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October	Tour of BAOR
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November 10	Lord Mayor's Show
December 12	Concert Fairfield Hall, Croydon (evening)

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We regret that prices have had to be raised again to take account of the new VAT rates.

Cover Photograph

Her Majesty The Queen accompanied by Brigadier E J Nolan CB, Deputy Controller Commandant and Brigadier A Field, Hon ADC, DWRAC.

Courtesy Soldier News.

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Contributions for next issue by 14th December 1979

(Photographs in black and white only)

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Lioness

Vol. LII

1979

No. 2

EDITORIAL

Messages of appreciation have been pouring in to tell us that for most of you the Grand Reunion was a great success. We are only sorry that it was not possible to send tickets to everyone who wanted to come. The centre pages have been devoted to a pictorial record of the Queen's visit starting with Her Majesty's arrival when she was welcomed by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Hamilton of Dalzell until her departure after Beating Retreat.

A message of loyal greetings was sent to our Commandant-in-Chief, HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, and the following reply was received by the Chairman of the WRAC Association. "I was delighted by the kind message of loyal greetings which I received from the Members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association on the occasion of their Diamond Jubilee Reunion. I send to you all gathered at Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford, my warmest good wishes for a happy and successful day. ELIZABETH R, Commandant-in-Chief." A letter and flowers were sent to our President HRH The Duchess of Kent to mark the occasion, and a gracious reply was received.

The British Ex-Service Women's Association, South Australia sent "Best of luck and success for your Reunion" and the New Zealand Women's Royal Army Corps Association sent, "Best wishes for a happy and memorable day". We also received good wishes and congratulations from our own units overseas and from many individuals.

Our warmest congratulations go to the Rt Hon Miss Betty Harvie Anderson OBE TD (Mrs J F P Skrimshire) who has received a life peerage in the Birthday Honours. Miss Harvie Anderson was the member for Renfrewshire East for twenty years. From 1970-1973 she was the Deputy Speaker and Deputy Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and was the first woman to sit in the Speaker's Chair. Miss Harvie Anderson joined the Association as a life member in 1943, and she goes to the House of Lords with our best wishes.

Presentations LSGC



Sgt Jean Raynor receiving the LSGC Medal from Lt Gen Sir Michael Gow, GOC Scotland.



Recruiters and ACOs (WS) in Yorkshire after the presentation of the LSGC Medal to Sgt N Haxby by Lt Col A Bray ADWRAC NE District. Sgt Haxby has served in the WRAC since 1955 in regular and TAVR units.
Back Row: Sgt Eadie, Sgt Bradshaw, Sgt Booker, Capt Macey, Sgt Atkinson, Sgt Lodge.
Front Row: Sgt Sillett, Sgt Boyd QARANC, Sgt Haxby, Lt Col Bray, Capt Conley TD.

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

Women's Emergency Corps and Women's Volunteer Reserve

Elizabeth Sedgwick (Driver Shepherd)

The War broke out on the 4 August 1914 and I joined the Women's Emergency Corps — soon to become the Women's Volunteer Reserve — on the 8th August. There were about a hundred of us.

We were told we had to be "disciplined", so the War Office sent a Grenadier Guardsman to give us drill, and, as long hobble skirts were the fashion, he used to delight (after making us form fours) to shout "About Turn". He would keep us at the "About" for a very long time before giving the command "Turn". Then, with sarcasm he would say, "Do you know what you look like? — a lot of Jelly Bags".

Our training included Emergency First Aid, Signalling — both semaphore and morse — and of course drill. Some of us could ride horseback so were given hard training with Rough Riders and some could drive.

Those who could give full time were trained as Officers and bought their own uniforms. We, who could only work in the evenings, were Tommies, and also bought our own Khaki uniforms — very sensible coat and skirt. At first we were sneered at in the streets, but as we progressed — we were a Battalion by 1915, and I was a Sergeant by then — people realised we were useful and dedicated.

Every night one Platoon would work with a horse-drawn canteen in Woolwich Arsenal all night, from 9 pm until 8 am. That wonderful woman Lilian Barker — later to be the first woman Prison Officer — was one of our Officers. Then there was driving an ambulance to Charing Cross Station to pick up the wounded; casualties were heavy and included gassed patients.

There were many other duties to be performed, but all on a voluntary basis. As I had to get a job during the day I applied to the War Department who wanted drivers for munitions. I could drive, but did not know what was under the bonnet.

I was given a 2 ton lorry, a Renault, with ratchet gears and gravity fed engine. That meant, if the petrol in the tank was not above a certain level you "conked out" — as happened to me on one occasion. I was loaded with long brass rods and had started to go up a hill — when the engine stopped dead. I had no alternative but to turn

round and back up it! That taught me a lesson: always to keep the tank full. On the dash board there was a drip feed oil pressure gauge, which was a glass-fronted case about ten inches wide and four inches long, with a row of brass knobs beneath a number of glass tubes showing which parts of the engine were being lubricated. If the oil stopped dripping in any one of these tubes, the driver had to pump the appropriate brass knob like mad until the oil started to drip again.

Driving my lorry took me to some interesting places. All sorts of firms, both large and small, used to make munitions, but one unexpected place was the Mint. On one occasion I took my usual brass rods to the Mint to be made into "nose caps" and was then reloaded, the usual waterproof sheets covering what looked like white bricks. When I had delivered them to the Docks at Tilbury the official who signed my chit said "Do you know what you've been carrying? Gold ingots!" That was 64 years ago — and no escort!

We carried on doing our tour of duty in the Women's Volunteer Reserve until 1917 when most of us joined the WAACS.

I was one of the eight WAAC Driver-Mechanics sent to France (Calais) in 1917 where we were attached to the Army Service Corps. Being only females, we had to "prove" ourselves before we were accepted by the "Boys".

My trial came when the OC Workshops said "Well, let's see what you can do! Go over to the workshop and put a new sleeve valve in your engine". When I arrived with my old car, a Daimler, the men all left their jobs and sat or stood round me watching my every movement. I dismantled the engine, and with heart pounding, fitted in the new sleeve valve, made sure my Claudel Hobson carburettor jets were clear, Bosche magnito O.K. (no batteries then), oil, water — full. Now to start up! — no self-starters in those days. I gave a mighty wind — and she went like a bird! The men all clapped. I was 'in' and accepted as one of them.

What they didn't know was that we had to pass the RAC Driving and Technical Examination before going overseas, and I had to go to a School of Mechanics where I had been given that very same task to do for that Examination. As part of the practical examination I had to change a wheel in Pall Mall!

The other girls had similar experiences and we all, men and women, worked together very well and it was a very happy garage. We even got used to our Sergeant Major's language — which he

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Personally I had a most interesting time. I was loaned to the American Army when it first joined the Allies and I drove their General Thompson down to a secret meeting with Sir Douglas Haig. It was a very hectic two weeks. At the end of the War I had the privilege of driving President Poincaré when he came to Calais, and of taking King Albert of the Belgians back to his own country, where at Bruges he received a tumultuous welcome.

Back to the Pool. Our cars were the "dregs" sent down from the line, but somehow we kept them running! There was a dump about two miles from the garage and if we needed any spares we went along and "scrounged" whatever we needed, such as springs, magnetos etc., and even stepneys. We had Sunbeams, Austins, Wolsleys, Mercedes, Daimlers and Fords, but the only Ford then was the old Tin Lizzie with epicyclic gearing. Oh, my! If you were taken off an ordinary car and put on a Tin Lizzie it was ghastly, as everything worked the opposite way – put on your brake and you were in top gear!

One of our girls had a frightening experience with her first Tin Lizzie. She was told to take two Officers to the Leave Boat. They had just come

down from the line, where one had won the VC. The driver had just come off a Sunbeam. She started off, then got muddled up and tried to put on the brakes. She couldn't stop and careered round and round the Place d'Armée for ten minutes, then shot up a road and over the railway crossing, which was fortunately open. One of the Officers appealed to her to stop and shouted, "I've got a wife and two children at home – for God's sake stop!" I think his prayer was heard, as she ran out of petrol! After that, however, she became an expert and absolute wizard on her old Tin Lizzie.

Even in war time, the French celebrated their Saints Days and would often make an arch and decorate it. They used so many nails that punctures were common place. One day I had eleven punctures. Sometimes the nails would puncture the outer cover only, but sometimes the inner tube as well. On this particular day I had run out of patches (which we always carried for such eventualities) and as a last resort had to pack the two tyres with grass and crawl home!

We had to work against great odds, and for the first eight months we had no time off at all. We worked hard – but it was a good life and we enjoyed it.

WAR OFFICE SELECTION BOARD: BEFORE AND AFTER

Joy Burden (nee Dickinson)

It seems a century away now, that summer of '43. A crowd of khaki clad cadets, we descended on Dalkeith ATS Training Centre one sunny evening to be greeted by a charming red-haired subaltern and directed to barrack rooms. These quarters held about fifteen beds apiece with lecture huts and ablutions nearby.

A month on the Pre-OCTU Wing would be spent extending knowledge of the Auxiliary Territorial Service, gaining a grasp of army organisation from War Office to platoon level and the role of a junior officer within the military framework. A King's Commission was the ultimate target but we were warned of likely hazards on the way!

It was extremely interesting. There were talks on unit administration, military law, welfare, British Way and Purpose and current affairs. Five minute lecturesses to prepare and deliver were a little unnerving, likewise the moment I briefly took charge of a Nissen hut of Scottish recruits. They were welcoming and law abiding, bless them; I was quite sorry to leave them after a week, but happy to rejoin my comrades-in-arms. We were wonderfully united and I can't recall one odd woman out.

Most days found us drilling as a platoon on the square. The motherly staff-sergeant, observing flopping arms, improved my marching somewhat by making me place a stone in each hand to ensure a taut military-swing. Individual interviews themselves went well once nervousness subsided, and how well I remember a session with the officer commanding the Wing. A senior commander, whose crowns on her shoulders gleamed as brightly as her eyes, she enquired how I had enjoyed rescuing fallen women. My documents hinted, she said, that this had been my line. "Honestly Ma'am I never did – I mean, it was a kind of modern social work training. Club leadership really, and one did an awful lot of things..."

"I am sure you did, Dickinson, and it would be nice to know about some of them". She settled herself down to hear what must have been sheer

comedy, but brought to it a keen sensitivity and interest.

Then one day we were despatched to Leeds to face a War Office Selection Board, the stepping stone or barricade to OCTU. Fifty-three of us joined innumerable soldiery on a station platform and something went awry. Our reserved carriages weren't; they were filled with troops! We rattled through Huddersfield and other Northern towns in a mail van feeling pretty sorry for ourselves till someone mentioned Dunkirk.

That evening, weary and wearing numbered armbands, we wrestled with a plethora of problems on paper. Some of these were devised by psychologists and designed to gauge powers of reasoning, observation and goodness knows what else; others, clearly, came from lay sources. "What sort of a person are you? Describe a) how your best friend might regard you and b) your worst enemy". Scope for humour here! Then came questions relating to ancestry, past experiences and opportunities where to be facetious might simply hasten a return to those ranks from which we'd sprung.

Jumbled sentences, word associations and pictures held a certain fascination. "Mother", "Home" and "Garden" were flashed on a screen in turn and reactions onto our papers. A man and woman stood by a window. We must describe the scene, allowing our imaginations full rein. We assuredly revealed sizeable pieces of ourselves as each picture succeeded the last and pens whirled.

