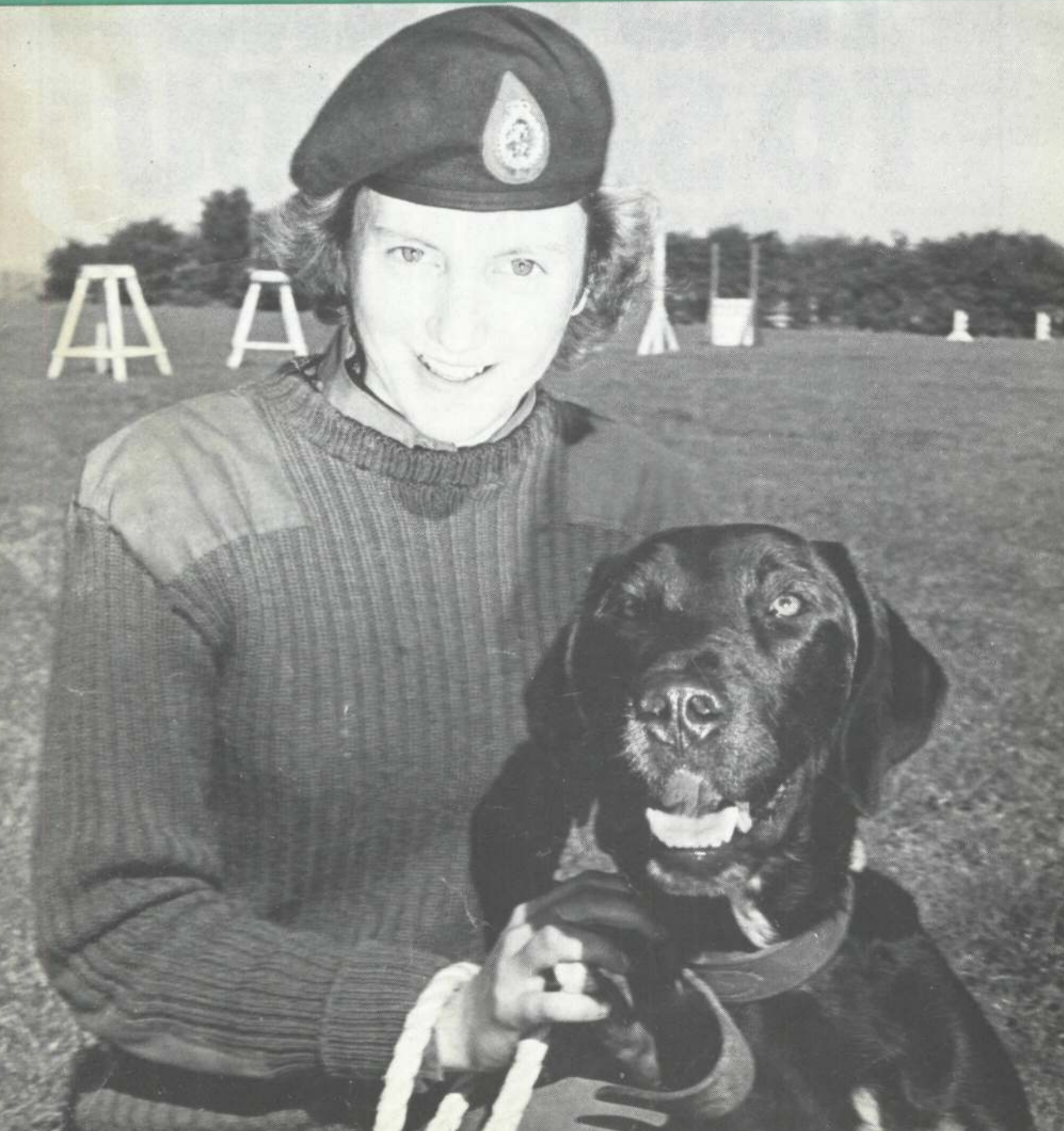


1978

No 2

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VACANCY FOR WRAC SHORT SERVICE TYPE 'R' ENGAGEMENT AS TAVR SGT PSI

A vacancy exists for a WRAC Sgt PSI with 36th (Eastern) Signal Regiment (Volunteers) in the Ilford/Brentwood area of Essex. Her duties would be mainly administrative but the applicant must have had data telegraphist training and be capable of instructing in that trade up to Class 2 level as required.

The post carries the rank of Sergeant. Applicants must have had regular or TAVR service. A qualification as a Class 1 Data Telegraphist is desirable but Class 2 will be accepted.

Initial engagement will be for a fixed period of three years with the colours, with no reserve liability. Extensions may be permitted under current rules. Women enlisted on the Type 'R' engagement are eligible to receive pay, including increments, in accordance with the Pay Warrant 1964, Articles 594 and 595.

The upper age limit for enlistment is normally 35 years. Terms and conditions are given in AGAs Chapter 25 Section IV.

Applications together with brief details of experience and service should be forwarded to: The Training Major, 36th (Eastern) Signal Regiment (V), Signals House, Selsdon Road, Wanstead, London E11 2QF.

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Green Leather	.25	15p (up to 6)
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Corps Drum Ice Bucket	6.00	70p

Most items are in green with the Corps Crest in gold. Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to CORPS HQ A/C.

Please note that we now sell a Corps Drum Ice Bucket. This is an authentic copy of a full size emblazoned drum in use with the WRAC Staff Band, and is a very attractive item.

Car Badges have been discontinued as rising costs have resulted in insufficient demand.

Cover Photograph

Pte Kay Smith of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps Training Centre with her labrador charge - Canto.

WOMENS ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1919

Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6QH
Tel: Guildford (0483) 71201 Ext. 383

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(Photographs in black and white only)

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Lioness

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No. 2

EDITORIAL

1939 was a year of destiny for everybody and not least for those ATS volunteers who joined up on and before the outbreak of war. "Forty years on" seems an appropriate opportunity to gather together all those who have served in the WAAC, QMAAC, ATS or WRAC and in particular those who served in the ATS during the war.

A Grand Reunion will be held at the WRAC Centre Guildford in 1979 which will be open to everybody who has served in the WAAC, QMAAC, ATS or WRAC, whether or not they are members of the Association. Guildford was selected by members at the Annual General Meeting this year because the WRAC Centre can accommodate large numbers, and the cost to the individual and the Association will be nominal compared with London or elsewhere.

Her Majesty The Queen has been invited to visit the WRAC Centre for the occasion on either 5th May or 19th May 1979. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, our Commandant in Chief, and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, our Controller Commandant and President of the Association, have also been notified of the alternative dates.

If Her Majesty The Queen is unable to attend on either date, the probable date of the Reunion will be 19th May 1979. We shall start at 2 pm and continue until 6pm when the occasion officially closes with Beating Retreat. Afterwards bars will be open until 8 pm.

We hope that members of the Association will contact their Corps ex-service friends with this news so that as many people as possible will get together and remember old times.

Once the date is firm we hope that Association branches and members will do all they can to advertise the Reunion through their local newspapers, radio stations, local information bulletins and women's organisations and clubs. The February 1979 Lioness will publish the detailed arrangements. Meanwhile, keep 5th May 1979 and 19th May 1979 free.

Presentations BEM



Sergeant Ann Parry receiving the British Empire Medal from the Chief of the Defence Staff, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Neil Cameron.

LSGC



W01 M E Jepson received the LSGC Medal from Brigadier G E Dennison OBE ADC, Commandant RAOC Training Centre.

LSGC



W02 M M N Lewis receiving the LSGC Medal from Brigadier W E Townsend MA, Commandant RAEC Centre.



W02 A Norris and SSgt M A McLaughlin talking to Brigadier W J Reed, Commander Aldershot Garrison, after he had presented them with the LSGC Medal.

I Joined the ATS in 1942 — From the USA

SYBILLE PHILLIPS (KNOTT-NUGENT)

The outbreak of war in Europe found many British subjects living in North America, and I was one. My two brothers had settled in Australia and joined the Forces there.

Through the British Embassy in Washington I heard of the British Volunteer Movement, Headquarters New York. I don't know how much

advertisement was given to this; I do know that after my successful application I was one of twenty-five women who joined from as far afield as Canada, California and the East Coast. My friends somehow obtained a training film which was made for ARP Wardens. This showed the London Blitz and they hoped it would make me change my mind. It had the opposite effect. We had to pass a medical by a British doctor, appointed by the BVM and then to go to the YWCA Spelman Hall, New York. This was early in October 1942. The Battle of the Atlantic was at its height and we didn't know what to expect. Two pamphlets were given to us, "War Work in Great Britain" which held the application form and explained the Government's wish to recruit all available British personnel, and the second "Since You are going to England" told us what we should take, explained rationing and so on, ending with a paragraph saying how much we would be giving up in the material sense and how we would be choosing a harder way of life. We were also asked to meet with sympathy and patience the fatigue and possibly abrupt manner of people we were to live amongst in this new life.

Finally came the evening of October 24th when we were told to pack and be ready to leave the hostel within the hour. In small groups we were taken to the Docks and eventually found ourselves on a blacked-out ship, the SS City of Hong Kong. Our cabins were very cramped but warm and comfortable, and we were advised to wear life jackets at all times. We went to bed and finally slept but were awakened in the early hours to realize we had quietly, and under cover of darkness and mist, slipped out to sea! If I say we were merely excited, I would be giving a false impression. One thing was very clear. We never once regretted our decision to join up. We were allowed on deck for exercise; there wasn't much room for anything else. As the day cleared, we looked about to see that we were in the centre of a gathering group of vessels. These were spread far apart except for three. The "City of Hong Kong" was the Flag Ship of this Convoy and a similar ship travelled in front and behind carrying cargo of some kind. On our ship were twenty-five female volunteers and about a hundred naval personnel who had been ship-wrecked and were coming home to be re-commissioned. We settled down to games of cards, singing and a daily meeting to pass the time as best we could.

Two incidents particularly stand out. The first occurred on the fourth or fifth day at sea. We had

become used to seeing the Convoy scatter and hearing the sound of depth charges, but this was a particularly noisy period and seemed to go on for hours. We were not allowed on deck and everything was battened down. It was no use asking questions, we just carried on trying to act calmly. By now we went to bed in our clothes as well as our life jackets. The next morning all was quiet but our ship sailed on alone. It had been forced to zig-zag and change course in the night. We were several miles back towards New York and several of the convoy were lost. The second event was due to the illness and severe pain of one of the Petty Officers who had been very badly burned in a previous torpedo attack. The doctor had insufficient facilities to treat him and it was decided to transfer this unfortunate man to one of the Corvettes which was escorting our convoy. Volunteers were called to man a life boat to row him to the Naval vessel, and I cannot describe our thoughts and emotions as we watched that boat launched into the sea. At times it was hidden from our sight by the huge waves, but at last the mission was successfully completed, our boys back on the ship and it was full speed ahead once again.

So the days passed, fifteen in all. We arrived in Liverpool on 9th November to another sight which left us all speechless. I can still see that scene of devastation. The naval personnel were taken off by tender before us and we stood at the rails singing "Bless 'em All". Yes, they taught us a few things for our future use, those lads. Our eyes were dry, the unshed tears held back. Some hours later we were taken off and put on board a train for London.

We were accommodated in the Royal Veterinary College and camp beds were laid out in one of the Labs. By this time our sense of humour was truly our salvation and we were ready for anything. Due to the thick fog I cannot remember where we were recruited, but it was certainly not far from the College because we walked in single file, holding the hand of the person in front of us! This peculiar laughing and perplexed crocodile was led by a very understanding and helpful Officer attached to the British Volunteer Movement who was responsible for us. After the ceremony, we each received ten shillings "dole" money and a warrant and were sent on leave for fourteen days. Another strange experience awaited us. We travelled alone to meet friends or relatives we hardly remembered. I went to a sister of my step-mother whom I had last seen when I was ten years old.

