

whole trip by road, so saw a lot, but getting about in these parts isn't a very easy matter. Trains don't help one in the slightest.

I just missed Vera Simpson in Beirut by one day. She has been doing some course in Palestine—a Captain, and was upon leave in Syria. By now, I think, homeward bound to Kenya. She has got on very well. I was very sad not to see her. . . . and looked well, and is quite prepared to become a good South African. She and her husband are farming. During another recent tour I came across Lowe, of St. Omer and Rouen, now Mrs. Soutar, and living at Vereeniging. She and her husband have lately come from India, where he has been in business. They have kindly adopted one of my children for the duration, and she is very happy with them. Mrs. Soutar asked after Miss Pickford and Mrs. Kenyon.

It always gives one a great thrill to meet Old Comrades unexpectedly, and, of course, becomes much more difficult as time goes on. And it has gone a long way already!

I often see Muriel Hughes in Johannesburg. She is hoping to return to England when she can get a passage.

A. F. Feiling has had an adventurous life since she left the Settlers' Club at Cape Town in 1941. She seems to have been all over the Middle East and is now reported to be in Rome. I enclose a letter from her which may be of interest.

During all these years of exile I have looked forward eagerly to the arrival of the "Gazette," and am greatly interested in all the new developments. I have been able to keep in touch with the younger generation of service women here, as I have done a good deal of lecturing, or rather "Talks," under the Army Education scheme here. These youngsters are very envious of the wider opportunities for girls overseas.

I see London branch is having its annual meeting next week. Never mind, I shall be there in 1945, and am sure I shall find them entirely unchanged. I have become a sort of honorary W.A.A.F. here, and have been given a badge on the strength of having done 100 hours' talking in the camps. Doesn't it sound awful?

I do wish the A.T.S. had never been christened so oddly. Such a pity they were not W.A.A.C.s, like all the other countries, and like US. However, they seem to have earned great credit for the new name. There are a number of Wrens out here from England, and a few of my girls have been allowed to join. The South African sailor women are called Swans (South African Women's Naval Service).

Warm greetings to you all for Christmas and 1945, when I hope to see you all again.

Affectionately yours,

EDITH THOMPSON.

15, Marian Macleary Street,  
St. Pitts Point,  
Sydney, Australia.

27/11/44.

Dear Dame Florence,

On Armistice Day I represented our Ex-Service Women at the Cenotaph. A little while before the service began a lady came and stood beside me. After a time she asked me had I been a nurse in the last war? I said no. I had been an English W.A.A.C. I asked her

if she were English, and she said yes, I am Lady Keyes. I felt a little embarrassed for the moment. She told me that you were a great friend of hers. I told her we had seen you when you were on your visit to Australia some years ago. I asked her if, on her return home, and when she saw you, would she convey the compliments of the Ex-Service Women in Sydney to you. She said she would. But somehow I felt I would like to write and say how sorry I was to hear that you had been so ill, and trust by now that you are well recovered. The blitzes and the flying bombs must have been a great source of anxiety to you, but with the lessening of that terror, it may be the means of a complete recovery for you, and I hope the day is not far distant when our beloved homeland is free from the menace. Our thoughts during those awful days were always with the people at home, and how brave they were. On November 9th we held our twenty-fourth annual dinner, and I was thrilled to have with me two women who were with me in my first camp at Bettlesfield, in Salop, and the husband of one who was in the R.F.A., to whom we were attached (the unit). We were also fortunate in being able to entertain from home boys, who are serving in the Marine Artillery. They man the guns on the ships coming from home. It was nice to have them, as we felt they belonged to us. Trusting this finds you well and in case Lady Keyes does not deliver our message in time for Christmas, I will wish you the compliments of the season and a fervent wish for a peace, a lasting one, before next Christmas. With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

ESTHER PACE.

Rosedale,

Bermagui, N.S.W.

16/10/44.

Dear Old Comrades,

It is several years since I've written to the "Gazette." My intentions have been good, but somehow the letter has never been written. A few months ago one of the members said in the "Gazette" she still had her first Army biscuit. So have I. Alas, it is not now all in one piece. My children were showing it to some friends, and somehow it dropped and broke. They cannot believe we had to eat them. In the May-June "Gazette" there is a rather tall story of two kangaroos entering a church. I know there is always an exception to the rule, but I have lived 20 years in the Bush and have never heard of them going inside any house, and two full-grown ones would be dangerous. They would stand about 6 ft. high, and are very strong, and goodness me, how they can hop. I wouldn't like to be in the church if they were there.

We folk out here feel very sorry for all of you at home. The dreadful time you have had, and especially for the children. It is a pity they could not have been brought out here away from it all, but I suppose lots of mothers would not like their children to go so far away. They would have been well looked after. The few that did come have been very happy here, and some of them want their parents to come out. How nice it must be to have the lights on again, and I hope by the time this letter reaches you the war will be over. I shouldn't think there is much left of Calais now. I wonder where all the girls of

Queen Mary Camp are now? What a lot of "Do you remember" there would be if we could all meet again.

We have had a very dry winter, and to-night it is very nice to be listening to the rain. It is our spring now, and the fruit trees are in bloom, and I have been busy getting the garden ready.

We country folk are better off than city folk, with the rationing, as we grow most of what we want to eat, and we get 112 clothing coupons a year, which has to include house linen, 25 for a pair of double bed sheets, so sheets are being patched and made do. War-time materials are very shoddy, especially shoes, and they are expensive. It is hard on mothers of large families. Kindest regards to all old Comrades.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) G. A. PARBERY.

3026 G. A. Smith, Calais-Andruicq.

Miss Feiling writes from the following address: S.I.M.E., G.H.Q., M.E.F.

I am now waiting for a relief before I pack up and depart from Syria. In spite of all the hordes of women arriving in the M.E. from England, there still seems a shortage, as I have now waited some weeks for someone to take over from me. I am still doubtful as to my plans, but hanker after a trip to S.A., even if only for some leave and to see all my friends. So I may find myself on a ship, and I may turn up on your doorstep and see what is doing. Remember me if you make any future plans for emigration, as that is really what I am most interested in as a post-war planning scheme, both for men and women.

I am keeping my hand well in with house-keeping, as I am sharing a mess with seven other officers and feeding men is oddly enough more difficult than women. It is not made easier by having to gesticulate or act what one wants, as our staff only speak Armenian and Turkish! We are living in a delightful house, and it is quite the most comfortable way I have lived since I left home. I suppose because one is free to do and eat what one likes. There is no rationing up here, and everything seems plentiful if one can afford to pay the prices, which are absolutely exorbitant. One loses all proportion of the value of money and if one stopped to compare prices with English prices, one would never buy anything. However, messing as we do is a lot cheaper than the local hotel, which charges £1 a day, and is not particularly good at that. . . .

I haven't met any S.O.S.B.W. settlers in Syria, but I think I told you there was a clique of us in Cairo that I had come across, all girls that had passed through my hands while I was in Cape Town. Most of them seem to think they will push on to England after the war, and not back to S.A., but I think the

#### RESOLUTION FOR 1945

Do you know that with another 200 readers the Gazette would pay its way? Once it does this it could become a far, far better thing. Can you help? There must be 200 potential members of the C.A. in our acquaintance. Let us collect the m.

Will all contributors please note that any particulars they wish included in the next issue of the "Gazette" should reach the Editor not later than the 15th of March, 1945, Mrs. Richard Addis, Woodside Frant, Sussex.



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



GENERAL SECRETARY: Mrs. Johnston, Q.M.A.A.C. and A.T.S. C.A., 82, Lancaster Gate, London, W.2.  
Telephone: Paddington 8440.

Vol. XXI. No. 5.

MARCH—APRIL, 1945

Subscription and Gazette,  
Life, £5. Annual 5s.

#### IMPORTANT NOTICE.

All contribution for the Gazette should reach the Editor, Q.M.A.A.C. and A.T.S. C.A. Gazette, WOODSIDE, FRANT, SUSSEX, not later than the 15th of the following months:—January, March, May, July, September and November.

#### REPORT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1945

The Twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on Saturday, 24th February, 1945, at 5, Buckingham Gate, S.W.1. In the absence of the Honorary President and of the President, the chair was taken at 3 p.m. by the Senior Vice-President, Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, who read the following message from Chief Controller The Princess Royal, Controller Commandant, A.T.S., and Honorary President of the Association:

"On the occasion of the Annual General Meeting of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades' Association, I send my congratulations on another successful year's work, and my best wishes to all Officers and Members."

"I assure you that I follow your activities with great interest, and with a keen sense of the value of such an organisation as yours, which links together in comradeship those who have shared much common experience in two wars, and provides for many people the best and happiest means of keeping in touch with old friendships."

#### "MARY"

It was proposed from the chair and carried with acclamation that a letter of thanks for her most gracious message be sent to the Honorary President.

#### MINUTES

The minutes of the twenty-fourth meeting, having been printed in the Gazette, were taken and signed as correct.

#### REGRETS FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman read a letter from the President, Dame Florence Simpson, who said: "I will not attempt to express my disappointment and regret, my feelings on the subject are inexpressible. I had looked forward so much to being at the meeting. . . . I had hoped to see many old friends. However, it was not to be. I have been overworked lately. . . . and had to stay in bed, with a temperature of over 100. . . . Will you please tell everyone how sorry I am."

It was proposed by Miss Ireland and resolved that a message be sent to the President, expressing hope of her early recovery and of her presence among us at the next Annual General Meeting.

The General Secretary read apologies for absence with greetings and good wishes from Corporal Barker, Miss Bertrand, Miss Cockledge, Mrs. Clough, Mrs. Doidge, Mrs. Duke, Miss M. E. Hehner (prevented by blindness from being present), Mrs. N. Howalls, Mrs. Jackman, Company-Sergeant-Major Kemp, Miss B. Mould, Miss M. Reid, Mrs. Savill, Senior Commander Walker, Miss Warrior (who sent warmest greetings, and would gladly have been with us), Mrs. Florence Wilson (who was in hospital having undergone an operation), Mrs. E. Wood, and Controller I. Wood.

#### REPORT OF COUNCIL

The report of the Council was read by Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan and adopted.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

The Hon. Treasurer, Miss M. Slee, presented her report. Its adoption was proposed by Chief Controller Whateley, seconded by Miss Davy, and carried without opposition. In the course of her report, the Treasurer referred to the anonymous donation of £1,000 last September, and to a gift of £25 from the Imperial Ex-Service Women's Association of Melbourne, Australia. It was proposed by Miss Ireland and carried by acclamation that special messages of thanks be sent to those donors.

#### THE BADGE OF THE ASSOCIATION

The meeting then considered the resolution standing in the name of the Council THAT THE BADGE OF THE ASSOCIATION BE A WREATH OF LAUREL ENCLOSING A LIONESSE RAMPANT ON A BEECH-BROWN BACKGROUND, WITH THE NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION INSCRIBED ON A SCROLL.

Chairman: Your Council have selected this design from those submitted in the recent competition; it seems to them a fitting symbol of the activities and significance of our members in both wars. The lion is one of the best-known Army symbols, a lioness is therefore appropriate to Q.M.A.A.C. and A.T.S. She is rampant, defending her hearth and home, as you have helped to defend yours, but no one can say that a lioness is unfeminine! Several drawings of this and other badges are on view. (Some of the drawings were passed round.) I think we should all like a word on the subject from our Vice-President, the D.A.T.S.

CHIEF CONTROLLER WHATELEY: I approve most heartily. I had not seen the design before, and think it extremely good.

In reply to various questions, it was explained that the badge would be about the size of the old badge, and would probably cost one shilling; that the design had been shown to Gaunt, the badge makers, who considered it easy to produce; that the possibility of a crown as part of the badge had been considered, but had been decided against, because it would have complicated the design and would have involved an application for special permission.

