

1990

No1

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Lioness



WOMENS ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

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REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960 – No 206184

Founded in 1919

Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6QH
Tel: Aldershot (0252) 24431 Ext. Guildford 8583

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Contributions for next issue by 14 June 1990

CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>		<i>page</i>
Shopping List	1	What's so special about us?	18
Staff Band	1	Holding Platoon – Chester!	20
Congratulations	2	Sri Lanka revisited	20
WRAC Centre	4	Grand Reunion 1991 – Application Form	22
WRAC Movements personnel	8	“Yes, I remember it well”	24
10 Company WRAC	10	WRAC Staff Band Reunion	25
RA Range Hebrides	12	Reunions/Notices	26
Ex HIGHLAND FLING	13	Antwerp 1989	28
Unit News BAOR	14	Association and Branch News	30
Ex CROSSBOW 1989	14	Correspondence	37
Out and About with 29 Coy WRAC	14	London Gazette	40
RMA visit to 19 Fd Regt	16	Personal Column	40
Iron Woman	16	Obituary	41
Army Badminton tour of Hong Kong	17	Association Accounts	44

Cover picture (see page 2) :

Junior Under Officer C J Tipper.

SHOPPING LIST

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Most items are in green with the Corps crest in gold. Please state size – small, medium, large, ex large and second colour choice for sweatshirts and T-shirts.

Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to CORPS HQ A/C and sent to Corps HQ WRAC, Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6QH.

WRAC embroidered rank slides on plain olive green background are available from Corps HQ. Prices as follows:

2Lt/Maj	£1.80 + 15p p&p
Lt/Lt Col	£1.80 + 15p p&p
Capt	£2.10 + 15p p&p
Col/Brig	£2.50 + 15p p&p

Cheques made payable to HQ Mess.

NEW OPENINGS

The official opening of "Dray Court" took place on the 12 July 1989 when the Commandant, Colonel N R Robertson MBE, of the Women's Royal Army Corps Centre was invited to open the £2.5 million housing development in Guildford. Dray Court has extended the concept of sheltered accommodation by providing an extra level of care for elderly people in the community. The development has been named after a popular and celebrated local shop keeper Dolly Dray. Dray Court consists of 67 one and two bedroom flats with their own kitchens and bathrooms plus flats on site for the resident manager and two wardens.

At the opening the Women's Royal Army Corps Staff Band played and various servicewomen met and had tea with the residents. It is hoped that Dray Court will become a focus for the local community, and a range of facilities

will be made available to elderly people and voluntary organisations in the surrounding area. It is planned to arrange outings and other activities for the residents.



Colonel N R Robertson MBE pictured at the opening of Dray Court on 12 July 1989.

WRAC STAFF BAND

Engagements

February 8	Celebrity Charity Concert, Civic Hall, Guildford at 1930 hours. In aid of Cancer Research and WRAC Benevolent Fund. Tickets available from WRAC Staff Band and from Civic Hall Box Office.
March 23	Massed Bands Concert, Fairfield Halls, Croydon at 1930 hours. In aid of Army Benevolent Fund.
April 21	WRAC AGM, Victory Services Club, London.
April 22	Concert with Biddulph Male VoiceChoir, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent at 1930 hours.
April 27	Concert with Guildford Opera Company, Guildford Civic Hall at 1930 hours.
May 27–June 1	Concerts – Grand Parade Bandstand, Eastbourne. Daily at the following times: Every morning 1100–1230 hours, every afternoon 1500–1630 hours, each evening 1945–2115 hours.
June 2–3	Summer Show, HMS Sultan, Gosport at 1400 hours each day.
July 11–28	Royal Tournament, Earls Court, London.
August 19–27	Concerts – Pinewalk Bandstand, Bournemouth. Sunday – Friday 1100–1230 hours and 1500–1620 hours/ Saturday only 1500–1630 hours.

