



Q.M.A.A.C. and A.T.S. Comrades Association GAZETTE



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IMPORTANT NOTICE.

All contribution for the Gazette should reach the Editor, Q.M.A.A.C. and A.T.S. C.A. Gazette, 82, Lancaster Gate, London W.2, **not later than the 21st of the following months:—January, March, May, July, September and November.**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Twenty-fourth Annual General Meeting of the Association was held at 5, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1, at the hour of 3 p.m. with Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, Chairman of Council, in the Chair.

Dame Helen: It is my duty to begin this Meeting with a very sad announcement, our President will not be able to be with us today. As you know, she had a serious operation recently and she writes to me that she moved especially to Wokingham thinking that would be nearer enough to London for her to attend the Meeting; but she came up to London earlier in the week and was so exhausted that she must not do it again. She asked me to say that she decided most reluctantly not to come to-day:—"Will you tell the Meeting how very, very sorry I am that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing my old and new Comrades. I am terribly disappointed as I had looked forward so much to being with you all." I think we should all like to send her our regrets that she is unable to be with us and our hopes for her early recovery.

This suggestion was carried by acclamation.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Twenty-third Annual General Meeting, having been published in the Gazette of March—April, 1943, were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following:—Mrs. Clough, Mrs. O'Meara, Mrs. Hardy, Miss Trotter, Senior Controller Fraser-Tyler, Mrs. Chilvers, Mrs. Mayhew, Chief Commander D. S. B. Potter, Mrs. Pratt-Barlow, Miss Warrior, Senior Commander J. A. A. Corbett, Miss H. Baron, Miss Olive Longman and Mrs. Foster (Cardiff), all of whom through illness or other unavoidable causes were unable to be present. They sent greetings and good wishes to the Meeting.

REPORT OF COUNCIL

The Report of Council (copy attached) was read by Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan and adopted.

REPORT OF TREASURER

The Treasurer's Report (copy attached) was read by Miss M. Slee, Hon. Treasurer.

The adoption of the Report was moved by Junior Commander Bilbrough, seconded by Miss Davy and carried unanimously.

COMRADES ASSOCIATION AND A.T.S.

The Meeting then considered Item 5 on the Agenda:—**To consider the most effective means to be taken by Branches to encourage serving and ex-serving members of the Auxiliary Territorial Services to join their local Branch.**

CHAIRMAN: We shall be very glad to hear any members on this subject.

Miss DAVY (London): I have had a note from the Edinburgh Branch, giving me a specific case, from which one does not generally argue but I think one could here, of a member of the A.T.S. who was invalided out and who was found by a member of the Comrades Association in Edinburgh and enrolled. This girl was suffering from varicose veins and would probably in time become badly crippled. She did not know anything about the Benevolent Fund. When she was discharged she was given a British Legion announcement, with an address in London. It conveyed nothing to her and she did nothing about it. Edinburgh Branch wondered whether it might be possible, when anyone was discharged for health reasons to make a special effort to give her the chance of joining and being eligible for benefits that would accrue.

CHIEF CONTROLLER WHATELEY: I am afraid that is a slip-up. There is a long leaflet, with the Comrades Association and all the organizations which will help her, which is handed out to those being discharged.

SENIOR CONTROLLER CARLISLE: Every discharged member receives it. It comes from Records with the Discharge papers.

Miss DAVY: I should very much like to have a copy for Edinburgh. Edinburgh, at the last Meeting, made a list of names and addresses of members who do not wish to keep their Gazettes; these members will be given the name of a Canteen or Camp or Reading Room where auxiliaries go and their Gazettes

will be sent to these places in the hope that the auxiliaries will see them and learn more about their antiquated sisters.

CHAIRMAN: That is a useful contribution. We would like others. Have any Branches had experience in this matter? I know some of the Branches have been getting into touch with the local A.T.S.

Miss IRELAND: It would be very interesting if the Director would give us any indication of how we can attract A.T.S. members, and how we can serve them if they are already members of the Association.

CHIEF CONTROLLER WHATELEY: We are all so actively engaged that until members go out of the Service they do not really begin to think about the matter. I think you will find that when they are discharged—and I hope they get these leaflets—things will look up. I am not giving away secrets when I tell you there are over 200,000 of us now, and we are employed in over 100 different employments, all over the world nearly, East Africa, Middle East, North Africa, and we hope to be somewhere else a bit nearer before long, North and South Caribbeans, Washington. I honestly think that is the root of the trouble. They are so busy that they do not think what they are going to need afterwards, until the time comes. If there are any questions anyone would like to ask me while I am here, if it is possible for me to answer them, I shall be very pleased to.

CHAIRMAN: I think we should all like to hear anything the Director can tell us about the developments that have been going on, which are most interesting.

(To Director): Will you address us now or wait until a later stage?

CHIEF CONTROLLER WHATELEY: May I wait until a later stage?

GENERAL SECRETARY: When I am travelling I often find myself sitting beside an A.T.S. member and if I tell her about Q.M.A.A.C. and the Comrades Association I find she is very much interested. After the war we shall find that quite a number will be joining the Association; at present one quite sees that they have no time for it. But I have always found them most interested in

the past, in the fact that Q.M.A.A.C. were the first women to serve; they take a great interest in our old badge, when we had no crown, and how we won the crown and how that crown has been passed on to them. I think they can see that there is a link and after the war a great number will join us very happily.

Miss DAVY: I have found exactly the same thing. I always talk to A.T.S. members in trains and find them extremely nice; and I always find—I remember we were the same—that they have no time for any extras at all. In their leisure they are busy getting a little fun out of life, and so were we.

Miss IRELAND (London): In view of what has been said, is it wise that we should endeavour to attract A.T.S. members to join us now? It seems a little hard that they should pay 2s. 6d. for two or three years and get nothing in return, and probably their ardour would be a little dampened. Would it not be wiser to boost the Association when they are leaving?

GENERAL SECRETARY: In answer to Miss Ireland's point about the half-crowns, we have had such pleasant letters from A.T.S. members sending us 2s. 6d., with a further 2s. 6d. afterwards (on being told of the new subscription) without having had any reminder that their subscription was due.

Mrs. POWELL (London): There are a good many Service Clubs up and down the country and I wondered whether we could send copies of the Gazette to those Clubs.

GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes, most happily. I have plenty of copies and I will do so.

CHAIRMAN: That is a very good idea. I think if we of the last war cast our minds back twenty years or so, we shall remember that it is not while one is serving that one feels an interest in these organizations, nor, indeed, immediately one is demobilized; but very soon after one has left the Service one begins to think about one's old comrades, then the need for the Association arises. We shall find that need arising again and our job is to be ready for it when it comes. We have to carry on meantime and the great thing is not so much to try and get members now as to make the Association known so that all ranks know that it is waiting for them when they want it. Whether we have a large membership now is not important. But it is important that the A.T.S., especially officers and N.C.O.'s, should know about the Association; they can pass it on to those being discharged. Like that we shall avoid such difficulties as the one Miss Davy described.

A member stressed that the idea of the Association is more to encourage the spirit of comradeship than to impress on people what they are going to get out of it materially. It is a fact that we want to be together not the material advantage.

Mrs. SAVILL (ex-Sergt., A.T.S. H.Q. Branch): As an ex-member of the A.T.S., I can tell you that a notice was put up periodically in orders, asking anyone who wished to join the Comrades Association to give her name to her officer.

Miss JACKSON (Oxford): I am an ex-A.T.S. from Canterbury, and the notice was put up in our orders at various intervals.

Miss MARTIN (London): I should like to support whole-heartedly Dame Helen's view that we are, after all, an Old Comrades Association, and, as such, we cannot expect them to be attracted. Our usefulness will come in

after the war when we are all Old Comrades. These youngsters are fully occupied and certainly do not realise its value.

CHAIRMAN: There is a great deal in that; the point is not so much to get them to join as to get them to know about the Association. We are a Comrades Association, remember. We are not limited to "Old." Last time the Comrades Association was formed during demobilization; years and years afterwards I have met women who had served and have said "I expect you have joined the Association?" "Oh, no, is there an Association?" So we want people to know.

Miss MARTIN: May I make it quite clear that in using the word "old" I was not referring to age.

Several Members: The "Old" is left out now.

Sergt-Major ROSSINGTON: As an ex-A.T.S. I suggest that the officers could give a little talk about it. I did that and I found the girls very enthusiastic. But if it is just put on the board they pass it by and think "Oh, just another gadget!"

A Member: If they are spoken to personally, it counts so much. They get awfully interested if you talk to them, but they do just pass it by on a notice board.

Miss TURNER (Oxford): I was coerced into giving some popular lectures which were called "A Waac in the last war" to A.T.S. Units and, having told them very briefly about the sort of thing we did and about the sort of comradeship that existed in the Corps, I told them about the Comrades Association and advised them to keep it in mind so that they might join when the war was finished. I told them that they had too much to do now, but it was there for them, I told them how many of us missed the Association because we did not know about it. Also I have done two Brains Trusts at another big A.T.S. Camp and I have always kept my eyes open to see anyone with Service medals on, and then asked to see them afterwards and reminded them about the Comrades Association and asked them to talk to their colleagues and units about it.

Miss TAYLOR (London): When hostilities cease, we may have the chance of reaching ex-members of the A.T.S. by means of the Radio. If we have that medium we shall get hold of a great many more people that we of Q.M.A.A.C. ever had the chance of doing.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you; that is an excellent suggestion. Has anyone else anything to suggest?

(No further suggestions.)

Well, will you all keep it in mind and when you have bright ideas let us know? We have had some very useful suggestions this afternoon and I am sure that there will be some more to come along in course of time.

To clarify the position with regard to Annual Subscriptions.

CHAIRMAN: The next item on the Agenda is to clarify the position with regard to Annual subscriptions. I will ask the Treasurer to begin.

Miss SLEE (Hon. Treasurer): I did not know that you were going to call on me for this! It was decided at the last Annual General Meeting that there would, in future, be a combined subscription of 5s. for Annual members and £5 for Life members to cover both membership of the Comrades Association and the cost of having the "Gazette."