As there was no further discussion, the resolution was put to the meeting and carried without opposition.

#### ELECTION OF COUNCIL

The General Secretary read the following nominal roll of representatives recommended by branches for election to the Council for the ensuing year. As there was no opposition, those nominated were declared to be elected:

ACTIVE SERVICE BRANCH: Chief Comd. B. Harvie Anderson, Junior Comd. P. M. Andrews, Junior Comd. Lady Apsley, Cpl. D. M. Barker, Regimental-Sergeant Major A. Glass, Chief Comd. M. F. Patrick, Cpl. J. P. K. Reynolds, Senior Comd. Viscountess Swinton, Senior Comd. E. Walker.

BIRMINGHAM: Mrs. W. M. Powell.  
BRIGHTON: Miss I. I. Turner.  
BRISTOL: Miss E. H. Pratt.  
EDINBURGH AND EAST OF SCOTLAND: Miss L. Davy.

HEADQUARTERS: Mrs. L. M. K. Pratt Barlow, Miss Billington, Mrs. A. E. B. Johnston.  
LONDON: Miss Billbrough, Miss Burnett, Mrs. Downer, Mrs. Eager, Mrs. Mayhew.  
NORFOLK: Mrs. V. Rumbold.  
OXFORD: Mrs. M. Grundy.

#### ELECTION OF TREASURER

It was proposed from the chair and carried by acclamation that Miss M. Slee be re-elected as Hon. Treasurer.

#### GAZETTE

The Editor, Mrs. Addis, having been called upon for a report, expressed regret for certain irregularities in the printing of the last issue of the Gazette. She looked forward to the time when, with more subscribers to the

Gazette, and better paper and printing, considerable developments would be possible.

THE CHAIRMAN: We have with us to-day someone who is always ready at the critical moment and whom we are specially glad to see, namely, Miss Edith Thompson. She has been abroad in charge of evacuees. I am sure she has lots to tell us. (Applause.)

MISS THOMPSON: Dame Helen and Old Comrades, I said I would be here to-day, and I have managed it. It was a difficult journey. I left Cape Town on 29th January, travelled to Durban by train, flew in a Sunderland flying ship to Dar-es-Salam, Kartoum, and several other places along the Nile. Unfortunately, I arrived in Cairo at the same moment as the Prime Minister, and had to stay there for a bit. I eventually got a Dakota bomber and flew direct to Casa-Benito, named after Mussolini. It was rather an interesting place, very high, lovely little white houses, olive trees, orchards, already flowering, it was simply marvellous. I flew to Marseilles and arrived here on Tuesday last, just in time to settle down before the meeting.

I would like, if I may, to congratulate Mrs. Addis on the good work she has done for the Gazette. This rather personally concerns me because I started it, and I am sure, if she looks at the original copies, she won't find the present issue as bad as she thinks. There is a great future for this little paper. People are delighted to see it in the distant outposts of the Empire. Copies are sent round till they become ragged.

Thank you very much for the hearty welcome you have given me. I would like to have the opportunity of seeing you many times. I hope to be at home for good.

#### THE FUTURE OF THE SERVICE

CHAIRMAN: The Director, Auxiliary Territorial Service, has consented to answer any questions.

A MEMBER: Those who served in the last war and in this one ask if there is to be a permanent service for women after the war?

CHIEF CONTROLLER WHATELEY: It is far from easy to say, as it will be dependent on what is necessary in the way of a permanent peace-time army. If there is a permanent A.T.S., it will be on an extremely small scale, in order to form a nucleus for expansion should necessity arise, with probably a very much larger service on the lines of the pre-war A.T.S., who undertook part-time training in peace.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

MRS. FRANKLIN: Can we have a dinner some time?

THE CHAIRMAN: Of course we are hoping to have dinners, but we shall have to wait at any rate till the end of the Western war. The dinners will not be forgotten, though where there is going to be room for one I cannot imagine. But we'll have it, if we have to have it in the middle of Hyde Park.

#### VOTE OF THANKS

Miss Ireland expressed the appreciation of the meeting to Dame Helen for presiding. The resolution was carried by acclamation. The Chairman expressed her thanks.

The meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.

#### REPORT OF COUNCIL, 1944-45

1. Your Council have again to report a quiet year, which is indeed appropriate to the times in which we live. Six Council meetings have been held, in March, May, July, September and January. The average attendance has been 14, which may be considered good when it is remembered that the nine representatives of the Active Branch are still serving, and that many other members have official duties. There are at present nine vice-presidents, four of

whom served in Q.M.A.A.C., three served or are serving in the A.T.S., and two served in both. Of the other members of Council, 13 come from Q.M.A.A.C. and 10 from the A.T.S.

2. In July the appointment was made of the first HONORARY MEMBERS under the new rules, which you passed in February, 1944. They are Miss Rosemary Worthington-Evans and Miss Eva Lethbridge. They have been honorary secretaries of the A.T.S. Comforts Fund since its formation in 1939. It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of their work, they are well known to everyone in the Service. It is a pleasure to think that we shall see them at our reunions.

3. Some little time ago we exhausted the supply of BADGES. Your Council did not consider new badges could then be ordered, but they had in view the need of a badge appropriate to our new name and increasing membership. As a first step they decided to open a competition, not only for a badge design, but also for a design for a POSTER to suggest some, at least, of the many reasons why all ranks should join our Association. The results of the competition are on view.

4. The growth of our membership and the dormant condition of many of our branches has thrown additional work on to the shoulders of our indefatigable General Secretary. She therefore asked to be relieved of the editorship of the GAZETTE, and your Council invited Mrs. Addis, better known to the A.T.S. as Subaltern Gill Dearmer, to succeed her. This has proved a very happy arrangement. Mrs. Addis, who is hon. secretary of the Active Service Branch, has been able to obtain a number of first-hand accounts of A.T.S. activities without in any way reducing the supply of interesting news of the older generation.

5. During the year only eight applications for help have been received from ex-Q.M.A.A.C. by the SERVICE WOMEN'S BENEVOLENT FUND, three less than in 1943-4. Three were for clothing, two of these being from Ireland; one was for a calliper for a fractured thigh, one for treatment for rheumatism, one for dentures, one for winter coal and one for part payment of a return passage from abroad. The A.T.S. BENEVOLENT FUND has been doing valuable work for women discharged from H.M. Forces. Until demobilisation, only the income of the Fund can be used, but this increases as the capital grows. The capital was £1,600 in September, 1941; £44,333 in December, 1943; and £70,000 in December, 1944. Owing to the pressure of her parliamentary duties, Lady Apsley has had to resign the honorary secretaryship of the Fund. A paid post has been created, and Mrs. Flora Davin appointed.

6. The ARMISTICE DAY wreath was laid on 11th November by Miss Saunders, accompanied by serving and ex-Service members.

7. Your Council wish to conclude by recalling the most gracious message received on the occasion of the birthday of Queen Mary. "I think you know," the message runs, "how proud Queen Mary has always been of the record and achievements of the Corps that bears her name, and of those of the Auxiliary Territorial Service, in which Her Majesty has also been deeply interested." We share Her Majesty's pride, which should inspire us to make our Association worthy of our Service.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER, 1944

The Balance Sheet has been circulated with the Agenda, and I will therefore only refer to the principal features of the year's accounts.

The total Assets of the Association, shown on the right-hand side of the Balance Sheet, have increased from £2,124 to £3,258. The assets consist of the office furniture, investments and cash, and each of these shows an increase.

The addition of £16 to the furniture represents a new typewriter.

The investments have been added to by the purchase of £400 3 per cent Savings Bonds, and a further £350 3 per cent Defence Bonds, bringing our holding of this security up to the maximum of £1,000. Before the end of the financial year your Council also authorised the encashment of the 475 National Savings Certificates valued in the Balance Sheet at their original purchase price of £380. These were bought in 1922/23 and were due for repayment this year. For various reasons it was not possible to complete the transaction by the 31st October, but the certificates have since been cashed and realised £886 8s. 1d. Of this amount, £625 has since been reinvested in Savings Certificates of the current issues, and the balance placed on deposit.

The cash in hand and at bank at the end of the year was £573, an increase of £369 on the previous year.

Turning to the Liabilities side, the Capital Account shows an excess of income over expenditure for the year of £930 2s. 8d. This is not quite so good as it looks, and I will return to it in a moment. The Life Subscriptions Fund has been increased from £675 to £876. The Benevolent Fund stands at the same figure as last year.

For those who are not familiar with balance sheets, I may say that the three principal items on the Liabilities side—the Capital Account, Life Subscriptions Fund and Benevolent Fund—are not liabilities in the sense of owing anything to anyone except ourselves; they merely represent the distribution of the assets between the various funds of the Association. The only debts owed to anyone outside the Association are covered by the item, Sundry Creditors, £51 5s. 3d. The capital position is, therefore, very satisfactory.

Dealing now with the Income and Expenditure Account, it will be seen that total expenditure amounted to £356 19s. 1d., which is about £25 less than last year. Income, on the other hand, is about £800 up on last year, but the greater part of the total income of £1,287 consists of donations amounting to £1,033. The splendid gift of £1,000 from an anonymous donor has already been reported in the Gazette. The Council were also greatly touched to receive at the height of the flying bomb attack £25 by cable from the Imperial Ex-Service Women's Association of Melbourne for the relief of any members who might have suffered from these missiles.

Without these donations the income of £254 would not have sufficed to cover the expenses, and we should have shown a deficit instead of a surplus. Normally, so large a donation as £1,000 would not have been treated as income, but placed to Capital Account. The donor, however, expressly stated that it might be used for organisational expenses, particularly with a view to post-war development, and it is this which has allowed us to show a surplus of £930 for the current year.

The total membership at 31st October was 1,661, consisting of 761 Life and 900 Annual Members. Of these, 589 were serving and 1,072 ex-Service members. The Life Members have increased by 34, but there is a drop of nearly 2,000 Annual Members, principally in the Active Service Branch. Active service conditions make it difficult to keep in touch with these members, but the Council are confident that there will be a large accession of Service members as soon as demobilisation begins. Subscribers to the Gazette numbered 973.

I have restricted this somewhat lengthy report to the broader aspects of the Association's finances, but I shall be pleased to answer any questions on points of detail.

M. SLEE, Hon. Treasurer.

24th February, 1945.

#### HEADQUARTERS REPORT FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1945

As there will be so much of interest to print in this issue of the Annual General Meeting, this Report will be very short.

A Meeting of Council, with 13 members present, was held on January 20th, when the question of the Badge and the Posters was considered. Members will know from the Resolution put forward by Council "That the Badge of the Association be a wreath of laurel enclosing a lioness rampant on a beech-brown background, with the name of the Association inscribed on a scroll."

This design was chosen from a good number of sketches submitted, some of which were beautifully executed. It was the work of Miss G. A. George, who served in the W.A.A.F. The Annual General Meeting expressed their approval of the new Badge by a great show of hands in favour, there being none against.

The prize for the Poster was awarded to: Pte. Suzanne Dalton, W/293088, 56 A.A. Bde. (A.T.S.) Group.

The consolation prize was awarded to Pte. M. D. Smith, W/56763, who sent three designs, which were beautifully executed. She is at present serving abroad.

It is hoped to show a picture of the new Badge in the next issue of the "Gazette." The date of the next Meeting of Council was fixed for Wednesday, March 21st, a notice of which duly appeared in the January-February "Gazette."

#### MIXED A.A. BATTERY IN BELGIUM BAG 20 "DOODLES" GIRLS BEST ON "PRECISION" From EVELYN IRONS, "Evening Standard" War Reporter.

BRUSSELS, 14/2/45.