Next day we were out in the garden for team tests. One centred round a bulky parcel. It had to be hauled over an awkwardly high branch. A stalwart cadet, not one of the Dalkeith contingent, masterminded this tree operation with shrill commands. Alas, several of us showed no initiative whatever, only timid co-operation. Afterwards someone came up with the hopeful theory that submissiveness in a Second Subaltern of the ATS might not be out of place. We trusted the examiners shared this view.

A few more outdoor activities and back to the house for group discussions and lively exchanges on the merits and otherwise of a public school education. The cadet who condemned the system unreservedly probably didn't do herself much good, poor dear, but it could have been equally incautious to praise say, Eton wholeheartedly, at the expense of different systems and citadels of learning.

We were asked our post-war aspirations and

these prompted many a high minded resolve. Intending settlement wardens, teachers, MPs, matrons and relief workers in Europe outlined their intentions; few saw themselves simply as wives and mothers in the future or if they did they didn't say so.

Down to earth we came as we drew scraps of paper containing topics on which to speak for several minutes at least. Mine read, "Your girls spend too long saying goodnight to boyfriends at the gate, thereby disturbing local inhabitants. Speak to them." Haltingly I urged consideration for civilians, courtesy, discretion and every quality calculated to keep the peace, assuring them that although King's Regulations couldn't exactly help them there, I hoped I could rely on them . . . and on the officers in the background to appreciate this effort in diplomacy and firmness. Someone had to reprimand her imaginary platoon for rudeness to NAAFI personnel, another must needs launch a National Savings Campaign, whilst a fourth was instructed to warn her little lot that its leave might be cancelled for top security reasons.

Mock interviews followed and we paired off to act out situations that could arise in any ATS unit at any time. Elizabeth, as a truculent orderly, tackled me about her posting and most convincingly. She didn't like the sound of it, wouldn't go. It would mean leaving all her friends. Wasn't she giving satisfaction here and "Ma'am I'm walking out with such a smashing feller in the Pay Corps. " How to convince anyone, stooge or genuine ATS private that in wartime her services were needed a hundred miles away, and that the finest fellow in the world couldn't constitute compassionate grounds for his girl staying put? I did my feeble best before changing places with Elizabeth and becoming an equally distraught young woman facing her officer and the unknown.

We lunched with the testers and found them disarming. A very human psychiatrist far from watching table manners thought her pudding helping too large and suggested a swap! A junior commander smiled when I mentioned what a mess I had made of an outdoor exercise through misreading instructions. "Don't worry Number 20, it was only a tiny part of the whole, nothing to be anxious about".

The 48 hours flew. The Selection Board Commandant, red tabbed and sporting a crown and 2 pips, impressed us tremendously. Clearly a deeply spiritual woman, hers was a calming presence at moments when the atmosphere grew intolerably tense. How inspiring it would be to

serve under someone with that wide vision and outlook. I think they all genuinely hoped we would pass. Only 23 did.

Results preceded us to Dalkeith to which we returned as 3rd class carriage folk! Staff-Sergeant gave us cocoa before pinning the OCTU list on the board. A couple of friends were bound to be on it. Service wives, assured but never arrogant, bright and outward going, they couldn't fail. They strolled up to the board, consulted it and by their expressions it was obvious that the unbelievable had happened. Then someone called across, "It's all right Joy, your name's there". How could it be? A relief, yes, but there could be no sense of elation. The WOSB had decimated our platoon. A previous board had even parted twins; distressing, but this was life.

My married friends, like the rest, took it well. Next morning they announced their intentions of starting families. An ideal solution for them but scarcely for the majority in its spinster state! Meanwhile, like Thursday's child, we had far to go — in my case to Somerset for a week's leave. Eight weeks at Edinburgh OCTU lay ahead and short of a landslide in behaviour or marked deterioration in studies, further elimination seemed unlikely. We would emerge as humble second subalterns prepared to serve anywhere and perhaps, once the war was over, better equipped to carry that service into the piping days of peace.

TAVR RECRUITING

Leaving the service! Have you thought of joining the TAVR? If you are settling in the London, Tunbridge Wells, Banbury or Dundee area and would like to carry on part-time using skills learned in the service you could become a TAVR soldier. 39th (City of London) Signal Regiment (V) offers you good pay, social life and visits to BAOR, Cyprus and Gibraltar.

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ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT

Major Annabelle Massey WRAC is one of more than 120 Regulars, drawn from some 50 Regiments and Corps of the British Army helping to train and administer soldiers of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) — the youngest and largest infantry regiment in the British Army.

Major Massey is Commander-Women with the UDR and is serving her duty tour at the Regiment's headquarters at Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn, where Headquarters Northern Ireland is also based.

The 8000 soldiers (men and women) of the Regiment conduct their anti-terrorist operations from bases in all six counties of the Province — ranging from Enniskillen in Fermanagh's south-west "Lake District" to Larne, more than 100 miles away on the north-east coast of Northern Ireland; and from Ballykelly, site of a former RAF station on Londonderry's north coast, down to Armagh, bordering the Republic of Eire.

The UDRs 750 women soldiers are not armed, but they go out on foot and vehicle patrols as radio operators, and as members of teams setting up vehicle checkpoints to deter arms, smugglers, and apprehend those travellers found to be in unlawful possession of arms or explosives, or suspected of being involved in terrorist activity.

They are also tasked to search women at these vehicle checkpoints and at busy shopping centres which are prime targets for the fire bombers, and they are trained to recognise weapon and bomb parts. The UDR girls are also trained in first-aid, map reading and driving, and others fill clerical and other administrative posts at battalion and company headquarters.

It is nearly ten years since the Ulster Defence Regiment was formed and its increasing professionalism and effectiveness as an anti-terrorist force is becoming noted by military experts at home and abroad. Brought into being to support the regular forces in Northern Ireland in measures protecting the border and the State against armed attack and sabotage, its tasks range from making foot and vehicle patrols and manning checkpoints and roadblocks, to guarding vital installations and searching out caches of terrorist weapons. It operates boat patrols on the Province's loughs to prevent arms smuggling and puts

soldiers ashore in surprise landings to set up snap vehicle checkpoints. Helicopter airlifts further increase its mobility.

The Regiment has its own fleet of locally built Shorland armoured cars and its role has become more varied as it has developed its search techniques. Each battalion now has a special search team, trained by the Royal Engineers in England, while the UDRs dog-handlers are trained by the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. Because of their deep local knowledge, the potential of the Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers for gathering information is of considerable value to the police and to the Regular Army with whose operations those of the UDR are fully integrated, through the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland and the headquarters of the three Regular Army brigades based in the Province.

Though the UDR takes pride in being a unit of the Regular Army, it differs from other regiments in a number of ways. One of these is that more than two-thirds of the force is made up of part-time soldiers who, after a normal days work as civilians, report to their UDR bases for eight-hour duty stints on two or three nights a week. Any night of the week will find about 1000 of them in uniform and on operations, and this figure doubles at weekends. But while the back-bone of the force remains these 5500 part-timers, the UDRs day-time capability has been steadily developed by the build-up of its full-time element to some 2500 soldiers — so improving the Regiment's round-the-clock effectiveness and strength that it has now been allocated eleven tactical areas of responsibility where the UDR provides the first line of military support for the police.

There can be no clearer indication that the authorities consider the Regiment is fit to carry out any operational task that would normally be demanded of the Regular Army in Northern Ireland — with the one exception of crowd control and riot duty in cities, tasks for which the UDR has not been trained.

Unlike the attached Regulars who live in accommodation provided by the Army, all the UDR soldiers, including the 750 women (known by their original radio call-sign of "Greenfinches") live in their own homes. And the Greenfinches are recruited directly into the UDR, wear the same badge as the men, and do not have their own corps, such as the WRAC.

Today, most of these citizen-soldiers operate from new purpose-built centres, with their own firing ranges, armouries, messes and helicopter

pads. As recruits join they are given eight days intensive training and subsequently are expected to complete at least 12 full days training a year, including three days at annual camp. UDR officers attend courses at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and all ranks may attend courses at other Army schools such as the School of Infantry at Warminster.

High points in the UDRs operations since it was formed have included the Regiment's mobilisation for a spell of full-time service when internment was introduced in 1971 and some 3000 UDR soldiers were on duty, or available for duty, for three weeks. The following summer the Regiment was called out for Operation Motorman, the security forces' campaign to clear barricades in Belfast and Londonderry when 5300 UDR soldiers reported for duty. Then, in 1976, when violence reached a high level, there was a selective call-out for five battalions, along with elements of a sixth, and in 1977 there were two general call-outs — the first to counter a Protestant workers' strike and the second to boost security during the Queen's visit to Northern Ireland.



Major Annabelle Massey who commands the 750 "Greenfinches" serving with the Ulster Defence Regt.

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TALL SHIPS

2Lt S J Meyer WRAC

I had sailed dinghies for several years, and had spent 2 weeks at sea on board the Sail Training Association schooner Sir Winston Churchill before I joined the WRAC and was hoping to continue sailing in the Army. When the opportunity arose to take part in the final leg of the STA Tall Ships Race of 1978 I jumped at it. I was to be a crew member of the Royal Artillery Yacht St Barbara III, from Oslo in Norway across the North Sea to Harwich.

We flew to Oslo, took over "St B" and the following day set sail and headed down the Oslo Fjord toward the start line at its mouth. That first day was spent getting to know each other and the boat. We practised changing the headsails, reefing the mainsail, and going about. We even put the spinnaker up; a glorious sight in the sun. The night was spent alongside the quay of a small town and then having stocked up on fresh bread and milk in the morning, we were off again toward the start line. At 2 o'clock that afternoon, in bright sunshine the committee boat fired the starting gun and the race was on.

By midnight the wind had blown up to Force 6 and was gusting to Force 7 on occasions. The brand new Working Genoa had been blown out almost as soon as it was put up and was too badly torn to be repaired. The top wire of the port side guardrail was also broken. It was the start of two days of rough weather, the wind blowing up to Force 8.

It was in this rough weather that the sea was most impressive with mountainous waves and no horizon. Changing sail on the foredeck was one of the wettest jobs, as the bows would dip below the water without fail and the waves break over the foredeck with cold regularity. As a result we were all wearing salty, wet clothes despite our waterproofs. Clothes soaked in salt water do not dry on a boat the size of St B. For those who do not know, let me say that there is nothing more horrible than leaving a warm, dry sleeping bag to fight your way into cold, wet jeans before going on watch on deck to get even colder and wetter!

On the morning of the fourth day the wind had dropped and the rain had stopped. By lunch time

the sun was out and so was the crew — on deck without waterproofs, allowing clothes their first chance to dry. It was sheer bliss. In the early hours of the next morning we were home, sailing into Harwich in the moonlight under a cloudless, star-studded sky. A perfect end after all the excitement of the voyage.

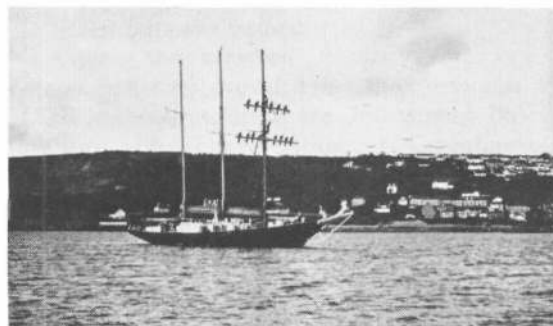
For anybody with a taste for "Swashbuckling" adventure there can be nothing to beat the schooners. They are 150 ft long with 3 masts towering above the decks. The old sailors' cries of "Brace the yards" and "Ship off the starboard bow Sir" are a reality on board. The crews' duties range from ships cleaning and cooking to scrubbing the decks and "manning the yards". I have sailed twice on the schooners, first as a trainee and in November as a Watch Leader. On the voyages we visited Alderney, Guernsey, St Malo, Douarnenez, Newlyn, Weymouth and Cherbourg and always had enough time on shore to visit local beauty spots. A trip to Lands End from Newlyn and Mont St Michel from St Malo for example.