In due course an AFE 511 R (Notice to Report for Duty) arrived containing instructions to report to the OC No 7 ATS TC Guildford on Friday 27th November 1942. On the train from Waterloo I met some of my previous companions and we naturally kept together. On Station Duty was Corporal White (now Mrs Pam Ford) who has remained through the years a staunch friend. The eight of us from the BVM were kept together in B Coy, 4 Platoon for our initial training. We all kept our sense of humour and tried to be like all the others but they had the edge on us in many ways. Still, after buttons had been cleaned, clothes pressed and shoes shined, Pay Books signed and numbers memorised (W/220486), you couldn't tell us apart. Except for our accents and our goose pimples. Especially when we were told to put on PT shorts, blouse and plimsolls and assemble in the freezing November air. All of us were hot house plants from centrally heated buildings, and nothing had prepared us for this punishment. Still we survived to face the "tests". Oh dear! Here was the most bitter blow. Sums in £.s.d. How did one cope with that for a start? Unashamedly I confess the tears poured down my face. I had hoped to be useful and had survived the journey to be met by a system I had completely forgotten. The Sergeant was very understanding and we were told to mark our papers "educated in the USA". Nothing else was quite so hard after that. Basic training came to an end, the Concert was arranged and I was chosen to dress as Uncle Sam and sing "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy". I repeatedly stated I was as English as any of them but I had to sing it just the same. Posting separated us all and I stayed on in Holding Unit.

Eventually I was made a training instructor on the permanent staff and allowed to wear the Lamb, the badge of the Queen's Royal Regiment.

There were many experiences in our Service days (especially when I went to OCTU) which set us apart from our friends. I lost contact with most of the girls who came over with me on the "City of Hong Kong". I heard of only one girl who returned to the States without much effort to stick it out. The others stayed the course and were, I suppose, repatriated eventually. For myself, I was truly thankful to be back in England among my fellow countrymen.

A Stroke — and After

Diana Law
ex-Senior Commander ATS

My war service with the ATS was a richly rewarding experience. I started as a Private (FANY/ATS) at the Beaufort, Camberley Training Centre (where the Queen later went through the driving course). From January to March 1942 I went to OCTU in Edinburgh. A series of Staff Officer appointments followed, culminating in staff duties with SHAEF at Paris, Rheims, Frankfurt and Berlin (where I was promoted to Senior Commander).

After demobilisation I worked for the British Council and Shell, finally settling down with International Computers Ltd, where I rose to manager of their education and liaison services.

On December 13th 1967 I awakened with a headache, but decided I must attend an important business luncheon in Knightsbridge. During lunch the pain became so acute that I was rushed to hospital and subsequently operated on for a subarachnoid haemorrhage; returning to consciousness to find that I was paralysed down my right side and unable to speak. In fact my mother was told that if I lived I would be an idiot! I could not speak but I could think, and I grimly resolved that somehow I would speak again.

Physical mobility was slowly partially restored by exercise and physiotherapy, but it was only due to the wonderful speech therapist, Joan Ellams at the Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Camden, working on me almost daily for two years, that I gradually began to speak again, beginning with painful little linking expressions like "it's wonderful" and "my dear".

Since then I have broadcast on many occasions and now devote all my time to trying to obtain skilled help for people with speech disorders. I have founded speech clubs all over the country and arrange for an annual interdenominational church service for such sufferers. There are many who as a result of strokes or car accidents are deprived of speech, and may not have, as I was lucky to have, patient help from family and friends.

I still cannot write except to sign my name, and my correspondence is dealt with by helpful voluntary "scribes" who write the letters for me.

I was delighted this Spring to be awarded the

MBE for my work for speech disorder victims, as I feel this may give some publicity to the very little official help given to those people deprived of the power of communication. The blind and the deaf are emotive figures and receive generous help from the public and the State. There is an appalling lack of support for those deprived of speech. Trained speech therapists are not nearly plentiful enough to cope with the desperate needs of the afflicted, and professional help is so essential that each Speech Club should have a Speech Therapist.



Diana Law holding her MBE which was awarded for her work on behalf of speech disorder victims.

Calling all ATS

Did you pay income tax between 1941-1946? Have you claimed the money owed to you under the Post-War Credit Scheme? If you have lost your certificates you can still claim but **YOU MUST DO SO BY 31ST DECEMBER 1978.**

People with certificates who have not yet claimed should do so as soon as possible.

Ask at any Post Office or Tax Office for form DC351.

Gunners' Mates

Lieutenant Colonel M S F Millington
OBE TD WRAC (Retd)
Editor Lioness 1961 – 1972

It may surprise many people to know that at one period during the Second World War there were more women than men in Anti-Aircraft Command. The story of how this came about is an interesting one as it shows the women of Britain in an officially recognised combatant role for the first time in history.

In September 1938 the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) was formed as successor to the various Women's Services of the 1914-1918 War. In AA Command, as everywhere else, the only employments open to them were as cooks, clerks, telephonists, orderlies, storewomen and drivers. The first trade authorised in connection with gunnery, was that of kine-theodolite operator and ATS had taken over this job in Ack-Ack Practice Camps by the beginning of 1940.

General Sir Frederick Pile, then GOC-in-C, AA Command, had more ambitious ideas for the employment of women. As early as October 1939, he started to investigate the possibility of using ATS to replace gunners for operational duties with Heavy Ack-Ack and Searchlight Units.

After the fall of France the Army Council began to realise that the only way to meet the manpower problem was by an increased use of women, and this led to a change of attitude that was to alter the whole status of the ATS. The announcement of this policy was made by the Secretary of State for War to the House of Commons on 10th April 1941. The direct result was that women ceased to be "camp followers", became part of the Armed Forces of the Crown and, as such, eligible for employment on combatant duties.

Training of the first Mixed Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiments started shortly afterwards. From the beginning the experiment referred to by Sir James Grigg as "breathtaking and revolutionary" was a success. The women in these units, cooks and clerks no less than Instrument numbers and Operators Fire Control, felt themselves to be part of a team. They knew they were doing a worthwhile job and sharing equally with the men the dangers and excitement, boredom and disappointments, of a gun site in war time.

On September 9th 1941, "The Times" reported

that the first Mixed Battery had been in action. This announcement was only slightly premature as (M) HAA regiments did open fire on November 1st and scored their first Category 1 success on December 8th 1941. They suffered their first fatal casualty in May of the following year when a predictor number on a South Coast site, was struck by a bomb splinter. Private N Caveney, aged 18, was actually on target when she collapsed. One of the spotters immediately stepped into her place, and the guns were able to continue the engagement without a break. In spite of fears to the contrary, the women always remained cool in action. Indeed practically the only tears shed by the ATS in AA Command during the war were those of frustration when they failed to get "On Target" or were prevented from firing for any reason.

160 (M) HAA Regiment, equipped with 4.5 inch guns, won a world record for Ack-Ack by shooting down an ME 100 G while it was flying at 33,000 feet over the Isle of Wight. Mme Violette Szabo, who was awarded a posthumous GC, served as a predictor number for a short period. She loved the life but had to claim her discharge on pregnancy. Not long after her baby was born she learned that her husband had been killed in North Africa. Later she volunteered for a mission in France, worked for the Resistance, was arrested, tortured and executed.

These Mixed Regiments were a novelty and were constantly being visited and inspected by a variety of VIPs. Mary Churchill started her Army Career as an Instrument Number in the London area, and later, on being commissioned, was posted to the gun site in Hyde Park. It goes without saying that her father the Prime Minister took a great interest in all that went on and liked to visit the site when a raid was in progress. The first of these visits gave rise to one of his famous minutes in which he stated that the ATS should be called "Gunners" and "members of the Royal Regiment of Artillery" although there was no objection to the letters ATS being retained. Mr Churchill himself presided at the subsequent conference when a compromise was reached. ATS Other Ranks were authorised to wear a white lanyard and Sergeants a gun above their stripes. This gave them great satisfaction.

One of the weaknesses of the ATS in the early days was the lack of experience of their NCOs. Some owed their promotion to their ability to pick up an operational job quickly, but had only a few months of Army experience behind them,

with little idea of discipline or how to handle a squad. Most of them learnt in time, but, while they were doing so, some of their unorthodox methods and orders must have made the regular gunners' hair curl. Many of the ATS had worked in factories before the war and their manual dexterity made them unexpectedly successful in matching dials. As well as their operational role they had, of course, to do their share of fatigues and other camp chores. The women usually carried out guard duties by day, armed with pick helves, while the men took over at night. One gunner when asked whether he minded being inspected by an ATS officer replied, "No, she doesn't tell me to get my hair cut!" The cooks too played their essential, if unromantic part and helped to keep the manning teams going at night with constant relays of sweet hot cocoa. One of these, a little Welsh woman on a hard pressed North Country site, would trudge cheerfully to the Command Post, singing at the top of her voice, carefully carrying her bucket of cocoa and quite undeterred by air raids, until one night when a large rat scurried past her feet. With a loud shriek she dropped her bucket and fled. Bombs were only to be expected but a rat was too much! Messing was also one of the early problems. The ration scale for ATS was smaller than that authorised for men but they could, and did, eat just as much, and there were a number of complaints until mixed units were allowed to draw the same rations for both sexes.

The employment of ATS with Searchlight units developed side by side with Heavy Ack-Ack. Women had, in fact been used as plotters in gun operations rooms and searchlight batteries early in the war, but this was unofficial and the men usually took over at night. As soon as the Service became part of the Armed Forces of the Crown this employment was recognised, and its development culminated in the formation of 83 Searchlight Regiment, which, with the exception of the Commanding Officer, was composed entirely of ATS. It operated with great success in the London area and was the only women's Searchlight Regiment in the world. The ATS Radar Officer was responsible for the maintenance of twenty-four equipments scattered over an area of thirty-five square miles. The physical demands of the job were heavy as the women had to combat lack of sleep, darkness, loneliness and fear as well as the enemy; indeed of them all they preferred the enemy. General Pile wrote of this Unit:-

"To go round the sites at such a time as

Christmas was to restore one's faith in the unquenchability of British morale. In their bleak isolation, their dingy army huts, the girls always managed to create an air of great festivity, with a Christmas tree ablaze with fairy lights, home made coloured paper chains and tinsel ornaments. The pride with which a visitor was shown around the hut and the site in general I always found both touching and exhilarating. The girls lived like men, fought their lights like men, and alas, some of them died like men. Unarmed they often showed great personal bravery. As a partial solution to our manpower problems they were grand. But like all good things they were in short supply."

The greatest test and the greatest triumph of the ATS was during the flying bomb attacks in the summer and autumn of 1944. Living under canvas on the desolate mud flats of Essex and Suffolk could hardly be described as fun, but the women rose to the occasion magnificently. The first VI Rockets presented a new problem. Although they could not take evasive action, they flew at the (for those days) high speed of 350-400 miles an hour and at a height of 2,000-3,000 feet, too low for HAA and too high for LAA to engage accurately.

The No. 10 predictor and SCR 584 radar provided the answer. Morale was high. At last they had efficient and accurate equipment to replace the Mark 1* GL Roller computer and semi-automatic plotters of the early "chuck and chance it" days, targets to engage after months of inaction and the stimulus of success. 17 per cent of the flying bombs engaged were brought down in the first week and this total rose steadily till it reached 74 per cent in August. On the best day only four out of the ninety-six "Doodles" launched reached London. Indeed by this time the success was such that most of the general public were quite unaware of the scale of the attack.

The Gunner Officer in charge of the first Mixed Battery to shoot down a VI has given the following description of what happened:-

"We hit a bomb as it came across the Channel. It came towards us in flames, and I remember shouting 'get down, get down!' The gunners dropped but the ATS were so thrilled they stood up cheering. The bomb landed two hundred yards away and blew out the front of the Command Post Nissen Hut, but fortunately no one was hurt."