Prior to that Meeting the "Gazette" was purely optional and we charged 3s. 6d. for it. Annual members up to last year who wished to have the "Gazette" had to pay 6s., 2s. 6d. for the Association and 3s. 6d. for the "Gazette." They now get both for 5s., the only difference being that the "Gazette" is an integral part of the subscription and everybody who is a member of the Association receives the "Gazette," except, perhaps, a very few old Life members, with whom we have lost touch. One or two Branches have thought that Annual members may, if they wish, pay 2s. 6d. only and not receive the "Gazette," or, on the other hand, they may pay 5s. and get the "Gazette." Council considered this at a recent meeting. London Branch, I think it was, had put forward rather strongly the view that there were some old members (and here I use the word "old" in its sense of denoting age) who were not well off, who had not previously subscribed to the "Gazette," and who would find the additional 2s. 6d. rather burdensome. Council was most sympathetic and very anxious to do anything they could to meet that difficulty; but the "Gazette" is the only means of making the activities of the Association known to the members. The Council would be glad to consider any suggestions that might be made to deal with the difficult problem of people who are badly off without giving up the principle that membership of the Association should carry with it the privilege of receiving the "Gazette."

CONTROLLER THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE: As a Life member I had no idea that I had to subscribe to the "Gazette" at the same time. I understand from a great many A.T.S. members that they had no idea of that either. They thought their subscription covered the "Gazette."

CONTROLLER M. F. WAGSTAFF: Do Life members who became Life members previous to last year now pay a Life subscription to the "Gazette"?

CHAIRMAN: Yes; if a Life member sends £2 10s. she is a Life "Gazette" member. Or she can get her "Gazette" annually if she likes, but I am sure no one likes to have an annual subscription if she can possibly avoid it.

Miss IRELAND (London): I am sorry that the Secretary of London Branch is not here because she felt very strongly on this. She felt it was desirable that new Members joining should be encouraged to pay a combined subscription; but she felt it was rather hard that it should be obligatory on old members, some of whom would find it very difficult to find the extra 2s. 6d. The Committee are in sympathy with her and we put forward a recommendation to the Council to consider at this Meeting. Unfortunately, Mrs. Mayhew has not sent us any written statement.

Mrs. RUMBOLD (Norfolk): Norfolk Branch agree with London Branch.

CHAIRMAN: Any other views? I think we all sympathise very deeply indeed with the question of the hard-up member, to whom the extra 2s. 6d. is a real difficulty; but we really do want a means of communication with our members, and the "Gazette" is the only possible means. I do commend to Branches the consideration of some way of helping out their very hard-up members. I think if you put up to Council that you have

three or four members who honestly cannot afford the "Gazette," we could send them a "Gazette" free. I think something like that could be done, if you let us know in detail. It must be a question of the individual problem and not a generalisation. Do you agree?

(General agreement expressed.)

To report the decision of Council in respect of Association ballots.

The General Secretary read the extract from the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 8th January, 1944, as follows:—"London. Mrs. Meyhew stated that there was always a difficulty with lapsed members, who only rejoined when hoping to benefit by sharing in a ballot for some important event. It was unanimously agreed that lapsed members rejoining before an important event should not be included in any ballot and that five years continuous membership be required for this purpose in the case of persons qualified for membership before 1941.

"It was agreed that this be explained at the Annual General Meeting."

CHAIRMAN: Now you see what that means. It means that if one joined the Association five years ago one must have continued to be a member all that time. It does not apply to people who only became eligible or only heard of the Association more recently. It does apply to the old hands who have no business to go in and out. Or, if they do, they cannot share with the stalwarts who have stayed in the benefits of things like Coronations and Silver Jubilees. When we have a ballot for some great occasion—and you may be sure there will be a great occasion coming along when peace is declared—we never have nearly as many tickets as we want. Of course we have not, because, after all, there are all the other Comrades Associations to be considered just as much as ours, and people are lucky who get a ticket; they should be the people who have stuck by the Association and not just tried to use it whenever they thought it would be an advantage to them. Is that clear? Do you agree?

(General agreement expressed.)

To approve list of representatives recommended by Local Branches for election to Council for the coming year.

The General Secretary read the list of Representatives nominated by Branches and the following were duly elected:—

BIRMINGHAM: Mrs. W. M. Powell.

BRIGHTON: Miss I. Turner.

BRISTOL: Miss E. H. Pratt.

EDINBURGH AND EAST SCOTLAND: Miss L. Davy.

LONDON: Mrs. Mayhew, Miss Binks, Miss Saunders, Miss Bilbrough.

NORFOLK: Mrs. Rumbold.

OXFORD: Mrs. M. Grundy.

HEADQUARTERS: Mrs. L. Pratt-Barlow, Mrs. A. E. B. Johnston, Miss H. M. Bilington.

ACTIVE SERVICE: Junior Comdr. Lady Apsley, Senior Comdr. Viscountess Swinton, Chief Comdr. M. F. Patrick, Chief Comdr. M. B. Harvie-Anderson, Senior Comdr. E. Walker, R.S.M. A. Glass, Staff Sergt. C. Kemp, Cpl. J. Reynnders.

It was asked how the Active Service members of Council were elected?

CHAIRMAN: There is no possibility, unfortunately, of electing them, and therefore the Association applied to the Directorate at

the War Office for names. I don't know how they obtained them.

GENERAL SECRETARY: They seem to have chosen one from each Command.

CHAIRMAN: The Commands were then invited to suggest names and they did so. It is practically impossible to have an election while people are serving. That is always one of the difficulties of Comrades Associations and yet it is desirable to have a proportion of people who are still serving, because their advice is very valuable.

GENERAL SECRETARY: They are very valuable members of Council.

CHAIRMAN: I should like to add a word of thanks to the Directorate for the quite admirable Members of Council they have sent us. They have attended very regularly, they have taken a very great interest and they have been a real stand-by to us. (Applause.)

To elect the Hon. Treasurer.

CHAIRMAN: I have very great pleasure in proposing from the Chair: "That Miss Slee be re-elected Honorary Treasurer for the coming year."

This was carried by acclamation.

Miss IRELAND: May we record a vote of thanks to Miss Slee for all the hard work that she has done during the last year and the very gratifying results.

The vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

Local Branch Business.

CHAIRMAN: Now, before we go on to Local Branch Business I am going to ask the D.A.T.S. if she will give us the very great pleasure of hearing a few words.

CHIEF CONTROLLER WHATELEY: I must tell you I was not expecting this. I have just come back from Scotland, where I have been touring for five or six days, and my brain is in an absolute whirl from what I have seen of my own Service. I never go out but that I come back more filled with admiration. Anything I tell you now will be very stale news for the active members, but I feel Q.M.A.A.C. members may like to hear one or two things. The last year has very much had its ups and downs. Recruiting stopped for six months—it seemed like more—and although it was opened again in January, we cannot make up the leeway because Mr. Bevin controls us rather firmly, and our wastage is something over which we have no control. It is an extremely worthy reason, for which they are leaving and we just cannot do anything about that! The recruits we are getting in now are very young, very, very good and frightfully keen, many of them having come from the G.T.C. I think one of the things Q.M.A.A.C. would like to know is that when a recruit comes in to the Service she goes through various tests and on that it is decided what her work will be. There is usually the choice of one or two employments. Of course, it has to fit in to supply and demand but it is amazingly successful and we have far fewer round pegs in square holes and vice versa. The next big innovation we have had is the method of selection for officers, for commission. They go before a Board where, instead of spending twenty minutes, they spend two days and go through all sorts of practical tests. From there they go on to what is known as pre-O.C.T.U. training. The War Office Selection Board sends notes on them to guide the pre-O.C.T.U. Commandant

as to the particular point in which the girl requires further training. From there they go on to the O.C.T.U., which used to be a month and is now two months. After that the officer is posted to a Platoon, or may be now to a technical appointment replacing a male officer. Large numbers are now being used in Ordnance. The regimental officer gets a refresher course when she becomes a Junior Commander (Company Commander). She goes for three weeks to Holloway College. We used to have a Senior Officers' School. That is in abeyance at the moment, but we have had enormous assistance from the Army and are running a course at Bagshot College, a Staff Course, which comes under the Director of Military Training. I think that is all I can tell you about the officers at present. One of the biggest things I think we have done in this war is on the educational side. I am extraordinarily struck, wherever I go, with the variety of educational facilities. Drama festivals are held—how they find time to do it is more than I know! I know it is a bit hectic for the Deputy Directors! Dressmaking classes: I saw some beautiful dresses being made by one unit (incidentally, that has stopped now). It is absolutely unlimited what the educational people are doing, a thing that pleases me very much is that there is a course for orderlies. They and the cooks have the most difficult job of the lot. The cooks are not so badly off, because cooking has become a trade, but it is difficult to know how to improve the orderlies' lot. They are, however, extraordinarily happy. I went in to one enormous cook-house this week, where they are cooking 22 meals through night and day; it never stops; and under very difficult conditions, in an enormous hotel. The cook-house was in the hard tennis courts; they had put a roof over it! And as to the various employments we are doing, it would take me a week to tell you about those. One very interesting one now is that of the girls who are being supplied for Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. I saw one girl with a box of spiders' webs which they catch at the right season and fit on to all sorts of little mechanical parts, most intricate work. The Convoy work I am sure you have already heard about. I expect many of you saw the film, "The Gentle Sex," which was a very true account of the work we are doing. At one enormous port which I have just visited there was astonishing work. I don't know what else I can tell you about the actual work because it goes on and on and on. Anti-aircraft: I was rather ashamed to go round Scotland because they have not had much action lately and I felt that unless I could produce a German plane I should not be welcome! I think one hears so much about the anti-aircraft units in the papers that probably you know a good deal about them.

CHAIRMAN: We should all like to thank the Director very much for finding time to come to this Meeting and for telling us the news. She knows that we do appreciate it very deeply indeed. We realise that she is tremendously busy and it is a real compliment that she has come here to-day. Now, has anybody got anything they would like to raise under Local Branch business?

Mrs. RUMBOLD (Norfolk): On behalf of my Branch, I should like to suggest that the

old Annual Dinner which we have held since 1920 be re-started after the war and continue until there are only two of us left. I don't mean to say that we do not want the A.T.S., our daughters, but I think that they would be the first to realise that we are a different generation, and that we older ones are getting on, and the last war was entirely different from this, and we still should enjoy our old Reunion dinner until two of us are left.

(The suggestion was received with applause.)