There is no doubt that a great deal of hard work is involved in the cruise. The sails are all hoisted by hand and are very heavy, and standing at the helm at night can be very cold, but it is certainly exciting. The view from the upper yard arm, 60 ft above the deck, is magnificent and quite a climb!

Although the STA is a civilian organisation, all three services send both men and women on its adventure training cruises. I thoroughly recommend it to anyone. Authority for claiming Field Conditions for the duration of the cruise is contained in UKLFO 185/78. The crews by the way are not mixed.

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EXERCISE TROJAN HORSE — HONG KONG

2 Lt E A Kennedy WRAC

After spending one year in 30th Signal Regiment as Unit Resettlement Officer and Admin Officer for HQ Sqn I was lucky enough in January to be detached to Echo Troop 1 Squadron to be employed as 2IC. The troop, which is all male, provides a mobile heavy radio station which is capable of communicating all over the world. During the last 2 years the troop has deployed to such exotic places as Kenya, Singapore, Antigua, the Virgin Islands and Bermuda.

I was delighted to discover that in February they were due to go to Stonecutters Island just off the West coast of Hong Kong to take part in Exercise Trojan Horse. There was a considerable amount of work to be done in preparation prior to the exercise and so as not to become a mere passenger I undertook a "crash" course on the many requirements for a move such as this. I managed to make myself useful in supervising the more mundane but very necessary duties such as

checking that all personal documentation including passports and various inoculation certificates were up to date, and also that all the equipment was correctly prepared and ready for the air move.

Ex Trojan Horse was a Joint ARMY/RAF communications exercise and 96 personnel were involved, including an RAF detachment of 36. The exercise was tasked to provide communications from Hong Kong to Australia for a period of 4 weeks. On 1st February after an overnight stay at Brize Norton we boarded the VC10 which was to fly us to Hong Kong. We arrived 24 hours later, travel weary after stopping at Bahrain, Colombo and Singapore, but it was lovely to be greeted with pleasant spring weather after the snow in Blandford, and for most of our time on the exercise we were in shirt sleeve order.

We were accommodated in the disused Military Corrective Training Centre (prison) on Stonecutters Island and I was quite relieved to discover I had a room to myself as I certainly needed some privacy being the only female on the exercise! My main role was as Duty Signals Officer in charge of one of the three shifts consisting of Operators, Technicians and Combat Powermen,

and my secondary role was as Messing Officer. This was a completely new experience, firstly because I had never taken part in a military exercise before and secondly because I was learning the technical and operational aspects of communications.

During the four weeks there were many visitors to the island including the Signals Officer in Chief Maj Gen A A G Anderson. Several of the WRAC servicewomen working in the COMMCEN in Hong Kong also came to visit the exercise.

Most of my off duty time was spent taking part in the making of a film covering the deployment of the detachment, although I did have time to visit the attractions in Hong Kong including the floating restaurants at Aberdeen, Ocean Park and Victoria Peak. My most enjoyable pastime however was shopping, especially late at night in the open street markets where clothes were ridiculously cheap compared with the UK.

Although the standard of food was good on the exercise, I did take every available opportunity to sample the local cuisine. This ranged from sitting at the side of the road with a bowl of rice and eating with chopsticks, to being entertained at some of the most expensive hotels to a five course dinner and cabaret.

Alas this enjoyable and valuable experience had to come to an end and on February 28th the detachment returned to Blandford. I had been placed in a unique situation which I would recommend to anyone, although I must say that my original views on living and working in an all male environment have changed — it's not all fun!

Unfortunately I shall miss the next trip, this time to the Ascension Islands, as my tour in 30th Signal Regiment comes to an end in August.

FEEDING THE LIONS

Margaret Heasman (Junior Commander ATS)

Having taken a Domestic Science course and been a Demonstrator for several years, I joined the ATS as a cook in January 1939 and was actually in uniform two days before the outbreak of war. I had been working at the Drill Hall mainly as a barmaid, when our officer, now Col Sylvia Crawley, a recent contributor to the Lioness, suggested that I might as well be "called up" and get paid for doing the same work. I shall never forget how hot those early days of the war were, and of course the blackout and the unaccustomed uniform seemed to make it even hotter.

Shortly after, I was sent to cook for a company of the Queen Victoria's Rifles, the unit to which we were attached now billeted in one of the lovely Regency houses in Gloucester Terrace, Regent's Park. The girl who worked with me and I were collected each morning by motor bike and side car. As I was the first to be collected I had the sidecar and Baxi sat on the pillion. A cheer went up that first morning when we arrived and went below with the two male cooks to prepare dinner. I do not think the War Office and the Quartermaster can have got together as we had no utensils and actually made our daily "duff" direct on the table! There was a small gas cooker in the basement kitchen, and up the stairs out of the front door and across the road in the Terrace gardens, we had a Fowler stove (oven with a chimney) and a Soya boiler. On these three we cooked for our 55 to 60 men.

By mid October we were at our war station of Aldershot and I found that I had the early turn that first morning at the Cookhouse at 5 am! So at 4.45 my mate and I walked up to the Barracks and got directions from the Guardroom and found the Cookhouse, but could not find a way in as the blackout was so good. We knew we had arrived, as we could hear the clashing of tins in the washing-up place presided over by Geraldo (why he was so called I never did discover) and we had to hammer on the windows to get in. We found two men cooks already there and with them we each fried 500 eggs.

The Cookhouse, one designed for Hore-Belisha, was meant to cook for 800 men but we seldom cooked for less than 2000 all the time I was there.



2 Lt Kennedy with members of her Troop.

Breakfast cooked, the men set about the morning's entertainment — rat hunting. We girls sensibly got on to a table while the cooks and some male mess orderlies who had nothing special to do, clanged and banged at the terrified rats. Tea-buckets flew through the air and oven poles crashed down on the hapless heads. Eventually all was over and a neat row of corpses were laid out for the Sergeant Cook's inspection when he came on duty. Cookhouse work was very heavy for girls because the equipment was so large, but with a few men we managed. Cleaning down after the morning's work consisted of tea-buckets of boiling water being swirled across the tiled floor, and woe betide anyone who got in the line of fire! This was then scrubbed with long handled brushes and finally sqee-geed away.

We had our laughs too. One day I was late duty cook and had all the boilers to scrub down before I finished. I got busy with a scrubbing brush round my boiler of rich soup. Everything was in that soup, it was a meal in itself. Suddenly the brush, which was too big for my hand flew into the soup and sank without trace. Two of us fished for it for some time with a spider (sort of strainer) but we were laughing so much it took ages to locate the brush and fish it out. Just as we succeeded, in walked Ticky, the sergeant i/c Dining Halls and asked "What's for supper?" "Soup" we said. "Would you like to taste it?", and we held our breath while he put in his spoon and approved the brew!

Our main evening occupation was dancing. Our Unit Garrison Theatre had a dance three times a week and we had invitations galore from Canadian, French Canadian and Cadet Units. We could have danced every night if we wanted to. My record was five in one week. We used to grumble that the Red Cross VAD's in their smart feminine uniform were snapped up first, and I well remember saying "I shall be a VAD in the next war." Rather funny to look back on when I have now been a VAD for 15 years!

When I left the Cookhouse I had a spell in the Sergeants' Mess. While I was there I got married (but not to a sergeant) and my husband was posted overseas a few weeks later. I also worked for a time at the Officers' and later the ATS Officers' Mess, before being recommended for a Commission. I went to London on leave before being posted to the first Edinburgh OCTU in 1941.

The first night of my leave the sirens sounded as we listened to the late news, and after a bit we

were forced to go and sit under the stairs, and there we sat with two short breaks when the gunfire and bombs slackened off, till 6 am. When my mother called me late in the morning she told me that Hess had landed in Scotland and that the House of Commons had been gutted in one of the worst raids of the war — May 10th. I must say I was glad it had been a bad raid, as I should not have wanted to feel so scared at a second class raid! I had really only consented to go to the OCTU if I could become a Messing Officer — no GD for me if I could help it! So I was very lucky to be posted to Aldermaston Training Centre when I was first commissioned, to understudy the Messing Officer for about ten days. Then I was out on my own to Salisbury. This was a big ATS company which worked at Command Headquarters at Wilton. Rations were a bit tricky as most of the clerks had breakfast and supper in Salisbury, but the food for their midday meal had to be at Wilton, five miles away.

It was perhaps because of my experience there that I was posted to London to the Transit Camp about eight months later. This was a fascinating place where everyone came sooner or later it seemed. Indenting for rations was certainly a headache or a game, whichever way you looked at it. Comptometer Operators, Teleprinter Operators, the ATS Band and the Special Platoon came and went. Sometimes the War Office told us about them, sometimes they told us twice and sometimes they never told us at all! Still no one ever went hungry and we were never overdrawn for long. In fact you got quite good at knowing who really was coming and who was not. The cooks were wonderful, they rose to every occasion and knowing that I had done their job and understood their difficulties, they gave me of their very best.

Our Camp had been the hostel for the staff of Bourne and Hollingsworth and very comfortable it was too. It had been bombed early in the war and we had a large tarpaulin over one part of the roof.

My last eighteen months were spent in Wales, six months with two RA Training Regiments at Llandrinod Wells. What I could tell about the Hotel/Cookhouses would make your hair curl!

The final year of the war I spent also in Wales at Tonfanau, with an RA Training Regiment and Practice Camp. There we had three cookhouses feeding between 2000 and 3000 men and women. This was mainly a happy time and while I was there my husband returned from 4½ years in the Middle East, and we were both demobbed in the autumn of 1945.

EXERCISE GREEN TREK

Major J L Lawson

At 0630 hours on the 4 May 1979 a band of walkers led by 2Lt Tricia Ash-Edwards left the WRAC College, Camberley for Edale, Derbyshire at the southern end of the Pennine Way from where they were to walk 280 miles to Kirk Yetholm in Scotland. The party consisted of LCpls Sally Cranwell-Child and Elaine Smart, Privates Karen Price, June Sterry, Jacky Fowler and Shirley Jones of the WRAC, and Private Clive Sadler of the Royal Pioneer Corps, with a back up and safety party of Cpl Sarah Cull, head cook and bottle washer, and the driver, Private Jane Derbyshire kindly loaned to us by 44 Squadron RCT.

On arrival at Edale about mid-day the walk began and the 8½ miles planned for that day stretched to about 12 miles as the party skirted the many bogs. Next day, having got over the horror of actually getting dirty, they ploughed straight through the bogs. The first three days' walking was during the Spring Bank Holiday when the weather reverted to its mid-winter grip, blizzards and whiteouts became the norm. Clive Sadler's extra height and strength were certainly needed to haul all the others out of bogs. Jacky Fowler went in almost up to her middle at one point. Conditions could hardly have been worse, and it is doubtful if anyone could have continued if it were not for Sarah and Jane arranging camp sites, putting up tents and having a hot meal waiting when the day's walking was finished. After the third day conditions gradually improved, although it rained almost solidly every day and several camp sites were a sea of mud. The daily average of just over 20 miles was maintained.

Unknown muscles were discovered, ankles swelled, blisters covered feet and only determination kept the party walking. Thoughts of food and hot baths occupied a large proportion of the walking time especially when four or five

nights went by without finding facilities for hot water. As the days progressed, either the walking became easier or the party fitter. The weather improved and once the halfway point was over spirits soared.