CONGRATULATIONS

We offer our congratulations to:

Brigadier R K Ramsey MBE ADC who took up her appointment as Director, Women's Royal Army Corps in November 1989.

Captain Ena Forster, Director of Music WRAC Staff band who has been awarded the Advanced Certificate of the Royal Military School of Music (psm).

Lt Charlotte "Charlie" Tipper WRAC who was awarded the Queen's Medal at the 100th Sovereign's Parade held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on 4 August 1989. This is the first time that a woman has won the Queen's Medal which is given to the cadet who has achieved the best overall results in Military and Practical tests.

2Lt Jennifer Cave who was awarded the Sash of Honour on Women's Standard Course 891 at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Miss Tina Gould BA (Hons), Assistant Curator WRAC Museum who has been awarded her Honours degree from the Open University.

Mrs R Kirby-Harris (Capt Abigail Kirby-Harris née Mee) who has been appointed a JP on the Bodmin bench.

PRESENTATIONS

LSGC

SSGT Angle Warnes of 1 Sqn, 16 Sig Regt received her medal for Long Service and Good Conduct in the WRAC Sgts' Mess Rheindahlen on 17 October 1989.



SSgt Warnes with her husband and colleagues after the presentation by Colonel R D K Thompson OBE.

SGT Shirley Partington pictured after the presentation of the ARA Medium Silver Medal for second place in the WRAC Individual Small Bore Championships by Col D B Green, comd Tpt & Mov SEDIST.



Sgt Shirley Partington after presentation of the ARA Medium Silver medal.

Pte Lynda Eden was presented with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Certificate at Silver level by Mr Gordon McKeag, Chairman of Newcastle United Football Club at Harrogate on 6 November 1989. Pte Eden is a qualified Chef serving with the Army Catering Corps at the Army Apprentices' College Harrogate. During her leisure time she is an assistant Youth Leader at the College Junior Youth Club.



Pte Lynda Eden.

WRAC HEADQUARTER MESS

It has been decided by the members of the Headquarters Mess to extend membership to those members of the Association who were appointed to an ATS Commission and who did not subsequently convert it into a WRAC Commission.

If you wish to apply please send your name and address with a cheque, for the first year's subscription of £1.00, made payable to the WRAC HQ Mess, to:

The Secretary
WRAC Headquarter Mess
Corps HQ WRAC
Queen Elizabeth Park
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NEW DIRECTOR WRAC

Brigadier G K Ramsey MBE ADC

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Brigadier Gael Ramsey assumed the appointment of Director, Women's Royal Army Corps on 20 November 1989 when she was also appointed Aide-de-Camp to Her Majesty The Queen.

Brigadier Ramsey who is from a military background, was commissioned in December 1968. She has served in a variety of staff and regimental appointments in UKLF,



**Lieutenant Colonel (now Brigadier)
G K Ramsey MBE.**

BAOR, Hong Kong and Cyprus, and has specialised in intelligence work, personnel services, public information and manning.

Promoted Lieutenant Colonel in February 1982, she served as Commander WRAC NEDIST/NWDIST and it was during her time in this appointment that she organised the highly successful Grand Reunion at Harrogate. On promotion to Colonel in June 1986, she filled the appointment of Colonel WRAC, WRAC Directorate.

From August 1988 to March 1989 she was a member of the team which studied the Long Term Role and Employment of Women in the Army, the conclusion of which will have far reaching effects on the WRAC. This was followed by a study into the Co-ordination of Welfare Agencies in BAOR.

She was awarded an operational MBE for her services in organising the evacuation of civilian tourists, Cypriot nationals and Service dependants during the 1974 invasion of Cyprus by the Turkish Army.

Brigadier Ramsey is married to Colonel Michael Ramsey of the Royal Military Police and has two step-daughters.