Miss DIPPLE (Birmingham): My Branch would like to support that very heartily. There has been a feeling for a long time that after the war it would be something to look forward to to have the London Dinner again, even a small one.

CHAIRMAN: I can see no reason Old Comrades, within the limits of our Association, why there should not be a Dinner of the women of 1914-1918. I have, indeed, heard rumours that some of us have daughters in the A.T.S. and do not want our daughters to see us going on the jolly! I know some of them, too. I cannot commit the Council of that indefinite future when the war is over, but there is certainly no reason against it. It is an interesting point, and a good one. It should be put up to Council as soon as the Armistice occurs.

Other Business, if any.

CHAIRMAN: Under "other business," London Branch wants to raise something. London Branch has asked permission (this did not come in time to go on the Agenda, so it is a question of your permission whether it is to be considered) to raise this: "That members of Q.M.A.A.C. O.C.A., prior to amalgamation with the A.T.S. should be given the option of paying only 2s. 6d. subscription to the Association." That has really been very largely dealt with in the question of Annual subscriptions, but if London Branch wants to ask permission to put this motion nevertheless, I will find out whether the Meeting is willing to consider it.

Miss IRELAND (London): I think the question has been answered, Madam Chairman.

CHAIRMAN: Right. Then that is that. Is there any other business anyone wants to raise?

Mrs. POWELL (London): There is something which struck me as being really rather odd. I often go to a Church in the country district, and in this district a number of women are serving. I have listened to the prayers of the congregation being asked for men, by name, and I have never heard one woman mentioned. I wondered if that is the usual procedure up and down the country, and whether a great many people here find the same thing. It seems rather a pity that the women should not be included.

Mrs. JERRETT (London): I think it rests with the clergy themselves. In our Church the vicar always mentions our girls with our boys.

Miss WINTER (London): I find the same in my neighbourhood.

CHAIRMAN: I think it is your parson who needs speaking to.

Miss MARTIN (London): I hear a considerable amount of discussion on post-war policy, post-war planning and post-war development in the course of my daily life

and I should like to move that the Council use every opportunity of ensuring that the women in the Forces, when they are demobilised after the war, have an equal opportunity of sharing, I won't say in the plums that may be coming in post-war development, but in any post-war employment; that they are not treated in a detrimental as compared with the men. I would like to move a resolution that we ask the Council to watch their position most carefully.

Miss HASSELL (Nottingham): I should like to second that, and also to implement it by a suggestion that the Association should be put on a better footing locally, so that people who are in office in the Association could have more of a say locally. At the present time the Association is not really on a footing with other Women's Associations and one feels rather neglected; one is never called in to consultation, and there is, therefore, very little that one can do about it at the moment.

CHAIRMAN: The Resolution that the Council should keep an eye on this matter has been proposed and seconded. In favour?

This was carried nem. con.

CHAIRMAN: There is just a word I should like to say about that. I entirely agree that it is a thing that ought to be watched. But I do remember, with considerable pleasure, that after the last war there was a very satisfactory recognition that ex-Service women should have the same advantages, the same consideration as ex-Service men. There were good points then and it ought to be still better now, don't you think so, Director? But still we will keep it in mind.

Miss SAUNDERS (London): On the other side of the picture, I would speak of the teaching profession. We are hoping to attract a number of women to our profession, and I hope they will treat the women better than they did after the last war. Our two years in France did not count towards pension, but the men's did, one has had to make up the money since, which no man has been asked to do.

CHAIRMAN: You know why that was? The Authorities definitely asked the men in the teaching profession to go into the Services and they did not want the women to do so. I have the greatest respect for the women in the teaching profession who came in to the Services all the same, but the official view was that they wanted to keep the women as teachers. That is why they were so sticky and would not count the women's Service time.

Miss TURNER (Oxford): I do think what we have to keep in front of us in the post-war period is that when people are looking for jobs, they must not expect to get the job because they are ex-Service, but because they are the best person.

JUNIOR COMMANDER BILBROUGH: In the teaching profession, it is the same as with a man. If the man leaves with his employer's consent, he gets his job back automatically; but if he goes off on his own account, he does not.

Miss SAUNDERS: This was done with the consent of the Education Committee.

CHAIRMAN: I know, that did happen in several cases where the Local Committee put the war first and the Board of Education did not agree. It is a very hard case. Well, now, Old Comrades, I think that concludes our business. One message—the

best—I have kept to the end because I always like a good finish. That is the good wishes of our Honorary President, The Princess Royal. She is very sorry indeed not to be able to be with us this afternoon but she is opening a hospital. She could not do both and the hospital, I regret to say, got in first. But you know her great interest in the Association. She is the daughter of our Queen Mary and she is the Controller-Commandant of the A.T.S., so she combines all our interests. I wish there was going to be a tea and a dinner this evening, but we must just hope that the war will end before we are all too old to enjoy our reunions.

Miss IRELAND: Before we disperse, may I propose a very hearty vote of appreciation, not thanks, because Dame Helen does not like thanks, to Dame Helen for taking the Chair. It has been an exceedingly good meeting, and it is very encouraging to see so many people present.

CHAIRMAN: It has been, as it always is, the very greatest pleasure to see so many old friends. I am in the happy position of having served in both Services so I have a great many friends of all ages.

THE VOTE OF THANKS WAS CARRIED BY ACCLAMATION.

The Meeting closed at 4.30 p.m.

FOOTNOTE.—The General Secretary regrets very much that it has not been possible to give the names of all the speakers. In some cases the speakers did not give their name and Branch (as is customary) and in others it was not possible for the shorthand writer to hear the names. She hopes very much that in the future members will give their name and Branch very distinctly when they rise to speak.

REPORT OF COUNCIL, 26th FEBRUARY, 1944.

During the past year your COUNCIL have held six meetings, one every second month. The Meetings have been well attended both by Old Comrades of the last war and by members of the Active Service Branch. There are now eight of the latter, two Welfare officers, three serving officers, one War- rant officer and two N.C.O.s. It has been a great convenience to be able to meet in our own office.

We have had the pleasure of welcoming two new VICE-PRESIDENTS—Chief Controller L. V. L. E. Whateley and Senior Controller C. H. Fraser-Tytler. Both, in spite of their heavy commitments, have attended the only meeting held since their election. I have also to report the election of Miss Davy, Miss Ireland and Lady Apsley as VICE-CHAIRMEN.

An interesting new development has resulted from the fact that Service women, in case of injury or disability due to service, are now dealt with by the Ministry of Pensions, and no longer, as in the last war, under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Ministry of Pensions has a number of APPEAL TRIBUNALS, each of which consists of a lawyer, a doctor, and a member of the Service to which the person making the appeal belongs—an officer for officers, and another rank for those who served in the ranks. Very properly our Association was asked to suggest names and I am glad to tell you that Mrs. Elizabeth Harris, an ex-sergeant, has been appointed. As officers are much less numerous than auxiliaries, they have not found it necessary to appoint

an officer, but we have provided a list of names which they can use if need arises. Mrs. Harris reports that the work is full of interest. She is a Life member of the Association and keeps in touch with the General Secretary.

The SERVICE WOMEN'S BENEVOLENT FUND had only 11 applications from Q.M.A.A.C. during the year ending 30th September, 1943. Grants were given for spectacles, dentures, clothing and maintenance. The total number of grants to all Services was only 17, and only £88 14s. was expended. This great reduction of applications during the war has made it possible to husband the money still in the Fund for use when war is over.

The A.T.S. BENEVOLENT FUND is growing in importance, and has now £31,245 to its credit. This, however, is not enough. There are more than 200,000 members of the A.T.S. If each of them subscribed one day's pay a year, the Fund would increase by something like £20,000 a year. I would ask all serving members to bear in mind the importance of subscribing to this Fund, and encouraging others to do so. On it will depend the possibility of assisting those in need after demobilisation. Your Council who have had to do with the administration of the Service Women's Benevolent Fund, know the tremendous difference it has made to have help available in illness, accidents, convalescence, retraining, starting in business and a dozen other emergencies.

In this connection the CAKE FROM CANADA deserves special mention. It was sent by three members of the Association who served together at Pont de l'Arche, the big Royal Flying Corps Depot near Rouen, in 1917 to 1918. The cake was made by Mrs. Parker (Caroline Bott) and despatched jointly by her, Mrs. Belfield (Florence Holly) and Mrs. Fenton (Jennie Evans). On its arrival all Branches were invited to take part in a raffle. The names of the local winners were sent to London for a final draw in which success went to Miss Nellie Julian, B.E.M., who had served as a forewoman (sergeant) in Abbeville and Calais. The proceeds of the raffle, £8 9s., were given to the Service Women's Benevolent Fund, which also received a donation of £1 12s. from Ilford Branch.

This year our ARMISTICE wreath was a chaplet of poppies, which bore the name of the Association. It was laid by R.S.M. Glass, one of the serving members of Council. She was supported by Mrs. Mayhew and Miss Hodges, Q.M.A.A.C., Staff Sergeant Kemp, of the A.T.S., and Miss S. T. Hannen, of both Services.

Your Council has been considering the BADGE of the Association. All our old Badges are used up, none can be ordered at the moment, but it is obvious that when we can stock badges again, they should be appropriate to both Services. Some members of Council are a little tired of groups of initial letters—especially when the letters are numerous—and want a symbol, which, like the lion of the British Legion, would sum up what we stand for, the combatant women of the Army, Q.M.A.A.C. and A.T.S. alike. Suggestions would be welcomed.

The General Secretary paid several VISITS to A.T.S. formations to speak on the work and objects of the Association. At Colchester she addressed a Meeting of Company Com-

manders on the invitation of Chief Commander Winterbottom, at No. 3 London District Group at the request of Chief Commander Rollinson; at Oxford she spoke to "A" Company South Midland Group, on the request of Controller M. D. Thorne she attended the Group Commanders' conference of the South Eastern Command. Your Council hope that there may be many opportunities of making the Association known in this very effective way. The General Secretary also made a much appreciated visit to Nottingham ex-Service Women's Club, and Miss Davy was cordially welcomed by the Edinburgh Branch, which she represents on your Council.