The route is almost all over remote territory and the word "way" should not be confused with "path" since much of it is undefined and requires accurate compass work. Snow still covered many features and combined with thick mist resulted in "white out". Spring however was in the air and many unusual plants were seen, also calves, cows and one very large Hereford bull, which necessitated a slight detour! On the high ground sheep and lambs abounded. As a result of the hard winter they appeared to have lost all fear of humans and followed the party, especially Elaine Smart, whom they seemed to think was 'Mum'.

There was much spectacular scenery, including the highest and longest waterfalls in England, interesting rock formations and panoramas when the rain and mist lifted sufficiently to see them. Many days walking were spent without seeing any other walkers, but during the second week a friendship and rivalry developed with a pair of walkers on almost the same schedule. Contact with the local people and information about the routes and other walkers was gained during the evening visits to local hostelrys where a lot of kindness and interest was met. After a good ten days walking the party reached Hadrian's Wall, an event particularly highlighted by the fact that at that point an extremely kind lady dispensed tea and scones in her kitchen and did not mind the dirty boots. The wall was followed for about ten miles — why couldn't those Romans have built it on flatter terrain? Sad to say it was misty and drizzly most of the way along.

The daily routine was up at six, breakfast at seven, walk at eight after having struck camp. This was upset on only two occasions, once when at a farmyard camp-site some very lusty cockerels had everyone up by 5.30 am, and on the last morning when 24 miles had to be covered and the walk began an hour early. In fact on that day spirits were so high and the hard living had toughened everyone up so much that the ground was covered in nine hours and the group jogged over the border into Kirk Yetholm in Scotland.

Ten individuals had set out and a compact, competent team of ten with a tremendous sense of achievement arrived, 280 + miles and 13½ days later. Everyone agreed that the journey had been

an enlightening, entertaining and even enjoyable experience and it was not without a tinge of sadness that camp was struck and wet tents packed for the last time.



2 Lt Ash-Edwards doing some essential map reading.

KIWI CAPERS or EXERCISE LONG LOOK 1978

Lt S J Rollo

As I trundled my luggage through the crowded terminal of Singapore International Airport, I wondered how on earth I was going to struggle back to my home with it, once we got back to England. It was difficult to believe that I was on my way back, after spending 4 months with the New Zealand Army on Exercise Long Look 78.

I heard in May that I was to be the first WRAC Officer to do the exchange. My job would be taken over by Lt Sandra McKie, Royal New Zealand Signals, and I was to go to her job as OC Central Signal Troop, based in the capital Wellington. As soon as the exchange had been confirmed, Sandra and I began corresponding, and tried to exchange useful information.

Eventually the day came to leave UK, and the whole contingent (90 all ranks who were going to

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Australia, and 30 to New Zealand) left RAF Brize Norton in VC10s. After an overnight stop in Singapore, the contingent split into its respective groups, and we carried on our way — by RNZAF C130 (Hercules). This was the first time either I, or Capt (now Maj) Sheila McCauley QARANC, had travelled on one of these aircraft, and we found it an interesting experience. However, after two days, the novelty began to wear off and we were glad to disembark at the unpronounceable RNZAF base at Whenuapai, near Auckland.

After some initial administration, the New Zealand contingent split up, and we were delivered (this time in RNZAF Andovers) to our respective units. I had wondered, when chatting to various New Zealanders, why the roars of laughter when I had mentioned that I was going to Wellington. When I arrived there, I found out. Wellington is swept by a constant high wind, usually accompanied by rain! So much for my dreams of a winter in the sun! However, I was assured that sometimes the wind dropped and the sun came out, which eventually happened in about October.

My OC, Maj 'Blue' Higginson RNZ Signals, was determined that I should see something of New Zealand, and a fortnight after arrival I embarked on a programme of visits to all RNZ

Signals units. This was less formidable than it sounds as the New Zealand Army is quite small and basically consists of 3 Brigades and various supporting Headquarters.

During my attachment to 3 Bde Sig Sqn, I set out with one other officer and a technician to check the Civil Defence Net Radio Stations in the South Island. This involved a lot of driving, mainly on coast roads, and we passed through an enormous variety of very impressive scenery. The South Island is very Nordic, with great pine forests, a fjord coastline and a backbone of snow-clad mountains — the Southern Alps. The roads either follow the coast or are built on the very crests of mountains — just where the original hunters' tracks ran. Not the sort of roads for a nervous driver, as there is usually a sheer drop of about 500 feet on one side of the road.

Another week was spent at the Army Training Group, Waiouru. The ATG is the centre of training for the Kiwi Army, and comprises the Recruit Training Depot, the Officer Cadet Training Company, and most of the Army Schools. The location is ideal for a training area, being in the very middle of nowhere, but some of the people posted there have mixed feelings about it! For miles around there is nothing but tussock grass and Volcanic mountains, one of which 'blew' in 1972. However, despite the isolation, the spot is ideal for fishing and water sports with the enormous Lake Taupo only 20 miles away, and the slopes of Mount Ruapeho are handy for an afternoon's skiing.

I found Waiouru particularly interesting because there I was able to see the integrated New Zealand Army training. Whilst visiting the RTD, I went out with one platoon to watch them firing grenade launchers. The platoon of recruits was mixed, with about 25% women, and the platoon commander, who was the Range Safety Officer that day, was a female Second Lieutenant. She had recently been commissioned into RNZEME, after a year's officer training course on which the female Officer Cadets did the same training as the men. Very shortly she will be leaving the Depot to attend a year long technical course to equip her for her future with the RNZEME.

During my last month in New Zealand I spent 2 weeks on a major CPX, which took the form of a Wargame. The Staff at each of the Brigades, together with their lower controllers, actually sat in an enormous hall, around a large scale relief map of the battle area, and made war according

to, among other things, the throw of a dice. As there was no DS solution, the outcome of the war was often in doubt, as the enemy played some very sneaky tricks. It was interesting to see the way feelings ran when it was realised that the "Goodies" might lose!

In between all the travelling, I did settle down and do some work. My troop of 23 Static Comcen Operators was spread around three locations in the south of the North Island and so I spent a lot of time on the road visiting comcens.

On the social side, I saw all the usual tourist sights and, of course, lots of rugby. Everyone from tiny children to Grannies watches rugby in New Zealand, and most people play it. Possibly not the Grannies, but there are plenty of ladies' teams! I watched every match the All Blacks played on their tour of Great Britain, even though we had to sit up until 3 am to see the live TV coverage, and I certainly knew a lot more about the game by the time I left. Naturally, there were other things to do on the social side, but a word of warning — don't go to New Zealand on a Sunday — it will be closed!

We left New Zealand reluctantly, for by this time it was high summer and there were still interesting things to see. Our journey back took us through Papua, New Guinea, where we saw a square sailed raft going out to sea, looking for all the world like the original Kon-Tiki. After an overnight stop we flew on to Djakarta where we had a two hour stopover. Here we were herded into a shed which was the military air terminal and was surrounded by armed guards. Next stop Singapore, where we spent two nights, and then back to Brize Norton via Colombo and Bahrein. I was fascinated by the sight of oil sheikhs in Bahrein wearing tailored Burnooses and crocodile shoes and carrying solid leather briefcases. Their Texan henchmen, who might have stepped out of a Western, were wearing traditional stetsons and high heeled boots!

The only thing to mar the return journey was learning that we had loaded all our kit into the wrong coach when we arrived back in England! However, eventually we sorted that out and went our separate ways, no doubt all wondering whether it had all really happened!

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN ATTENDS THE GRAND REUNION 26th MAY 1979



The Queen arrives and is welcomed by Her Majesty's Lieutenant for Surrey, The Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.



Her Majesty accompanied by Brigadier E J Nolan CB and Brigadier A Field, Hon ADC walks towards the Saluting Dais.



Colonel F M Cook, Commandant WRAC Centre, Lt Col G E M Saunders-Davies TD, Chairman of the Association and Mrs H E C Weldon, Vice Chairman of the Association are presented to Her Majesty.



The Queen mounts the Dais and the WRAC Staff Band plays the National Anthem. Standing behind The Queen are her Lady in Waiting Mrs John Dugdale, the Defence Services Secretary Rear Admiral Leslie Townsend, the Equerry in Waiting Lt Col Blair Stewart-Wilson, Brigadier Nolan and the Secretary Mr Robert Fellowes.



The Queen inspects the Band accompanied by the Director of Music Capt L A E Hopkin, MBE LRAM.



After the Band inspection The Queen leaves the Parade Ground and walks towards the Museum. WO1 K L Scott, RSM WRAC Centre, is presented to Her Majesty.



Mrs P Blake (ex Sgt Hayes ATS) is presented to The Queen standing beside a wartime Austin 10 Light Utility (Tilly). Mrs Blake was a member of the class in which Her Majesty as a 2nd Subaltern ATS received instruction at No 1 MTTC Camberley.

The Queen entered the Museum accompanied by Brigadier Nolan. The Corps Secretary Brig N C King MBE, the Curator Maj D R M Parker, the recently retired Assistant Curator Mrs H Bell BEM and the new Museum Attendant Miss M Kelly were presented to Her Majesty. Her Majesty toured the Museum and signed the Visitors' Book.



On leaving the Museum The Queen unveils the commemorative plaque which is inset in the Museum wall.



Her Majesty reads the inscription.



Lined up to be presented to Her Majesty are W02 McCluskey, Sgt Hatchell, Cpl Rolfe, Cpl Tooby and Pte Mayberry.



Brigadier Field presents Pte Christopher to The Queen. Also in the group, having already been presented are SSgt Bowers, Sgt Weston, Cpl Hoban and LCpl Birbeck.



The Queen talks to members of the Association on her way to the Dining Hall.



More members have an opportunity to talk to The Queen.



Col Cook presents Capt Cann ACC and WO2 Scantlebury to The Queen in the Dining Hall.



Lt Col M S F Millington OBE TD presents Miss Brown, Mrs Alexander, Miss Crump, Miss Whitfield and Miss Bradley to The Queen.



Lt Col E E Michell presents Mrs King, Secretary of the Plymouth Branch, to The Queen.



Mrs Kingdon JP, Chairman of the Southampton Branch being presented to The Queen. Others in the group are Mrs King, Mrs Dodkins, Miss Mould MBE and Mrs Williams.



Members from Scotland are presented to The Queen by Miss M M Thomson TD. They are Miss Brown, Miss Abbey, Major Crawford and Miss Butters. Capt Earls from Belfast was also presented with this group.



Miss A G Learmouth MBE TD presents Mrs Melby who is wearing Norwegian national dress, Mrs Poole, Mrs Wells and Miss Day.



Mrs Madill, a dedicated supporter of the Canadian Veterans' Association is presented to The Queen.



The Queen accompanied by Brig Field and Lt Claridge WRAC TAVR visits 35 Sig Regt (V) under canvas and sees the activities of the WRAC volunteers.



Her Majesty leaves the heavily camouflaged site after her tour of inspection.

The Queen accompanied by Brig Field was driven to the Officers' Mess for tea. Major Dexter, PMC, was presented and Her Majesty was escorted to tea by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Association. Brig Nolan then presented to Her Majesty the distinguished gathering of ex Directors of the ATS and WRAC, Chief Controller Dame Leslie Whateley DBE, Brigadier Dame Mary Tyrwhitt DBE TD, Brigadier Dame Frances Coulshed DBE TD, Brigadier Dame Mary Railton DBE, Brigadier Dame Jean Rivett-Drake DBE JP, Brigadier Dame Mary Pihl DBE and Brigadier S A E Heaney CB MBE TD.