No account of the part played by women in Anti-Aircraft units would be complete without some mention of their service in North West

If you accept that ...

All ex-Servicemen and women have a continuing duty

- to remember fallen comrades
- to give succour to their dependents
- to assist those afflicted with war disabilities
- to support those who have fallen on difficult times
- to advise and help those who today are returning to civil life
- and to transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy



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GENERAL SECRETARY
THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
49 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.

Europe during the closing months of the war. The capture of a number of V1 and V2 launching sites in Northern France, Belgium and Holland had resulted in a lessening of the attack on London and South East England but, for the first time, these missiles were being launched from Germany against the liberated countries. The Ack-Ack Regiments already serving with the BLA had not had any experience of shooting down flying bombs, or operating the new equipment, and were required to cover the crossing of the Rhine; it was therefore decided to send Mixed Regiments to the theatre to relieve them for this duty. The first Mixed Regiment was posted to Belgium in November 1944. They went into action on Christmas Day, and by the end of January their score of "Doodles" was nineteen.

No member of the Women's Services who did not have the privilege of serving with Ack-Ack Command can appreciate the consternation caused by the announcement of its closing down. The old ATS saying "Once Ack-Ack always Ack-Ack" gives some indication of the effect it had on the women who served in any of its various units, and of the affection and esteem they felt for the

Royal Regiment. Perhaps this was not entirely one-sided, for General Sir Frederick Pile has honoured us both by choosing an ATS Auxiliary and a Gunner as supporters for his coat of arms.

In other ways also AA Command did not forget. At the WRAC Centre, on 18th October 1955, General Sir Frederick Pile presented to Brigadier (now Dame Mary) Railton, then Director WRAC, a silver model 3.7 Mark 2C HAA Gun. This superb piece of craftsmanship was designed and presented as a permanent memento of the spirit of comradeship, forged over the years, between the men of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and the women of the ATS and WRAC who shared their fortunes at home and overseas, in war and peace. Among those on parade on this occasion was a platoon made up of women who had served in AA Command. After the presentation they marched off to the strains of the Regimental March of the Royal Artillery played by the RA Band. The gun now occupies a place of honour in the silver room of the Corps Museum at Guildford, and in the hearts of all those who were privileged to have served as "Gunnery Mates".

WRAC HISTORY

SPECIAL PRICE PAPER-BACK

For those people who would like to buy "The Women's Royal Army Corps" by Brigadier Shelford Bidwell which includes the history of the WAAC, QMAAC and ATS, at a price even lower than £5.95 (which is a considerable reduction on the shop price of £8.50) a paper-back edition is now available from Corps Headquarters for £3.00 plus 40p for postage and packing. The contents, including illustrations, are identical to those in the hard-back edition which is still available from Corps Headquarters at £5.95 inclusive of postage and packing. The paper-back edition is not available from book-shops and can be obtained only from Corps Headquarters.

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Name

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At the Start

M E Norcott

(Ex-RSM ATS and Secretary Stafford Branch)

Having been a member of the Terries (as we then called the ATS), I was called up on 6th September 1939, and that very morning we had an air raid warning. All traffic had to stop immediately, including the bus I was travelling in. So I got out, and walked until I saw a policeman and I told him I had to report to the Drill Hall at 9 o'clock and would be late. He commandeered a private car at the roadside to take me. The driver was delighted to get on his way, and I arrived half an hour before anyone else at the Drill Hall!

My first Army bed consisted of a bag which I had to fill with straw, and some blankets. There

were no sheets. The room which I shared with two others was bare except for our suitcases; bare floorboards and no furniture of any kind. We were attached to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and I had four volunteers to help me open up seven Officers and Sergeants' messes around the country. Almost immediately we were posted to Aldershot, and very soon after that, on 15th December 1939 I was posted to Aldermaston Court to help get the first ATS Training Centre started. When I joined, my pay was eight shillings (40p) a week. Now I was a Sub-Section Leader (Corporal) with twenty other NCOs picked for the job. We scrubbed and cleaned and seemed to be endlessly carrying bedsteads and mattresses to the vast number of rooms in this mansion.

At last the recruits arrived — in all sorts of dress and from every walk of life. Some of them eventually became my Company Officers. During my three years at Aldermaston some 33,000 recruits passed through. As one military inspecting

officer put it, we were the nursery of the ATS.

Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan made many visits to Aldermaston. On one occasion she came out of her bedroom very early looking for her button-up boots, to find a batwoman wearing them, to the intense amusement of the other batwomen. Dame Helen roared with laughter. On another occasion Corporal Bloomfield and I were acting Military Police, complete with arm-bands and canes and stationed at the main gate for Dame Helen's official send-off. She left by a side gate, but as her car passed us, she stopped and got out to give us a beautiful salute. She was a very wonderful lady.

Drill competitions by platoons were held on the lawns and many was the time when my platoon won. When that happened I was picked up and flung into the air — and fortunately caught on the way down!

They were good days. We who were there at the beginning look back with pride and happy memories.

Grass Skiing

Colonel E S Macfie TD WRAC (Retd)

Grass skiing is in its ninth season in Britain but most of us who could enjoy it know almost nothing about it.

At the AGM of the Army Ski Association I was advised to go on your behalf and look at the sport in action. This I did and was carried away by enthusiasm. Inexpensive, accessible and not dependant on weather or season, it is a sport which all skiers and would-be skiers can enjoy all the year round.

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There are many other centres, in Yorkshire, Northumberland, Dorset, Warwickshire and Sussex, and in Scotland and Wales. For further information apply to the Ski Club of Great Britain or the Army Ski Association, Ministry of Defence (ASCB), Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, London W1X 6AA.

Forty Years in Retrospect

Doris Madill

(Sgt Doris Bunch Plourde ATS)

In 1938 many of us were bubbling with youthful effervescence. We were occupying ourselves with such pastimes as Girl Guides, Rangers and diversified sports. Many of us were hardly out of school.

By December 20th 1940, I was at the ATS Training Centre at Aldermaston, Berkshire where I was to spend the first of five Christmases away from home. It was an extremely cold winter. Uniforms were in scarce supply it seemed, and we were still wearing our civilian clothes accompanied by our constant companion, the cardboard box containing a gas mask. We swore allegiance to God, King and Country and were in for the "duration". The few weeks' basic training passed by quickly and I was posted to Reading to the 4th Berks Platoon, ATS, attached to HQ 5th AA Division Signals, as an Orderly, one of the few openings at that time. I soon knew what it was like to wash huge piles of plates and cooking utensils, how much bread had to be sliced in the machine and what hearty appetites the young Signalmen, mostly DR's and Linesmen had. After a short while I was called into the office and told that I would be moving to a new job which had recently opened up and was now available to ATS.

So now I found myself posted to the 7th Hants Platoon, ATS, attached to 47 AA Brigade and wearing the RA grenade above the left pocket. The location was near Chichester, where we were occupying part of a large country house, together with the owners, and helping with their hay season and playing tennis on their courts in between our new shift duties. We were plotters. We were transported to and from all shifts to the Ops Room, which was situated in a requisitioned School on the other side of Chichester. I learned how to compute plots coming in from site and how to be a tracer, which was a hectic job, particularly on nights when we had heavy air raids and many unfriendly aircraft on the board. Day-time activity would mainly be reconnaissance, or sweeps by our own fighter planes across the Channel. However, the chore of computing our own plots was short lived as the use of GL's came about, and when we were not busy, or if the weather was too bad to allow flying, we were

constantly doing exercises with all of our searchlight sites. Hence the name AA SLOR, Tangmere. To all of those sites out there, around SE England, the familiar words "Ops Don, Tangmere" and "All sites will now synchronise their watches when I say 'now' it will be 1300 hours. If you have received this message incorrectly, please ring back immediately", became almost automatic.

But there was still to be another change. I was sent to the AA Signals course at Kingston-on-Thames, only to return to be a Signals Switchboard Operator and tradeswoman, and out of the RA Plotting Room to Ops Don in the main RAF Plotting Room. Now I was sporting a Signals badge in place of an RA badge over the left pocket. This move saw the departure of the six Signalmen who had hitherto been doing this particular job on a two per shift 24 hours a day basis. Our alertness was maintained with constant exercises. On nights when it was quiet, searchlight and night fighter exercises could be held. On one such occasion I vividly remember, upon the conclusion of one such night exercise, the message had gone out to the SL sites "Exercise concluded, douse all SL's" when suddenly there was a commotion from the other end of the dais and the RAF Ops Room Controller called over and said "What the blinkety blink are those SL's doing exposing on our incoming Beaufighter, 'the exercise is concluded' "? Were our faces red, and of course it looked quite bad for the two SBO's. The very next day when called into the SAALO's office during the course of investigation I breathed a sigh of relief when I learned that I was cleared of blame.

In still another change, we were moved from the large country house to another along the road. One day I was informed that a party was to be held and I was to be invited. To my great surprise a marvellous 21st Birthday party had been organised in my honour, which involved all the cooking being done by the staff of this fabulous country mansion. Among my souvenirs is an autographed photo of the mansion. But alas, army life doesn't stand still and in a short while the seven ATS Signals were withdrawn from the mansion and sent into Chichester itself, to be billeted at the YWCA. Here, we either walked or cycled to our duties at Ops Don, Tangmere.

An exciting assignment came my way when two of us headed for AA Command HQ at Stanmore where a film was to be made in co-operation with RAF Fighter Command, Searchlight and Gun Sites and of course the WAAF Plotters. This was a

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very agreeable two weeks and imagine the kidding we got on our return to Ops Don Tangmere about being film stars.

The tide of war was changing and as more and more fighters became available they were going out on more and more sweeps over the English Channel. On one of these important sweeps, we were all sitting tensely in the Ops Room on duty one day and all the speakers were switched on to allow maximum radio contact with the fighters. We could hear the fighter to Controller conversation as well as follow the plots on the plotting board, when suddenly from the enemy plots the Controller could see that enemy fighters were intercepting and the conversation then became quite frantic. "Bandits at ??? o'clock, keep your eyes open", "Roger", bungled excited talk, a noise and frantic appeals "Hello, Johnny Red One, what has happened, can you see Johnny Blue One, over?" "He's going down", "Follow him down, cover for him, give us a fix, give us a fix, then get out there, over". There was a deep sense of feeling in the Ops Room that day because one of the greatest fighter aces had been shot down. He was seen to parachute and the very next day the Wing Commander Controller took off in a Lysander to fly another set of artificial legs to Sqdn Ldr

Douglas Bader.

Fighter sweeps by day and huge bomber concentrations going out at night had now become common-place and this provided plenty of employment for SBO's. At night requests came for AA Command Searchlights to "home" certain aircraft who were returning in difficulty, which was one of the most valuable assets of the SL's. The advent of Radar was now assisting guns and SL's effectively. Reconnaissance and nuisance strafing had become a large part of German strategy and they just loved to fly in at low level, above the waves across the Channel to avoid detection by Radar. It was a great joke to plot the "milkman" practically every morning early, possibly out there checking on shipping or other movements. We were aware that enemy spies could be dropped and often the police would stop and ask to see our identification. On a few occasions I stupidly forgot to put my bicycle away at night and to my chagrin had to go to the Police Station to claim it. However, when I had put it safely inside one day, I was due to go on shift at 5.30 pm when the YWCA had a visitor, HRH The Duchess of Gloucester, in the uniform of Controller WAAF, who was inspecting facilities in the Tangmere area. I knew that it was not taken

lightly when one took over a shift late and yet, on the other hand I knew that it was not polite to interrupt the royal visit and I was in a predicament.