The Editor of the "Gazette" has been encouraged in her rather arduous duties by a number of very appreciative letters from officers and auxiliaries as well as from old comrades. She has also lately made a very useful contact with the A.T.S. Public Relations Officer at the War Office, who has undertaken to provide news of interest. You will have observed the first sample in the January-February issue. Of course there have been some complaints (we should not be worthy of the Army if we did not grouse), mostly to the effect that X never sees anything in the "Gazette" about the women with whom she served at Y. Your Council wish to emphasise that the Editor puts in all the news she receives, but she cannot evolve news out of her inner consciousness, and so, unless someone sends it to her, she cannot put it in. Please, will all members bear in mind that their comrades do like news of them, and, when anything special happens, marriages, births, new jobs, interesting journeys, let the Editor know, so that she may record it in the "Gazette."

Most of our Branches are not very active at present; they will take a new lease of life when the war is over. Bristol is to be congratulated on having secured Lady Apsley as President. Bradford has a new Secretary, Mrs. E. Ward, with Mrs. Armitage as treasurer. They served together in France, so should make a good team. They are keen to do all they can for auxiliaries in the locality and to make them—in their own words—"comfortable and happy."

The A.T.S. members of North Staffs Branch have made history by inviting the Branch to meet in their quarters. The old members attended in force. To be sitting round the stove in a Nissen hut was like old times and awakened many pleasant memories. I gather it was a most hilarious evening. The kindly thought of these auxiliaries might be copied elsewhere.

London still have regular meetings. The Branch has adopted a battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, for which the Comforts Fund, under the able guidance of Miss L. Saunders, has knitted nearly 1,000 garments. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Norfolk, Birmingham, Manchester, Bournemouth, Eire and South Wales, as well as few others, are struggling to carry on under difficult conditions. The Adelaide Branch in South Australia and the affiliated club in Sydney keep us in touch. Miss Thompson has been able to meet South African members.

The present strength of the Association is 3,621.

Ex-Service members: Life 545; Annual 399. Total, 944.

Serving members: Life, 193; Annual, 2,484. Total, 2,677.

Your Council would like to see a considerable increase in serving membership, so that, after discharge, every member may know that she has still a link with her comrades.

I want to conclude by quoting from the reply which Queen Mary sent to our birthday greetings. "Her Majesty," the letter said, "never loses interest in the Comrades Association and is particularly pleased to hear that over 2,500 A.T.S. members have joined, no less than eight serving on Council. This splendid continuity seems to the Queen to be one of the happiest features of a fellowship that already has great traditions."

In such a fellowship let us bring happiness to each other and service to the country.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER, 1943

As the statement of accounts has been circulated with the Agenda, I will not take up the time of the meeting by reading it, but would draw attention to the outstanding features.

Looking first at the right hand side of the Balance Sheet it will be seen that the total assets of the Association amount to £2,124 18s. 7½d., an increase of £388 over the preceding year. The greater part of the assets consist of investments in Government securities. These were added to during the year by the purchase of £650 3 per cent. Defence Bonds, thus absorbing almost the whole of the amount shown on the Liabilities side of the Balance Sheet under the heading Life Subscriptions Fund. Since the end of the financial year a further £100 has been invested in Defence Bonds. The remaining assets consist of cash in hand and office furniture which would probably fetch more to-day than the figure at which it stands in the Balance Sheet. In view of the Council's proposal to adopt a new badge, the only item of doubtful value, the trifling amount of 18s. 7d. for stock of badges, has been written off. The whole of the Association's assets are thus in the highest degree sound and conservatively valued.

Turning to the Liabilities side, it will be seen that the Capital Account shows an excess of Income over expenditure for the year amounting to £93 4s. 6½d.—a satisfactory state of affairs which is due mainly to the increase in annual subscriptions.

The investment of the Life Subscriptions, including the greater part of the "Gazette" Life Subscriptions, has already been mentioned. There have been no calls on the Benevolent Fund, and very early in the financial year the Bren Gun Fund was made up to £70 and paid over to the Secretary of State for War.

Passing now to the Income and Expenditure Account, it will be seen that the total income was £475. Of this amount, approximately £430 represents members' subscriptions and capitation fees, including subscriptions to the "Gazette," the balance being made up of donations and interest on investments. The expenditure side shows that the total cost of running the Association was £382, i.e., the difference between £475 and the surplus of £93 carried to Capital Account. It may be said, therefore, that to maintain the Association on its present basis at the present annual subscription of 5s. a

minimum of 2,400 annual members is needed.

The total membership at 31st October was 3,261, made up as follows:—

Annual Members: Serving	...	2,484
Ex-Service	...	399
		2,883
Life Members: Serving	...	193
Ex-Service	...	545
		738
		3,621

Up to the present 264 Annual Subscriptions for the current year have been received direct and capitation fees in respect of 192 members. Ten Life Members have joined during the current financial year.

No capitation fees were received during the year from the following branches:—

Adelaide	Liverpool
Blackpool	Newcastle
Bradford	Northern Ireland
Cheltenham	Plymouth
Leeds	St. Leonards

Transvaal

Adelaide and Northern Ireland, however, sent their fees before the end of December and capitation fees for this year have been received from Bradford. Most of the Branches which submitted their balance sheets showed a favourable balance.

The satisfactory financial position of the Association is largely due to the influx of the A.T.S., which occurred at the end of 1942 and early in 1943. As the Association will in future function mainly for their benefit, this is as it should be. It is, however, extremely difficult to keep in touch with members on Active Service. If the Association is to be kept on a sound footing so as to be ready at the end of the war to meet the needs of demobilised Service women, it is desirable that the membership of the Active Service Branch should be maintained.

BRANCH REPORTS

BRISTOL & WEST OF ENGLAND

On the 29th January we met at Bath and had a very good gathering, in spite of several absences through illness. We would extend our sympathy to Miss Smith in the death of her father.

On the 26th February I had the privilege of attending the Secretaries' Meeting in London, where I had the pleasure of sitting next to Mrs. Rumbold, who was representing Norfolk Branch. Then on to the Annual Meeting, where I met other friends. I was intensely interested in Chief Controller Whately's account of some of the present-day activities of the A.T.S. I wish all the members of the Branch could have been present at this Meeting, but now that we all have a "Gazette" I am sure we shall feel a keener interest in our Association, which should and must be a great force for the good of all Ex-Service women in post-war plans.

We have a new Member. Miss L. L. E. Hobbs, who has served for four years and is now in Somerset. We look forward with great pleasure to meeting Miss Hobbs and exchanging Service tales.

Miss Sims, our Vice-President, is trying to arrange our next meeting at Bristol, to ease transport difficulties, and notices will be sent to all members.

B. M.

BRADFORD

On Monday, January 31st, 13 of us, all old comrades, met in our old clubroom and after much animated discussion, decided to revive our Branch, rounding up all old comrades and welcome new A.T.S. girls. We are planning to have social evenings, with games, and lots of little affairs, which will make our meetings a joy, to look forward to. We have had many happy little gatherings, in each other's homes, during the past two years, but now we are "going big" again, and hope to see very many new faces in the near future. It is grand to have our old clubroom once again, and with great hopes for the future of our Branch, and best wishes to all old comrades.

Our February Meeting was a very happy gathering. Fifteen were present, all girls of the old brigade. We had hoped to welcome some new A.T.S. girls, and whilst waiting for their arrival, we "reminisced" as usual, and much lively chatter, and gay laughter enhanced our waiting, as we travelled back to the good old days. It was decided to have a little party at our next meeting, each member contributing to the eats, and thus we are hoping for many more happy gatherings in the future, and maybe gradually drawn in, members of the "new brigade." All too soon, our meeting came to an end, and we wended our way home, by the light of a new moon.

All the Pont l'Arche girls will be extremely sorry to know that Sergt. Parkinson (Parkey), who married Gladys Whittingham, died very suddenly just before Christmas. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

E. WARD.

EDINBURGH & EAST OF SCOTLAND

The Annual General Meeting of the Branch was held on Saturday, January 22nd, at 12, Drumsheugh Gardens. The Report and Balance Sheet were read and adopted, and members then discussed methods of interesting discharged members of A.T.S. before they got too widely scattered. It was finally decided to ask Council for ideas on the subject. Our newest member from the A.T.S. had not been told about the O.C.A. on discharge, and it was quite by chance that our President met her and got her to join.

It was pointed out by the Chairman that there was a slight error in the Report. The new combined subscription of 5s. is compulsory for all members, old or new, and not optional.

The meeting was followed by a tea party, at which 24 members were present. We were very pleased to see Miss Crombie, as this is the first time her leave from the W.A.A.F. has fitted in with one of the meetings.

Miss Alice Low was unable to be present, but she will be at the club for the usual monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 4th, between 7—10 p.m.

G. D. HARDY.

THE EDINBURGH DEPOT

While visiting Edinburgh last year, 1943, I was fortunate enough to meet our Q.M. of depot days, Miss Mackenzie. I chuckled with delight to observe that the passing years had not tamed her buoyant spirit. I also met Mrs. Paton, our Company Commander, the proud mother of four handsome stalwart sons and one daughter.

We had two police women attached to us in those days—gentle, quiet girls. I often meet one of them here in Glasgow.

Miss Gilchrist has supervised the Q.M.A.A.C. Club in Renfrew Street all these years. The thought of her work brings a warm feeling to one's heart, that we had women like her in the old Corps. I have met Frail, too, our orderly-room typist. Just the same as in the days when we all loved her. I wonder often about our permanent staff of those early days—Bryce Fairly and Keith, Smith and Robertson (the heavenly twins), Little Valentine of sick bay. I heard that she had "crossed the bar," and a feeling of sadness comes over me. Murray, Halley, Potter—I could go on indefinitely—Miss Ewing, Miss Finlay, Tubby Turner, and, of course, dear old Topsy Turnbull. Happy memories to you all.

O.C. Draft, Edinburgh Depot, 1914.

LONDON

News is rather scarce this month, reunions have been quite well attended. The Bring and Buy Sale, held on the 19th March, attracted quite a large gathering. I was unfortunately not able to attend and at the time of sending this to the "Gazette" Editor the report has not come to hand, but I believe quite a nice sum has been raised for Branch Funds.

Old Comrades will be glad to hear that Mrs. Kendrew is now making good progress. She has been ill for about 14 months. We all send best wishes for her speedy recovery. She hopes to be home by Whitsun.

Mrs. Rose writes that she is finding all her time fully occupied running her business—her chief trouble is finding sufficient stock. She sends good news of her son and daughter.