Members of Council were presented to Her Majesty in groups by the Chairman and Vice Chairman. They were Cols Davies, Hammond, Green, Fisher, Jamieson, Laverack, Clark and Millington; Lt Cols Soames, Tait, Parsons, Clissitt, Richards and Bray; Majs Coven and Perry; W02 Templeman; Mrs Laurence-Smith, Mrs Curtis and Mrs Stevenson.

After tea Her Majesty signed the Visitors' Book and a Royal Photograph before leaving the Officers' Mess.



Watching Beating Retreat.



Bands taking part are the WRAC Staff Band, Junior Musicians of the Household Division, Bands from REME and the RMA and the Guards Depot Corps of Drums.



Beating Retreat ends with Sunset, when the Corps flag is lowered, followed by the National Anthem.



**Her Majesty The Queen says goodbye to Brig Field, Brig Nolan and Lord Hamilton of Dalzell. W02 Hudson opens the door of the Royal car. As Her Majesty leaves Queen Elizabeth Park the RSM leads
"THREE CHEERS FOR THE QUEEN"**

UNIT NEWS

Green Meets Blue

Lt K M Purveur WRAC
The Royal School of Artillery

One often wonders what inspires servicewomen to choose one particular service as opposed to another. It may well be that they have carefully explored the advantages and disadvantages of all three and then made their selection. I chatted to the members of the WRAC Battery at Larkhill and soon found that the majority knew little about their counterparts in blue. They chose the WRAC as a career because of wider Army publicity, friends and relatives already in the Army and a friendly approach from career offices.

I decided then, that it would be an educational experience to visit other services and see how the girls in blue live and work. I encountered friendly co-operation from the WRNS and WRAF who thoroughly approved of the idea and visits were quickly arranged.

The first trip, planned for twelve servicewomen, was to visit HM Naval Base in Portsmouth and the WRNS station at HMS Dryad. The programme was superb and all the girls were able to learn much about life in the WRNS. We were even forgiven for theoretically wiping out half the Royal Navy on the training aid machines and simulators! In the afternoon we visited the Naval Base, toured HMS Victory and a modern frigate and enjoyed a trip on the Harbour launch.

A few days later we travelled to meet the small contingent of WRAF at RAF Odiham. Although the WRAF here were not a typical unit, all being married and living out, our girls did have a very interesting and informative chat with them and were able to see their places of work and discuss job opportunities. The highlight of the day was a flight in a Wessex helicopter. It was the first time many girls had flown and nearly all of us wished we could parachute when the side door was removed and the helicopter tipped at 45°. The looks on our faces confirmed we were still land-lubbers.

Although it was a matter of dispute as to whether guns can compete with ships and aircraft, the piece de resistance planned by the WRAC Battery was to have a tri-service rendezvous

during the Royal Artillery Fire Power Demonstration in April.

The event received full support from HMS Dryad and RAF Odiham and some twenty members of our sister services joined us for the day. The event was a tremendous success. The informality of the visit enabled everyone to learn much more about all three services.

Many publicity photographs were taken and letters of thanks received after the event confirmed that the tri-service rendezvous had been greatly enjoyed by our guests, having both an educational and entertainment value.

Tentative arrangements are now being made for the WRNS to hold a similar type of rendezvous and it is hoped that this idea of 'Green meets Blue' might continue in the future.



WRAC at the Royal School of Artillery "at home" to the WRNS and WRAF.

WANTED

A lady to cook at the Royal Cambridge Home for Army Widows. The appointment is non-residential and involves cooking only one meal a day at mid-day for about 30 ladies. Apply to Miss C East, Superintendent, The Royal Cambridge Home for Army Widows, 82 - 84 Hurst Road, East Molesey, Surrey. Tel: 01-979 3788.

CAD DONNINGTON

Donnington Down River Raft Race

31 May 1979

On the day that Blandford was flooded, Donnington Garrison held its first ever Down River Raft Race. The aim was for teams of six people to build, launch and paddle a raft down the River Severn from Buildwas to Coalport, a distance of nearly 5 miles. Although we were told what equipment we would be given to build the rafts, we knew we could not actually use the materials for a trial run before the race. Naturally the WRAC at Donnington could not sit back and let the men have all the fun, so we entered our own team. In the event our team, led by 2 Lt Brigid Quinlan, was the only all female entry. The remaining team members were Cpl Dewsbury, Cpl McDonald, LCpl Bryant, Pte Howard and Pte Thomas. In all fourteen WRAC took part in what turned out to be the funniest afternoon many of us can remember. It was especially funny for the spectators! Major Taylor was a member of the Officers Mess team, Sgts Bryant and Gill the Sgts Mess team, Cpl Denney and LCpls Green and Reed the Cpls Mess team and Ptes Ashmore and Carroll the Ptes Mess team.

Despite not being allowed to have a trial run with the 6 x 45 gall drums, 8 x 4ft 9in planks, 2 x 9ft 6in planks and 150ft of rope, most teams found some way of rehearsing. To start with our WRAC team leader assembled six evaporated milk tins, an assortment of wood and some string. Somehow this did not work so she took advice from some male members of the Officers Mess and revised her plan. (On the day they were not to be allowed any assistance at all). It was essential the team had some practice, but where were they to find some spare drums? Down to the stables they went and there they found some drums

being used as jumps for the horses. These gave the WRAC team the chance of a much-needed dry run.

At about 10.30 on 31st May, 2 Lt Quinlan was seen to be leaving the Depot with strange bits of wood poking out of her car windows. She was not the only one. There were paddles of all sorts, shapes and sizes leaving the Depot that day. In all 11 teams were preparing for the big race. At exactly 1600 hours sixty-six people in a variety of dress hurtled down a field next to the river where they found a pile of equipment for each team. The Raft Race had begun in earnest.

The spectators came into their own when the raft-building began. No two rafts were alike. Some got the rope tangled, others ran out of rope before the raft was completed, lost barrels downstream. The tales are endless.

Some 12 min 5 sec after the race started the Officers Mess team took to the water . . . successfully and without sinking!! The Signals team followed five minutes later. They in turn were followed by the Sgts Mess and then the WRAC. Before the WRAC team took to the water, they had the opportunity of seeing the SSO's team launch a raft that immediately fell apart. We understand they tried again using a different design but that also collapsed. At the third attempt they remained afloat and in one piece but needless to say, that particular raft was last across the finish line.

After one hour and one minute of constant paddling and a fairly uneventful trip, the Officers Mess team crossed the finish line only 3½ min ahead of the Signals team. Meanwhile the WRAC crew was shooting the rapids. Luckily, because of recent rain, there was a lot of water in the river and hence a greater depth of water at the rapids. Despite this the WRAC craft managed to hit a rock and bash into a safety canoe that was there to guide people safely through! It was a good test for their raft building ability though, and happily they paddled on, wet, but in one piece.

From that point onwards the WRAC started gaining on the Sgts Mess, but they were not able to catch them before the finish. They came in fourth, ahead of seven other teams. It was a tremendous performance and an experience much enjoyed by all.

The Ptes and Cpls teams raced neck and neck most of the way. At the finish the Ptes team just had the edge. However the strain was too much for their raft and it promptly fell apart and the crew took an unexpected ducking.

It was such fun that we reckon the Donnington Down River Raft Race (DDRRR) is here to stay.



Shooting the Rapids.

Left side front to back: LCpl Bryant, Pte Howard, Cpl McDonald
Right side front to back: Cpl Dawsbury, Pte Thomas, 2 Lt Quinlan.

WRAC MUSEUM

The Regimental Museum at Queen Elizabeth Park Guildford is open to visitors from 9 am – 4 pm daily from Monday to Friday. Because of staffing problems it is closed at weekends and on Bank Holidays. All members and their friends are very welcome.

This is your museum and it contains uniforms, medals and documents dating from 1917. If you are turning out an attic or moving to a smaller house and come across your old badges and buttons and photographs, we would be very glad to have them.

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.**

ARMY AIR CORPS CENTRE WRAC DETACHMENT

LCpl Nutter

Although the WRAC Detachment at the Army Air Corps Centre, Middle Wallop is quite small, the girls here enjoy both a busy working day and a full social life.

Already this year we've said goodbye to many girls, and within the next few months we will be losing our Officer Commanding Capt J M Ball, our Catering Officer Capt Cathy Ranford, Capt Frances Rendall initially our Sports Officer for 13 months, then Officer Commanding for 40 days, and last but not least, the smallest of our gang, Sgt Woody Wood.

Although the unit is small we manage to make a good all round effort in the Sports League Tables. Congratulations to all members of our Hockey Team who represented South West District in the Army Inter-Zone Championships in March and came fifth. As our team had only been formed for four weeks, the result was particularly pleasing. Our thanks go to Cpls Sally Bowles and T C Rees who coached and trained the team. Cpl T C Rees who is our MT NCO and LCpl Kim Edwards who is now our PTI, play a higher standard of hockey for the Army team. We wish them both the best of luck in future matches.

Courses are also available for the girls to attend and the turn out is very good. Pte Linda Graham and LCpl Val Jennings are off to Norway on a Canoeing Course. Then we have the mad crowd who enjoy throwing themselves out of aeroplanes. We are very pleased to be able to say that they all managed to come back in one piece, the proud owners of parachuting certificates and lots of bruises.

Pte Karen Christopher is also to be congratulated on being presented to the Queen at the Grand Reunion.

We look forward to meeting and getting to know our new Officer Commanding Capt Jenny McLaren, Sports Officer 2 Lt Bridget Richardson and Sgt Chris Dunn our new Admin Sgt, and hope they enjoy Middle Wallop as much as their predecessors.

New Extension for The National Army Museum

The Council of the National Army Museum has awarded Sir Robert McAlpine & Sons Ltd a contract worth more than half-a-million pounds to build the second phase of the new museum in Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea.

The extension adjoins the building opened by Her Majesty The Queen in 1971 to give an additional 26,000 sq ft of exhibition and administrative accommodation. Permanent displays will continue the story of the British Army and the land forces of the Empire from 1914 until today. A large gallery will house temporary exhibitions, and Reading Room and educational facilities will be improved.

The cost of the building has been met entirely from private donations, enough having been raised by the museum Building Appeal Fund to complete the 'bricks and mortar' part of the project. Further sums are needed to equip the new wing, but it is hoped to open its permanent galleries in 1981.



AAC Centre Hockey Team.

Back Row L — R: LCpl Lavery, Cpl Rees (Captain), Cpl Bowles, LCpl Davies, LCpl Abbott, Sgt Goldsmith, LCpl Jennings

Front Row: Pte Smart, Pte Graham, Capt Rendall, Cpl Tully, Pte Greedy.

TAVR

22 SQUADRON RCT

The first quarter of 1979 has given scope to the range of talents possessed by the WRAC of 22 Squadron Royal Corps of Transport at Old Sarum.

Sgt Cooper successfully attended a unit First Aid Instructors Course and is now full of the idea that "if it doesn't move, bandage it".

Pte Roberts braved the bleak January weather conditions to attend a "Safety in Mountain Venture Training Course" and her route to Aviemore was taken two months later by 2 Lt Faulkner, Pte Francis, Pte Hills and Pte Lamb, all members of the Exercise 'White Lady' team. The eventful fortnight culminated in the four "six-days on skis" wonders taking part in the Giant Slalom Race on the White Lady Slope.

Sporting achievements closer to home were achieved for badminton players. Pte Jeffrey and LCpl Swords took part in the South West District Competition and were then selected for the Army Badminton Championships. The duo also spent a weekend in Le Havre with the Army Team. They played in a friendly match against a civilian badminton club and the Army's victory was decided only in the closing stages of the final game.