Men and girls of a mixed A.A. regiment in Belgium have just had their flying-bomb score verified. They have shot down 19 up to the end of January, and since then they have put in a claim for one more.

They were the first mixed batteries to reach Belgium, and they began operations on Christmas night.

To-day I visited one of this regiment's three batteries in lonely field a foot deep in mud.

Each battery is divided into two half batteries of four guns, operated by some 70 men and 120 girls.

#### MIDDAY ALARM

They were in the middle of the midday dinner of stew and baked apples when the alarm went. The Nissen hut mess of the half battery I was visiting was empty in an instant.

Men and girls in battledress and waterproof capes clattered along the narrow duckboards in streaming rain to take their places.

Then men dashed to the guns.

Three girls whipped the cover from the predictor and swung it into readiness.

Three more took the height finder.

A spotter and telephonist ran to their places.

Inside the control hut the A.T.S. plotting officer and her assistant stood by.

Three minutes later came the order to stand down. The girls were disgusted.

"We get lonely without those doodles," said 21-year-old Corporal Dorothy Strain, auburn-haired ex-weaver from Chorley, Lancs.

Dorothy was one of a group of 15 girls I found clustered round the stove in the manning hut, where the crews stand by ready for an alarm.

#### A TOUGH LIFE

They agreed that gun-site life was tough. With the temperature 25 deg. recently, they found frost on the inside walls of the Nissens where they slept.

Now there is damp to contend with, and their daily outlook is a sea of chocolate-brown mud with the twisted remains of a flying bomb half submerged in the centre by way of ornament.

"But we're glad we came," declared Dorothy, "even when we get as many as 24 turn-outs in one night."

The wreck of a flying bomb, which the battery treasures as a souvenir, was a kill that fell to their guns only 300 yards away.

It did not damage beyond breaking a few windows.

Said Private Amy Hall, who was on the predictor outside when this V-bomb was shot down in daylight recently: "The tail dropped off and the whole thing whizzed down in flames. It was 'smack.' We all cheered like mad."

I asked one of the men officers, Captain L. Povey, what he thought of the girls.

"Better than men on precision instruments like predictors," he said.

The captain admits that his peace-time job gave him special qualifications for bossing women around. He was a West End hair-dresser.

## NEWS OF COMRADES

We are very sorry to learn that Miss E. STARLING has broken her ankle and hope that she will soon be able to visit the Club again. Mrs. JAMES is another London Branch member who is unable to get about at present, but she gets much interest from reading the Gazette.

Mrs. E. WOOD, who is a Life member, sends us some news of herself and says that she hears every Christmas from Miss GILES, who was with the Y.W.C.A. at Etaples. Mrs. Wood served with the 4th Army Musketry School at Nort-becourt, and in January, 1919, she was transferred to Etaples. She greatly enjoyed her life in the Army, and tried to serve again this time in the A.T.S., but was over-age.

Mrs. A. CHAMBERLAIN (Hull), who served in Q.M.A.A.C. as Forewoman Brown, 8275, "looks forward with great interest to the arrival of the Gazette, as it is the main way of keeping in touch with your activities, and in spite of bad health, one does not feel so much out of things."

Mrs. MARGARET HALLAM, who is an ex-W.R.A.F., and an Associate member of Oxford Branch, is excellent at finding new members for the Association; we received no less than seven applications through her interest. Her husband has been in Hospital, but we hope he is now quite well.

Miss J. THORP, ex-Q.M.A.A.C., and now discharged from the A.T.S. on account of age, is hoping to return to the U.S.A. during the summer. She was there for many years, and came to England to serve again during this war.

Miss H. FOSTER, Worker 12449, sends us some interesting reminiscences of her life with the Army. She is glad that the A.T.S. have more comfort and amenities than the pioneers in Q.M.A.A.C. We are glad to have her new address.

It was very nice to hear again from C.S.M. KEMP, and we hope she will find time to visit Headquarters when she is in London.

Miss WINIFRED JOHNSON asks the General Secretary to explain a "Beetle Drive." The G.S. only knows how to catch Cockroaches, so could someone please help Miss Johnson about this thrilling and exceedingly difficult adventure! (I didn't dare confess my ignorance! Brave G.S.—EDITOR.)

Miss E. M. WARRIOR was very disappointed at being unable to attend the Annual General Meeting, and sent warmest greetings and good wishes to all Comrades at the meeting.

Mrs. FLORENCE WILSON has now left the A.T.S., and was expecting to undergo an operation soon after she wrote in February. We

hope that it is well over and that she is now on the high road to recovery.

It is a very long time since we had news of Miss M. E. HEHNER, and are indeed glad to know that she has fair health and that she still enjoys gardening in the three-quarters of an acre which surrounds her little bungalow at Small Dole, which is the name of the village, NOT her home. She is very nearly blind, sad to say, but she hopes to read the Gazette with the aid of a magnifying glass. Many have been the bombs around her, one of them setting her bungalow roof all askew; nevertheless, with the true soldier's spirit, she has cheerfully put up with all the hardships the war has brought.

Miss E. COCKSEDGE sends best wishes to Comrades. They had rather hard times during the coal shortage, as there was deep snow everywhere. Fortunately they were able to get wood in plenty.

Mrs. B. H. DOIDGE, who is another Life member from whom we have had no news for some years, was delighted to get the Gazette. She served as Beatrice Coombe at Parkhurst and the Isle of Wight. She writes that she would be pleased to welcome any old members who find themselves near her home, Chapel House, Tremar Coombe, St. Cleer, near Liskeard, Cornwall.

We hope that SENIOR COMMANDER E. WALKER is now quite well and are looking forward to seeing her again at Headquarters some day soon.

It was a pleasure to hear again from Mrs. E. NORA HOWELLS, a Life member who served as an A.A. at Queen Eleanor Camp, under Mrs. Webb (who served as Minnie Grundy), and whose death was announced in the last issue. Mrs. Howells writes: "Minnie Grundy charmed by her quality and she was constant in her kindness and consideration to others. What she expected from an assistant was more than justified by her own performance as U.A." She also says that a number of her ex-pupils are in the A.T.S., and she hopes she may get some new members when they revisit the school.

Mrs. M. SAVILL, who served as a Sergeant in the A.T.S., was in hospital in Romford when she wrote on the 21st February. We hope that she has quite recovered by now, and that she will be able to attend the meetings of London Branch before long.

The Editor has had an interesting letter from W/37173 Sgt. HENRIETTA M. STEWART-RICHE, who is serving with the Engineer Section at A.F.H.Q., C.M.F. She is Chief Clerk and she has just become engaged to another Chief Clerk—S.M. G. H. ARCHER, R.A.S.C., of Wimbledon. They hope to be married in September, and to spend their honeymoon touring

Northern Italy, and to include Venice and Milan if all goes well!

She joined the 1st City of London Platoon at Hounslow, and she says she has bumped into quite a number of the "old originals," and the conversation always seems to turn to the "good old days" and "do you remember when."

So you see, ex-Q.M.A.A.C.s, even the A.T.S. are beginning to have memories!

All best wishes to you, Sgt Stewart-Riche, and to your lucky fiancé.

We are very glad to have news of **Miss M. Dawson-Smith**, who served in Q.M.A.A.C. as an A.A. at Abbeville, Rouen and Calais. She started the Lowestoft Company of the A.T.S. in October, 1938, their Regimental number started at 3, so one can see that they began early. She had to resign as a Junior Commander in December, 1939, in order to nurse her mother, who was, and still is, ill. Miss Dawson-Smith is a Life member of the Comrades Association, and has just paid also a Life subscription to the "Gazette." She sends best wishes to the Association and hopes for the continuance of the Association and the "Gazette."

**Mrs. Mabel A. King** sends us news of her son, Bobby, which is sure to be of interest to the older members of the C.A. Bobby, as a small boy, used to help entertain at the Branch Socials with his violin. He is now in the R.A.F., and has successfully completed 33 operations with Bomber Command. He has been flying in a Canadian-built Lancaster with R.C.A.F. as a Flight Engineer. On the completion of the tour his pilot was awarded the D.F.C. for numerous and successful operations carried out against the enemy with great skill and determination, and my son has been given a Commission. As he is only 20 in March, I am sure that all who met him will feel with me that he has done well. He is now grounded for a short while and is instructing.

**Senior Commander M. A. Tillis** enjoys the "Gazette," and has now paid a Life subscription for it. She has been a Life member of the Association for some years, having joined before the subscription to the "Gazette" was made an integral part of the subscription.

**Mrs. D. M. Ellery**, who retired as a Junior Commander for family reasons, also joined before 1943 and has now paid a Life subscription for the "Gazette."

**Miss Edith Latimer** has written to **Miss Ireland** giving news of the death of **Miss Frances I. Savory**, whom she feels sure will be remembered by many old comrades for her unique personality, powers of leadership and inspiring personal devotion. She sends the following notice for insertion:—

"**Frances Ina Savory**, D.A. Bristol Depot Hostel, U.A., Wareham, Tunbridge Wells, and St. Leonard's, died peacefully in her sleep after an operation in September, 1944. On demobilisation in 1918 she taught in London, and then became French mistress and House Mistress at St. Felix School, Southwold. She was appointed Principal of York College for Girls in York in 1935, where, despite increasing ill-health, borne with uncomplaining heroism, which finally

compelled her to resign, the School increased greatly in numbers and prestige during her Headship."

**Miss A. Yetton** is now living at Kingston H.H. Her landlady evacuated the house in June last on account of the rockets, leaving Miss Yetton quite alone, so she wisely decided to warehouse her furniture and to go and live with a friend until times are quieter.

It was very nice indeed to get news of **Miss Margaret Moyes**. We are glad to learn that she is still steadily improving and hope that she will feel still better as the weather gets warmer. She manages to get out for short walks with the aid of a stick. **Miss J. Turnbull**, now in the W.R.N.S., has been to see her quite frequently and they have fine chats about the old meetings in Newcastle. We are sorry to hear that **Miss Nora White** had a serious accident to her hand some two years ago and had not yet recovered the use of it. It was seriously cut with a broken bottle when she had a fall.

**Miss E. E. Rickwood** is asking for the addresses of **Miss F. E. Denny**, who used to live at Blackheath, and **Miss Mack**, of Send. The General Secretary has not been notified of any change of address, though Miss Rickwood's letters to both these members have been returned marked "Gone away." Can anyone help, please?

**Mrs. E. M. Chubbock**, who served as E.M. Cook, 1501 Q.M.A.A.C., has sent a useful parcel from South Africa, which has been given by Dame Helen to London Branch, to help swell their funds. Mrs. Chubbock was at Abbeville and St. Valéry-sur-Somme and served there under Dame Helen.

We are very sorry to hear that **Miss E. E. Bertrand** has been ill. She was away convalescing at the time of the A.G.M., and we hope that she is now quite well again.

Last month we gave the news that **Mrs. Alice Marwood** had been granted an Alms-house, with which she was delighted. This month we have to give the sad news that **Mrs. Marwood** died there after 28 days' residence, very peacefully on February 21st, and was cremated at Woking on February 28th. She was 76 and a wonderful character, very kind and brave.

#### SERVICE WITH S.H.A.E.F. CIVIL AFFAIRS ON THE CONTINENT

Thirteen members of the A.T.S. are now working on the Continent with the "G5" Division of S.H.A.E.F. which controls Civil Affairs in liberated countries and Military Government in Occupied Germany. As long ago as 1943, when they had volunteered for overseas service, they were interviewed and chosen for work with this then secret and newly created staff division under General Eisenhower's Command.

For many months they trained and worked on the preparation of plans ready for the liberation of Europe. Later, they moved to a forward headquarters in Southern England, and it was from there that two of them flew to the Continent a few days after the liberation of Paris.