Miss Moyes, one of our ardent knitters, we hear is ill, and now in Scotland. Again our kind thoughts and good wishes go to Miss Moyes, wishing her well again.

Now for a few reminders. American Brains Trust on Saturday, 15th April, at 2.30 prompt. Friends are welcome. Tea will be provided for a limited number only. Do not forget to have your questions ready for the Brains Trust.

Reunions. May until September. Reunions will be held on the first Thursday in the month at 6.30 p.m., and the third Saturday in the month at 2.30 p.m. Next Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, 4th May, at 6.15 p.m., at the Service Women's Club, 5, Buckingham Gate. Will Committee Members note the change of day and time?

B. MAYHEW, Hon. Sec.

NORTHERN IRELAND

A meeting was called by Northern Ireland Branch on Wednesday, 8th inst.

It was fairly well attended by Old Comrades and by Serving Officers of A.T.S., including Chief Commander C. E. Swettenham and Senior Commander A. C. D. Hind.

C.S.M. Hughes has been awarded the Certificate of Merit in the New Year's Honours List. This was brought down and shown at the Meeting.

It was decided to call a General Meeting on Thursday, 6th April, to form Committee and Office Bearers, which, it is hoped, would include Ex-A.T.S. as well as Old Comrades.

An apology was read from Controller Ogilvie Graham, A.T.S.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**"A" Company A.T.S., Oxford**

The week's celebrations in Oxford for the A.T.S. 5th Birthday was opened by a combined church parade at Christchurch Cathedral on Sunday afternoon, 5th September. The address was given by the Right Rev. the Bishop of Oxford. Several companies, including "A" Company, took part, and the A.T.S. were afterwards complimented on the high standard of smartness which prevailed throughout the parade. The salute at the March Past was taken by the G.O.C., South Midland District, Major-General L. A. Hawes, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.

A dance was held on Monday evening at the Town Hall, and was well attended by members of all the Services. Amongst the articles raffled was a doll, dressed as an A.T.S. auxiliary, and a basket of fruit.

On Thursday, we were all surprised by a birthday lunch, specially arranged. The menu consisted of cold meat and salad, fresh fruit salad and cream, and coffee; cigarettes and sweets were afterwards handed round.

The members of the company had been hard at work for many weeks on handicrafts, and put forth an excellent show of useful household articles, stuffed toys, etc. These were on show at a garden fete and sports held on Saturday, 11th September. A basket of fruit, containing grapes, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, figs, bananas, etc., fetched 10 guineas. A five-tiered birthday cake, with pink icing, made by "J" Company, A.T.S., was on show, and was afterwards distributed amongst the companies in S. Mid. Group. The evening concluded with dancing.

The week's celebrations realised £371 17s., which sum is being handed over to the A.T.S. Benevolent Fund.

Heartiest congratulations and thanks are due to all who took part to make this week of celebrations the most successful yet held.

G. M. JACKSON.

Editor's Note.—The Editor wishes to express her sincere apologies that this very interesting account of "A" Company's Birthday Celebrations was mislaid and has just been found.

NORTH STAFFS

February—March, 1944.

We are now holding our meetings on the first Monday in the month at the Nell Gwynne Restaurant. On February 7th we entertained eight members of the A.T.S. to supper. We were glad to welcome three new members to the C.A.: Sergt. Tappin, Corporal Kerbotson and Private Amison, as well as some previous members. Miss Hudson represented the Leek members. We were all delighted to see her after a long absence from meetings owing to transport difficulties.

The March meeting was not very well attended—but thoroughly enjoyed by the members who did brave the weather. We hope to have more members present at our next meeting, on April 3rd.

In May we hope to have our Annual Whist Drive to help our funds.

It is felt by all members of this branch that it will be a great improvement for everyone to have the "Gazette." It has been very difficult in the past to keep members in touch with what has been happening, apart from purely local events.

H. CLOUGH.

NOTTINGHAM

We met one Sunday in March as United Service Club members, but unfortunately very few were able to be present.

It was a great pleasure to welcome two serving members of the W.A.A.F., and we hope at our next meeting to welcome some of the A.T.S. who were unable to attend last time as they were on duty.

How time flies! It is 21 years ago that a wee model was made of George Peters: a picture of this was used in the illuminated Membership Card, which was signed by our Commandant-in-Chief, Queen Mary, on the occasion of the official opening of the Ex-Service Women's Club, 5, Buckingham Gate, now known as the Service Women's Club. George has grown into a tall, strapping young lad of 23 and is now in the Middle East, performing some special work. Happy landings, George.

N. OSLER, Branch Secretary.

CONVALESCENCE IN THE A.T.S.

(By an Auxiliary who has been cared for in a Service Convalescent Home after illness.)

"No sick leave," I was told. "Convalescent Home for you." After some time in a Military Hospital I had been looking forward to going home, so the next few days were spent in ceaseless grumbling at the thought of the convalescent home which was to replace my long-looked forward to leave.

Well, now I have been, and I feel so ashamed of my grumbling that I want to write the truth about a military convalescent home. Many of my friends have asked me what it was like—"All work and discipline, I suppose?" they said.

Here is the truth. I set off for the great unknown one day, arriving—the only passenger to alight—at a deserted little station somewhere in the farthest North of Northern Command. Out of the drizzle a voice called "This way, please," and within a few seconds I was in a warm car, skimming along miles of shining wet road, deeper and deeper into the countryside.

"The great unknown" turned out to be a large mansion, softly lit and carpeted, where I was greeted by a trim and cheerful Red Cross nurse, who relieved me of my case and ushered me into a warm room to remove my cap and greatcoat. I was taken immediately to a hall, where the trophies of some big-game hunter stared down at me while I attacked a hot meal, excellently cooked and served.

My fatigue after travelling had been anticipated. I was shown to my bed, ready-made and covered with soft coloured blankets, and—lo and behold—equipped with hot water bottles.

On top of the beds, cosy nightgowns in pastel shades, fresh towels and soap, were laid, obviating unpacking. That night I slipped between the fine sheets wondering—"Is this really happening, or am I already asleep and dreaming?"

Reveille—6.30 a.m. in the Service—is a horrid word. But Reveille at 8 a.m., after eleven hours of perfect sleep, seemed to have acquired a new and pleasant sound. I rose to wash and dress and be served immediately with a delicious breakfast. There was no

rushing beforehand to clean quarters for inspection; no hunting for enamel mugs and personal "irons"; and no parade. Those of us who were fit to do so made our own beds and tidied our own corners, but that was no imposition. Our beds were not Army "double-deckers" but comfortable single ones. Our lockers were of polished wood. The floors were of parquet.

When black-out restrictions were lifted and I was able to look out of the large windows, I found myself in the midst of a beautiful estate, set among woods and the misty hills of the Border country, with the promise of plenty of fresh air, long walks, peace and quiet.

After a medical examination I asked what I was to do next. The answer was simply "Anything you wish." I was directed to two sitting rooms, tastefully furnished and warmed by roaring log fires. There was a playroom for table tennis, a library and a cupboard filled with every kind of parlour game. The Matron would issue us with wool and handicraft materials for a mere donation to the Red Cross Fund, and many of the girls were making fascinating toys, such as ridiculous dogs and elephants, as well as useful articles like slippers and bags.

I found that A.T.S. members were not the only Service girls being cared for in this house. Members of the W.A.A.F., the V.A.D., and the National Fire Service were there, all on the best of terms and exchanging notes on life in their various Services.

A great source of pleasure was the food. I cannot remember one meal with which I could find fault. It was a remarkable effort at catering for invalids in the face of wartime restrictions. Somehow there was always more if we wanted it, and we generally did. The bracing air of the north developed huge appetites.

Little but unimportant things such as the despatch and delivery of post were efficiently organised. A telephone was at our disposal. The only work that we were asked to do (and then only if we felt fit) was to gather logs for our own fires, peel a bucket of potatoes, or wash crockery. These duties were done by small teams and came round only once in several days. The only discipline, if it could possibly be called that, was punctuality at meal and bed-times.

The young V.A.D. nurses were friendly and efficient, and their superiors kindly and understanding. For those who were strong enough, passes were given to visit the nearest town, and there were unlimited opportunities for rambling and exploring the wonderful country around the estate. But the order of the day—every day—was "take it easy."

Now the story has been told, there is only one conclusion to be drawn—that when the A.T.S. sends its members to a convalescent home instead of on sick leave, it is giving them the best possible chance of complete recovery.

It is difficult in these days for any private household to give an invalid the food and attention required, without making enormous sacrifices, whereas the convalescent home is properly equipped for the job.

It is a fact that most of the women were genuinely sorry when they had to leave such excellent care and pleasant surroundings—even though it meant that they were in the best of health and absolutely fit to return to brisk Service life.

A.T.S. "UNIVERSAL AUNTS"

"Universal Aunts" is the nickname for the A.T.S. Orderly Room personnel at a Port of Embarkation Unit somewhere in England. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week they are ready to pay, send on leave, equip or billet soldiers from any part of the British Empire.

Every job is a rush job. A 'phone call may mean beds and food needed for 5 to 500, or a hospital ship to be paid off at half an hour's notice. Documents for four or five drafts may be in the office at one time and it is often "two-way" traffic with men coming home passing those going overseas. Soldiers returning from years abroad often get their first sight of A.T.S. when the girls come aboard ship with the Paying Officer. They deal with every Corps in the Army and at one time corresponded with 32 different Pay and Record Offices.

In charge of the Pay and Accounts is Sergeant Edna Woodall, of Bristol, who has been four years in the A.T.S. Sergeant Olwen Moore, of Cottingham, Yorks., is responsible for documentation and has handled the papers of many repatriated prisoners. Her husband is with the Eighth Army. Private Winifred Darter, of Kintbury, Berks., used to work for the London County Council, and now looks after the Quartering side. They all love the work. "You never know what job you will have to tackle next—there is always something new and interesting."

A.T.S. OFFICER RETURNS TO BRITAIN WITH AFRICA STAR

One of the first women in Britain to be seen wearing the Africa Star is Junior Commander Margaret Latham. As a staff officer at the Middle East Headquarters she helped to send urgent medical supplies to our Armies in North Africa from the Battle of El Alamein until the landing in Sicily.