We welcome Ptes Cowan and Allen, LCpls Haffenden and De-Hoxar and Cpls Bleasdale and Wilson to the squadron. We hope that their tours with us will be happy and rewarding.

Unfortunately we have to say goodbye or at least "au revoir" to Cpl Castle and LCpl Fisher posted to BAOR and to LCpl Addy now working in Northern Ireland. Good luck and best wishes go to them all.

The future months may prove to be just as eventful as the unit is shortly to be re-located in Wilton and the dates for summer camp in Garelochhead get nearer.

34 (N) Signal Regiment (V)

34(N) Signal Regiment (V) with its RHQ at Middlesbrough in the county of Cleveland, exercised its right of Freedom to march through the Town of Middlesbrough on Saturday, May 5th. 150 all ranks formed up outside Middlesbrough town hall to be inspected by the Mayor.



The Mayor of Middlesbrough, Councillor John Stokes speaking to the WRAC Squadron during his inspection.

38 Signal Regiment (V)

RETIREMENT OF MAJOR F D WHITE TD

On a fine April Sunday morning Major Doris White, Senior WRAC Officer of 38th Signal Regiment (V), took the salute for the last time as the WRAC members of the Regiment marched past to the recorded strains of the WRAC Staff Band. The occasion marked her retirement after 34 years' service and the march past was preceded by the presentation of a farewell gift.

Major White joined the ATS in 1943, served first with AA Command, then trained as a driver, leaving the Army in 1946. She joined the TA in 1948, again in AA Command, was commissioned in 1954, and subsequently became Company Commander of an MT Coy after transferring to 308 (NC) Bn WRAC/TA. In 1967 she transferred to Royal Signals in the new TAVR and was appointed SWRACO in 1970. As SWRACO she had the task of keeping in touch with WRAC in six widely spread locations, and all ranks will recall with affection her visits to training centres and to an assortment of field locations.

We know that as a past Chairman and active member of the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Branch of the WRAC Association she will maintain her links with the Corps, past and present, and we wish her well in her retirement.



Major White receiving the farewell gift of a morning tea maker, presented by W02 Thorne.

BOOK REVIEW

'BULL, BATTLE-DRESS, LANYARD & LIPSTICK' by Dorothy Calvert.

Printed and Published by New Horizon, 5 Victoria Drive, Bognor Regis, £3.50.

Pte D K Woolston joined the ATS although her intention had been to join the WRNS. She wanted to be a driver but found herself posted as a radar operator. She took life as it came, and in the ATS in wartime Britain it came in a good mixture of hard work, boredom and discomfort, with a certain amount of danger and a good deal of fun.

Mrs Calvert, happily married with two grown up sons, tells her story in a racy, gossipy style reminiscent of Damon Runyan. Life was not easy but with good sense and good humour one could make the best of it and even enjoy it. This is an extremely amusing book and what makes it so readable is the author's irrepressible sense of fun. For all her irreverence she realised the necessity for hard work and self-discipline.

She dedicates the book "to each and all who made up the complement of our dear old 495 (M) HAA Battery RA" and expresses what many must have felt when the war was over: "My years in the ATS were worthwhile — so for all the heart-ache I got personally, it was something I would not really have missed".

DON'T KNOCK THE ROCK

Major C Vere TAVR PRO
North West District

Five girls from 4th Bn The Kings Own Border Regiment (V) joined 125 men of the special Waterloo Company to fly to Gibraltar on Exercise Marble Tor. Cpl Jeanette West was responsible for the pay of the company, LCpl Pat Driscoll and Pte Gaye West (Jeanette's sister) worked as stewards in the Officers Mess, and Ptes Alma Rigby and M McKintosh drove landrovers. Pte Rigby was very busy indeed driving the 3/4 ton Landrover round Gibraltar. She found the streets very narrow and people seemed to park every-

where and anywhere. But ferrying the soldiers to the border security posts, and running between Lathbury Barracks and the training areas, Fortress HQ and the beaches was no problem for Alma and her Rover. Four years in the TAVR, and living in Lancaster, this was Alma's first trip abroad. In civilian life she works as a machinist in a Lancaster factory.



Pte Rigby checks the landrover.

UOTC

BIRMINGHAM STUDENTS WIN REME COMPETITION

WO2 J Eastwood, BEM RRF

The annual "Western Approaches" Competition run by HQ REME Wales/W M Dist/ S E Dist was held this year on Salisbury Plain. A total of 12 teams entered and based themselves on Westdown Camp. Each team consisted of 14 personnel and Birmingham University OTC included 2 WRAC, the only team to have the good fortune to include females.

Leaving base at Tennal Grange in Harborne the team encountered their first problem before

WE, THE LIMBLESS, LOOK TO YOU FOR HELP

We come from both world wars. We come from Kenya, Malaya, Aden, Cyprus... and from Ulster. From keeping the peace no less than from war we limbless look to you for help.

And you can help, by helping our Association. BLESMA (the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association) looks after the limbless from all the Services. It helps, with advice and encouragement, to overcome the shock of losing arms, or legs or an eye. It sees that red-tape does not stand in the way of the right entitlement to pension. And, for the severely handicapped and the elderly, it provides Residential Homes where they can live in peace and dignity.

Help BLESMA, please. We need money desperately. And, we promise you, not a penny of it will be wasted.



Donations and information: Major
The Earl of Ancaster, KCVO TD.,
Midland Bank Limited: 60 West
Smithfield, London EC1A 9DX.

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association

'GIVE TO THOSE WHO GAVE-PLEASE'

the convoy of 2 Landrovers and trailers, a Bedford light recovery vehicle and a 4 tonner and machinery trailer had even left the square! Officer Cadet Don Campbell had to adjust the position of the 4 tonner to negotiate the gateway and accidentally inserted his towing hook beneath the bumper of the vehicle behind him. After a puzzled few minutes wondering why his vehicle would not pull away the error was spotted and red faced Don led the team on the route to Salisbury.

On arriving at a pre-arranged rendezvous the team were given an area in which they had to deploy their vehicles and having set up their hide were then under 2 hours notice to move. The Birmingham position was not ideal to say the least, a sparse wood on top of a pimple of ground and the whole area covered by 18 inches of thick mud. The Bedford recovery vehicle was borrowed by the organisers to move a vehicle bogged down somewhere and of course it was at this time that Birmingham were ordered to move! A spot of quick thinking led to the stripping down of a Landrover to its basics and this vehicle was then used to extricate the team's other vehicles from the hide. Officer Cadet Fik was tested individually on a vehicle maintenance tick test and was delighted when he learned he had tied for 3rd place, a very creditable result for this very junior cadet. Senior Under Officer Dave Pickles was then tested on recovery, both in theory and in practice. His practical test was to recover a 4 tonner which was not only upside down but had been booby-trapped as well! Dave managed 2nd place in the event and when this result was allied to the team First Aid score gained by JUO Porat's medics, it meant 2nd place overall for Birmingham in these 3 events. Meanwhile, Belinda Exell was gaining valuable points in her amazing role of Unit Blacksmith (she weighs about 6 stone!). Belinda had to manufacture a heavy vehicle cooling duct by cutting, shaping and welding metal. The labourer was Officer Cadet Milsom. Officer Cadets Fik and Milsom were then given 3 vehicle maintenance tasks, to replace the shoes on a transmission brake, to replace the seal on a transfer box and to manufacture a brake fluid pipe. This stage caused some hilarity when it was discovered that only 2 Units from the 12 had the necessary flaring tools to complete the pipe manufacture. A good example of the friendly spirit of this competition was the sharing out of the 2 available tools. Susanne Logan had to run the radio complex at Control HQ and impressed everyone with her calm and professional skills. She gained 1st place for her work and when

one looks at the male competition, a fair idea of the effort she made becomes clear!

Officer Cadet Mike Watson then played his part by winning the Driving skills competition which involved 5 tests of manoeuvring skills and a night rally of 36 miles; his navigator was O/Cdt Milsom. The military skills part of the team consisting of JUO Theo Dennison, Howard Roberts, O/Cdt Wilson, O/Cdt Shuck, O/Cdt Hough then faced the infamous speed march, assault course and shoot which they duly won. Birmingham OTC came out the overall winners of the competition and the final word of credit must go to the team leader, O/Cdt Don Campbell and his second in command Bob Menneer. Roll on next year!



OCdt Susanne Logan.

WEST MIDLAND DISTRICT/WALES ORIENTEERING COMPETITION

Congratulations to JUO Gill Douglas and her team of OCdts Jocelyn Ivett (now 2 Lt), Liz Kent, Judy Freeman and Belinda Exell of Birmingham University for winning the WRAC Orienteering Championship for the District, and to OCdt Liz Kent who won the ladies individual prize outright.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1979

The AGM was held at Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford on 26th May, 1979.

Brigadier E J Nolan CB Vice President of the Association took the Chair and opened the Meeting by reading messages of congratulations on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the Association.

The Association Chairman gave the Report of Council in which she drew attention to the interest in the Association which the Reunion had aroused and she encouraged members to support their branches by taking their turn at organising it, and where there was no branch by starting one. East Anglia in particular was devoid of branches.

The Honorary Treasurer explained the published accounts and pointed out that the excess of income over expenditure was £5,138 which was mainly due to the economy measures of recent years and to increased support from serving members. Rising costs would almost certainly reduce this in the years ahead.

The Chairman of the Benevolent Fund Trustees reported that £18,218 had been disbursed in grants to those in need compared with £14,434 in 1977.

The Chairman of the Museum Trustees reported on the number of visitors to the Museum and on recent acquisitions. She welcomed Miss M Kelly as the replacement for Mrs H Bell BEM who had finally retired after forty years service to the Corps. Association branches and individuals had contributed to a present for Mrs Bell and the Chairman presented her with a clock and a cheque from the Association and Museum Trustees.

Certain resolutions concerning amendments to the rules were tabled and carried unanimously.

Mrs H E C Weldon was elected Chairman of

Council to succeed Lt Col G E M Saunders-Davies TD who completes three years as Chairman in October 1979.

Scotland will be holding a Reunion in 1980 at City Chambers, Glasgow on either 12 April or 26 April and invited the Association to hold the AGM in Glasgow on that day. After a vote on alternative suggestions the invitation was accepted.

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

Oman Gift Makes New Museum Extension possible

One of the best kept museum secrets of modern times lies behind the recent announcement of a £600,000 extension to the National Army Museum.

When Phase I of the museum in Chelsea was finished in 1970 a huge gap remained between the amount in the Building Appeal and that needed for completion. Fund raising continued during a period of rising construction costs but, although the Appeal achieved a measure of success, it was not until the Sultan of Oman made a personal donation of £150,000 last year that the Museum Council was also able to commission the new building.

HM The Sultan Qaboos bin Said received part of his education at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. There, and during the bitter fighting in the southern province of Dhofar, Britain earned the Sultan's respect and gratitude. In making this substantial gift to the National Army Museum, His Majesty expressed the hope that it will confirm the strength of the comradeship between the Omani Army, which the Sultan himself commands, and the many officers and men of the British Army who helped in their training and shared their battles against a skilful and determined enemy.

REUNION NOTICES

NORTHERN AREA REUNION 1979

The Northern Area Reunion will be held in the Study Centre at Imphal Barracks, York on Saturday 29 September 1979 from 2.30 to 6 pm. The WRAC Band will play during the afternoon.