#### NEWS FROM BRUSSELS

"There is the best N.A.A.F.I./E.F.I. club here that I have ever been in. I had a set and manicure to-day for 35 francs. It is the largest club I've seen. You can have lunch there for 15 francs, with a band playing. Afterwards you can leave the huge dining-room, with its long, pink, velvet curtains, and have tea in another room, or play ping-pong in one of the three large rooms each with two or three tables in it. There is a ladies' wing, where you can have a bath or hairdo, or just sit and read if you like. Last night we were celebrating a birthday, eight of us. We started off at Montgomery Club, and had supper there. The band even played "Happy Birthday" three times through by request. They had to learn it from a N.A.A.F.I. hostess, who hummed it to them first. I think you could spend a whole day there without moving out of the building; it is easily the best club here, and so large that it is the only one which isn't crowded."

#### ROCKET TESTING

Every type of rocket, including those that blasted Hitler's West Wall, and the ones with which we shot his planes from the skies and his tanks from the roads, was tested before going into production by A.T.S. working alongside troops and civilians at a Ministry of Supply Establishment in Western Command.

Not only do these women need to have a knowledge of elementary electricity, trigonometry, ballistics, and be able to operate wireless sets and photo-electric apparatus, but they can compile drafts for scientific reports on rocket trials. They know too, how to set up, adjust and operate X-ray apparatus, read and send morse messages by lamp, and use a stop watch accurately to within 5/100s of a second.

Working at hours decided by wind and cloud conditions, and on lonely observation posts on the surrounding hills, or in the plotting room behind the rocket projectors, the auxiliaries find the life interesting and exciting. Neither does the constant swish and bang of different types of rockets affect their nerves.

Most of the technicians had some mathematical ability before joining the Service, although Junior Commander E. Cochrane, of Edinburgh, who is in charge, was in an advertising agency before joining up. Assisting her is another Scottish girl, Subaltern M. McEnhill, of Dumfries, who graduated from Glasgow University with a degree in mathematics and physics. Subaltern McEnhill's husband is also a ballistic expert working with the Ministry of Supply.

Another expert is Company Sergeant Major F. Farr, of Gosberton, under whose guidance the auxiliaries find out what the rocket does in the air and where it goes. Other "rocket" girls include Private I. Webster, of Larbert, Stirlingshire, a one time comptometer operator, Private M. Sowden, of Huddersfield, and Private A. Brotherton, whose civilian job was that of a laboratory assistant.

The A.T.S. at this establishment have only one complaint. Although their job is one of the most highly skilled in the Army, they are not allowed, for security reasons, to wear a distinguishing shoulder flash or badge.

## BRANCH REPORTS

### LONDON BRANCH GAZETTE REPORT

The first happy event to report is, of course, the return for good of the Branch's President, **Miss Edith Thompson**. Miss Thompson received a hearty welcome from all, which undoubtedly showed how glad we were to see her back again. All are looking forward to a happy resumption of reunions with our President, and anticipate all the interesting news and anecdotes that we know Miss Thompson will have to tell us when she has had time to settle in once more amongst us.

At the last reunion, interesting news was given of **L. Regrave**, who is a well-known member of the Branch. Miss Regrave served as a driver at Boulogne during the last war. She has served since the beginning of this in the Civil Defence, Ambulance Section. In this capacity she has driven through some of the worst of the London Blitzes. She has now been appointed to drive a Mobile Canteen with the Church Army in N.W. Europe. The Branch is very proud to learn that one of its members has been given this opportunity of doing such a good job of work overseas, and we wish her the very best of luck and a safe return.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**.—Major and Mrs. Mayhew wish to thank all Members of the Branch who supported the whist drive and auction held in aid of the Prisoners of War Fund, Middlesex Regiment, and who contributed in so large measure to the splendid results obtained. The sum of £17 6s. 6d. was raised, and further donations to the amount of two guineas have since been received. The following Members gave prizes, cakes, etc.:

**Mrs. Downer**, **Miss Bilbrough**, **Miss Thorpe**, **Miss Hayward**, and **Mrs. Garrard**. A very fair proportion of the prizes were won by Old Comrades, as the list below will show:

**Miss Bilbrough**—prize for highest half score in the room.

**Mrs. Courage**—lowest score in the room.

**Miss W. Rogers** won the raffle.

**Mrs. Courage** won the American Auction for silver egg boiler with eggs.

**Miss L. Freeman**, A.T.S., won raffle for new egg boiler. (Hope she enjoyed her breakfast.)

It may be recalled that the egg boiler was originally given by Mrs. Johnston some two years ago, and it then raised £5 for the Wool Comforts Fund. It has now raised a similar sum for the Prisoners of War Fund. We hope that **Mrs. Courage**, the present holder, will keep the ball rolling.

It is hoped to be able to arrange a similar drive some time in May or June. Again many thanks.

**REMINDERS**.—Bring and Buy Sale on 21st April at 3.0. Proceeds for Branch Funds. Please bring along your white elephants. Next Committee Meeting April 21st, at 2.15 p.m.

**REUNIONS**.—These are being held on the first Thursday in the month at 6.15 and the third Saturday in the month at 2.30 p.m. At the last reunion **Mrs. Dowler** was presented with a set of glass dinner mats from Branch members, on the occasion of her marriage.

**PLEASE NOTE** that all branch subscriptions should be sent to the Branch Hon. Treasurer, **Miss D. Hayward**, at The Priory, Reigate, and should NOT be sent to the General Secretary, **Mrs. Johnston**, as this causes Mrs. Johnston much unnecessary work, as well as her own Branch Treasurer. Any other Branch business should be sent to the Branch Secretary, **Mrs. Mayhew**, 25, Denmark Avenue, Epsom, S.W.19. Tel.: Wim. 2789.

Information for new members, reunions are held at 5, Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.

The Theatre Party arranged by **Miss Billing-**

ton will be attended on the 17th March. Tickets were disposed of at the Reunions preceding this date.

Please roll up or send your gifts, etc., for Branch Funds for the 21st April Bring and Buy.

**B. MAYHEW**, Hon. Secretary.

### BRADFORD BRANCH REPORT

January was our Annual Meeting. Twelve members were present. It was a dreadful winter's night, and some had come long journeys, but snow and slush, with sleet driving overhead, did not daunt the spirits of these brave souls. We are thankful for their faithfulness. They brought with them, too, cakes enough and to spare. One member turned up with a huge apple tart on a dinner-plate. After the reports had been read, and the business side attended to, we gathered round and enjoyed our little party, and did a cup of hot tea taste good? Thus we made a flying start in the New Year. A year which we hope will bring peace, and our sons and daughters safely back home.

In February fifteen members were present. We had a special little supper to honour my silver wedding anniversary. "Eat, drink and be merry" was the slogan. This we did. The drink was tea, but it was very refreshing. Time is slipping by, and we are growing older, but we keep these friendships we made in our Service days, and grow young again in thoughts, going back and talking about those old times, as if they were yesterday. We are fortunate in Bradford, away from the doodles, and have many good friends, who help us in every direction. I must finish with this little story: As you know, we meet at the "Limblex Ex-Service Men's Association" rooms. They are known affectionately just as "The Limblex." One member was getting ready to come down one evening, when her small daughter, who was watching, said: "Don't go to the Legless Women's to-night, mum!" Well, we are not quite so bad, are we? Greetings to everybody.

**E. WARD**.

I write to tell you that the February 26th meeting of our Branch was a very happy occasion. We always have a cup of tea and "nice eats" at our monthly meetings, but on this occasion **Mrs. Ward**, our popular Secretary, was celebrating the silver anniversary of her wedding, and provided a veritable feast. We had various sandwiches and delicious meat patties, followed by delightful home-made chocolate truffles that must have taken many sweet coupons to produce, then came a lovely iced cake. It takes war-time fare to appreciate such dainties.

**Mrs. Ward** said that twenty-five years of married life made her feel old, but looking round on our members I was struck by their youthful looks. It is difficult to realise that many of them have sons and daughters in the Forces. Good wishes from all to Mr. and Mrs. Ward.

Yours in Comradeship,  
**A. C. L. GUMMERSALL**, No. 699.

### NORTH STAFFS BRANCH REPORT

We had our Annual General Meeting on Monday, December 4th. There was a good attendance of Q.M.A.A.C. members and two A.T.S. Our finances are satisfactory, and our membership is slowly increasing.

It was decided to have a party early in the New Year. The New Year's Party was held on January 5th. Unfortunately the Secretary was ill and unable to be there, but various members wrote to say what an enjoyable even-

ing they had spent. **Mrs. Smith** was hostess and provided a pre-war supper, followed by fun and games.

We welcome a new member from Kent, **C.S.M. Griffen**, A.T.S., who is stationed at the same camp as **Sergt. Wallis**, who was previously at Stoke.

### FEBRUARY AND MARCH.

By an oversight, the above report was too late to be included in the previous Gazette. My apologies to our distant members, who may have missed the news of the branch.

In February we had a talkative evening. The Secretary showed photographs of Q.M.A.A.C. in the last war, which caused much merriment. The coat-frocks and lengthy skirts were not admired by the younger generation.

At the March meeting we had a demonstration of leather glove-making, which most people found quite interesting. We had hoped to see some of our most recent members, but transport difficulties are too great at present.

**Sergeant Ellis**, who was one of our first A.T.S. members, is to be married as soon as her fiancé returns from the Far East. He is on his way home, so she is expecting her 28 days' leave at any time. **S.M. Hills**, who joined us at the same time, has had an operation for appendicitis since our meeting, and is in hospital. She is making a good recovery and some of the branch members are going to see her.

We are fortunate enough to be able to have our gatherings at **Mrs. Smith's** restaurant, and have decided to form a supper club and invite various people to come and give us short talks on subjects of general interest. We have not yet worked out details, but feel it would be more satisfactory to have a definite plan.

**H. CLOUGH**.

### BRISTOL AND WEST OF ENGLAND BRANCH

This report was left out of the last Gazette by accident. The Editor apologises.

The Annual Meeting of this Branch was held at "The Cosy Café," Clifton, Bristol, on Saturday, the 18th November.

There was a very good attendance, in spite of a pouring wet day, members coming as far afield as Swindon, Gloucester, Taunton, Bath, and outlying districts of Bristol. We now have four ex-A.T.S. and they all turned up for the meeting. Well done.

In view of our increase in membership, it was decided to reform the Committee, the following members being elected:

**Miss A. V. Andrew** (ex-A.T.S.).

**Mrs. M. Clay** (ex-Q.M.A.A.C.).

**Miss F. Nespoli** (ex-A.T.S.).

**Miss E. Walker** (ex-Q.M.A.A.C.).

Our President (**Lady Apsley**) was unable to attend, owing to transport difficulties, but sent her good wishes to our meeting.

**Miss Sims** (Vice-President) gave a cordial welcome to two ex-A.T.S. members, **Miss A. V. Andrew** and **Miss L. Hobbs**, who were attending for the first time. **Miss Hobbs** is now doing Land Army work and is stationed near Taunton, so that her attendance was the result of a valiant effort. **Mrs. Symons** also is to be congratulated in getting down from Swindon.

The Vice-President and Secretary were re-elected for the coming year.

One of our Bath members, **Miss I. Smith**, was unable to make the journey owing to the very bad weather, but she has since written me that she has received an airgraph and letter from **Miss Davison**, in Australia, sending good wishes to our Branch for Christmas. **Miss Smith** has kindly sent her an airgraph and has included our good wishes.

We had the pleasure of two visitors to tea,

Mrs. Clay's Naval Officer son, to whom we would say "Thank you" for coming and giving such pleasure, and would send our very best wishes to him in his journeyings. Also Mrs. Packer's cousin kindly came down from Gloucester with her, for company.