MARRIED SERVICEWOMEN – SOLDIERS' WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS FUND (SWF)

Great news for married Servicewomen. From 1 January 1990 the Soldiers' Widows Fund (SWF) can accept married women members and the Fund is re-named Soldiers' Widows and Widowers Fund (SWF). It is clearly in girls interests to belong to a Fund whose annual subscription of £1.80 ensures a maximum grant of £3,500. Those married girls who belong to the Military Assurance Trust (MAT) are eligible for SWF. Interim administrative arrangements are known to Unit Administration Offices.

CORRECTION

Mrs Olive Macrae, who sent Memories of an ATS "Volunteer" for Lioness No 2 1989, page 70 has asked that in para five the name of Neville Chamberlain be substituted for Winston Churchill which was a slip of the pen!

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THE WRAC CENTRE 1987–1989

During the last two years the face of the WRAC Centre has changed, some would say, out of all recognition. Certainly the completed building refurbishment programme, including Weapon Training, and the introduction of Phase two training of Regimental Duty Servicewomen (Administrative Assistants) into WO & NCO Wing have brought a new and exciting dimension into our lives. We have now a much more impressive barracks than ever before, one in which we can all take a pride. Despite the many upheavals, those who have served here have done so cheerfully and faithfully in the true tradition of their Corps.

The training of recruits bears little resemblance to my own 34 years ago, although the spirit is as fervent as ever, and the square as large! In the vanguard of these changes has been Major Di Davies, Officer Commanding the new and expanded Training Company. She has fostered the new syllabus, developing it and shaping it until it has become a challenging, stimulating course for recruits and training staff alike. The result has been a fitter, more professional young servicewoman, capable of taking her place in a more integrated Army yet retaining all the old values that have been the hallmark of the WRAC over the years.

Major Davies has devoted all her time and energy to perfecting the new syllabus and the result has been exciting and successful.

Undoubtedly she has enjoyed her time here and as it draws to a close, she was asked to write a chapter for "One Day in the Life of the British Army." The result was a highly entertaining article on a "Day in the Life of the WRAC Centre". The following extract, dwelling on a Passing Out Parade, shows how much dedication and affection she has for the task of training Recruits and as she embarks on her new tour in Hong Kong, we wish her every success and as much happiness and more in her new posting.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF RECRUITS AT THE WRAC CENTRE DURING THE LONG HOT SUMMER OF 1989

It's 0530 hours, the sound of bird song rings around Queen Elizabeth Park Guildford, the home of the Women's Royal Army Corps. At the Gatehouse, the milk float arrives with the daily delivery and Tim Tyler, the milkman who has served the Centre for many years, starts his rounds – one pint for the Unit Admin Office, one for Corps Headquarters, two for Regimental Headquarters and one each for Headquarters and Holding Company, Training Company and the Quartermasters Stores. The Regimental Police and Duty staff commence their morning rounds; opening up buildings, checking security and turning off the security lights. The Cooks on the "Early Shift" enter the Elizabethan Restaurant and start preparing breakfast for some 400 hungry servicewomen.

Meanwhile in two of the Training Company accommodation blocks there is an air of excitement for today there is a Passing Out Parade. It is the finale of two of the Recruit Courses. The Regular Recruits have spent eight weeks at the WRAC Centre completing an intense course which provides a young woman with all the basic military skills which she will require to be able to take her place alongside her male counterpart in the modern British Army. They have been an action packed eight weeks with Map Reading, First Aid, Nuclear Biological and Chemical warfare, Weapon Training, Field Craft, Physical