Tickets £1, including tea, obtainable from Miss M Bradley, 60 West End Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 9BY (Tel: 0423-57023 evenings) not later than Thursday, 20 September. Please send stamped addressed envelope with remittance payable to 'WRAC Association - Northern Area'.

Admittance strictly by ticket - NO tickets will be available at the door.

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 14th December, 1979.

REUNION DINNER

Drivers and Clerks Training Centre Reunion Dinner will be held in Worthing on 17th May, 1980. Write with s.a.e. to Miss F J Little, 'Kabete', Common Hill, West Chiltington, Sussex RH20 2NR for details.

CANADIAN WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS VETERANS 21ST ANNUAL REUNION

This event is sponsored by the Canadian Corps Association, CWAC Unit 47, and takes place on September 28th and 29th in Toronto, Canada.

For particulars write to CWAC Veterans Reunion Chairman, Mrs Shirley Wood Heesaker, 201 Niagara Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 1C9.

BRANCH NEWS

EDINBURGH February 14th St Valentine's Day 1979 was a very special occasion at Mayfield House (The Cheshire Home in Edinburgh).

Residents, staff and friends were gathered to share in the happiness of Cindy Scott - ex WRAC and Brian Common on their wedding day.

After the ceremony everyone drank the health of the bride and bridegroom, enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch and admired the bride's wedding dress of blue flowered nylon made for her by the matron.

All our good wishes remain with them.



The happy couple after the wedding.

GLASGOW The Branch met every month from September to May in our new premises, the Royal Artillery Club, 38 Elmbank Crescent. We had a varied syllabus and although the weather was poor the meetings were well attended.

More than 20 members attended the Reunion at Guildford, where our President Miss E H Butters

and Area Vice President Miss M M Thomson were presented to the Queen. Many of our members met old friends and a good time was had by all.

LONDON We continue to hold our meetings on the third Thursday of each month at the Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea. These have included an evening of colour slides by Miss Mary Curtis and a successful Bring and Buy Sale.

Several of our members attended the Grand Reunion at Guildford on 26th May. Two of our members, Miss Betty Brown and Mrs Barbara Alexander, also Miss Edith Crump of Ilford Branch, had the honour of being presented to the Queen. Mrs Madeline Curtis, our Vice President, joined with members of the Council to have tea with Her Majesty. We all enjoyed the day and would like to convey to all those concerned with the arrangements our grateful thanks for making it such a happy occasion.

LIVERPOOL Since our last report we have continued to meet regularly each month apart from July and August when a lot of members are away on holiday. Despite the very severe weather this last winter and numerous transport problems we did not have to cancel any of our meetings and had good attendances.

We usually spend our monthly meetings in such activities as Beetle Drives etc. with an occasional speaker, and our Bring and Buy Sale each year remains our main money-making activity. This provides the funds to enable the Branch to keep going and also enables us to make donations to charities.

We continue to be represented on the Merseyside Council of Ex-Service and Regimental Associations. This body meets monthly and discusses matters which are of interest to all ex-service organisations in the city and surrounding area. They occasionally hold functions, the latest being a Hot Pot Supper which several members attended.

In October 1978, four of our members attended the Western Area Reunion at Donnington. They found the recruiting film and the tour of the WRAC quarters most interesting. They very much appreciated the excellent tea which was provided and served by the WRAC personnel.

Of course, since the beginning of this year the most important topic has been the Reunion at Guildford on the 26th May. Our Secretary wrote to six local papers about it, and it was also picked up by two other papers. In addition there was an announcement on our local radio station, Radio Merseyside. As a result of this publicity our Secretary received numerous telephone calls — she lost count of the number! She also received about twenty-five letters, all of which she replied to individually, supplying the necessary details. In fact, one of the letters came from an ex QMAAC who had appeared in a BBC Television film about the contribution made by women during the 1914/18 war. She has since attended one of our meetings and talked to us about her experiences. Another lady who served in the first World War also attended this meeting. In addition we have heard from a third ex QMAAC. She served as a private secretary in the Secrets Department of GHQ Statistical Branch in London, and would be pleased to hear from anybody who served in this Branch. From Liverpool Branch we do know that about fifteen members are attending the Reunion but, in fact, many more are attending from Merseyside as most of those from whom we received enquiries are attending and some of our members are linking up with ex ATS friends who are not members of the Association.

As a further result of the publicity about the Reunion we have received a lot of enquiries about membership of the Association and have already enrolled several new members. Some of these new members have been able to attend our recent meetings.

MANCHESTER Membership is now 17 Life members and 44 Annual members. This year we have had many new members owing to the publicity in the press and on the radio. Although for a long time the average attendance at meetings has been about 12, we hope to do better in future because we have recruited quite a number of local ladies.

The big day for 30 ladies was the visit to Guildford on May 26th. It was a wonderful day, and everyone enjoyed it. The hospitality that was shown to us was marvellous, and what comfortable beds! Some of our members were so impressed, they were wondering whether they could rejoin the WRAC!

Mrs Dugmore, our Treasurer, was very

disappointed that she was unable to use her ticket because she had to go into hospital for an operation. There was no difficulty in getting someone to take her place. Mrs Freda Jones has also had an operation. We wish them both a speedy recovery to full health.

We shall be having our Annual Bring and Buy Sale on December 6th, and hope to see many old friends, and meet some new ones.

PLYMOUTH We are still expanding and have now got nearly 50 members. We have been going officially for thirteen months and have thoroughly enjoyed ourselves in the Branch. We have had several Jumble Sales and Social Evenings which have been successful monetary and social wise, and our Christmas Party was a great success.

We have now got a Standard, thanks to Miss W M Brooks of Bristol and our President had the Standard refurbished and rehung on a new pole. It was dedicated at St Boniface Church, St Budeaux, Plymouth on May 6th and Brigadier Eileen Nolan took the salute with the Lord Mayor of Plymouth and afterwards at tea she cut the dedication cake.

Of course the highlight of the year was the trip to Guildford. We had a Jumble Sale and Bingo and Raffles to help with the cost of transporting 18 members to Guildford. I had the honour to be presented to Her Majesty the Queen and I shall remember this day as long as I live. Our members were very well taken care of by the young members of the WRAC and they cannot speak too highly of the comradeship the Forces still have. A very good time was had by all and we are looking forward to the next get-together.

We are about to start working towards a Christmas Fayre, a Regimental Dinner and the usual Christmas festivities. Best wishes to all other Branches and if any members served in Plymouth or nearby, drop us a line.

SOUTHAMPTON This year is proving to be a very busy and exciting year for our Branch. Due to a chat show on the local radio station and followed up by letters in local newspapers publicising the Grand Reunion and Association, the response from ex ATS and WRAC was overwhelming. Our membership of the Branch increased from 41 to a staggering 82. These new

members have very quickly integrated into the activities of the Branch.

Nearly 60 members attended the Grand Reunion at Guildford and despite the cold weather enjoyed a day full of nostalgia. Our Chairman Mrs Jean Kingdon had the honour of being presented to the Queen. To many of us founder members of the WRAC it was heartwarming to note the smartness of the young serving members and their kindness and consideration to their visitors has earned the praise of our Branch. May we take this opportunity to thank all concerned for the hard work and organisation that went into making the day so memorable.

Our Guest of Honour at our Annual Dinner was the Mayor of Eastleigh and 40 of our members enjoyed a very happy evening.

ULSTER On 24th February 48 members held a very successful luncheon. Unfortunately our guest speaker was unable to attend, but from the noise and chatter of old friends reminiscing time seemed to fly.

Once again the highlight of our year was our visit to Government House, Hillsborough, on 3rd May where 142 members and guests enjoyed a cheese and wine evening and the walk round the beautiful gardens. The gratifying sum of £158 was raised and will be distributed amongst the different service charities.

We learned with regret of the death of two of our members and our donations in memory of both was sent to combat Cancer. We hope that members who have been unable to join us for any reason will come back again, and will let the secretary know if they are ill.



Members of the Ulster Branch after their luncheon party
(Courtesy Century Newspapers Belfast).

Correspondence

23 Trinity Close
The Pavement
London SW4 0JD

Dear Editor,

I was interested in two items in the February *Lioness*, the first being the letter from ex J/Commander Bamber. I live a stone's throw from South Side, Clapham Common, and I took a good long look at it the other day and tried to visualise it when it had the Searchlight Regiment there. Apart from that I don't suppose it has changed much, although quite a bit of tree felling has taken place recently because of Dutch Elm disease. Other trees have been planted and if the vandals don't do any damage they should be getting tall in a year or two's time.

The other item of interest was about Miss M Tindall. I knew a WOII Tindall when I was at Scottish Command (M) Signal Regt at Dreghorn Camp, Edinburgh. I was Signals she was the other lot! Could it be the same person I wonder? *She* might be interested to know that I have sold Poppies for the Royal British Legion every year since leaving the Service in 1958, the last 11 years for the local Clapham Branch.

Yours sincerely,
C I Lawrence (Miss)

Mrs I Hoogendyk
Chopinstraat 46A
3131 De Vlaardingen
The Netherlands

Madam,

I wonder if you could possibly help me trace some of my former ATS friends with whom I was stationed in London in 1942, I was discharged – family reasons, in 1944. We were stationed at the Transit camp in Warwickshire House, Gower Street, London. The names of some of them I can remember, Sally Oosterwyk (nee Roberts) from Chesterfield in Derbyshire, Eunice Davies from Wales, Rachel Quince (or Tweedy), Cynthia Derham, Iris Budd, Dorothy Dack. Anyone else who was with me, I would love to hear from them.

Hoping you will be able to help me.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs Irene Hoogendyk (nee Ellison)

We have received the following letter from Major Yvonne M Hall, ex Director New Zealand Women's Royal Army Corps:

Dear Editor,

When I received your most recent copy of "*Lioness*" it occurred to me that as your magazine is fairly widely read and there must be a number of ex-patriot New Zealanders in the United Kingdom and elsewhere who perhaps served with the New Zealand Women's Royal Army Corps, the following may be of interest.

The New Zealand Women's Royal Army Corps (NZWRAC) came into being during WWII along similar lines to the WRAC and evolved in much the same way. Space prohibits a detailed history but suffice to say Her Majesty approved an Alliance between the WRAC and NZWRAC in 1953. And so we progressed along our way until 29 July 1977. On that day the NZWRAC was deactivated and all members of the Corps were posted to other Corps of the NZ Army.

The reasons for this step are rather detailed but in brief, the Ministry of Defence with Government approval agreed that to suit the needs of modern defence forces it was no longer necessary to have separate women's services, and that women where possible would be employed on equal terms, conditions of service, training, pay etc. with their male counterparts. Some trades are closed to women because of their combat nature. So that is why there are no longer any women (or men!) in the NZWRAC.

To date it all seems to be working well. Although there are still some minor problems to be worked out, particularly in regard to the provision of the Human Rights Commission Act 1977 which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex race, religion and marital status, I am sure the young women of today will carry on with the fine reputation achieved by the NZWRAC.

Because of my previous appointment I still receive a regular copy of "*Lioness*" but because of the changed circumstances it would be much appreciated if this copy could now be sent to the Defence Librarian, Defence Headquarters, Private Bag, Wellington, New Zealand, who will be more than happy to receive it. (They have all the previous issues which I passed to them on the demise of the Directorate NZWRAC).

Yours most sincerely,
Yvonne M Hall (Major)
ex Director New Zealand Women's Royal Army Corps

Mrs M Crosley
60 The Links
Trevethin
Pontypool
Gwent

88 Osborne Court
Lockyer Street
Plymouth PL1 2PX

Dear Madam,

I wonder if the following is a record for an ex ATS friendship?