It has been suggested that for our next meeting we should visit the Little Theatre, one Saturday towards the end of January.

#### ILFORD BRANCH

Our February meeting was held at my flat, when five members were present, and Mrs. Sheffield (née Burman, from Henriville Camp). We had a very good time and chatted as usual about old times, etc. Our March meeting should have been at Drutt's, but owing to enemy activity in her district, Drutt thought St. Leonard's was a safer area, so has gone to stay at Oversea for the time being. I believe she is enjoying her stay. We thought of cancelling our meeting owing to so many of the members having a journey and other reasons, and Ford was ill, but Mrs. Curtis kindly offered us to go to her house, and there were five members present. Ford could not come owing to a very bad leg, but I am pleased to say she is much better and now well on the road to recovery. I was able to visit her on behalf of the Branch, and we sent her some nice flowers and fruit, which she appreciated very much. Our next meeting will be at Word's friend's house at Goodmayes. Two members hope to be able to go to the Theatre Party.

#### NOTTINGHAM

At the March meeting held in the Club Room, 14, Heathcote Street, Nottingham, we were very pleased to welcome Miss Hassall, chairman of the United Services, Nottingham Branch, who had a month earlier been transferred to London on some important work, and was paying a long week-end to Nottingham. We will all miss her for she has been a splendid chairman, and guided and steered the Club through a difficult period. Miss Hassall brought with her a very rich fruit cake, which had been sent from New Zealand, and with her usual greatness of heart divided it amongst the members present. Everyone enjoyed the cake mentioning the butter and fruit it contained, and all appreciated Hassall's generosity in sharing her gift.

Mrs. Peters gave some interesting news of her son George, who has been abroad close on 3½ years. We were pleased to hear he has left the desert and is back in civilisation.

We missed our A.T.S. member, Freda Calvert, who has recently been discharged from hospital and certified O.K. We hope the non-appearance does not signify a relapse.

Our two wee babies came to the meeting. They always appear to enjoy the outing. Tony, Mrs. Timmett's grandson, and Michael, Mrs. Gerrish's son. It was suggested by one member that the Club would have to acquire a play-pen as the electric fire appeared to attract both bairns.

Miss Stirland, ex-Waaf member, has kindly agreed to arrange a great family open-air party at Nuthall for Q.M.A.A.C., A.T.S., and W.A.A.F. members and their children, irrespective of age. I believe

husbands and fathers are welcome. Will all members please note the date, the second Sunday in July? Those who have been to Nuthall on previous occasions know how jolly these parties are, and what lovely teas are provided.

N. OSLER, Nottingham Branch Sec.

#### EDINBURGH AND EAST OF SCOTLAND

The Annual General Meeting of the Branch was held on Saturday, December 16th, at 12, Drumsheugh Gardens. This was followed by a reunion of members. Our President was unfortunately unable to be present, and we did not have quite such a good turn-out of members as usual, but the proceedings were greatly enlivened (not that our reunions need any assistance to make them go!) by the presence of Mrs. Reach's grandson, the very happy and beautiful two-years-old son of ex-A.T.S. Sgt. Mary Melvin.

Mrs. M. A. Rattray has been elected to the Committee to represent the A.T.S. members of our Branch. G. D. HARDY.

#### NORTHERN IRELAND

At our Committee Meeting in January it was decided to hold only two meetings in 1945, as the serving members were being kept very busy and had little time for meetings.

We hope to have a meeting in May or early in June and another in December, and to do our best to have a really interesting programme for both, the idea being just to keep the members together until such times as we can revert to our monthly meetings again.

I am sorry I made three mistakes in my last report, which I wish to rectify—namely, our new chairman is Chief Commander Sweitenham. I had Senior Commander. I made the same mistake in one of the Committee. Miss Hind, who is also a Chief Commander, and Miss Dale on the Committee is a Junior Commander.

HELEN H. BELL, Hon. Secretary.

#### SUBALTERN MARRIES IN BRUSSELS AND HONEYMOONS IN PARIS

In September, 1944, Sub. Sylvia Maudsley went to Normandy with a reinforcement section of Second Echelon, 21st Army Group.

In February, 1945, as Sub. Close, she flew back to England on leave to meet her husband, Lt. Peter Close, of the Queen's Royal Regiment, whom she had married a few weeks earlier in Brussels.

Sub. Close and her husband met when they were working in the same unit overseas. They were married in the Embassy Church in Brussels and spent a three days honeymoon in Paris. The Belgian people have shown great kindness and hospitality to the A.T.S., and friends of the bride and bridegroom who were invited to the wedding presented them with three bottles of precious champagne, and insisted on giving the bride an orchid, even though she was married in uniform.

Auxiliaries of the bride's unit formed a

Guard of Honour at the wedding, while the Belgian people threw flowers at the church door.

All electricity was turned off during the day in Brussels, but as a special favour it was switched on for ten minutes to enable the Wedding March to be played on the organ.

Two presents arrived from England for the ceremony, both taken over by plane in charge of the Colonel of the unit, who was returning to duty. One was the wedding ring, bought in London, the other a two-tier wedding cake, beautifully decorated and made by the cooks of the bride's unit, who are still in this country.

Sub. Close, who was an art student at the Lancaster School of Art, joined the A.T.S. in September, 1939, and a year later was promoted from private to sergeant. For most of her service she has done clerical work, and was administrative N.C.O. in the first mixed Ack Ack Battery to be formed. She was commissioned in November, 1941, and as an officer worked mostly in Holding Units.

#### THE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Every member of the A.T.S. will shortly receive a letter from Chief Controller L. V. L. E. Whateley, C.B.E. She has written this because, after 15 months as Director she has found that despite every effort and constant touring she has been unable to visit all units now that the A.T.S. is so large and serves over such a vast area in the Middle East, East Africa, Italy, the Caribbeans, U.S.A. and North West Europe as well as Great Britain.

She refers to the good name which the A.T.S. has earned and the fact that the task of women in uniform is made so difficult by the constant call of home as well as the call of service.

She assures everyone who has volunteered for overseas Service that they will be sent abroad the moment there is a sufficiently large demand for A.T.S. trained in their particular jobs, and that they will certainly go before anyone doing similar employment is compulsorily drafted. She repeats the assurances already given that married women, or single women with genuine compassionate grounds for remaining in this country will not be sent abroad and that all A.T.S. will be released with their age and Service group whether they are at home or abroad.

Chief Controller Whateley adds that Field Marshals Alexander and Montgomery and other great soldier leaders overseas are asking for A.T.S. to be sent out to their commands and that the women who go will enable soldiers who have been separated from their families during years of overseas Service to be repatriated.

"Many of you will marry and bring children into the world," the letter ends, "and we are not going to have it laid at our door that for want of a little more selfishness on our part now our children or our husbands might have to go through the horrors of another war. I have implicit faith in you and know that you will not fail in the last lap of the race."

#### A.T.S. WITH B.L.A. PRODUCE OWN REVUE

One of the smallest and most isolated mixed units of the B.L.A.—the War Office Selection Board, which is staffed by Army officers and A.T.S. cooks, clerks and orderlies—has designed, written and produced its own revue.

Unlike most of the units with which A.T.S. serve in N.W. Europe, the W.O.S.B. is very small and is fairly isolated so that there is not much outside entertainment available. When the little company decided to produce its own show the Commanding Officer allowed it to be called after him, so it was known as "Waigh's Wonders."

At first the difficulties seemed insuperable—there was no piano, stage, curtains, make-up or costumes, no music and no one who could play by ear, and no script. Only one or two members of the unit had ever taken part in amateur theatricals before. In fact the production was a triumph of ingenuity and improvisation.

The monks of a nearby monastery, who, in an earlier emergency had offered the use of their laundry washtubs as baths, now produced a piano and the materials to make a stage, as well as some curtains. Belgian families lent precious articles of civilian clothing, and one young university student fetched a top hat and frock coat from his home nearly 20 miles away. Theatrical makeup was run to earth in a shop in the nearest town.

Some of the cast of 20 could sing, so they decided to write their own lyrics and compose original tunes, some of which had to be played by two pianists—one for the bass and one for the treble, owing to the lack of expert players.

Among the A.T.S. in one of the sketches was Private J. Matthews, of Northampton, aged 20, who used to be a shorthand typist before joining the A.T.S. Corporal S. Sumner, of Preston, played a part in three of the sketches. She has been in the service since the beginning of 1940 and before that was a shop assistant. Lance Corporal J. Du Rose, who acted with her as clerk to the Selection Board psychiatrist. She comes from Teddington and was a bank clerk before joining the A.T.S. Sergeant E. Chapman, one of the stars of a sketch "Virtue Rewarded" has served with the British Army Staff in Washington for 18 months. Her home is in Long Eaton, Nottingham, and she joined up in 1939.

An audience of 100 guests, including civilian friends as well as members of neighbouring units, was invited. As the show had been rehearsed under difficulties owing to members of the company working on different shifts, prizes were offered for the detection of "six deliberate mistakes" in order to camouflage any unintentional errors. The Commanding Officer presided at the debate as to which of the many mistakes were the deliberate ones still continues.

The revue was a tremendous success and led to repeated requests for another show as soon as possible. Now the sequel "Waigh's Wonders Again—and Why Not?" is shortly to be produced.

#### FLYING BOMBS AGAIN

The soldiers in a camp in Southern England are full of praise for their A.T.S. cooks and orderlies. Early one morning, when the first cookhouse shift had just gone on duty, the sirens went and A.A. guns could be heard firing. The A.T.S. went on getting breakfasts for hundreds of soldiers, until Sergeant E. Bryant, who was in charge of the shift, heard a fly-bomb approaching. She told her shift to get down the basement steps, remaining herself in the cookhouse until all the auxiliaries were down. They were just in time, for the fly-bomb landed on the men's quarters not very many yards away, causing some fatal casualties and many injuries.

Sergeant Bryant had time to see that her auxiliaries were unhurt, while herself being careful to hide a bad cut she had received on the forehead while she was waiting to see the rest of the women down the steps. Then she was taken to hospital, where she was detained for some days.

The rest of the A.T.S. carried on straight away. Glass was scattered everywhere and had ruined the food they were preparing, but every one of the soldiers in the barracks had his breakfast at the usual time and, as the cooks proudly say, "They had FISH for breakfast." The fish was all right because it was in the oven. "We got out the emergency rations, and anything we could lay our hands on. Some of the ovens were not working properly, but in about twenty minutes we were making tea for the men."

As soon as the bomb fell, the cooks and orderlies from the off-duty shifts ran up to the cookhouse and helped the duty shift, while other women went to the help of the wounded men. While the cooks were preparing tea and breakfast, the orderlies took cups of tea to the wounded men waiting in the M.I. room for first aid.

Corporal M. J. Sawyer, of Bermondsey, who was in charge of the shift of orderlies, organised the tea for the wounded men. "When we got to the M.I. room we found the girls there already, combing class out of the men's hair," she said. "When we took the tea round we had to cool it down with water, because some of the men had such cut lips they couldn't drink it hot."

This was only one of many days when the A.T.S. cooked meals with steel helmets above their white overalls, diving under tables at the last moment. An officer relates the story of auxiliaries working in a nearby cookhouse, during another incident. A flying bomb landed near, and the officer's steel helmet was blown right off her head. She picked herself up and went into another part of the cookhouse, where she saw two A.T.S. cooks standing at a table taking the stones out of dates. The dates and the stones had to be put into separate basins. The cooks were carrying on stoning their dates throughout the incident—and not one date or stone got into the wrong bowl!