Training and a myriad of other subjects to prepare the recruit for her chosen career. The Territorial Army Recruits have only spent 14 days in Guildford, having travelled from their units scattered throughout the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands. They have left behind their civilian employments and all other commitments to undertake their basic military training. Amongst their ranks are housewives and mothers with teenage children, Civil Servants, Factory Workers, Teachers, Secretaries, a Roofer and a self employed Graphic Design Artist. They too have mastered the fundamentals of the Common Military Syllabus and will continue to build on the foundations created at the WRAC Centre when they return to their unit. In each Barrack Room there are four recruits and every available flat surface is festooned with items of kit lovingly prepared and inspected ready for the "Big Day". By 0700 hours the 120 recruits of the Junior Intake, who are in their fourth week of training, have finished cleaning their rooms and join the elongated centipede of recruits marching in small groups towards the Elizabethan Restaurant. At home most of them were never up at this hour and breakfast was either a meal only to be enjoyed at the weekend or it was eaten hastily prior to rushing out to catch the bus to work. Now it is an essential part of the day and young recruits quickly learn that a good breakfast is essential if they are to survive another demanding day.

The recruits are joined at breakfast by members of Headquarters and Holding Company. The Holdees are a transitory population awaiting courses, reallocation to different trades, discharge or undergoing medical treatment. Most will only spend a few weeks at the Centre, during which time they will be employed on a variety of tasks; assisting other units as part of the regular Army Assistance Table Commitments; providing a civilian population for units training for operational tours in Northern Ireland, acting as ushers at the Royal Tournament or assisting on the TIGERWATCH Security Scheme. Some of the Holdees passed out on the last Passing Out Parade, so they know the feeling of great excitement on the "Big Day".

At 0800 hours the Training Day begins.

Outside the bird song has been replaced by the sound of a military band marching up the road. Following close behind is the parade, 140 marching recruits and 18 staff who are taking part on a rehearsal as the band for today's parade is the Pegasus band of the Parachute Regiment. They are standing in for the WRAC Staff Band who are away on an important engagement in Eastbourne and who have only recently returned from a tour in BAOR. The spring and summer months are always very busy for the 35 members of the band. In the last year they have led the parade through the streets of Guildford when the WRAC received the Freedom of the Borough; played in St Paul's Cathedral at the Service marking 50 years since the formation of the Auxiliary Territorial Service which was attended by some 2000 ex servicewomen from all over the world; played at the dinner held in the Guildhall to celebrate 40 years of the WRAC; played at the 800th anniversary luncheon of the Lords Mayors of London in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen; toured Cyprus and Germany and were an integral part of the Lord Mayor of London's Show, and Remembrance parades at the WRAC Centre in Guildford. They have also played for a variety of military parades and social functions.

After two circuits of the massive parade ground, said to be one of the largest in Great Britain, the Band of the Parachute Regiment and RSM are satisfied, and the recruits return to their accommodation while the Band

retire for some well earned refreshment.

A peaceful calm settled across the Centre for a short time before the Parade.

At 1100 hours all is set and the Parade ground is filled by the long ranks of the 180 members of Training Company and the Pegasus Band all awaiting the arrival of the Inspecting Officer, Brigadier M I E Scott DSO CBE who commanded the first Battalion of the Scots Guards in the



Brigadier Scott stops to talk during his inspection.

Falklands War. The Junior recruits sit on the edge of the Parade Ground to witness the parade and to learn what they must achieve after a further four weeks training. The Parade Commander brings the Parade to attention as the staff car draws up – the video cameras whir as fathers and brothers jockey for the position with the best view. Everyone stands for the General Salute, they may be civilian guests but they have studied the programme avidly and have learned what to do. The Inspecting Officer accompanied by the Commandant and the Parade Commander head for one Platoon who are the first to be inspected. There follows a slow procession as the Inspecting Officer progresses along the ranks of extremely proud recruits and Training Staff. While the band plays incidental music, the recruits struggle not to sway to the tones of the well known tune. "Where do you come from?" "What trade are you going to be?" "Have you enjoyed the course?" "Why did you join the Army?" "What have you learnt about yourself during the training?" – are amongst the questions the Inspecting Officer asks the recruits.