Junior Commander Latham, who is 23, and comes from Chislehurst, Kent, arrived in Cairo in June, 1942, as a Subaltern. She worked with the Military Forwarding Organisation where her job was to ensure that the right consignments of priority supplies reached the right units in the shortest possible time.

While she was in Cairo, Junior Commander Latham met her husband, Captain John Latham, who was also a staff officer. They were married at Cairo Cathedral last November. Her father and brother are both Army officers.

WAR OFFICE WEDDING

Chief Commander Mary Agatha Storey, M.B.E., and Brigadier W. G. D. Knapton, both staff officers at the War Office, were married on Saturday, February 12th, 1944, at St. Dunstan's Church, Woking, Surrey. The bride, who is 29, is a Yorkshire woman and Brigadier Knapton, who is 39, comes from the New Forest. They met at the War Office two and a half years ago.

Chief Commander Storey was awarded the M.B.E. in the 1944 New Year's Honours List. She holds the London University Social Science Diploma and was a hospital almoner until she joined the A.T.S. as a clerk in 1939.

Father Peter Storey, the bride's brother, performed the marriage ceremony and another brother, Father Adrian Storey, said the Nuptial Mass. Father Henry Plummer,

the parish priest, assisted. The Papal Blessing was received.

CORPORAL NAN

Corporal Nan Rabstaff, of the A.T.S., who was wounded on a London gunsight, is off the danger list, but she has lost an eye. She is in a North London hospital.

She was on fire control at a battery when a raider dived.

Someone shouted "Duck." But Corporal Rabstaff had her job to do. She gave the order to fire.

The raider was hit and it crashed in flames. But a bomb dropped close to the gun, killing a soldier and wounding Corporal Rabstaff. She received injuries to the face and head.

Corporal Rabstaff, whose parents live in Forrest Road, Edinburgh, was a radio shop sales girl before joining the A.T.S.

The general who is senior officer commanding London's ack-ack visited her in hospital and praised her brave conduct.

CHILDREN'S NURSE BECOMES A.T.S. COBBLER

Private Marion Houseman, Crewelthorpe, Ripon, Yorks., was a children's nurse before she joined the A.T.S. two and a half years ago.

Now she is an expert cobbler at a large A.T.S. Training Centre in South-Eastern Command. With her seven A.T.S. colleagues, who work under a male corporal she helps to mend on an average two hundred and fifty pairs of A.T.S. shoes a week.

Private Houseman volunteered for her job several months ago and would not change it for any other.

She comes from a farming family. One brother is now a farmer and her mother is looking after a small holding of 21 acres entirely on her own. Two of her sisters are in the Land Army and one is a nurse.

AN A.T.S. ARMAMENT EXPERT

Junior Commander Jean Reynolds, A.T.S., a Staff Captain, whose job has been arranging for the distribution of ammunition, weapons and armoured vehicles in Western Command, has acquired so expert a knowledge of the making and mechanical action of armaments that she is in great demand as a lecturer by A.T.S. auxiliaries anxious to learn in their spare time something of the weapons we are using in Italy.

Bringing with her small replicas of English and American tanks, armoured cars, and with Bren and Tommy guns and model grenades, Junior Commander Reynolds proceeds to explain the history of tanks, their uses and battle action; the range and rate of fire of various guns and their mechanical fitting and operation, and gives a general description of battle tactics, so that when reading newspaper reports of fighting, her listeners will have a useful background knowledge.

Before being appointed a Staff Captain, Junior Commander Reynolds attended a course at the A.T.S. "Staff College," where she studied the practical aspect of armaments in manoeuvres, and rode in various types of tanks under the guidance of members of the Guards Armoured Brigade.

Aged 29, Junior Commander Reynolds, whose home is at Frodsham, near Warrington, taught domestic science at the Liverpool Technical College before the war. She joined the A.T.S. in 1938.

A.T.S. LIVE IN RACECOURSE BUILDINGS

Women's reputation of being able to make a "home out of anything" received a severe test some months ago, when an A.T.S. unit was posted to a racecourse in Western Command, which is now used as an Ordnance Depot.

Confronted with horse boxes, a grandstand, Tote buildings, stables, weighing-in rooms, and stable boys' quarters, the problem of turning those into comfortable living accommodation seemed a big one, but with the help of local Army units, the A.T.S. more than succeeded.

Steve Donoghue would have difficulty in recognising the tastefully decorated recreation room with curtained windows and comfortable chairs as a one time weighing-in room, and so would stable boys the comfortable bedrooms, each containing two beds, a stove, covered floors, chairs and flowers, evolved from stables.

The Tote building is now the N.A.A.F.I., where dances and entertainments are held, and the rooms under the grandstand have been turned into an Officers' Mess. Jockeys' changing rooms have been transformed into a warm and comfortable sick-bay, and Subaltern Joan Smith, in charge of the unit, works in an office that was once a loose horse box.

SIX A.T.S. COBBLERS MEND SHOES FOR TWELVE HUNDRED

Six A.T.S. cobblers in leather "basil" aprons, working at their benches at a Midlands Ordnance Depot, are repairing shoes for more than 1,200 of their fellow Servicemen. They mend an average of 180 pairs of shoes each week; one week they dealt with 250 pairs and every one was finished on time.

All six A.T.S. volunteered to learn cobbling and none had any previous experience. Now the R.A.O.C. bootmaker who trained them says "It's amazing how quickly they learnt the job—folks at home won't believe that I've turned the cobblers shop over to them entirely."

The veteran of the team is Private Millie Platt, of Sheffield, a former cook, who has worked at the bench for 18 months. Two of the cobblers are Scots women; Private Agnes Russell comes from Windygates, Fife, and Private Marion Innes lives at Livingstone village, Mid Calder. Privates Joan Sower and Ena Surman, of Gravesend, were friends in civil life when they worked a few doors away from each other. Private Margaret Andrews, of Lewknor, near Oxford, is the wife of a cook in the Army Catering Corps whom she met while serving in the A.T.S.

A.T.S. SERVE WITH THE RECONNAISSANCE CORPS

A platoon of 60 A.T.S. in Northern Command are the only women in Britain entitled to wear the badge of the Reconnaissance Corps—the streak of lightning flanked by a spear which is symbolic of the speed and danger of the work of the "Recco" men in battle.

The auxiliaries were specially chosen to serve with a Reconnaissance Corps training unit, and every one released a fit man for the fighting front. They see each contingent arriving at the centre and later watch them as they go out on draft, fully trained and

fighting fit, marching to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne."

The A.T.S. cook for the men, issue their clothing and equipment and repair it when necessary, staff the offices as clerks and telephonists and do all kinds of orderly duties.

The training unit was formerly stationed in Scotland and many of its members are Scotswomen. L/Cpl. Dobson, aged 25, of Dumfries, works in the Quartermaster's store and issues anything from a button stick to a pair of socks. Her job is to see that each man has a complete scale of equipment when he leaves for overseas.

Private Ella Wilson, of Glasgow, who was a dressmaker in civil life, is now the unit's tailoress. Her fiancée is serving in the same camp and she has three brothers in the Army overseas. Private Jean Dansher, who also comes from Glasgow, has been cooking for the "Recco" Corps for 18 months. Another Scot, Cpl. Marie Austin, comes from Ayr.

Private Betty Davies, of Aberystwyth, a telephone operator, was a hairdresser in civil life and in her off duty time keeps her hand in by setting her friends' hair. Cpl. Violet Henderson, of Sunderland, is in charge of rations and L/Cpl. Patricia Galloway, a Londoner, is a confidential clerk.

200 A.T.S. IN WASHINGTON HELP TO PREPARE FOR THE SECOND FRONT

More than 200 members of the A.T.S. serving with the British Army Staff in Washington are helping to prepare for the Second Front. Twenty-five of them are working in the office of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, where they deal with highly secret correspondence. One A.T.S. Sergeant is secretary to Major-General B. H. Macready, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., O.B.E., the Commander of the British Army Staff. Thirty cipher operators handle the most secret cable and wireless traffic and A.T.S. clerks are working with the Intelligence organisation and the Civil Affairs staff, which deals with the administration of occupied territory.

Six sergeants who work with the Ordnance branch deal with the operation of the Lease-Lend system. There are also a number of A.T.S. typists, four of whom were the only Servicewomen chosen to work for the Prime Minister during his visit to Washington. Two A.T.S. drivers have just arrived from England for duty at the British Embassy.

Some of the Washington A.T.S. were recruited in the West Indies; the rest came straight from Britain. Senior Commander Pamela Hammick, Officer Commanding the A.T.S. Company in Washington, who has arrived in London on duty and is returning to the U.S.A. in a few days, said in an interview: "We have been given a wonderful reception in America; people are very interested in our Service and A.T.S. are in great demand as speakers in their spare time. The hospitality has been tremendous and families who entertain A.T.S. regularly in their homes always ask them to bring any friends who have just come out from Britain, so new arrivals have a wide circle of friends within a few weeks. A.T.S. parade with American Women's Services, who also invite them to their dances and

parties. A.T.S. join with the W.A.C.S. and W.A.V.E.S. in running a joint club for Servicewomen."

A.T.S. live in part of a large hotel, and civilian visitors are intensely interested at seeing an almost normal camp routine carried out in such unusual circumstances. There are daily rooms inspections and morning parade is held in the hotel lobby, where A.T.S. are issued with occasional late passes and are checked in by an N.C.O. exactly as if they were living in barracks. There is a sick bay for A.T.S. with minor ailments, and, in fact, the whole equipment of a camp except for a cookhouse and mess. A.T.S. are paid at the same rate as at home, but receive in addition a consolidated allowance out of which they buy their own meals in cafeteria or canteens. In the hot weather they wear tropical kit of the same pattern as is issued to C.W.A.C.s.

"Sundays on the Soil," a feature of American war-time life, are arranged so that A.T.S. volunteers, from their Commanding Officer downwards, can spend their Sundays helping the farmers. Parties leave Washington after church and spend the whole day planting corn, harvesting, picking fruit or repairing fences and chicken-houses according to the season.

Senior Commander Hammick, who is 30, comes from Petersfield, Hants, and was a secretary to a horse trainer at Winchester before the war. Before going to Washington a year ago she served with the A.T.S. in Northern Ireland and also in A.A. Command.

Several of the A.T.S. have been married while serving in Washington—all to British soldiers or civilians working at British delegations.