#### A.T.S. OVERSEA

##### TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—So many things have been said for and against the compulsory posting of the A.T.S. overseas that your readers may like to see the enclosed extract from a letter which I have just received from a young trooper aged 20, who is now with the B.L.A. 19/2/45

"... But we treat Brussels like London. Why is this? Simply because you have a saucer beneath your teacup; and further because of the prevalence of British girls. That puts us on our best behaviour and teaches us, or rather re-teaches us, the ideal of the 'gentleman.' It is extraordinary how the heaven of Atterly has worked in Brussels; I suppose there's not one A.T. to five soldiers, but the tone of behaviour and attitude is incomparably higher than anywhere I have seen on the Continent. ... What a grand education and experience for them, too, to live and work in Brussels in 1945. I just cannot understand the yells which went up when overseas conscription was introduced. On principle, I am sure, it's admirable that every one should spend a few of their years of education away from home—better still abroad. And all the girls I spoke to said they were having the time of their lives—even those on the lonely searchlight sites. And I wish you could see for yourselves the fine job they are doing, not only in driving brigadiers round but in restoring some of the prestige the soldiers have dissipated, and in maintaining both our morale and morality. ..."

Yours faithfully,

THELMA CAZALET KEIR.

House of Commons, March 14.

#### PRINCESS ON OTHER SIDE OF A ROYAL VISIT

Princess Elizabeth has left No. 1 A.T.S. Mechanical Training Centre with a certificate that she is a tested driver capable of driving and maintaining all classes of Army vehicles.

She had taken her final test and passed theoretical and practical.

Those who trained with her on the three-weeks course say the Princess was a jolly companion.

It was fun for the Princess when first her aunt, the Princess Royal, and then the King and Queen, came to inspect the training centre.

The Princess said: "I have never seen a royal visit from the inside before. I did not know how much preparation went on."

Princess Elizabeth will be 19 on Saturday, April 21st.

#### ON ACTIVE SERVICE

**BOUGHEY.**—On Saturday, January 20th, 1945, at Chislehurst, Mary Ursula Boughey, Junior Commander, A.T.S., youngest daughter of the Reverend P. F. and Mrs. Boughey, of Soham Vicarage, Cambridgeshire, and Narborough House, Norfolk. Military service at Fooks Cray Parish Church, to-morrow (Wednesday), at 2.30. Committal at Narborough, Norfolk, Thursday, at 2 p.m.

## EAST AFRICA COMMAND

Extract from a description written by a shorthand-typist employed with the Army Post Office:-

"We are rightly proud of our Army Postal Service in this Command. We have a vast territory to cover, from the Somalilands to the far flung Isles of the Mauritius and Madagascar, and it is our special pride to ensure that the forces in all corners of these territories receive their mail in record time. As the regular receipt of mail has such a high bearing on morale, I feel we are a very responsible "Service" indeed. Normal routine is only broken when large sea mails arrive in their thousands of bags to be sorted and distributed along with the usual air and local mails. During such periods the Army Postal Service will be working to 23.59 hours for a matter of 2 or 3 days, but the kindly head of the Service has accepted only volunteers from the A.T.S. on these long hours. Indeed, the heat and high altitude of this H.Q. are factors to bear in mind, and one is much more easily tired than in cooler lands.

"Some of us miss the unaccountable changes of the English climate, but the regular appearance of the sun in this country has definite advantages, for instance in regard to sport, which flourishes in this group in spite of the lazy climate and the many distractions. Netball, Hockey, Rounders, Cricket, Badminton, Lacrosse and Tennis all have their followers. The latest departure in sport is fencing classes, and apart from sport and entertainments such as cinema shows and gramophone recitals held at the Camp, dancing at the Kudu Club perhaps is the most popular. The meaning of the word 'Kudu' is clear, for there are Kudus, a variety of East African buck, looking down enquiringly from all directions. Another popular form of amusement of the more serious sort is provided by the Italian Central Orchestra Concerts.

"Something should be said about the way we spend our leave. Not only are the local people most kind and hospitable in entertaining us, but also for the auxiliary who wants to see the sights of Africa and enjoy its thrills there are unlimited opportunities. Auxiliaries have been taken on 'safari,' and have seen all sorts of big game, and some were even lucky enough to see lion."

### OBITUARY

FORD.—Miss C. M., of 7, Hillcrest Road, Romford, Essex, passed away on November 29th, 1944, after a long and very painful illness. She served in Q.M.A.A.C. at the Officers' Command Depot, Eastbourne, and at Le Havre as Assistant Foreman. Miss Ford had been a member of London Branch since 1929.

## A.F.H.Q.

A.T.S. members of A.F.H.Q. are fortunate in the opportunities that are open for them for studying the best architecture and art in the world, and of hearing opera. Most of them are not slow to realise that it is far easier to learn by seeing realities, than by any amount of A.B.C.A. lectures. Officers and Other Ranks are learning Italian by attending language classes which are arranged either by their Units, Education Centres, Welfare or N.A.A.F.I.

A small measure of resentment has been felt by A.T.S. in the Command by the publication in an Army paper of an article stating that soldiers will not want to marry girls who have been in the Forces overseas, as "their heads have been turned by having too good a time." The A.T.S. reaction to this statement is that the Service is keeping up its tradition of working hard, and it is not possible to give as much of their free time as they would like to soldiers who are off duty. Dancing during the week must be limited, let alone that transport to a dance over rough roads is in itself a wearying affair. They wish whenever possible to cheer up the soldiers, and they appreciate how every care is taken of them by the men.

Members of the Service at home are much in their thoughts, and their message to the directed A.T.S. is that life overseas is great fun, and that not one girl—even the homesick—regrets her adventure.

An A.T.S. Officer who has just returned from visiting Italy was impressed by the extent to which women who are serving overseas are learning about life in occupied countries, and consequently how much they will have to teach on their return home.

### HOMES FOR AGED EX-SERVICE PEOPLE

From The British Legion Journal

The question of establishing homes for aged ex-Service people, probably at the seaside, was advanced a stage further at a recent meeting of the British Legion Benevolent Committee.

It is estimated that the initial cost may be up to £25,000 for the first home, and maintenance may be anything up to £8,000 a year.

#### Legion Homes—Women Eligible

Colonel Crosfield told the Benevolent Committee that he had found, on inquiry, that there were a number of ageing ex-Service women, who would be qualified and very suitable candidates for the home.

Indeed, it would be an advantage to have a women's hostel attached to the home, because the women would take part in social functions and thus promote a good atmosphere.

## SQUARE PEGS IN SQUARE HOLES

Everyone who joins the Service is given a series of tests and a personal interview with a trained Personnel Selection Officer who takes into account the many factors affecting the recruits choice of job. The results of tests and interviews all ensure that as far as possible the auxiliary will be given employment in keeping with her talents and temperament.

With the exception of a simple intelligence test, given at the time of enlisting, all these tests and interviews are given at the recruits' Basic Training Centre, where there is a Personnel Selection team consisting of two or three Officers and Sergeant testers.

Seven tests are given. They measure general intelligence; mechanical aptitude; standard reached in simple arithmetic; ability to understand and handle words; and sense of spatial relations (Fitters' eye) which is of importance in mechanical trades. Clerical and standardised spelling tests complete the number.

The interview with the P.S.O. is important because the woman's civilian employment records, her test results, general interests, abilities and attainments must all be considered. The recruit can, of course, ask questions during the interview. Personnel Selection Officers are carefully chosen for their job and trained to assess the educational standard of the recruit, to understand her civilian employment, note evidence of leadership as well as taking into account such immediately practical problems as the neatness or otherwise of her appearance and what her voice will sound like on the telephone.

Civilian qualifications and employment are always a useful guide in the choice of the A.T.S. job, for they may show skill and experience which can be immediately used. They can provide other clues, for instance if a woman is shown by the tests to be of high intelligence and yet has been "in a rut" in her civilian job for 15 years, it may show that she lacks initiative and ambition. If, on the other hand, a woman of less intelligence has been doing the same job for the same length of time, it may show a commendable use of limited ability.

Recruits are given talks on the various types of work offered to them and are asked to say which trade they would prefer to do, giving a second choice as well. The P.S.O. then classifies each recruit, bearing in mind all her qualifications, her own choice of work and the number of current vacancies in each trade. She then tells the auxiliary to which job she is considered to be suited and explains what they entail in such matters as rates of pay, chances of promotion and any other particular the recruit may require.

If, after a fair trial, a change of job seems desirable in the interests of the service and of the auxiliary, she has the chance of going to a Selection Centre where she can be re-classified. From time to time, opportunities occur for non-tradeswomen to volunteer for training in a more skilled occupation and so qualify for higher rates of pay.

## BEWARE!

The British Legion is trying every possible way to safeguard men and women leaving the Forces from landing themselves in businesses which they cannot make a success.

Here are two cases.

### "LORRY FOR SALE"

An ex-Service man desirous of setting himself up in business, answered an advertisement in a London evening paper, wherein a lorry was offered for sale for £140. The advertisement also stated that a "B" licence could be arranged, so that, in effect, he would be able to start work immediately.

Upon inquiry, the vendors told him that a petrol licence would be arranged for, and that, furthermore, adequate and remunerative work would be found upon which he could embark with the lorry.

### TALK ON THE 'PHONE

In order to give colour to this statement, the client was introduced over the telephone to another man, purporting to be a contractor, who assured him that work would undoubtedly be forthcoming.

He later saw this man, who undertook to arrange for the insurance, road fund licence, and the "B" licence, stating that the last-mentioned would not take more than a fortnight.

The client was prevailed upon to part with £23 for tax and insurance.

After paying a proportion of the purchase price and signing a note regarding the payment of the balance, the purchaser waited in anticipation of the work which had been promised him and for the licences which were to be forthcoming.

### SOLICITORS CONSULTED

Nothing transpired, and after many fruitless approaches, he informed the vendors that he was consulting solicitors, and placing the matters in the hands of the police.

As a result of this threat he was given work of a kind which was quite unsuitable, did not require a "B" licence, and which, furthermore, resulted in serious injury to his health.

Being destitute, he was forced to carry out this work. He then made independent inquiries, and discovered that the lorry was not worth more than £20, and was of such an age and condition that there was never any possibility of a "B" licence being obtained in respect of it.

Unfortunately, after putting the whole matter into the hands of the Legion's legal department, the man very foolishly accepted a sum of money from the vendors in settlement, thus depriving the Legion of the opportunity of taking adequate action.

### A SMALL HOLDING

Another ex-Service man answered an advertisement in a Lancashire paper of highest repute, wherein a cottage and holding was offered for sale and an agreement to be signed to the effect that purchaser should retain the vendor as a lodger.

## COUNCIL MEETING

Will all members of Council please note that the date of the next Meeting of Council has been fixed for **TUESDAY, 15th MAY, 1945, at 6.15 p.m.** The Agenda will be sent, as usual, ten days before the Meeting.

## THE NEW BADGE

The new badge is a gold lioness rampant on a beech brown background. She will be surrounded by a laurel wreath and the name of the Association will be on a scroll at the base of the badge. I hope to be able to reproduce the badge in our next number. It will look very grand on our front page, and will symbolise the unity between all comrades of every age and war. The Editor cut her first tooth on Armistice Day, 1918, and she for one will wear the badge with a deep sense of the honour of belonging to the same band as the great people who served before and paved the way for us.

Some of you may be dismayed at "beech brown," but it is not as dull as it sounds. It is the colour of the red gorget patches (tabs) and hat-band of controllers and their superiors. It is the colour inside the top of A.T.S. forage caps. It is an orangey-red. The idea for the badge came from one who served in both the Q.M.A.A.C. and A.T.S. It was designed by one who served in neither. She is Miss G. A. George, an ex-W.A.A.F.