I had to go on shift so I plucked up courage and went along to get my bicycle at the spot where the Duchess was being shown round. The YMCA Manageress happened to be from my own village and I had known her for many years, so my interruption was forgiven. After being presented to Her Royal Highness I was on my way.

As is well known in the services, one is not a permanent fixture and just in time before having to wear a two year good service and conduct stripe, a posting came to No 4 Coy HQ, 2 AA Group (M) Signals Unit as a Sgt. By this time the AA Divisions had become Mixed Groups. After being in an Ops Room for so long this seemed an entirely new ball game. Duties were different and had to be learned. Before too long I was on my way to the Senior NCO's course at Nevilles Cross, Durham, only to return to our newly moved Coy HQ near Lewes. However, this was short lived and postings came to GOR Chichester, GOR Brighton, GOR Hastings and GOR Felixstowe, each posting lasting several months. A Signals Section Sgts job consisted mainly of admin, with an eye kept on the Actual Signals Procedure in the Ops Room, Drills, Training Programmes, and working in co-operation with the ATS RA personnel and of course our own Sigs Subaltern.

A different type of story emerged from GOR Hastings. One night we were all in bed, except the night shift who were on duty in the Ops Room situated in the basement of this former girls Convent. Suddenly, we were abruptly woken and experienced the horrible suction that accompanies an exploding bomb. We were breathing in plaster dust, hearing shattering glass and the moan of the air-raid sirens all at the same time, without fully opening our eyes and coming to our senses. Suddenly I noticed that the blackout had been ripped from the windows and the bright moonlight was forming rays through the dust. Momentarily, I was paralysed, and then I began to collect my thoughts, and realised that I had better do something about the other girls, as our Subaltern was temporarily at GOR Dover. I listened and could hear nothing moving. I began to think could I get out of my bedroom door and along the passage to the other rooms? Would we be able to get down either of the stairs, as we were on the third floor? With the blackouts gone from the windows no lights could be used, but I

always had a torch under my pillow and as I reached for it I discovered that a huge chunk of plaster, the decorative piece from the corner of the room, was on my bed. I dressed quickly, cautiously opened the door and to my relief I found the passage way intact. In the first dormitory I found the girls up, no appreciable damage except that one girl had had a heavy radiator thrown on her bed, and had received only a scratch. We mustered on the large landing and although appearing calm, I knew that everyone was a little frightened. Once downstairs and mustered in the front hall way, we were greeted with the sound of gushing water, which was coming from broken water pipes, flooding the floor and ruining our food supplies in the pantry.

The scene in the Ops Room was of a ruffled, but concerned night shift on this night of January 4th 1944. I could sense that they were genuinely glad to see at least someone from upstairs walk in and to know that everything was all right. They enquired about everyone, but they were especially concerned about the RA Lt who was up on the roof manning the direct telephone near the gun, who, they told me was not answering the phone. Minutes later we knew that he had been killed.

The next day was occupied with moving out, lock stock and barrel to a large country house a little further up the road. That night extremely tired, we settled down to sleep. Once more I was awakened by shouts, screams and bumps. Once more my torch came out from under my pillow and venturing to open the bedroom door, I made my way along the long passage where I could see a light shining under the door. What a scene inside; it was as though a tornado had struck. Beds were upside down, two and three girls were huddled in other beds, steel helmets, shoes and clothes were all over the place. Suddenly I spotted some mice running along the top of an unoccupied bed. There were literally swarms of them. How happy we all were to be able to move back into the repaired convent.

My next posting was to GOR Felixstowe, in my view a fairly tough assignment, but mainly administratively. However, this was the era of the doodle bug, or VI buzz bomb. Soon, I was packed again and on my way to HQ No 2 AA Group (M) Signals Unit as a Technical Sgt Storewoman. Here it was common practice to sleep in underground shelters. One morning when leaving the shelter with my bedding in my arms, what a surprise it was to see going by at a low altitude, a VI buzz bomb, complete with its red glow from the motors

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coming from the back, which signified that it was not yet ready to drop. It was an eerie feeling none the less and warranted ducking back into the shelter. On another occasion, whilst unlocking the coal and coke compound to supervise the issue of the daily ration to the various recipients, there was a shattering explosion without any warning, sending us all ducking. This was the new rocket bomb, the V2.

By this time the war in Europe was nearly over and fewer raids were staged on the UK. My last posting came through and it was early 1945 when I arrived at HQ Coy, No 2 MTTC at Gresford, North Wales. I was completely out of AA for the first time, and missing it. When VE Day came we were so jubilant that we simply threw our papers in the air and thumbed lifts to London and elsewhere to celebrate. I joined a group of service men and women on a long flat-bed lorry and celebrated in my own village. After nine day's leave at home I returned to Gresford for the remaining months of my service.

During those six years in the ATS all of us experienced stress, happiness, laughter, sadness and even romance, all of it adding up to the indelible feeling of comradeship which has kept vivid those memories of 40 years ago.

Congratulations

Mrs Doris Madill and her husband were both awarded the Jubilee Medal by the Governor General of Canada for their services to the Veterans Association. Mrs Madill has also received the Meritorious Service Award, which is the highest award of the Association and given for not less than ten years of Meritorious Service. Our congratulations go to this dedicated husband and wife team.

Where Dogs and Horses Take Priority

At Melton Mowbray, in the heart of the rolling countryside of Leicestershire, is an Army Establishment where both horses and dogs are equally to the fore. The Royal Army Veterinary Corps Training Centre employs 120 RAVC Officers and Men, and 60 WRAC Kennelmaids and Rider/Grooms. In addition to the KMs and RGs, there is a WRAC back-up of 1 Captain, 1 Admin Sgt, 1 Cpl Driver, 1 Admin NCO (Regtl Stores) and 1 Stewardess.

Animal lovers they certainly are. Not for them the luxury of forgetting about their Army job every week-end. Dogs and horses cannot be put away and forgotten for a few days. They have to be fed, watered and looked after seven days a week. The girls start their lives with the RAVC on a two week Security Dog Handlers Course, during which they are teamed with a dog, and trained to look after it, do obedience work with it, and finally to work it and control it when locating and attacking an intruder. Once the course is over they are down to the main kennel lines to start working as Kennelmaids under the eagle eyes of Sgt Glenys Bell, Cpl Chris Cage and Cpl Mavis Irvin and the other LCpls. It can be a daunting prospect because some of the dogs are extremely hostile to anyone they don't know.

The Army does not breed its own dogs. Some are bought from dealers and others from members of the public. If they are not found to be suitable they are returned to their original owners. Three types of dog are employed by the Army – Guard Dogs, Security Dogs (mostly Alsatis) and Searcher/Tracker Dogs (mostly Labradors).

The Equine Wing includes the Army School of Equitation and the Remount Holding Wing. The Remount Holding Wing must ensure that the Household Cavalry and various other Army Units are kept fully in stock with Black or Dark Brown horses, and sometimes up to 200 horses can be seen either stabled or wandering around fields at the Camp. The site at Melton has a long association with horses – having been built 80 years ago as a stud farm. It was bought in 1902 by the War Department as a remount depot, and has acres of lush fields for grazing, a cross country course, an indoor riding school, show jumps and

excellent stabling. The grazing is assisted by 11 bullocks! They are employed to eat the tougher types of grass which their more fastidious equine colleagues refuse to touch, and they also make a tidy profit for the PRI when sold!

The Equestrian Staff includes eight WRAC Rider/Grooms who are responsible for the feeding, care, grooming and exercising of up to 3 horses each. They assist at Shows and events, and if up to the standard, may compete at Hunter Trials and Show Jumping, including venues like the Earls Court Horse of the Year Show. The School of Equitation, which is run by Lt Ben Jones, an Olympic Gold Medallist, and a Team of NCOs run 6-week "Saddle Club" courses which take students up to BHSA1 standard and 6-month courses which reach BHS11 standards.

There are five WRAC Rider/Grooms and one Kennelmaid employed at the Animal hospital looking after ill or damaged horses and dogs. Years ago when horses were injured they were speedily put down, but today's modern hospital techniques can often return the injured animal to full strength. The hospital boasts its own X-Ray Department and Operating Theatre, so with up to 400 animals on the camp the Veterinary Officer Capt Paul Jepson has his work well cut out!

The work with animals at Melton Mowbray is still important to today's Army – even though the days of Cavalry Chargers have long gone. Vehicles come and go but the horse remains and the dog is yet again proving his worth in today's grim confrontation in Northern Ireland.



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Operation Burberry

The Tri-Service fire-fighting operation during the firemen's strike in the Autumn of 1977, code-named 'BURBERRY' included 5 officers and 171 servicewomen of the WRAC.

Some worked from their Units, but many were moved to other areas, and accommodation varied from camping out in the Executive Suite of Durham County Hall, bed and breakfast with motherly landladies and infiltrating the normally male preserve of the Guards Depot! They were located as far north as Aberdeen and as far west as Taunton. Signals units provided operators for teleprinter and switchboard duties in Fire Control Centres, augmenting civilian staffs and reinforcing existing Defence Communication Network staffs. WRAC drivers were provided for many operational locations. The work included collecting stores and equipment from Home Office Depots, and DIY hose loading caused many a bruise and broken nails. Many were the aches and pains in previously unnoticed muscles!

Some drivers were trained to drive the Green Goddesses, and in London District they drove RN

and RAF Specialist Team vehicles, releasing men to the fire-fighting crews. For many this was their first experience of driving in London. Others carried out duties with GOC's Flying Columns, supply points, Op centres and local fire stations, giving the very necessary clerical and general administrative support. Overnight, officers found themselves becoming Fire Control Centre Officers.

Combat kit, waterproof jackets, trousers, boots, "wellies", tin hats, socks — often too large — were added to the normal WRAC uniform. The work was varied, the hours long and the conditions strange, but all adapted quickly to the new responsibilities.

Off duty, TV, games and general chatter, tea making and other activities were the time fillers. Lighter moments came often, including drivers in London being chatted up by American tourists at traffic lights. Christmas and New Year came and the usual festivities were enjoyed, everybody helping to get as much of the traditional Army Christmas as possible.

The Corps has no need to hide its head under its Burberry! It played its part well in an operational situation. We learnt a lot, and many others, by seeing the Corps at work, learnt a great deal about us.

UNIT NEWS

10 Company WRAC

1978 has been a very successful year for the Company.

In the Army Cookery Competition LCpl Maggie Stevens won the Gold Medal in the Gateau competition and our other entry, Pte Joan Mitchell, achieved a certificate of merit. This was out of fifteen entries army-wide. Pte Carol Anderson gained a Bronze Medal in the cold sweets competition. A fine achievement as they were competing against experienced ACC cooks. This success is partly due to the recently joined male member of the Company, Sgt Jeff Meachin ACC who has passed on his experience to all the cooks working in the Duchess of Kent Kitchen. The only problem is keeping the slimming diets going when the food is so good!

Three of our more senior members have earned the LS and GC Medal this year; WO1 Mo Jepson, WO2 Audrey Norris and SSgt Mo McLaughlin. Together they have given over 50 years service to the Corps. Not to be outdone Cpl (now Sgt) Jan Rees gained an 'A' grading on her Clerks B1 course and we wish her future success up the corridor as Chief Clerk of 3 Sqn 10 Sig Regt.

In the sporting field our achievements are almost embarrassing! This success is largely due to the enthusiasm and keen training of Sgt Pat Rosewell and the way in which members of the unit have worked hard and given up their off duty time. Briefly our successes have been:

Cross Country — 2nd in the SE District Final. Captain Barbara Fraser and Sgt Rosewell were selected for the Army Team.

Hockey — Won South East District League. 2Lt Julie Capon and Sgt Rosewell were selected for the Army and combined services.