I won't go into all the details but at 17 years of age in 1940, I joined up in Newcastle on Tyne and after basic training was sent to the GPO School London. There I met another 17 year old Dulcie Neath nee Lewis. We did our respective courses, then eventually went to 4th Command Signals at Western Command Chester. My husband remained in the Army and we travelled a lot but I always kept in contact with Dulcie. Eventually I settled in South Wales and Dulcie settled in Wrington, Somerset, and now we can visit and talk about our days in the ATS. Although tragedy did stalk Britain in those years, we also had our laughs, and it was certainly a character building time.

Dulcie is now a Social Worker and I a nurse. We both hoped to attend the Reunion but were unfortunately too late to get tickets.

Best wishes,
Maureen Crosley

Mrs E M Anstey (nee Gray) of 17 Kithill Crescent, St Budeaux, Plymouth who is a member of the Plymouth Branch wrote a very appreciative letter after the Reunion and asked for another one soon! She would like to hear from anyone who was with 480 (M) HAA Battery in which she served for three years, or 598 Coy RASC, South Western Command where she spent a year. Mrs Anstey was enrolled into the ATS on 6th June 1942 at the age of fifteen years and three months.

Can anyone beat this for under age enrolment? We think it might be a record.

Mrs Ellen Douglas (nee Loudon) of 58 Timmery Etts, Broxburn, West Lothian, who is a member of the Edinburgh Branch would like to get in touch with ex ATS friends who were stationed at Garelochhead during 1943-44 and Portsmouth during 1944-45. Mrs Douglas was a cook and her nickname was "Ginger", which she hated!

I wonder whether you have any old members of the WAAC (later QMAAC) belonging to your Association, or known to you who may have served with me or who came from Plymouth and were known to me? If so, I would be very pleased to hear from them.

In response to a recent appeal in our local paper for 'veterans' to contact the local Association with regard to the dedication of colours, three ladies of your Association called on me. I have been invited to attend the ceremony to which I look forward with pleasure.

I will be most interested to have details of the proposed big reunion and to hear if you have any knowledge of ex WAAC/QMAAC members from this area with whom I may have served during the years 1917-1919.

Yours truly,
Mrs W K Kelleway
(nee Widdecombe) ex WAAC/QMAAC
Regtl No 11367 1917-1919

Mrs Margaret Hine (ex Captain Peg Reeve WRAC) who retired on marriage in 1952 writes from Villa Rosa, Calle San Jose 28, Costa den Blanes, Portals Nous, Mallorca, Spain:

"I do enjoy reading the Lioness and keeping in touch with happenings in the Corps, as well as picking up bits of news about old colleagues and friends. Should you ever have any queries about coming to live in Spain, I should be glad to offer any help or advice required — purely from my own experience, of course, and not gospel on Spanish rules and regulations, which are very much in the melting pot at the moment".

Mrs J Leon of Flat 5, St Mary's, Ballygate, Beccles enlisted at Exeter in 1940, trained at Aldermaston and was posted as a clerk to the RAPC (36th Detachment) at Ilfracombe, North Devon. She wonders what became of Junior Commander C M Simpson, who also came from Exeter, and would like to get in touch with anyone who served in that unit.

Mrs Leslie Barker JP of Norfolk House, 2 Sidmouth Avenue, Newcastle, Staffs, ST4 0QN was unable to attend the Reunion, but would like to know if anyone from 524 Battery (Radio Location) attended as she would like to contact them.

Mrs E Powell, 11 Baron Grove, Mitcham, Surrey, nee LCpl Edith Jackson of 'C' Company, Greenford Group, Middlesex from 1942-1946 would like news of Cpl Kathy Bacon who lived in London, Pte Vicky Wallis who lived in Hull and Pte Kathy Stagg who lived in Wiltshire. They were all cooks together.

Mrs Kathleen Smith (nee Grunwell) of 30 Greenwood Avenue, Bolton-le-Sands, Nr Carnforth, Lancs was stationed at Donnington COD from 1942-1945. She would like to get in touch with Doris Fox, Phyl Turner, Alice Salt and Peggy France or anyone else in 'F' Company.

Ex Sgt Muriel Shaw of Flat 69, Hytall Road, Solihull Lodge, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 1NF would like anyone who served with her from 1941-1948 to get in touch. She remembers 510 Battery and 559 Battery in Oswestry, Anglesey, Hull and Dovercourt.

Mrs G M Smith of 20 Queensway, Coldyhill Lane, Newly, Scarborough, N Yorks was stationed at Parsons Barracks, Aldershot during the war with the 12th Buckingham Company ATS. Ex-Sgt Smith was unable to come to the Reunion but would like to get in touch with anyone who remembers that unit.

Mrs W M Pihera (nee Coales), Box 328 Rotorua, New Zealand, who served with 504 Battery, 133 HAA Regt would welcome a letter to renew an old friendship. She will be returning to UK next year.



Thank God you're not in their situation.

Like a number of young soldiers trying to keep the precarious peace in Ireland, he was killed. His wife and child were still in married quarters in Germany, his former posting.

They were flown back to England. At the airport SSAFA had organised an escort to accompany them from the airport to a London station where the train was to take them to Scotland. SSAFA had booked a sleeper, and at the end of this long journey, another SSAFA representative had arranged for their relatives to meet them at the station.

But this is not the end of this SSAFA story. SSAFA will continue to keep a friendly eye on this bereaved family for as long as it is necessary, to make sure that the widow and her child shall never feel friendless and forgotten.

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Families Association,

27 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9BZ.

Colonel R E Noel-Clarke RAPC (Retd) of Westwood, Beacon Road West, Crowborough, Sussex TN6 1QL writes to us that nearly forty years ago he was commanding a Pay Office at St George's Hall, Reading. He had about 40 ATS working for him whose Junior Commander was Mrs Ethel Perry. He would very much like to hear from any officer or OR who served in that Pay Office in 1939 or 1940.

TRIBUTES

Mrs A T Chitty OBE ex-Controller ATS

Ex-ATS who served in the Middle East and especially those who were members of the Middle East Branch will have been sad to learn of the death of Mrs Chitty on February 19th. She was present at the 30th Annual Reunion of the Middle East Branch in 1977, where she officiated at the ceremonial cutting of the cake and later chaired the meeting. Mrs Chitty was the senior ATS officer in the Middle East from 1941-1944 and returned home to be DDATS Western Command from 1944 until her release from the Service in July 1946.

The Association was represented at the funeral by the Chairman.

Major G Howard (nee Bunty Sergeant)

Friends of Major Bunty Howard will be very sad to learn that she died on 1st June. For the last three years she was one of Cambridge University's career advisers, and two days before she died she heard that she had been made a Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College. Earlier this year she became only the fourth woman to be made a Fellow of the Institute of Mechanical Engineering.

Major Howard served in the WRAC from 1953 until 1973, mainly attached to REME. Giving the address at her funeral, Major General A M McKay CB said that Major Howard had taken her place in REME on an absolutely equal footing with her male colleagues. She was a good officer and a good engineer and he could pay no one a higher tribute than that.

OBITUARY

Binks. Miss W Binks of Boston Manor, London on 21 February 1979. QMAAC.

Boileau Mrs W Boileau of Beaminster, Dorset on 24 February 1979. Senior Commander ATS.

Chitty. Mrs A T Chitty OBE of Newent, Gloucestershire on 19 February 1979. Controller ATS.

Digby. Pamela Lady Digby of Dorchester, Dorset on 16 February 1978. Group Commander ATS.

Foley. Miss N E C Foley on 7 February 1979. Subaltern ATS.

Foster. SSgt J W Foster on duty in York on 19 January 1979. WRAC.

Howard. Major G A Howard of Great Shelford, Cambridge on 1 June 1979. WRAC 1953-1973.

Johnston. Mrs L Johnston of Belfast on 25 June 1979. ATS.

Kasyna Mrs A M Kasyna of Kirkby Stephen, Westmorland on 12 December 1978. ATS.

Lemon. Miss C K Lemon of Broughty Ferry, Angus in November 1978. ATS.

Low. Miss O M Low of Newbury, Berkshire on 4 April 1979. QMAAC. Chairman of the Newbury Branch.

Morley. Mrs Morley of Dartford, Kent on 10 February 1979.

Pearce Mrs M Pearce of Margate, Kent on 11 April 1978. QMAAC.

Russell. Miss K O Russell of Salisbury Wiltshire on 16 May 1979. S/Sgt WRAC.

Scarlett. Mrs S G Scarlett of Belfast on 3 January 1979. ATS.

Scott. Mrs A Scott of Bournemouth on 26 February 1979. ATS.

Scott. Mrs J S Scott of Prestwick, Ayrshire on 17 March 1979. ATS.

Sivyer. Mrs G K Sivyer of Goring by Sea, Sussex on 23 November 1978. Junior Commander ATS.

Vesterfelt. Mrs E Vesterfelt (nee Anson) in Canada on 30 January 1979. Sgt ATS.

Waterson. Mrs M Waterson of Manchester on 22 April 1979. QMAAC & ATS.

LONDON GAZETTE

BIRTHDAY HONOURS

MBE

Captain A H Harrison

HONOURS AND AWARDS

BEM

Corporal E M Linne

Mention in Despatches

W02 J Mowe, Sergeant M J Schooling

PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Regular Army

Colonel: E I Millington

Lieutenant Colonel: A J Smith

Majors: A L C Massey, M J Rook, A C Spencer

Majors: (QM) K Hughes, D Jones

Captains: Y M T Dutton, C M Reynolds,

P K Jarman, V Batchelor, S E Reynolds,

S Burwell, M A Harwood, S M Bishop

Lieutenants: V L Wright, A L Birtwistle, P J Gold,

C J Lewington, H M Prior, L A Relph

2/Lieutenant: P A Boram

2/Lieutenant (on probation): J P R Perry

Special Regular Commissions

Majors: J L Lawson, C A Marriott

Captains: C C Kennedy, R E Longden

Lieutenants: K M Purveur, A M J Bolwell

2/Lieutenant (on probation): L Blake

Short Service Commissions

Captains: M J Pollock-Gore, L J Whalley,

A K Stasiuk, P A Binnie, C F Harkin,

A A Mee, W K Hall, A M Moyes,

P E Robinson

Lieutenants: C E Arnold, A M Blackmore,

S E Murray-Playfair, B Flaherty, M L Smith,

A Pritchard, I J B A France, S E Bedford,

J A Capon, S V Jones, S A Selway,

J R Wallace, E M Wilson

2/Lieutenants: M O Anderson, S M M Atherton,

E E Cunningham, L R J Garvey,

C A McPherson, A C Merry, A J Shiel,

A C Stratton, J Dowson, S A Howell,

S J Meyer

2/Lieutenants (on probation): D Foster,

V J Jessop, C P Marshall, A S Negus,

M C Fisher, A Lintern-Mole, M F Redhead,

P A Woods, D E Baxter, N Collins,

M A Hamilton, J D Ashton, A J Moore,

Y Neophytou, M G E Croft, J M Crosse

RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Regular Army

Colonel: E J Bowles

Captains: G M S Baxter, S D Harrington,

M J Morison, R Matthews, K M Howard

2/Lieutenant: C Shaw

2/Lieutenant (on probation): J L Morrison

Special Regular Commission

Lieutenant: H J Matthews

Short Service Commissions

Captain: B A Mitcheson

Lieutenants: U J Bleasdale, C I Larkins,

P A Campbell, C Jones, N M Hopwood

2/Lieutenants: T V H Mitchell, G E Grimes

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Nottingham 412839.



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