A.T.S. OFFICER TOOK PART IN S. AFRICA DIAMOND RUSH

Second Subaltern Daphne Oliver, A.T.S., who formerly lived in South Africa where she successfully "staked her claim" in a diamond rush, is now serving with a Mechanised Transport Company in South Eastern Command. Before she was commissioned she spent three years in the ranks as a driver.

She lived for ten years in the North West Transvaal where her stepfather was a farmer and claim inspector. Her sister is Senior Assistant at the Johannesburg Museum and her mother is also in South Africa.

Second Subaltern Oliver is keenly interested in mining conditions and has been two miles down a diamond mine; she has also been down a Durham coal mine. After her return to England she took a diploma at the Swanley Horticultural College and became a gardener. She has also taught nature study and biology, worked at a court dressmaker's establishment and been a book-keeper. She has studied art and is attending evening classes while in the Services.

Describing the gold rush she says "Our claims had to be forty feet square and there was a great deal of quarrelling when one overlapped another. When we staked our claims we all lined up and then ran with four iron pegs to the area we wanted. If there were no diamonds within six feet of the surface the claim was no good."

A.T.S. OFFICERS LIVE AS PRIVATEES FOR SIX WEEKS

In order that A.T.S. officers, who will take charge of searchlight sites, should have a real knowledge of the work and conditions under which their auxiliaries live, they now spend six weeks on a lonely searchlight site as part of their training.

During this six weeks, they live "on their own," scrubbing and keeping their huts clean, lighting fires, and doing everything for themselves as well as cleaning searchlight projectors and equipment.

This is in addition to their arduous training on the site, which includes learning how to work and repair searchlights and generators. They also have instruction in the rudiments of electricity, and the recognition of enemy aircraft, and must be able to ride a motor cycle under all sorts of conditions by the time this part of their training is completed.

From the searchlight site they go to a camp for a month, where they receive higher technical training for duties as searchlight officers, and they spend a fortnight on an operational site.

All searchlight officers volunteer for the job, most volunteers being officers from isolated A.A. sites, who like the healthy open air life.

OBITUARY NOTICES

We have just learnt with deep regret that **Private Jessie Sharp**, W/178338, was killed by enemy action in May, 1943. She was a member of the Comrades Association and we feel sure that the sympathy of all Comrades will be with her family.

Another of our Comrades who has passed over is **L/Corporal Doris Waites**, W/137242. She died on the 18th January, 1944, after a long illness, and her family has our sincere sympathy.

We also record, with much regret, the death of **Mrs. Amy West**, No. 25759, Forewoman Cook. Mrs. West first served in the Women's Legion in 1917 at Strence Camp, York. She transferred to Q.M.A.A.C. in January, 1918, and went overseas to France, where she was posted to Unit 7, Boulogne. She was discharged in London in February, 1920. She was awarded the General Service and Victory Medals.

Miss Finlay sends the following notice:—Members of Edinburgh Branch will learn with much regret of the passing of **Miss Mary Campbell**, North Berwick—a most popular and enthusiastic member. While in France Campbell served with the Third Army Unit at Aux-le-Chateau, and, during the retreat of March, 1918, was one of those who travelled many weary hours in cattle trucks to a more distant base, where they stayed until able to return to Aux-le-Chateau many months later. In a letter to our Branch Secretary, one who served with Campbell writes: "She was of a very amiable, cheery and kindly disposition and ever furthered the cause of goodwill in the Unit." A disposition which she retained during the many weeks of illness. Our deep sympathy goes to her sister, with whom she lived and to other relatives.

NEWS OF COMRADES

OLD AND NEW

It was suggested the other day by a member of the A.T.S., **A. Rodgers**, that this feature might be called "Friendship Corner," where one could look for news of one's friends and where members could give news of themselves so that others they have met while serving could get into touch with them again. So send along your news to the Editor.

Miss Warrior was very sorry indeed to be unable to attend the Annual General Meeting. She has only missed two since the Comrades Association was formed—a very early one and again in 1940, when she was in hospital. She sent a message to the Meeting, which is now repeated, as more members will have the opportunity of seeing it: "Warrior (Harrogate) sends affectionate greetings and good wishes to all Comrades at the 24th A.G.M. Hail but not farewell."

Another Old Comrade who sent greetings is **Miss H. B. Baron**. She looks forward to the Reunions in London, so we hope that there may be one next year. We are very sorry to hear that she has lately lost her father, and offer her our deep sympathy.

Miss A. L. Brown sends news that Mr. and Mrs. P. Beach (Teddy Warren), of Place Capécure Rest House, Boulogne, celebrated the Anniversary of their Silver Wedding in December last.

Mrs. J. S. Glistler (Smith) sends good wishes to **Franklin**, of Canfield Gardens, who kindly gave her hospitality at her first Reunion Dinner.

Mrs. H. Clough (Newcastle, Staffs) has now added to her activities by helping with the office work of the S.S.A.F.A. This brings her in touch with the women of the present Services. Her Branch of the Comrades Association has several A.T.S. members who kindly gave a very pleasant party to the old Q.M.A.A.C. members, which was much appreciated.

Miss Finlay, Chairman of Edinburgh Branch, sends a contribution to the "Gazette," but no news of herself!

Mrs. Riach (Edinburgh) has sent a charming snap of her daughter, her son-in-law and the lovely new grandchild. She still keeps in touch with Mrs. Parker in Canada.

Sergt. A. Meredith, now in the A.T.S., sends greetings to all Old Comrades who were at Etaples and Flexicourt.

Pte. L. Middlemiss, W/94682, is a member of the Comrades Association, having joined in 1942. She finds the "Gazette" most interesting and writes that she "is proud to be a member of the C.A."

We are so sorry to learn that **Margery Thornhill**, until lately a Corporal in the A.T.S., has lost everything she possesses in an air-raid. Her belongings had been left with a friend near London, whose house received a direct hit and was also burnt out. This was particularly cruel, as Thornhill is now needing all the civilian kit which she has been preparing against the day of her discharge.

Another member has also suffered some bomb damage at her home, so our sympathy goes to **Miss Binks**. We hope that it was not too serious and that the house is still habitable.

Mrs. F. Palmer writes that she has had

two doses of 'flu and workmen in and out of the house repairing bomb damage. No wonder she forgot to send her subscription as punctually as usual.

Members will be sorry to learn that **Mrs. H. M. Robinson**, who was General Secretary of the Association for some years, is not well. She is suffering from some arthritis trouble in her left wrist, which seems to be extending and is most difficult to cure.

Junior Commander M. E. C. Bilbrough was released from the A.T.S. on the 27th February last, having reached the retiring age for junior officers, and being in a low medical category permanently. She has found an interesting job with the University of London Senior Training Corps.

She writes: "A point which occurred to me after the Annual General Meeting with regard to helping serving auxiliaries and getting to know them by Branches, and this applies especially to girls in requisitioned houses, is to invite the girls individually to houses and let them bring their own mending, sewing and letter writing, etc. You have no idea how they appreciate this. They do not want to be entertained but they do appreciate being able to sit in a comfy chair by a nice fire away from the crowd. When I had girls in training I contacted the W.V.S. and used to get quite a lot of invitations for the girls to go on Sunday afternoons. I found these visits often led to invitations to go round for an hour or so in the evenings, and correspondence was kept up by the girls after they had been posted."

Mrs. L. V. Saunders, who served as Haberfield, is wanting news of **Miss F. W. Pardoe**, who also served in Rouen.

Miss M. Wotzel, of whom we have heard nothing for a long time, is very busy doing a full day's work at Physiotherapy. She met **Miss M. Chapman** the other day and found her little changed despite the passing years.

Miss Susan Greig has a full life teaching in Liverpool; she tells us that **Mrs. McNamee** is now a Sergeant in the A.T.S., and she has encouraged a friend of her's, **Miss Ethel Howard** (who was at Pont de l'Arche) to rejoin the C.A.

Mrs. G. Parker (Bott of Pont de l'Arche) writes from Vancouver with the sad news that **Mrs. Belfield** has lost her husband, and that Mrs. Belfield had hardly at the time recovered from an operation. **Mrs. Fenton** is busy on war work and is enjoying it. Her husband has lately got over a serious operation and is making good progress.

Miss Wicks is still at Salford and is as energetic as ever. The School is packed to overflowing and they are full of plans. **Miss Alice Davey**, who was a Hostel Forewoman at Etaples and Havre, is still with her.

Miss G. Blanchard, who was in New York for many years, for 12 years as Secretary to an author, has now gone to Washington. She is working for South African Government and is enjoying the change from New York. She likes Washington very much and thinks it is a much more beautiful and certainly cleaner city than New York. She had visited many places of interest round: Mount Vernon, which is still kept as if George Washington was in residence. It is a beautiful old place in lovely

country. The Unknown Soldier's Grave in Arlington Cemetery is a most impressive monument and is guarded day and night by a sentry. General Lee's Mansion is close by and that also is kept as if the General and his family were still living there. She spent a vacation with her sister at Hot Springs, Virginia. Her description of all her doings makes one long for a holiday in that part of the world. Washington is full of uniform and there are many A.T.S., W.R.N.S., W.A.A.F.s and the American equivalent of W.A.C.C.s, Waves, Spars and girl Marines. The Americans have no W.A.A.F. but there are some from Canada. She closes her long and interesting letter with good wishes to all and enclosed a very charming card, which the General Secretary is keeping as a book-marker.

Mrs. E. Mills, Hon. Secretary of the Ex-Service Women's Club in New South Wales, writes that they are still actively engaged in all kinds of war work. Her son was home from Darwin and her daughter and husband expected, so that there would be a family reunion after 3½ years! The social side of the Club is well catered for and many interesting events have been arranged, among them a Talk, "Rats of Tobruk," by Brigadier McIlven, to which guests are invited. We envy them this opportunity of getting first hand accounts of what happened during the memorable campaign in North Africa.

Miss W. Clark has also been a victim of a raid, though she did not get a direct hit. The blast blew off the roof and other parts of the house, blew out the windows and blew in lots of dirt. She had a lucky escape.