Netball — Won SE District League. Won Army Championship. Cpl Liz Johnston selected for Army Team.

Orienteering — Won SE District Competition. Sgt Rosewell came 3rd and SSgt Carol O'Nians 9th in the South England Championship and were selected to run for the Army in the British Relay championships. The 10 Company Team won the UKLF/WRAC orienteering championship and

Army WRAC Team prize in BAOR. This team consisted of 2Lt Rosie Seeckts, SSgt O'Nians and Sgt Rosewell, who also gained 4th, 3rd and 2nd places in the Army Orienteering Individual Championship.

Skiing — Sgt Rosewell and SSgt O'Nians came 1st and 2nd in the Army Ski championships and were placed the same in the Ladies Open.

Visitors to the unit have included Brigadier G E Dennison OBE ADC, Commandant RAOC Training Centre who came for our annual inspection, Brigadier A Field Hon ADC, Director WRAC and Brigadier Reed, Aldershot Garrison Commander. None of these Senior Officers had visited the Duchess of Kent Barracks before and so it was with special pride we were able to show them our newly decorated accommodation.

In April four women of the Jamaican Defence Force joined the Company to work as clerks for two weeks. They were all charming young women who fitted into the unit well and became very popular. We look forward to seeing more of their Force in years to come.

Most recently, a group from 10 Coy spent a week of Adventurous Training with the Royal Navy at Portland, one of three such expeditions planned. It was a busy week which involved living under canvas, and included pistol shooting, a 6 mile map march, sailing, sub aqua, and a visit round the Naval Air Base, all of which made a pleasant change for the cooks, clerks, stewardesses, medical assistants and regimental policewomen who took part.

By the time this goes to press the Aldershot Army Display will be over and we shall look forward to adding to our sports achievements in Rounders, Tennis, Swimming and Athletics.



Members of 10 Company WRAC pictured with their array of sports trophies.

Royal Visit to Bicester

Major E M Miseroy

Hong Kong

Despite being approximately 8,500 miles away from the UK, this WRAC contingent would like it to be known that all 59 of us are alive and well and living on a very humid, and at present, wet island in the South China Sea.

Many servicewomen have come and gone in the past four months, and there has been a changeover of officers. We wish Major Anne Brown and Captain Jane Freebairn every success in their new appointments at 12 Coy and AG 16, and welcome Major Sue Wing and Captain Lorna McGregor. Captain Trish Malcolm will be leaving 75 AEC Kowloon later this summer to reaffirm her acquaintance with Northern Ireland. Despite rumours that W02 Dorothy McFall is a permanent fixture of the Company we will be missing her ardent support at all Company events in October, when she completes her tour here.

Congratulations are due to AW02 Carol Rolt on her promotion, and to Cpls Sheila Gibson-Fenningworth, Gill Warwick, Linda Yearsley and LCpls Mandy Brookes, Judy Daley and Hilary Doyle on their assault on the ladder of promotion.

Sports activities and Community Relations projects are still an essential part of the more active side of life here in Hong Kong. Cpl Nicki Seward and Cpl Babs Cheetham did very well in winning the British Forces Badminton Championships, and the WRAC Netball team showed their steadfast ability in beating 14 civilian Netball teams to win the Hong Kong Netball League.

We are shortly to lose LCpl Mitch Barnett and Pte Jackie Erdbeer into the wilds of the mountains and paddy-fields of the New Territories to act as Patrol Leaders for another Community Relations Camp. They will, we are sure, come back in August fighting fit, sunburnt, and experts in canoeing, rock-climbing, swimming, snorkelling, orienteering, but especially in dealing with Chinese teenagers.

The 29 Signals servicewomen are working harder than ever after taking over the traffic from the now desolate RAF Kai Tak, following the RAF's move up to Sek Kong. We look forward to the Annual Battle Camp in November run by the Hong Kong Gurkha Signal Squadron.

Meanwhile we shall continue to work hard and play hard and explore the exotic charms and interests of these tropical islands.

On Tuesday 16th May 1978, Her Majesty the Queen visited the RAOC at Bicester to mark her 25th Anniversary as Colonel in Chief and the 60th Anniversary of the Granting to the Corps of the title Royal. Her Majesty arrived at Bicester at 1130 hours to inspect the Guard of Honour. Personnel of D Coy WRAC were there distributing programmes to all spectators.

From the parade Her Majesty went to DSM(A) Control Building and on to ADPI and to the Encoders room where she saw Sgt Jan Furness, Ptes Elizabeth Hall and Debra Godfrey at work on the Key Station machines, which is preparatory work for the computer. During the visit, the normal transaction of a unit's request for stores was placed through, so that Her Majesty saw the start of events of its arrival in DSM and through the computer (ADPI) and much later on saw Ptes Zena Marshall and Jane Herbertson WRAC receive the voucher, take action and take the bear-skin from the stores and prepare it for dispatch to the unit. During her tour through the Depot all personnel there had a chance to see the Queen.

At lunchtime 2Lt Caroline Paxton was presented to Her Majesty and attended the luncheon given for the Queen.

At the Garden Party held in the afternoon on Blackthorn Sports Field, attended by members of the RAOC and their wives, LCpl Margaret MacSkimming was presented to Her Majesty. Also presented were W02 Ann Ramsden and SSgt Sadie White.

Capt Mary Woolford was very much involved in behind the scenes activities for this visit which was a very happy and successful day.



Her Majesty the Queen talking to Pte Marshall and Pte Herbertson.

419 Troop RCT

Pte Easson and Pte Cordingley go fire-fighting

On December 2nd 1977 I was sent on detachment from 419 Troop RCT to Whipps Cross, Leytonstone to be one of the few girl drivers of "The Royal Naval Rescue Teams". The shift rota was simple. A red, white and blue watch each working 24 hours from 1200 hours to the following 1200 hours the next day. When each shift had been completed we had 24 hours off. After the next 24 hour watch we had 48 hours off and when the cycle ended 72 hours leave was considered a short rest period.

It was just after New Years Day. Team 3 (of which I was a proud member) was doing the 'neck-breaking' watch from midnight till mid-day. At 0400 hours my eyes were slowly closing, when suddenly the BA Hut was filled with a shrill buzzing. It was a 'scramble', our first call of the night. I raced to 29 Bravo, my team's Rover, and sprung the engine into life. The sailors jumped into the back and started to dress themselves into their breathing apparatus sets.

I edged Bravo on to the forecourt of the TAVR Centre waiting for the Police Escort to move off. It was a 'big one', Spillers Flour Mill down by London Docks. Already at the scene of the fire there were 4 BA Teams and 8 Green Goddesses.

We moved off activating the two-tones before going through the gates on to Lea Bridge Road warning the traffic of our approach, although there was seldom much about at that time of the morning. Bravo, following the Police car, thundered down the A 11 towards the docks. The weird oscillation of the blue lights sent cars and lorries scattering like frightened sheep. Round the last corner I saw the thick smoke billowing darkly from the shattered windows and roof of the mill.

On arrival 29 Bravo's crew sprang straight into action, still making last minute adjustments to the shoulder straps of their sets as they bounded up the stairs of the fire escape on to the 7th floor. I

raced behind them, weighed down by axes and rope. The roaring of the blaze grew more intense as we passed from floor to floor. By the time I reached the hallway one of the lads had already kicked down the door leading to a blazing room. With their breathing apparatus turned on they entered the room armed with a fully charged hose. Petty Officer Germaine, grasping the branch, opened the valve and with both hands directed the jet first at the ceiling then the walls and floor. Behind the security of the hissing hose they advanced slowly towards the concrete stairs in the middle of the building.

An order came across the 'Storm Phone' that hung precariously round my neck. I was to leave the mill and wait for further instructions.

As I waited momentarily for instructions, civilians started to approach asking who and what had started the fire. A message came over the Home Office radio in Bravo. I had listened carefully with my unpractised ear as the static coming on the channel was rising to a high pitched crescendo, "Control to 29 Bravo, do you require assistance? Over".

I looked about for help but everyone seemed too preoccupied in various tasks. As I picked up the radio receiver everything seemed to shake. I heard a low rumbling coming from the mill, and then with a spurt of sparks and flames the roof collapsed where seconds ago Team 3 had been working.

"20 Bravo, no assistance required, over". It was obvious that BA Teams could no longer enter the building. The blaze had now turned into an inferno of flames; the walls had started to crack with the intense heat and the building was beginning to collapse.

It was not until 0830 hours that the tired and soaking sailors returned to Bravo, looking and smelling like chimney sweeps. At 1000 hours we were stood down and started the cold journey back to Whipps Cross.

It was three weeks before that fire was completely extinguished.

Type Right

You are probably correct if you think that the typists in No 1 Typing Pool, HQ BAOR, are very efficient, but did you know that some of

them work with beasts known as Automatic Data Word Processing Machines or DATIC 1000 – 2 FBD? To the less technical among you these machines are best described as typewriters with memories.

Initial work is typed up in the normal way but instead of producing a hard copy on paper, it appears on a visual screen in front of you. Any mistakes can be erased without trace and over-typed. When the text is absolutely perfect, the touch of a button will make the machine produce as many copies as you like at the staggering pace of 600 wpm.

But what about the memory? All the information is stored by computer action on what is generally referred to as a "floppy disc" which looks like a flimsy singles record. Each "disc" can store over 260,000 characters, say over 4,000 lines of text, and you can recall the text to the visual display screen for amendment, or simply produce another copy at any time.

The main advantages to the system are that each addressee gets a "top copy", the presented work will never have any corrections or rubbings-out, and large documents can be stored on computer disc and amended with the minimum of manual effort. This includes the inserting of new data, sentences, paragraphs, or pages without the need to renumber.



L - R Pte Ginette Spicer, Cpl Julie Weaving, Mrs Ruth Allison (their supervisor), W02 Jess Von Dahlen (Supervisor No 1 Typing Pool BAOR).

Isle of Benbecula Outer Hebrides

During the Queen's Jubilee Year, the WRAC in Benbecula wished to contribute some effort to the local island community. The conventional street parties were 'non-starters' owing to the Force 10 gales, so we decided to run a games evening for all the inhabitants of Benbecula, including civilians.

The games we played were darts, carpet bowls, table tennis, billiards and a tug-of-war. The WRAC thoroughly enjoyed themselves as did everyone else. The visiting unit won the trophy which had been kindly made by REME Wing. The WRAC team won the tug-of-war!

When the games were over there was a buffet supper and a disco. Everyone danced late into the night while the accountants counted the money. We managed to raise £140 for the local Old Peoples' Home at Lochmaddy. With this money we bought two wheel chairs which has enabled many old people to go out and see Highland Games Shows and dancing displays. We are delighted that our contribution to the Jubilee Year has been so well appreciated.

68 Squadron RCT

68 SQN TAKES TO THE HILLS

From 13th May – 3rd June 1978, a mixed group of RCT and WRAC from the unit made the ten hour journey from Rheindahlen to Steibis, Bavaria. Each group went for one week and changed over with the new 'intake' on the following Saturday.

Activities included mountain-walking, grass skiing, canoeing, swimming and abseiling. A good time was had by all.

LCpl Wills managed to abseil upside down by feeding her rope out and forgetting to move her feet!

Pte Biricz always seemed to be hungry, and on many of the walks "I'm starving" and "my feet

hurt" were the only words she said.

The climax of the week was a high level walk, climbing up to about 7000 ft. This was very hard because of the deep snow above the tree-line. Even Pte Biricz stayed quiet to conserve her energy! Everyone made it to the top; the girls obviously did not want to be seen as less capable than the men, and the men did not want to be beaten by the girls!