The inspection ends, the Bass Drum beats and the Parade sets off as one to march past the Inspecting Officer twice, the Platoon Commanders shout their commands and the recruits manoeuvre into the required formation past the Saluting dais in perfectly straight lines, shoes glinting in the sun and heads held high. The TA bring up the rear, dressed in their lightweight trousers, boots and shirts; many a member of staff and Regular recruit wish that they were dressed the same as the sun is high in the sky and their No2 Dress is somewhat warm. The Parade halts, an air of disappointment that it's over spreads across the audience, but they are wrong as they are about to witness the Parade advance down the Square in Review Order. A last General Salute and Brigadier Scott steps down from the dais. The band strikes up again and leads the Parade off the Square. No longer recruits but trained

servicewomen, amongst the smiles there is the occasional tear as it is almost the end of recruit training.

At last the formal part of the proceedings are over and the recruits are united with their visitors. As the recruits recount all sorts of "Anglers Tales" about the last eight weeks of training, the Inspecting Officer and Commandant mingle amongst the visitors who have travelled from all corners of the United Kingdom and a few from further afield. Friends and relatives in various uniforms of the Armed Forces add colour to the occasion and add some insight as to why some of the recruits selected a career in the WRAC. After half an hour the gathering breaks up and the recruits escort their visitors off to lunch or on a tour of the camp for yet more photographs.

The ceremony of the day is over, the recruits can now relax with their families and friends – the day is passed in celebration and reminiscences.

By 2300 hours all is quiet as the majority of the unit prepares for bed. Just as bird song woke the unit, an owl is heard calling as it flies its nightly patrol over Queen Elizabeth Park, another very special day at the WRAC Centre draws to a close.

STAR 89

The STAR Course (Scheme for the Training of Army Reservists) is a refresher course in military training of members of the Regular Reserve. All Regular Reserve are invited to attend the course every three years. Servicewomen have been eligible to volunteer to join the Regular Reserve since 1985 and membership is mandatory for all personnel enlisted after 31 December 1986.

Training Company ran the first WRAC STAR Course for regular reservists who were from WRAC sponsored trades from 7–13 October. As with any new course and particularly with the great variety in the levels of experience of the seven Reservists who attended, the programme had to be extremely flexible. The subjects covered included Weapon Training, Fieldcraft, First Aid, NBC and an up date on the Corps. The first two subjects were completely new to everyone and culminated in a day on the ranges and a mini exercise. Opinion was divided as



Back Row L-R. Cpl Whitehead, Cpl Lindsell, Sgt Steel, Sgt Price.

Front Row L-R. Sgt Jones, LCpl Griffiths, 2Lt Munro, Cpl Shiel, LCpl Hobbs.

to whether the Reservists would have liked to have spent a night in the field but there were numerous comments of "Oh to have my time again!"

The Course was a great success and introduced a new facet to the role of Training Company. It was a learning experience for all involved, but as we look forward to larger courses in the future we know that the STAR Course will be a challenge and that the students will be eager to renew their ties with the Corps and update their skills.

VISIT OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL TO THE WRAC CENTRE

A cold morning gave way to Thursday 7 December 1989, a particularly important day for the WRAC Centre Guildford. Not only was it the Passing Out Parade of Regular Recruit Intake 547 taken by General Sir Robert Pascoe KCB MBE ADC Gen, Adjutant General, but also the opening of the Junior Ranks Club which marked an end to seven years refurbishment at the WRAC Centre. To mark the occasion both senior and junior intakes were present on parade, six platoons and some 250 recruits in total.

Immediately after the Church service and presentation of certificates, all guests moved up to the new JRC to be met by the NAAFI Manager Mr Lewis and his wife. The Adjutant General, witnessed by officers and guests at the Parade, unveiled a plaque marking the opening of the



General Pascoe re-opens the Tudor Rose Club.

"Tudor Rose Club". The opening suitably reflected a very enjoyable day particularly so for the Corporals and Privates who are grateful at last to have a place of their own!

