazette, as I have been—not from choice—so neglectful of London Branch since I was embodied in August. I hope Hayward has sent you an official report.

Please convey my best wishes to all for 1940, and thank the many people who have sent me Christmas cards. I know of a good number of London Branch members who have donned uniform again, but should like to hear from every member what war work they have been able to take up. Although I am stationed somewhere in Middlesex, letters addressed to me at my London address

or the Club will be forwarded. I was sorry that, owing to the short notice I received from the W.R.A.F.s, I was unable to circularise members of the Service Re-union arranged by them in November, but I was glad to see quite a number turned up.

A lovely blanket knitted in squares of most delightful shades of wool was sent in December to Headquarters. It was made by an ex-W.A.A.C. who writes: "This has been made from odd scraps of wool and kind thoughts for Old Comrades. Miss R. A. Green of Hungerford, asks that it may be given to some old comrade and she is glad to know that it was sent to one of our invalids who is much crippled with rheumatism, to whom the warmth as well as the beauty is a great comfort and a constant reminder of the true spirit of good comradeship which still binds us all despite the passing of twenty years or more. It is really a symbolical gift to the whole O.C.A."

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"On Waactive Service, 1917-1918," by Marjorie Hay (2173 F/w. M. K. T. Edwardes). Price per copy to ex-Q.M.A.A.C., 1/6; non-Q.M.A.A.C., 2/-. Postage twopence extra. Apply Miss F. M. Frith, 44 Bargrange Avenue, Shipley, Yorks. All profits go towards Q.M.A.A.C. O.C.A. Benevolent Funds.

Ex-W.A.A.C. crippled by broken hip, wishes for orders for knitting; jumpers, cardigans, baby things, pullovers, etc.; copies from books, done cheaply.—E. Cockerham, 6 Gayton Road, Harrow, Middlesex.

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