Our packed lunches were eaten at the top, and then came the fun. For much of the descent the steep slopes, thickly covered with snow, were ideal for "poly-bagging". We climbed into our polythene survival bags and literally slid down the slopes, clutching rucksacks. The speed was a bit terrifying at times but everyone seemed to stop together and after the first few 'pitches' all had gained confidence — needless to say the descent was a lot faster than the ascent.

Arriving back after the hard day, all feeling exhausted, the OC camp declared "Three free drinks for the workers". We did manage to stay awake long enough to drink them.

REGULAR FORCES EMPLOYMENT ASSOCIATION

This Association is part of the Forces Resettlement Service. It exists to help Servicemen and women to find suitable employment when they leave the Forces. It also takes a long term interest in ex-Regulars, who may use its services as often as they wish.

The Association has 42 Branches covering the United Kingdom, and its Employment Officers — all ex-Servicemen — are in close touch with employers. It provides all services free.

In 1977 the Association placed over 5,900 men and women from the Services in employment; of these jobs some 2,400 were for men and women from the Army and 30 were from the WRAC.

Addresses and telephone numbers of Branches can be obtained from Corps and Regimental Associations — or from Post Offices, Employment Offices or local telephone directories.



SPORT

TABLE TENNIS

For the first time in nine years the Army Team were victorious in the Inter-Services Table Tennis Championships held at HMS Nelson, Portsmouth on 16th February 1978. They won 16 sets, compared with 6 sets won by the WRAF and 5 sets by the WRNS.

Singles

1. Pte J Armstrong
2. SSgt P Swailes
3. Capt M King
4. Pte A Turner

Doubles

Pte J Armstrong
SSgt P Swailes

NETBALL

VICTORIOUS WRAC HONG KONG TEAM



Back Row: Cpl Tobb, Pte Spooner, Sgt Bradbury, Cpl McSherry, Cpl Enser.
Front Row: LCpl Wilson, Pte Clegg, Cpl Ford (reserve).

TAVR

32 (SCOTTISH) SIGNAL REGIMENT (V)

At Edinburgh Castle on 17th April 1978 Captain Connie Buntain of 52 (Lowland) Squadron was presented with the GOC Scotland's Certificate of Commendation. This award was for gallantry in life saving in a fire on 4th November 1977 when she and Lt Stobo, Royal Signals, of the same Regiment rescued a woman from a blazing house in Possilpark, Glasgow. The woman was burned and unconscious by the time they managed to fight their way to her and drag her to safety.

The Commendation concludes "Both Captain Buntain and Lt Stobo who were burned about the hands and arms, displayed great courage and placed their own lives in jeopardy to save the woman who would have otherwise died".

A further award was made on 23rd June 1978 at Holyrood Palace by the Priory of Scotland of the Most Venerable Order of St John when His Grace The Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, K StJ, BA presented her with their Bronze Life Saving Award. This award was last presented in Scotland in 1950.



Captain Buntain and Lt Stobo after the presentation of the GOC Scotland's Certificate of Commendation.



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother accompanied by the Commanding Officer, Lt Col N G Thorne TD B Sc RA (V), inspecting WRAC officer cadets of the University of London Officers Training Corps forming a Royal Guard of Honour before the presentation of degrees at the Royal Albert Hall on March 8th 1978.

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First Chopper Trip for Assistant Adjutant

Two "firsts" this year for Lieutenant Rosalyn Shaw from Warrington, TAVR WRAC Assistant Adjutant of 103 Air Defence Regiment RA (V) – The Lancashire Artillery Volunteers. It was her first Camp with the Regiment and she is the only woman in the Regiment. As Assistant Adjutant, she helped run the Regimental Command net during Annual Camp in June on Salisbury Plain, and also achieved a personal first – the first time aloft in a helicopter. She is seen here in the back seat of the Army Air Corps Gazelle helicopter. Her straps are being checked by Major Charles Inness, previously Adjutant of the Regiment and now serving with the Army Air Corps at Netheravon. Back in civilian life Rosalyn is a Personnel Manager in Warrington.



Osborne House

King Edward VII's Convalescent Home for Officers

Rachel Bleackley
Editor Educational Explorers Ltd

'Certainly the best hotel in the Island and probably the cheapest...'

I wonder how many people would guess that this is the description of a Convalescent Home?

A special one, it is true. But this is no exaggeration as I (and many others) can vouch. It was only with the greatest reluctance that I left – albeit by then fully restored and able to take on again the hurly burly of everyday life. Osborne House in the Isle of Wight is special, as I shall try to show. If ever you should need care and rehabilitation after an operation or illness, Osborne continues to provide both par excellence.

Osborne was given to the nation by King Edward VII and in 1904, by his wish, the Household Wing became a Convalescent Home for Officers of the Armed Forces. This role it sustained through two world wars and the period in-between when service overseas (we had an Empire then, remember?) meant a number of invaliding home to recover from obscure tropical diseases. This perhaps was one of Osborne's hey-days. The majority of patients were young and, as they recovered, high spirited. Many are the tales of pranks and dare-devilry, and the array of silver trophies which gleam on the long dining tables bear witness to hotly contested sports of infinite variety.

Osborne, then strictly a masculine preserve, resembled a club or Officers Mess as far as off-duty time was concerned. In conversation certain subjects were taboo; for instance, discussion of one's ailment and its symptoms – an excellent precaution this. But a great deal of each day, then as now, was taken up with treatment and therapies of various kinds.

Today, according to individual needs, there are appointments with the resident Physiotherapist and the Remedial Gymnast, each in his way demanding. One tends to be 'pushed to the point of pain' – but not beyond. A challenge and a salutary reminder that reluctant limbs can be persuaded to do better. Less physically taxing, but still certainly in the 'character forming' category, is the occupational therapy unit. While hydrotherapy and exercises in the heated pool soothe and encourage a struggling patient to believe that maybe the Remedial Gymnast's targets are not after all as totally unobtainable as they seem on dry land.

But perhaps this is placing too much emphasis on physical rehabilitation. It is an important feature of course – but Osborne caters for convalescents of all kinds, and patients are under constant medical supervision. The House Governor is supported by the Matron and night and day nursing staff for the pace of progress is finely-tuned to individual needs. For those whose prime

requirement is rest, there can be few lovelier or more peaceful spots in England.

The grounds are justly famous and slope gently down to a bay overlooking the Solent. A wooded path leads to the Swiss Chalet, imported by the Prince Consort and furnished to scale for the Royal children who cooked, kept house and had their gardens there. In Spring there are daffodils and, of course, primroses everywhere. One learns how these were bunched each year and sent to Lord Beaconsfield on the Queen's instructions. In fact one of the delights of Osborne is the ease with which one can step back quite literally into the more gentle pace of the Victorian era.

With the privilege of free access to the State Apartments (open from April to October) those who wish can share the interests and gain a delightfully personal insight on the life and times of the Royal Family in the home which they designed and had built for themselves.

It was to Osborne that Queen Victoria retired in her grief in 1861 after the death of the Prince Consort. And it was there that she died forty years later. During this period everything was preserved (and it still is) as it had been during Prince Albert's lifetime. Objets d'art are mingled with childhood sketches. A well-used umbrella is ready to hand and a favourite gundog has been immortalised in bronze. A touching and unique collection — as viewers of the Royal Heritage TV programmes will recall.

Returning to the present day and the Household Wing, it is no surprise that the elegance of a more gracious age lingers there too. The portraits looking down from the walls would ensure this, but the care and service (many of the domestic staff are descended from those who originally served Queen Victoria) set a standard that is all the more appreciated for being rare.

The daily treatment and therapies completed, there is a country house party atmosphere. Sporting events ranging from Shove Ha'penny through Scrabble to Billiard Bowls are keenly contested, but by no means obligatory. There is a library and a TV room as well as ample opportunity for quiet meditation. Add to this the abiding interest of one's fellow patients. Drawn today from the Armed Forces, the Diplomatic, Overseas and Home Civil Services, there is a cross-fertilisation of ideas, much good talk and often the discovery of friends in common.

Finally, doubtful of my own credentials to write for *Lioness*, perhaps I may turn for support to a beloved aunt, a Regular Army wife in her

day, who wrote: "Your card from Osborne House is especially interesting to me as Uncle Tom was sent there in the first world war when he was invalided back from France. Visiting him, I was shown into a pretty sitting room with another woman who suggested I joined her nearer the fire. We had a long chat and she was so nice. To my astonishment when the Matron came in, she did a splendid curtsy. My companion was Princess Marie Louise!"

Footnote. Officers of HM Forces, men and women, both serving and retired, are eligible for admission to Osborne House. Further details from The House Governor, Osborne, East Cowes, Isle of Wight. Tel.: Cowes 2511.

"We'll Meet Again"

The last time that this WRAC quartet met was in 1962. Then they were sergeants, serving in Rheindahlen; three of them in 14 Battalion WRAC and the fourth in 28 Signal Regiment.

Sixteen years later they met again. The occasion was the handover of the duties of clerical manpower accountant in HQ BAOR, by W01 Betty Green to W01 Pam Bartlett. Betty is off to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps Training Centre at Blackdown. "What are you going to do there?" we asked. "Why, take over Pam's job of course!"

Pictured here with Pam left and Betty right, are W01 Hilda Griffith who is a duty Communications officer with the NORTHAG/2ATAF communications centre, and W01 Ann 'Mac' Maskens-McIntyre who is the RSM of 29 Company WRAC.

Between them these senior Warrant Officers have 92 years service. Hopefully "we'll meet again" is their motto! However, where and when remains to be seen.



Four senior Warrant Officers sharing 92 years service.

The Queen and Her Army

New Jubilee Souvenir Book from Soldier

BOOK REVIEW

'WHAT A WAY TO WIN A WAR' by Pat Hall.
Published by Midas Books, Speldhurst, Kent.
193 pps. £4.50

This is an unusual account of a very small piece of the tail which helped the fighting part of the 8th Army to wag in North Africa and Italy. It is the story of a select group of women volunteers of the Mechanised Transport Corps (MTC) who, through the wiles of their original Commander, got themselves to South Africa in 1941 and thence to Egypt. Through their proven ability and enthusiasm they were accepted into the ATS and thence the Western desert and eventually into Italy.

Perforce the book contains a great deal of the minutiae of life, both military and social, and of the problems faced by a small group of women in an all-male environment which often was not prepared to accept them seriously. Albeit, it records an aspect of life not normally described in military histories and having served in the 8th Army, I can vouch for the accuracy of the geographical descriptions.

Provided one accepts the journalistic style, it is interesting reading especially for members of the WRAC and RAMC who might benefit from the intriguing account of the way relationships between these two Corps were forged in war.

Pat Hall financed this book herself and deserves support.

P.S. NEWTON Colonel

Editor's Note'

I have read this book with considerable enjoyment. For those who knew Cairo in wartime this vivid description will bring back the smells and sounds and all the other memories. "Cairo by night, Cairo in the dawn, Helmh in a khamseen, the cool green peace of a cricket match at Gezira. 'Ice coffee cold, or ice coffee hot?' on offer with rich cakes at Groppi's. The splendours of Shepherds and the Continental, the feluccas on the Nile, the smell of the drains at Cairo Main station. Where else in the world could one be offered a bunch of bananas in lieu of change on a tram, during a temporary run on the banks?"

SOLDIER, the British Army's magazine has produced a special souvenir edition to commemorate the Queen's links with her Army during Jubilee year. Copies are only available from military units and direct from SOLDIER and stocks are limited so early applications are essential.

Printed on special stiff paper and with hard covers, the special Jubilee SOLDIER contains 28 pages crammed with pictures of military involvement in the Queen's Jubilee tours.

Many of these are in full colour and some are hitherto unpublished. It has been designed as a comprehensive and permanent record of the Army's participation in the Jubilee celebrations.

Individuals should send their remittance for 65p (including 15p postage and packing) to SOLDIER, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU.