### THE DUCHESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND'S COMFORT FUND A.T.S.

The Comforts Fund received a windfall of rubber hot water bottles from Army Welfare Services. We decided to give them to all sick bays, and the officers of the A.T.S., as gestures of gratitude for six years of unflinching courtesy and co-operation that we have received from the A.T.S. officers. A further consignment has been distributed to H.Q. of each Command to be sent to those units whose auxiliaries need them most. A.A. C/M. has decided to distribute theirs to the Mixed Regiments in the Diver Belt.

We are making an appeal for friends to carry on the good work of the Comforts Fund; by an interesting coincidence, we received our first two cheques, each for £25, on the same day from Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan and Chief Controller Whateley, both firm friends of the Fund. Both Directors, past and present, sent their donations spontaneously, as the Appeal has not yet been sent out.

We have added the care of A.T.S. overseas to our activities, and each auxiliary is equipped with a full set of woollen comforts from the Fund before she leaves the country. We have visits from the A.T.S. Staff Officers from S.H.A.E.F. B.L.A., and C.M.F.; in this way we know the actual conditions and needs of the A.T.S. overseas—a plentiful supply of rubber hot water bottles for all ranks, comfort bags and sick bay equipment has been supplied, and we are trying to keep up a steady flow of recreation room amenities. If the Home Front goes a little short, they will realise that with the restriction of supplies, the overseas girls must come first.

Any lawyer would probably have advised against such an arrangement, knowing full well the friction that would be likely to arise, and particularly having regard to the inexperience of the purchaser in running a small holding of this nature.

The man in question soon found himself involved in difficulties, and discomforts such as can be readily imagined, and was at last compelled to approach the Legion for legal advice on his position.

We did what we could under the circumstances; but the belief that because an advertisement appears in the columns of a reputable newspaper, this is in itself a guarantee of good faith, dies hard.

Newspapers do their best to ensure that only bona fide advertisements shall appear in their columns, but it is up to anyone who answers an advertisement to beware of the hidden dangers.

### M.E.F.

The Rose Bowl presented by the Veteran Motorists Association to promote safe driving amongst A.T.S., was handed by D.D.A.T.S. to 513 (DTW) Company A.T.S., commanded by Senior Commander M. McKenzie, M.B.E. The training of this Company has, during the past three years, produced 1,250 drivers, which include British, Palestinian and Cypriot A.T.S., and also low medical category men, Palestinians, Syrians, West Africans, Basutes and mixed U.N.R.R.A. teams.

The draft of W.O.'s and N.C.O.'s sent out as replacements for tour expired A.T.S. were sent for ten days (between courses) to the A.T.S. O.C.T.U. and N.C.O.'s Wing at Sarafand to gain local colour. They did this by visiting British and Palestinian Companies, Jewish Settlements, an Arab village, the Municipality of Tel Aviv and the School of Hygiene, and also spent a day in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. All agreed that this scheme has been of great value.

A most successful exhibition of A.T.S. dressmaking was held in Jerusalem recently. The classes were organised by a prominent member of the Women's International Zionist Organisation, and included about equal numbers of British and Palestinian students. The Exhibition, which was opened by D.D.A.T.S., was considered by all who attended to show quite exceptional talent, considering the short time that the classes had been run.

Senior A.T.S. Officers in Egypt attended a reception given by the Prime Minister of Egypt on the occasion of the 25th Birthday of H.M. King Farouk.

### DO YOU LIVE IN BOURNEMOUTH?

Bournemouth Branch is short of members, and anxious to become active again now that things are more peaceful. The Secretary, Miss E. M. Trotter, C.B.E., 4, East Avenue, will be glad to welcome any A.T.S. or ex-Service members who work or live nearby who would get in touch with her.

## A.T.S. EXPLAINS HER WORK

Hilda Pink, ex-Junior Commander, A.T.S., has written to the General Secretary about her present work.

"Well, about Factory Hostels; and my work in them, which happened really through my A.T.S. experience. Briefly, I joined the A.T.S. in 1939, and after working as a clerk to a Group Commander for some eight months, received my Commission. When I reported to my Unit as a nervous 2nd Subaltern, I was told that I was to be "Messing Officer." I murmured simultaneously a dutiful "Yes, Ma'am," and a prayer for the Troops' insides, and went to it. When discharged on compassionate grounds in 1942, I held the appointment of Specialist Messing Officer, and food and cooks' training no longer had any terror for me. After three years, I knew the answers, and so was a suitable candidate to open and manage hostels for factory workers. Naturally a manager must have administrative and welfare knowledge as well as catering, but the Army gives it all. I feel the A.T.S. might like to know how the people who make the shells and other implements of war live.

"On the face of it, they would appear to score, hands down, though fundamentally they lack that indefinable 'something' which makes Army life and its memory something to be treasured.

This is a typical hostel. Situated in some of the most beautiful English countryside, it caters and cares for 500 men and women, whose ages range from 18 to 50 and whose work varies from the most secret designing to labouring: every skilled and unskilled section included, and everyone living cheek by jowl. The results are interesting in the extreme, though from the manager's point of view it is not easy to find a common denominator.

"As for the hostel itself—picture a central building—low and long and attractively decorated. There is a long hall, usually with flowers about, bright settees and chairs as in a hotel, and as in a hotel the Reception Office at the entrance, where from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. specially trained clerks are available to receive money, give out letters, answer inquiries, deal with all problems of bedrooms, etc., and to sift out more important problems before they reach the manager. Opposite the Reception is the Welfare Office, where the Welfare Officer or assistant must be available at all times for the planning of amusements, the solving of problems, the supervision of countless tournaments and the conducting of the 'Residents' Committee.' The latter body meets weekly or fortnight to receive complaints, to arrange amusements, and to tell the manager what the residents think—a safety valve, in fact. Behind the Reception is the Accountants' Office, where the multitudinous accounts are co-ordinated, and then the Manager's Office. The Manager who wishes to bide peaceably is usually available at least all the morning and from 5 p.m. until closing time, and the optimistic hope to get the normal administrative work done between the many interruptions and problems and public duties which abound. Any Manager who gets away with less than a fourteen-hour day is either a genius or a shirker.

"Returning to the main hall, one passes from Reception to attractive bays with small tables, and easy chairs too. On the left the Canteen, and on the right the Assembly Hall. "The Canteen is a long, bright room with coloured washable tables for eight, and coloured chairs. The modern and spotless kitchen is at the back. A three-course breakfast is served from, say, 5 a.m. until 9.30 a.m. (and it has to be hot and good), and a three-course dinner from 5 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Lunch is served to staff, night workers, sick people and those on leave, and the number might be 80 to 300 for this meal, without any hope of knowing beforehand. There are windows in the canteen along both walls, which have folk-weave curtains. The wireless and loudspeakers never stop.

Opposite, the Assembly Hall caters for amusement. The floor is perfect for dancing, and is also marked for Badminton. Settees and chairs range against the walls. There is, of course, a stage, and the most modern lighting for plays—spotlights, limelights, etc. At the back are dressing rooms, lavatories and showers. Curtains of orange velvet conceal the stage with back and side curtains in attractive grey, and, of course, there are footlights and a very grand piano. There is some form of entertainment every night—C.E.M.A., E.N.S.A., cinema shows, local plays; sometimes the 'residents' themselves even put on a play. All through Sunday Badminton is played until the evening, when there is a cinema show.

"Leaving the Assembly Hall one enters the Lounge, a large, attractive room with tables, armchairs and deep settees. It has French windows on to the grounds and looks over the hills for as far as the eye can see. It adjoins the 'Tea Bar'—unanimously voted the most successful and popular spot of any hostel. From it the residents buy tea, coffee, cakes, sandwiches, Horlicks, bovril, and the rest. It opens in the afternoon from about 3.30 to 5, and again in the evening from 8 p.m. until 11. Residents get what they want and carry it into the lounge, the hall or the terrace. Many optimistic Managers have begun by refusing to have a deposit and by making many and varied appeals to better nature, but the experienced Manager institutes it at once, and then there are no hard feelings at all. A Manager is lucky who can open a hostel and start it from the word go with every circumstance provided for. Residents will always accept initial regulations; it is the additions they bitterly resent. This is, of course, unfortunate for the good Manager who, by chance, follows his slack, and has to add to the few rules.

"From the main building one walks 'up the garden path' to the sleeping blocks, in each of which 68 men or women are housed, two per room. Each room has its h. and c., electric light, two built-in wardrobes, and two chests of drawers, and two windows. Each corridor of 16 has its bath, shampoo room, shower, drying cupboard and electric iron and ironing board. Each block has its sitting room, with armchairs, writing tables, and quite often wireless. These sitting rooms are usually most attractive, and each block can, if it wishes, be a little community on its own. Each women's block houses a warden, a sort of mother-cum-housekeeper of the block, who can be a vital link between residents and Manager, and whose job is, apart from supervising the cleanliness and the work of her housemaids, to take care of all the residents' ills, from heartache to toe-ache. A Manager possessing good wardens is extremely lucky, and kept well in touch. The gardens around the centre block are the Manager's business. Residents may develop those around the sleeping blocks as they choose, and they vary from onions to roses, and a fine display of individualism it is.

"Lastly, there is the Sick Bay—an entirely

separate block, administered by a Sister and a nurse. There are at least two wards, one for men and one for women, up to 12 beds each, attractively furnished and decorated, with individual lighting over each bed and wireless. There are isolation wards, an out-patients' room, a waiting room, a sitting room, and sister and nurses' quarters, plus bathrooms, kitchen, etc. Usually a gem of a building, and under a good sister it is popular socially and professionally. Patients call for a cut thumb, a burn, appendicitis or worse, and all old patients make frequent calls afterwards—an important section of hostel work and far-reaching in good hands. A local doctor is appointed as visiting Physician, and holds a surgery at the hostel twice a week, though residents are under the N.H.I. and can choose their own doctor if they desire.

"This, then, is the hostel layout. The staff is many and varied.

"At 11 p.m. the wise Manager 'plugs in' on the wireless to the Forces 'God Save the King,' puts the lights out in the main block, and hopes that the rest of the night is his or her own. (Mostly it isn't.) The night watchmen take over and call the Manager in any untoward circumstance—probably three times a week!

"The Factory Hostel, as can be seen, is very different from the Barrack Room—the former has all material comforts, the latter has the quality of spirit and comradeship which furnishes it completely. The A.T.S. have no need to envy their civilian sisters—I know—I've tried both."

### A.T.S. WIN COOKERY SHIELD FROM ARMY

For the first time a centre with A.T.S. cooks and instructors and an A.T.S. administrative officer has won the gold shield which is open for competition by the Army and A.T.S.

Not only did the standard of cooking contribute to the award, but cleanliness, originality, discipline and capability helped the A.T.S. to win it from their male rivals.

Two of the instructors, Q.M.S.I. Salter, a former draper's assistant of Ottery St. Mary, Devon, and Q.M.S.I. MacLeod of Inverness, who was formerly cook to the Countess of Cawdor, also received certificates of merit from the G.O.C.-in-C. Western Command, Lt.-Gen. D. J. Watson, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., at a special ceremony.

## THE OUTLOOK OF THE FUTURE

Your Council have under consideration a suggestion for making the next issue of the "Gazette" a more convenient smaller size with more pages, and possibly the New Badge introduced into the heading.

## LOOKING AFTER B.L.A. MEN ON LEAVE

For many weeks hundreds of A.T.S. in London have been scrubbing, cleaning, and clearing up in empty buildings, helping to turn them into bright cheerful clubs. Now they are reaping the reward of long hours of hard, dirty work, as one by one the hostels are opening—and the A.T.S. have the pleasure of welcoming and looking after men home on leave from the B.L.A.