LONDON BRANCH REPORT

Results of the Bring and Buy Sale. I have just received news of the above. There was a splendid gathering, about 30 Members being present. Altogether the sum of £3 11s. 3d. was raised. Goods were given by the following Members:—Mrs. Palmer, a knitted handbag and some charming sprays of wax flowers; Miss Bilbrough and Miss Hatfield brought cakes; Mrs. Jerrett knitted gloves and soap; Miss Benson a Pyrex dish and Nescafe; Miss Hayward's niece made two kettle holders and other gifts not specified; Miss Saunders brought a number of goods, including some cherry jam, and she also assisted at the stall. Thanks to Miss Billington, Miss Rogers and Miss Saunders for their help and to all who contributed both in gifts and purchases and thus helped to raise the goodly sum before mentioned. Donations were sent by Miss Ireland and Mrs. Mayhew, who regretted that they were unable to be present. Everyone was glad to see two of our very old diehards, i.e., Paddy Bell and Sgt-Maj. E. M. Watson. We have not seen or heard of Wattie for such a long time, so it was good to see her again.

Everyone will be sorry to hear that **Miss Binks**, our Assistant Secretary, suffered damage to her home in the last series of raids. But she still is able to bring forth another of her "Fowl" stories. This can wait until the next "Gazette." And now, please, all be ready to put up some real good questions for the Brains Trust, our next Social Event, on the 15th April, at 2.30.

B. MAYHEW, Hon. Secretary,

SHE WAS DETERMINED TO BE IN KHAKI

Nineteen-year-old **Private Mavis Aitken, A.T.S.**, of Nethergrove, High Bickington, North Devon, has a will of her own.

After nine months in hospital, pluckily going through operation after operation, she was discharged from the A.T.S. Determined to be back in khaki, she volunteered again three months later, asked for a medical examination, and was accepted.

Mavis was involved in a bus accident in the blackout and received head and ankle injuries and a broken kneecap. For weeks her leg was encased in plaster, but injuries were complicated and finally her kneecap was removed.

When Mavis first joined up, she begged to be a driver. She was taught and for a short period drove an ambulance in Scottish Command. Finally she achieved her great ambition of becoming a dispatch rider.

In hospital she was told that it was unlikely that she would be able to drive again in the A.T.S. Undaunted, Mavis decided to do the next best thing—she would be a "fitter." She asked for books on mechanics and spent all her time in bed studying.

"She is one of the most courageous and happy girls I have come across," said the visiting padre for the hospital to her Commanding Officer.

Mavis considered herself lucky, for she found three of her old school friends from St. Leonard's School, St. Andrew's Fife, working in the hospital.

Courage runs in her family, for her brother Lieutenant John Aitken, who is in the Navy, recently won the D.S.C. One of her four sisters is in the W.A.A.F., two are married, and the fourth is working for the Army Remount Service.

"I am glad to be back in khaki again," said Mavis. "All I want now is to go on my fitter's course."

FROM BOND STREET TO A.T.S.

In peace-time wealthy women paid pounds for the exquisite Bond Street creations which a North London girl designed and cut out.

Now A.T.S. at a Depot in South Eastern Command have the benefit of her experience free.

Private Joan V. Benn, A.T.S. Storewoman, of Holly Park, Crouch Hill, runs a sewing class of her own. Many of her A.T.S. pupils had never done any hand-sewing before. Now they turn out perfect examples of needlework during their evenings' spare time.

These A.T.S. Auxiliaries' Christmas presents will also include perfectly tailored hand-sewn waistcoats, each made from two squares of chamois leather.

"I help with the cutting, but all the rest they do themselves with guidance," said Private Benn.

Private Benn has a brother in Canada in the R.A.F., and another brother in the Royal Artillery. When she joined up, she was sent to the same Camp in South Eastern Command at which her father was stationed during the last war.

PRIVATE JONES, A.T.S., VISITS HER CHILDREN

Every week Private Mary Jones, A.T.S., visits her two small boys who live in a nursery just outside the North of England town where she is stationed. When she gets back to camp she writes to her husband, a regular soldier serving overseas, to give him the latest news of David, who is just beginning lessons, and Johnnie, who is one year older.

Strictly speaking, Private Jones should be stationed in Scotland now and the War Office had to stretch a good many points to make it possible for her to see her children every week. Mrs. Jones joined the A.T.S. to "get her own back" on the Germans, whose bombs had destroyed her home in a North East Coastal town. She was originally posted, at her own request, within easy reach of the nursery where her children were evacuated. Then, just as her husband had returned from embarkation leave, her job moved and she had to move with it—to Scotland.

Private Jones wanted to stay in the A.T.S. but she was afraid that the children would forget her and, without her regular visits, grow out of hand. She asked to be posted near to them and, because the War Office considered that her's was a really compassionate case, her request was granted. Now the children look forward to their mother's weekly visits, and Private Jones and her husband are carrying on their service happy in the knowledge that their sons are being well looked after.

As home conditions have grown harder for invalids and the elderly, and neighbours on war work have not time to lend a hand, the number of requests for compassionate postings nearer home forwarded to the War Office by A.T.S. units has been steadily increasing. Every request is given sympathetic consideration, but the majority have to be refused in order that those with more claim to priority may not be delayed. The applications received are far in excess of the number that can be adequately dealt with, and one result of these numerous requests is that cases of extreme urgency are blocked.

Every A.T.S. Unit, like every Army Unit, is composed of a stated number of each type of personnel—so many drivers, so many cooks, so many technicians—and of a definite proportion of N.C.O.'s to Privates. It is no use posting a cook to a vacancy for a driver, and if a Corporal wants a posting to a Unit which already has its complement of N.C.O.'s she must relinquish her stripes, involving hardship to herself and loss of an N.C.O. to the Service.

Since the outbreak of war the terms of services in the A.T.S. are such that all members on joining undertake to serve wherever they may be posted, and no sense of grievance therefore should be felt if postings near home cannot be granted.

NEWPORT PIANIST IN A.T.S.

Private Kathleen Collins, A.T.S., daughter of a former Mayor of Newport, Isle of Wight, gives pleasure to hundreds of A.T.S. every week.

Kathleen learnt to play the piano at the age of six and has been playing in her spare time ever since. Now she is the "star turn" of her Company's "barrack evening," playing classical and popular music while the A.T.S. sew, knit, and write their letters.

In Newport she won two cups and two medals for piano solos in the town's annual musical festivals. Her teacher was Miss Eileen Cooper, L.R.A.M.

In civilian life Kathleen was an analysing machine operator for a Newport transport company. Now this nineteen-year-old A.T.S. is a storewoman. She hopes after this war to win a scholarship for the Royal Academy of Music.

A.T.S. GIRL WANTS TO REBUILD COVENTRY

Eighteen-years-old **Private Ruby Nash**, of the A.T.S., is a girl with an ambition. She hopes that her civilian art training and the course she is now taking as an A.T.S. draughtswoman for the Royal Engineers, will qualify her to take up architecture and town planning after the war. She is particularly interested in the post-war reconstruction of her home town, Coventry.

Private Nash won a scholarship to the Coventry Art School when she was only 13. This school was bombed out and she transferred to the Stourbridge School of Art.

Now she is training in architectural and engineering draughtsmanship and will be posted to a Royal Engineers drawing office on completion of her course.

HEADQUARTERS REPORT FEBRUARY AND MARCH

There is nothing of interest to report as no Council Meeting has been held since the 8th January, which was mentioned in the January-February "Gazette." The great event has been the Annual General Meeting, of which a full account is given in another place. There were 93 members present, according to the list, among them Chief Controller L. V. Whateley, Director Auxiliary Territorial Service, who shows a great interest in the Comrades Association. She has presented the Headquarter Office with a charming portrait of herself, for which we thank her heartily.

The General Secretary would like to say, once again, how much she appreciates visits from any members who can find time to call at the office and is happy to give them lunch should they come towards one o'clock.

BRANCHES

Active Service	Mrs. A. E. B. Johnston (pro tem), 82, Lancaster Gate, W.2.		
Adelaide	Miss L. M. Smith, 52, Wattle Avenue, Brighton, Adelaide, Australia.		
Birmingham.	Miss E. I. Dipple, 17, Somersset Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham, 20.		
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. E. Ward, 35, Legrams Avenue, Bradford		
Brighton.	Mrs. E. C. Jolly, 107 Preston Drove, Brighton, 6.	Aqua Restaurant, Old Steine, Brighton.	Not fixed. 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.		
Edinburgh and East of Scotland.	Mrs. G. D. Hardy, 51 Lockharton Ave., Edinburgh 11.	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, C.3	251 Renfrew Street, Glasgow.	Every Wednesday, 7.30.
Headquarters.	Mrs. Pratt Barlow, O.B.E., 82, Lancaster Gate, W.2.		
Irish Free State.	Mrs. O'Meara, M.B.E., Cove Cottage, Dunmore East, County Waterford.		Not fixed.
Liverpool.	Mrs. E. Edwards, 8, Wyndcote Road, Liverpool 18.		
London.	Mrs. Mayhew, c/o 5 Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.	See Branch Reports for dates of meetings.	Thursday evenings, 7.30 to 10 p.m.
Ilford.	Miss P. Parker, 4, Richmond Street, Plaistow, E.13.		
Manchester.	Mrs. Cornes, 12, High Bank Crescent, Prestwick, 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.
New South Wales.	Mrs. E. Mills, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.	26, Victoria Street, Bondi Junction, N.S.W.	
New York.	Mrs. G. Rose. Phone Nevins 8-5250.		
Norfolk.	Mrs. L. Chilvers, 2, King's Head Terrace, Great Witchingham, Norfolk.		Monthly. Members notified individually.
Northern Ireland.	Miss Smyth, 18, Cedar Avenue, Carnalea, Nr. Bangor, Co. Down.		Last Saturday in the month at 7, Victoria Street, Belfast.
North Staffs.	Mrs. G. H. Clough, 3 Eleanor View, Newcastle.	Nell Gwynne Restaurant, Newcastle.	First Friday in month, 6.30 p.m.
Notts.	Miss Osler, 243a, Mansfield Road, Nottingham.		
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, Rumney, Cardiff.	Y.M.C.A., Cardiff.	Second and last Tuesday, 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.
Tees-side.	Miss E. Kendra, 21, Thackeray Grove, Linthorpe Middlesbrough.		
Transvaal.	Mrs. Widdicombe, 8 Gascoigne Street Observatory, Johannesburg, S. Africa.		

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