Bringing Them In

Sgt A Sillett
Recruiter — Leeds

Many of you serving members may well think of a Recruiter as not really being in the Corps at all. You may also think that we are all "old maids", uncaring, untalented and unambitious. In actual fact a Recruiter needs to be talented, competent, ambitious for her applicants, responsible, polite, honest, observant, confident, genuine and influential. In short — undervalued but not yet a genius!

Because of the nature of our work — maintaining and trying always to raise the standard of the Corps — we have to be resourceful, adaptable, courageous and compassionate. Self-praise may be no recommendation, but it does pay to advertise!

Apparently remote to you, we are in the WRAC, only our engagement is different, and we have all been regular serving members before taking the 'R' Type engagement.

The only time we get a mention is when a

Recruiter receives the LS & GC Medal and not always then. Since none of us here in Leeds, at least, will qualify for that medal for many years to come, I felt it was time to put all Recruiters on the map. We are your colleagues and we, too, are proud of our Corps. On your next visit home, how about popping into your local Army Careers Office to make contact with us? We would welcome "feed-back" comments on what we don't, but should, tell recruits, and any out-dated information we may be giving. Please come and see us.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1978

The AGM was held at the WRAC Centre, Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford on 15th May 1978, with the Vice President in the Chair.

The Association Chairman in the Report of Council said that the financial situation was satisfactory and the Association was now on fairly solid foundations. The ex-Service membership at the end of 1977 was 2836 which was a drop of 191. During 1977 the Association welcomed 207 new members but lost 398 members who had joined in earlier years. In general terms the Association loses something in the order of 200 members a year or about 7% of our membership. If we could stem this outflow our membership would move up substantially. Even so, the matter of membership gets increasingly worrying as it is an ageing one and looking to the future this does not portend well. Support from serving members has improved and over 3000 officers and service-women are contributing to the Association.

During the year the York Branch disbanded for lack of members prepared to take on the duties of secretary and treasurer.

Council are particularly grateful to the Honorary Officials in Branches and Areas for all their hard work in organising branch activities, without which the Association would wither. Nevertheless Branches must find ways and means of attracting more members, and especially younger ex-service members of the WRAC who

will be able to carry the Association forward to the future.

The Honorary Treasurers' report explained that the excess of income over expenditure in the published annual accounts was £3996. This was due mainly to increased subscriptions and investment interest and the proceeds of 1976 Grand Draw combined with a reduction in the cost of producing *Lioness*. Provided expenditure was watched carefully she was confident that even with some increase in costs, subscriptions will be held at their present level.

The Editor said her aim was to produce a magazine which would appeal to everybody from the oldest retired member of the WAAC to the newest recruit in the WRAC. This could only be done if individuals and units sent in a variety of articles, with photographs in black and white, and she thanked everyone who had sent contributions. As the *Lioness* was published only twice a year it was important that material was sent in promptly as articles received too late for one edition were invariably out of date six months later.

She thanked Major E O Coven (Retd) for her untiring efforts to obtain and retain advertisers.

The Chairman of the Benevolent Fund Trustees reported that 432 applications for assistance had been considered and £14,434 had been spent on grants.

Support for the fund had again been splendid and in particular by serving members of the Corps. Many Association branches, regular and volunteer units, had concentrated on raising funds for The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund and had raised £5,974 which had enabled the Trustees to raise the annuities to £1 per week for the 34 annuitants.

The Chairman of the Museum Trustees reported that there had been 4,666 visitors to the Museum.

Colonel L M Davies CBE was elected Life Vice President and Colonel R M Green, Lady Jackson and Colonel M N Jamieson were re-elected Council Vice Presidents.

It was decided to hold a Reunion at Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford in 1979 which would be open to all who were serving or had served in the QMAAC, ATS and WRAC, whether or not they were members of the Association.

The AGM 1979 would be held at the WRAC Centre, Guildford on the same day as the Reunion.

Copies of the Minutes of the AGM are held by Branches but any member requiring a personal copy can obtain it from the General Secretary.

REUNIONS

Southern Area Reunion

The 1978 Southern Area Reunion was held in Weymouth on 21st May 1978.

Members of the Branches met at Minterne House at 2.30 pm and were greeted by Lord and Lady Digby and members of Weymouth and Portland Branch. Lord Digby welcomed everyone to his home, which is not open to the general public. He gave us a history of the family and the house, and then he and Lady Digby took everyone around the ground floor. We were able to have a quick look at the garden before returning to the coaches.

We went on to Weymouth and had tea at Pullingers Restaurant. The Hostess Branch were celebrating their 21st Birthday Year and a large cake was cut.

We welcomed as our guests Brigadier King and Lt Col Saunders-Davies.



Members of the Weymouth Branch cutting their 21st Birthday cake.

Didcot Garrison Group

Didcot Garrison Group Old Comrades ATS have once again celebrated their Annual Tea-Party. This year was the 32nd meeting and 38 members attended.

It was held on April 8th at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo, who provided a very nice tea. A great deal of chatter went on and photographs of

children and grandchildren, and those taken during the war years were passed round. In spite of all members being older, the years between 1945 and 1978 were forgotten as the memories were exchanged amid outbursts of laughter.

Each year a member is lost and greatly missed, and again a new member comes along to be greatly welcomed. Long may Didcot Garrison Group ATS continue to meet for their Annual Tea-Party.

Anyone ever stationed at Didcot and wishing to join, please contact Mrs A Wagstaff, 127B St Julian's Farm Road, London SE27 0RP — 01 670 1840.

Drivers and Clerks Reunion Dinner

Were you ever on the permanent staff of a Drivers and Clerks Training Centre?

On Saturday 20th May 1978 an experimental Reunion Dinner was held in Worthing for those who had been stationed at Horsley Hall, Gresford and/or Figsbury Barracks, Winterbourne Gunner, and was so enjoyed by all there that, from the chatter and laughter that followed the "Do you remember ..." stories one felt there were 150 people in the room and not just 15.

The years fell away and everyone looked young again. The shock came when the total number of years service was added up — 267 years! Only one person there could find no one she knew, but soon her stories were being enjoyed by the others.

Our thanks to Miss (Flo) Jane Little, who organised everything, including the booking of accommodation for those who wished it. She must have felt all her hard work and time had not been wasted when she looked round the room and saw our cheerful smiling faces.

After such a successful evening Flo said she was willing to arrange another Reunion next year (1979) and to widen the circle to include those who served at any Drivers and Clerks Training Centre.

If you qualify to attend, why not start contacting as many of your 'old' friends as you can to come with you. Some of them may not receive the Lioness so will not see the advertisement.

The person to contact if you are interested is: Miss F J Little, Kabete, Common Hill, West Chiltington Sussex RH20 2NR.

REUNION NOTICES

NORTHERN AREA REUNION 1978

To be held in Harrogate on Saturday 7 October from 2.30 to 6 pm.

Tickets £1, including tea, may be obtained from Miss M Bradley, 60 West End Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 9BY not later than Thursday 28th September. (On holiday from 7th to 21st September).

Please send stamped addressed envelope with remittance payable to "WRAC Association - Northern Area Committee".

WESTERN AREA REUNION 1978

The Western Area Reunion will be held at Donnington on Saturday, 21st October 1978.

Further details from Area Secretary, 26 Boden Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9DJ.

LONDON BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Owing to unforeseen circumstances the date of the London Branch AGM has been changed. Please note that it will take place on Friday 15th December, 1978.

ATS DINNER CLUB The 1978 Luncheon for members and their guests will be held on Saturday 14th October 1978 at the Bloomsbury Centre Hotel, London, when members of the Club will also be celebrating the 40th anniversary of the formation of the ATS. Ex-ATS are eligible for membership and details of the Dinner Club can be obtained from the Hon Secretary, Mrs M Storer, Bel Air, Llangrove, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 6EY.

REUNION DINNER Due to the success of the Drivers and Clerks Training Centre Reunion Dinner held in Worthing on 20th May 1978, another such evening is planned for 19th May 1979. Anybody who served with that unit and would like to attend should send a s.a.e. to Miss F J Little, 'Kabete', Common Hill, West Chiltington, Sussex RH20 2NR, for details.

BRANCH NEWS

GLASGOW BRANCH WENT "BACK TO THE OLD ROUTINE"

The WRAC Flag was flying high over the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders' Drill Hall at Dumbarton when 18 Volunteers from the Glasgow Branch WRAC Association reported for duty. Khaki jackets were donned, and one lucky volunteer got immediate promotion, her jacket had one stripe, so Volunteer Calderwood became L/Cpl, albeit it was local/unpaid. A mug of tea, plus a piece of slab cake (NAAFI) was provided, then "FALL-IN, NUMBER, FORM THREES" the old familiar commands were heard. The Squad was handed over to Volunteer Russell (ex Drill Instructor) who quickly put us through our paces, and except for a few false starts and halts, in no time we were drilling as experts; right and left inclines, change step, mark time, etc. Another five minutes and we could have taken on the "ARGYLLS".

Memory Corner gave us a rest, Photographs, AB 64s, even the old style Air Mail letters were produced. Part 1 Orders, Leave Ration Card, and Soldier Magazine were only some of the items which had come out of hiding.

PTI Volunteer Tweedie blew her whistle, teams were picked, and a hectic and quite hilarious game of netball ensued, the PTI trying hard to enforce the rules. The match ended even, so everyone was satisfied.

A .22 Rifle Shoot was next on the programme, and various excuses were heard for how the "Bull" was missed.

We were now all ready for the tea meal. Shepherds pie, peas (Army type), fruit crumble, custard and a mug of tea were on the menu.

An invitation had been extended by the WO's & Sgts' Mess for a few games of Bingo, and the necessary liquid refreshment for the losers. This brought the day to an end, though not quite. Seven Volunteers leaving the Drill Hall were offered a lift to the station in a war time ambulance. What the passers-by thought when it drew up and the seven tired "old girls" jumped out we will never know. As the train drew out of the station, the Air Raid Siren (used for fires) sounded, a fitting end to a trip down memory lane. We had great fun and to our amazement we hadn't forgotten a thing.

HARROGATE. The Branch meets regularly on the last Wednesday of every month, and for 1978 we are experimenting with an alternating programme of a meeting in our Club room one month and an outside social event the next, which so far has proved to be a popular arrangement. We have recently acquired some new members and have enjoyed quite a varied series of activities.

Highlights were a super Dinner at a local hotel where the proprietor, being an ex-Buckingham Palace chef, fed us right royally, and a Buffet Supper at the home of our Chairman in May which was a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Our thanks are due to Mrs Watkinson for the delicious spread she provided. (Harrogate members are always ready to uphold that Yorkshire tradition of enjoying good food!).

Other events have included a "Home-Made Bring and Buy" for funds, a "Cold Cookery" demonstration, a competitive games evening, several social get-togethers and a visit to the Royal Hall in Harrogate to see "My Fair Lady".

We have just completed programme arrangements for the second six months of 1978 and hope that they will be well supported and as enjoyable as those in the first half of the year.

WIMBLEDON. Our monthly meetings continue to be very enjoyable — we had twenty-seven members at the Bring and Buy in April and raised just over £30 for the Branch funds. Two members who were unable to attend that night sent us donations which were very welcome. Thank you.

Seven members of the Branch attended the WRAC Association Annual General Meeting at WRAC Centre, Guildford on 15th April. There was a lovely WRAC band concert afterwards and then a good tea.

The September meeting will be a Make and Take. You bring something you have made and take something someone else has made. Was good fun last year — don't forget the date — 8th September.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on 17th November, at 8.00 pm.