Soldiers from North-West Europe can get a bed from 1/- and meals for 9d. to 1/3d. if they choose to stay at one of the London District leave hostels during their leave. If their draft is held up after they have reported back at the end of their leave, the hostels will give them free meals and a free bed. They are run by various voluntary organisations in co-operation with Army Welfare.

Many girls who have just joined the A.T.S. have gone to them straight from their Training Centre—and say that it is just the sort of job they joined up to do. Other auxiliaries have come from A.A. batteries. Sergeant M. Reeve, of Bristol, expressed their feeling when she said, "Now that we are not wanted on the gun-sites any more, we feel that this is the most worth-while job we could have been transferred to."

The kitchens of the hostels are staffed entirely by cooks and a few days after the first A.T.S. had arrived at a Salvation Army Hostel, Mrs. Pearce, who runs the hostel with her husband, said, "I am never going to buy any more cakes—the A.T.S. make them so much better."

Most of the hostels will provide a snack meal at any hour of the night, and some are prepared to provide a cooked supper up to midnight. At the Y.M.C.A. hostel in Park Lane, the A.T.S. cooks stand by until midnight if there is a rush of men coming home on leave. At a Y.M.C.A. breakfasts sometimes have to be provided at 4 a.m. The other duties of the auxiliaries are waiting in the canteens, keeping buildings clean, making beds, and changing sheets—which are the greatest luxury for men who have been fighting.

Many of the A.T.S. have relations in the B.L.A. whom they are looking forward to welcoming at one of the hostels, for example, Private W. Murphy, of Barry, South Wales, who is hoping to see her brother home any minute, and is going to meet all leave trains in her off duty time.

These auxiliaries all take a tremendous pride in their work—for they know that on them rests the responsibility of giving the first welcome home to many men straight from the fighting line.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Westminster Hotel,  
1607—17th Street, N.W.  
Washington 9, D.C.  
January 31, 1945

Dear Mrs. Johnston,

I really feel almost ashamed to send you my greetings so late. You will think I am sending for next Christmas—well, anyhow, it will be in time for that! I got a card for you and did not seem to get time to write you a letter, until now.

This week I am sending you a Money Order for five shillings for my subscription to the Association, and for the Gazette. I enjoy reading the Gazette very much, and always look forward to its coming. I think it is a fine idea that the A.T.S. have joined us, as the spirit of our Association will now go on much longer.

I read in the paper that you had a nice snowy Christmas, but we had a very wet one here. I went for Christmas dinner to the Kinlocks' (Jarvie, an ex-W.A.A.C.). She has two lovely little girls of eight and six, and it is always nice to spend Christmas where there are children, and needless to say I had a lovely dinner, as "Jarvie" is such an excellent cook.

The war news is certainly very good, and people here seem to expect it to end any minute now. It will be a blessing when it ends, especially for you people in England. I have seen several interesting films exhibited by the British Ministry of Information, showing conditions in England. One was "The Battle of Britain," showing the hard times you had during 1940 and 1941. Another was "V.I.," and told us about the robot bombs. I was shocked at the damage that they had done, and also by the number that came over at once, as when I hear on the radio that robot planes have been over London, I imagine just one or two, but the pictures showed numbers of them coming at once; they almost looked like flocks of birds migrating, there were so many of them. I was also shocked to hear that they came over continuously for 80 days and nights. What a terrible time you must have had. Another film was "Mulberry Harbour," and showed us the wonderful harbour that was built in England in sections and then towed to France on D-Day. What a wonderful engineering feat that was. Another film was "Western Approaches," and was the story of a convoy crossing the Atlantic; and of course, it was all quite thrilling. These films are shown privately and tickets are sent to the various British Missions, and I am always very pleased to get one.

A few weeks ago Americans were warned that robot planes might drop bombs on New York, Washington, and other cities on the East Coast, but hardly anybody believes such a thing really possible. Chickens, meat, butter and cigarettes are getting very scarce; also coal, but, fortunately for me, the Westminster is heated by oil, and so I am warm enough. I am also quite warm at the office, for which I am thankful, as we are having bitter cold weather now.

Turkeys were very scarce at Christmas, and some stores sold them by auction to the highest bidder.

I wonder if you have any news of Eleanor Teall, who was interned at Vittel, France, for about four years? I understand that the prisoners were liberated on September 13th, but I have never heard from her. I sent her a Christmas card and a form letter, but it was returned to me by the Censor with a note on it, saying that she would not be there, and that I must wait until I get her address and then write through the ordinary post. However, since I have not heard from her, I really do not know where she is. Another ex-W.A.A.C. I often think about is Mrs. J. G. Jones, who used to live in China. I often wonder what has become of her and her family as I have not heard from her since 1939.

I had a short holiday at the end of September, and went to Natural Bridge, Virginia. On the way I stopped off at New Market to see the Endless Caverns. They are really endless, as they stretch out for about 18 miles under the hills, but only two miles are open to the public, and it takes about one hour to walk through them. They are really beautiful and wonderful, and scientists say they are 125 million years old.

At Natural Bridge, the chief attraction is, of course, the bridge, which is formed by the natural joining together of two mountains. I think the guide said it was about four million years old—quite a child compared to the Endless Caverns. Every night at 8 p.m. there is a Pageant held at the bridge. The story of the Creation is read, and sacred songs are played and the bridge is illuminated. It makes quite an impressive service.

This seems to be all I can think of to tell you, so I will close with best wishes to you for a happy and peaceful 1945.

Yours sincerely,  
GEORGINA BLANCHARD.

From W/1714 R.S.M. G. O. Davies.  
My dear Editor.

Too late for Christmas greetings, but I do wish you and all members a very happy and, we hope, victorious New Year.

I have been a member of A.A. Command since the outbreak of war, and I have wandered round our country quite a lot, and have now been stationed in the London area for about three months. My next move, I hope, will be home. I have no regrets in joining our Service, and am proud to belong to the A.T.S., but like everyone else, am just longing for peace.

The organisation of our service has increased 100 per cent. I remember my first job as a Private, 5½ years ago, we were billeted in a house which had no heating, light or water, but we just grinned and thought it grand. Now we have everything that anyone could wish for.

Yours very sincerely,  
G. O. DAVIES.

Will all contributors please note that any particulars they wish included in the next issue of the "Gazette" should reach the Editor not later than the 15th of May, 1945, Mrs. Richard Addis, Woodside Frant, Sussex.

**BRANCHES**

|                                        |                                                                             |                                                                  |                                                               |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Active Service</b>                  | Mrs. Richard Addis, Woodside, Frant, Sussex.                                |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Adelaide</b>                        | Miss L. M. Smith,<br>52, Wattle Avenue,<br>Brighton, Adelaide, Australia.   |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Birmingham.</b>                     | Miss E. I. Dipple,<br>17, Somerset Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham. 20.   |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Blackpool.</b>                      | Mrs. K. Fry,<br>136 Albert Road, Blackpool.                                 |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Bournemouth.</b>                    | Miss E. M. Trotter, C.B.E.,<br>4, East Avenue, Bournemouth.                 |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Bradford.</b>                       | Mrs. E. Ward,<br>35, Legrams Avenue, Bradford                               | Limbley Ex-Service Men's Club,<br>King's Parade, Bradford        | Last Monday in month<br>from 6.30 onwards                     |
| <b>Brighton.</b>                       | Mrs. E. C. Jolly,<br>107 Preston Drive,<br>Brighton, 6.                     | Aqua Restaurant,<br>Old Steine,<br>Brighton.                     | Not fixed.<br>Wednesday, 7.30 p.m.                            |
| <b>Bristol and West of England.</b>    | Miss B. Mould,<br>11, The Tynning, Bath, Somerset                           |                                                                  | Not fixed.                                                    |
| <b>Cheltenham.</b>                     | Mrs. Mann, Cornerways, Churchdown, Gloucester.                              |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Edinburgh and East of Scotland.</b> | Mrs. G. D. Hardy,<br>51 Lockhart Ave., Edinburgh 11.                        | Women's United Services Club,<br>12 Drumsheugh Grdns., Edinburgh | 1st Tuesday of each<br>month, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.               |
| <b>Glasgow and West of Scotland.</b>   | Miss E. M. Gilchrist, M.B.E.,<br>1, Great Western Terrace,<br>Glasgow, W.2. | 251 Renfrew Street,<br>Glasgow.                                  | Every Wednesday, 7.30.                                        |
| <b>Headquarters.</b>                   | Mrs. Pratt Barlow, O.B.E., 82, Lancaster Gate, W.2.                         |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Irish Free State.</b>               | Mrs. O'Meara, M.B.E.,<br>Cove Cottage, Dunmore East, County Waterford.      |                                                                  | Not fixed.                                                    |
| <b>Liverpool.</b>                      | Mrs. E. Edwards,<br>8, Wyndcote Road,<br>Liverpool 18.                      |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>London.</b>                         | Mrs. Mayhew,<br>25, Denmark Avenue, Wimbledon, S.W.19. Tel: WIM 2789        |                                                                  | See Branch Report for<br>dates of meetings                    |
| <b>Ilford.</b>                         | Miss P. Parker,<br>4, Richmond Street,<br>Plaistow, E.13.                   |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Manchester.</b>                     | Mrs. Cornes,<br>12, High Bank Crescent,<br>Prestwick, Manchester.           | Raglan Café,<br>24 Mosley St., Manchester.                       | 2nd and 4th Thursday, 7 to<br>10.30 p.m.                      |
| <b>Newcastle-on-Tyne.</b>              | Miss C. W. Maunders,<br>31, Norwood Avenue,<br>Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne.   |                                                                  | Members notified<br>individually.                             |
| <b>New South Wales.</b>                | Mrs. E. Mills,<br>Hon. Secretary and Treasurer                              | 26, Victoria Street,<br>Bondi Junction, N.S.W.                   |                                                               |
| <b>New York.</b>                       | Mrs. G. Rose. Phone Nevins 8-5250.                                          |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Norfolk.</b>                        | Mrs. L. Chilvers, 2, King's Head Terrace,<br>Great Witchingham, Norfolk.    |                                                                  | Monthly. Members notified<br>individually.                    |
| <b>Northern Ireland.</b>               | Mrs. H. Bell,<br>27, Wellington Park, Belfast.                              |                                                                  | Last Saturday in the month at<br>7, Victoria Street, Belfast. |
| <b>North Staffs.</b>                   | Mrs. G. H. Clough,<br>3 Eleanor View, Newcastle<br>Staffs.                  | Nell Gwynne Restaurant,<br>Newcastle.                            | First Monday in month,<br>6.30 p.m.                           |
| <b>Notts.</b>                          | Miss Osler,<br>243a, Mansfield Road,<br>Nottingham.                         |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Oxford.</b>                         | Mrs. Jackman, 23 Grays Road,<br>Headington, Oxford.                         |                                                                  | Members notified<br>individually.                             |
| <b>Plymouth.</b>                       | Mrs. O. Foster, 2 Nottle St., Plymouth.                                     |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Cardiff and S. Wales.</b>           | Mrs. Diana Foster,<br>7, The Grove, Rumney, Cardiff.                        | Y.M.C.A., Cardiff.                                               | Second and last Tuesday<br>at 7.30 p.m.                       |
| <b>St. Leonard's.</b>                  | Miss E. Taylor,<br>58 West Hill, St. Leonards-on-Sea.                       |                                                                  | Not fixed.                                                    |
| <b>Tees-side.</b>                      | Miss E. Kendra, 21, Thackeray Grove, Linthorpe Middlesbrough.               |                                                                  |                                                               |
| <b>Transvaal.</b>                      | Mrs. Widdicombe, 8 Gascoigne Street Observatory, Johannesburg, S. Africa.   |                                                                  |                                                               |

Editor Gazette—Mrs. Richard Addis, Woodside, Frant, Sussex.