SOUTHAMPTON. We continue to flourish and meet regularly each month in our comfortable surroundings. We aim to provide something of interest for our members each month, and these have included antiques, flower arranging, beetle drive, and fund raising for various charities. We are celebrating this year our 30th Anniversary of the Branch, and on the 5th April we had our Anniversary Dinner. This was a very happy occasion, and although we were sad to hear that Col D P Clark MBE DDWRAC UKLF who was to have been our Guest of Honour was taken ill, we were delighted to welcome Lt Col S P Richards ADWRAC South West District who at very short notice kindly accepted to take Col Clark's place. We continued the celebrations in July with a cheese and wine party, and the proceeds from the tombola were sent to the Princess Royal's Memorial Fund. 29 members attended the No 2 Sub Area Reunion on 21st May at Weymouth which was most enjoyable.



30th Anniversary Dinner

Front Row L — R Mrs B Keating (Secretary), Mrs J Kingdon JP (Chairman), Lt Col S P Richards, ADWRAC South West District, Mrs E Chandler (Vice-Chairman).
Back Row L — R Miss D Blampied, Mrs F Allen, Mrs S Nias, Mrs P Beazley, Miss B Furber (Treasurer).

Correspondence

SOLDIERS' SONGS

The following letter has been received from Mrs Daphne Hill, Selwood, Mill Road, Heathfield, Sussex TN21 0XD:

Dear Madam,

I am making a collection of the words of soldier's songs sung during the 1914-18 war and subsequently, and hope that some of your readers may be able to help me.

I am particularly interested in those sung by the QMAAC and ATS and to know if the WRAC have any songs of their own.

Does anyone know if there are any unofficial words to our Corps March 'The Lass of Richmond Hill'?

I will gladly refund postage to anyone who writes to me.

Mrs M Chrusciany (ex Pte Waring) of 136 Hartington Street, Moss-side, Manchester M14 4RW writes:-

I would be grateful if anyone has a record of the ATS March, and if so would be willing to have it put on a cassette for me, and I will pay expenses. Also has anyone got the words of "Girls in Khaki" or a record of it that could be put on a cassette?

SSgt M Rosie BEM writes to us from Chequers:

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Officers in the WRAC who contributed towards the beautiful silver teapot presented to me after I left the WRAC College. I am absolutely thrilled and delighted with it and will treasure it for ever. It will always remind me of my happy days at the College. My sincere thanks to all of you."

134 Palmerston Street
Currajong
Taunsville
Queensland
Australia 4812

April 28th 1978

Dear Secretary,

Will you please send my Lioness to my new address as above, instead of Darwin NT where we lived for twenty years until the cyclone which took the whole town of 45,000 people and for 16 miles around. I had belonged to the Civil Defence Nursing Section for 14 years, so I was on duty. *Darwin has been three quarters rebuilt but it will never be the nice old place it was, and a lot of people like ourselves, have left. It is a hippy place now.*

I live with my single son. He is one of four sons who served from 1939-45. One was killed, one a Japanese prisoner of war and two wounded. The one I live with is on war pension and I have been widowed twice, both husbands wounded ex soldiers. I am 81 now and marched yesterday, Anzac Day. I hope I do not live to see my third war. Though I'd love to serve again I'm too old now, but active. I hold the Red Cross Honour. I would love to hear from any WAAC tailoress, 1914-18.

Please pass on my address. I do love Lioness and have received it since I was in England (my last time) in 1930.

Wishing you all the very best of everything.

Yours sincerely
M Batterham

Mrs Doris Orme (nee Carradice) wants to get in touch with ex-Private Dora Vernon whom she knew when they were stationed at Rhyl. Dora Vernon's home was at St Asaph. If anyone can help, will they write to Mrs Orme at 69 Waterside, Kendal, Cumbria.

OBITUARY

Mrs C King
127 Albert Road
Stoke
Plymouth
Devon

19 June 1978

Dear Editor,

I thought perhaps you would like to know how the Plymouth Branch started. My friend (Joyce Donovan) and myself were at a Burma Star Dinner and we were saying how nice it would be if we had an association. We were both ATS. So I decided in 1978 to see if we could form one. I mentioned this to the Secretary of the Federation of Ex Service Assns, and they promised to help with publicity and meeting place. Our first meeting was February, in a blizzard. I didn't expect anyone to arrive but nine people braved the storm. Each meeting since we started we have had at least one new member and everyone enjoys them immensely. Most of the members' families have grown up and they now have a bit of spare time. Also we have people who are lonely and they look on the meeting as an outlet to meet new and old friends. We are now up to 30 members and hopefully still recruiting?

I have had a silver cup given to us from a disbanded TA Unit. The last person to win it was given it. So we have a bit of silver for decoration.

So far we have had a Jumble Sale to raise funds and we have a "Nostalgia Social" in July; a general get together to show old photographs and talk about "old times" and introduce the men in our lives. We hope to have another Social in August or September and of course an Autumn Jumble Sale.

Several of our members went to the funeral of Sgt Mavis Fry. I had known her for quite a few years and we were very sad about her death. I know she had a lot of suffering but always put a cheerful face on.

I hope you will find this interesting as all the members here are very keen. Our aim is to have a standard dedicated to join with the other ex-service associations in Plymouth.

I will keep you informed of our progress.

Yours faithfully,
Christina King

Adamson. Miss E Adamson of Freuchie, Fife, on 5 February 1978. QMAAC and ATS.

Andrews. Miss V Andrews of Taunton, Somerset, in December 1977.

Bakes. Mrs C Bakes of Bradford Yorkshire, on 2 February 1978. QMAAC.

Brousson. Major D D W Brousson of Hythe, Kent, on 24 January 1978. ATS and WRAC 1939-1971.

Bull. Miss Florence Bull of Cowes, Isle of Wight. ATS. Member of Bournemouth Branch for many years.

Butler. Miss Freda Butler of York on 2 March 1978. ATS. Served with Pay Corps in York.

Cartmell. Miss S Cartmell on 4 June 1978. Warrant Officer WRAC.

Colquhoun. Mrs Annie Colquhoun of Hastings, New Zealand on 25 June 1978. QMAAC.

Curran. Miss Alice Curran on 1 April 1978. Served in Singapore 1970-1971 as Warrant Officer with Women's Australian Army Corps.

Frampton. Miss E M Frampton on 23 December 1977. Senior Commander ATS.

Frost. Mrs Hilda Frost MBE of Leamington Spa on 28 March 1978. Senior Commander ATS. Served with 142 (M) HAA Regt, 5 AA Group.

Fry. Sgt M G Fry of the WRAC Centre on 3 June 1978. WRAC 1958-1978.

Fyles. Miss B Fyles of London on 4 October 1977. QMAAC.

Gardner. Miss J D Gardner on 4 February 1978. Subaltern ATS.

Hassell. Miss B M Hassell of Bromley on 25 June 1978. QMAAC.

Honeyman. Mrs E T B Honeyman of Gatehouse-of-Fleet, Kirkcudbrightshire. Junior Commander ATS.

Hulme-Welch. Mrs I M Hulme-Welch of Saxmundham, Suffolk in December 1977. ATS.

Jackson. Miss E M Jackson of Margate in January 1978. ATS.

Jackson. Miss A E M Jackson of Margate in June 1978. CSM ATS.

Lassetter. Miss M Faith Lassetter in October 1977. Junior Commander ATS.

Maher. Mrs Nancy Maher of Manchester, on 9 February 1978. ATS. Member of Manchester Branch for 25 years.

Manley. Miss Marjorie Manley of Keighley, Yorkshire on 3 July 1978. RSM, ATS and WRAC.

McKnight. Miss Maybelle McKnight on 10 July 1977. QMAAC.

McNiven. Miss Christina McNiven of Duddingston, Edinburgh on 3 April 1978. Senior Commander ATS.

Meredith. Miss J Meredith of Radnor in March 1978. ATS and WRAC.

Redhead. Mrs E Redhead of Bradford, Yorkshire on 8 March 1978. ATS.

Schiller. Miss T Schiller of London in November 1977. ATS.

Valentine. Mrs E M Valentine TD (nee Breeden) of Runcorn, Cheshire in February 1978. ATS 1938-1947. Senior Commander.

Waddell. Mrs Irma Waddell of Glasgow on 17 April 1978. ATS.

Willson. Mrs E H Willson of Carlisle on 5 May 1978. QMAAC.

RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Regular Army

Colonel: J Hands

Lieutenant Colonel: D J Freeland

Majors: P S E Carson, J M Roulstone

Captains: H M Cary, I M Hawes, K D Lloyd-Jones, J A Mason

Lieutenants: C Liles, S H Nettleship, S M F Veillard-Thomas

Special Regular Commissions

Lieutenants: A S Armitage-Smith, N M Vickers

Short Service Commissions

Captains: C A Blanch, D V Stephens, B B Vaughan

Lieutenants: M L R Cass, J P Hawkes, C M J Stephens, C M Swallow

2/Lieutenants: S J Dalton, K G James, S A McGrath, J M Robertshaw

LONDON GAZETTE

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Mention in Despatches: Cpl P R Jones

PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Regular Army

Majors: C R Bolland, M J Craggs, A A Kelly, G K Ramsey, MBE, M S Wing

Major (QM): E J Edwards

Captains: J J Goldsmith, S J Westlake

Lieutenants: S Davies, J A Jones, S E Reynolds

2/Lieutenants: I J B A Andrews, C J H Faulkner, E A Kennedy, B E Richardson, R A Seeckts, S E Tait

2/Lieutenants on probation: A L Birtwistle, J L Morrison

Short Service Commissions

Captains: E H Bell, V M Brighton, J E Edwards

Lieutenants: J E Bennett, A M Carter, J A Dathan, V Evans, A E Ewan, K G Findlay, J A Johnson, C Lace, D M Legg, L Marsh, J K Petty, H M Thain, S Westall, V L Wright

2/Lieutenants: G E Griffiths, A L Hughes, K A Lee, J E Marshall, T V H Mitchell, B M Quinlan, J E Sawyer

2/Lieutenants on probation: R A Butterworth, B Flaherty, S A Howell, A A Mee, S J Meyer, J M Simmonds, M L Smith, E E Reed

Short Service Voluntary Commission

2/Lieutenants on probation: M A Hamilton

PERSONAL COLUMN

FOR SALE Greatcoat. Moss Bros, hardly worn, almost as new, size 14/16, height 5' 4", £110. Telephone Major Jackson 09803-3371 ext 5664 (Larkhill).

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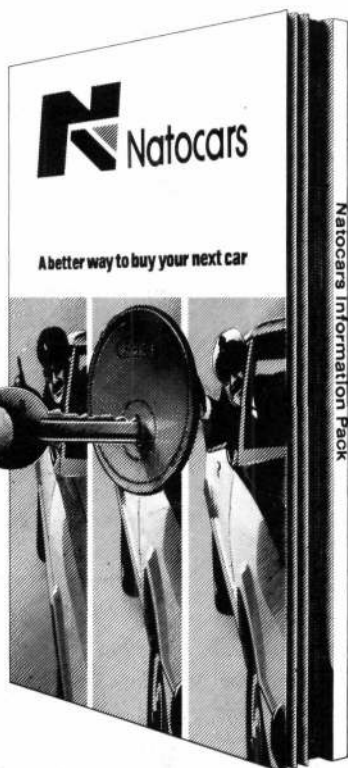
FOR SALE Officers No 2 Dress. Bust 36", hips 38", skirt length 25". One new £80. One as new £40. Mrs D Stephens, 13 Biggs Lane, Arborfield Camp, Berkshire.

FOR SALE Greatcoat £100. No 2 dress £50. Summer blouses 2 for £5. Mess Dress (old style with silk sash) £15. No 1 Dress hat (size 7) £10. Miscellaneous items. Size 12/14, height 5' 5". Mrs C M Walker, 2 Matthew Road, Camberley, Surrey. Tel: Camberley 65562. After November 1978 c/o Bridge House, Culmstock, Devon.

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