The AG, on behalf of the Army Benevolent Fund, also accepted a cheque from the Commandant Col N R Robertson, for the sum of £2306.08 raised by all members of the WRAC Centre. The money was the result of many different and ingenious schemes including an outstanding pantomime staged by Training Company. Our thanks to everyone involved.



The Adjutant-General receiving the cheque from Pte Box.

EXERCISE ARDINGTIGH – SCOTLAND 29 SEP – 7 OCT 89

The WRAC Centre organised an adventure training expedition for eight members of staff and two holdees. Our destination was Tom McClellan's Adventurous Training Centre located just outside Mallaig on the west coast of Scotland. During their seven days at the centre the group participated in Hill Walking, Canoeing, Windsurfing, Abseiling, Top Roping and Clay Pigeon Shooting.

The Centre itself had excellent facilities and overlooked a breath taking view of Loch Morar. The team indulged in locally caught salmon, mackerel and herring. From the hectic life at Guildford the Ardingtigh Centre was a perfect contrast which should be experienced by all.

LONG TERM ROLE AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN THE ARMY

The Army has decided to expand significantly the role of women, and will adapt a new framework for assessing the career opportunities and employment categories available to female officers and servicewomen. This could in due course result in up to 10,000 posts currently filled by men becoming available to women for the first time. The measures will provide the opportunity for women to join regiments and corps which until now have been all male.

Lord Arran, Under Secretary of State for the Armed Forces, stated that the Army's decision had taken into account the quality of female recruits, the high calibre of the women already serving and the fine record of achievement by women while serving in the United Kingdom and overseas.

The aim was to give women, as far as possible, equivalent opportunities to their male counterparts.

The decision follows consideration of a report to the Army Board which studied the long term role and employment of women. Many of the recommendations are still to be examined in detail but the Army Board, has, made three decisions as the basis for future planning.

Firstly, that the deployment rules for women should be made less restrictive so that women should be allowed to be employed in peace and war in all posts except where the primary role is direct combat.

Secondly, that the army should seek to increase the career opportunities and job satisfaction of female officers and servicewomen by integrating them more fully in the regiments and corps which employ them.

Thirdly, that with regard to the separate identity of the Women's Royal Army Corps, it will continue to have a major role into the foreseeable future, maintaining a female focus and overseeing the morale and wellbeing of female officers and servicewomen.

The report recommended that over 100 trades and employments, currently available only to men, should in future be opened to women as well. This could result not only in up to 6,000 posts becoming open to women in the Regular Army, but also up to 4,000 in the Territorial Army.

In line with the Government's policy for all the Armed Services, women will continue not to be employed in posts likely to be involved in direct combat, which will exclude them from some Army formations and units. Women serving in medical units will not be so restricted. Lord Arran said, when commenting on the career potential for those women who choose to integrate with other corps: "Subject to the deployment rules their promotion opportunities will be determined only by their ability, the qualifications they gain, and their willingness to commit themselves to a career in the Army".

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The WRAC Officers Mess Dress was redesigned two years ago by Hilliers Couture Ltd for many reasons, most of which emanated from the young Officers' comments whilst at Sandhurst.

The previous neckline did not cater for all figures and after the eight month lean training period, the style did not lend itself to be let out without tell tale lines on the fabric.

This Mess Dress is easier to wear and happily accommodates the most exhaustive menu as the waist sash can be adjusted with ease not showing unsightly lines across the midriff.

The slight puff on the sleeve gives a softer effect and can be adjusted in making, to suit either the broad or sloping shoulder. The wide ruched sash was designed to compliment the dress and give it the touch of glamour that the gentlemen have monopolised for so long in their elaborate Mess Wear.

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IT'LL BE ALRIGHT ON THE NIGHT

The evening of Friday 27 October 1989 is a date indelibly printed on the memory of those who were present at the PMC of the Officers' Mess. The singularly momentous date marked the Corps Dinner night to say farewell to DWRAC, Brig S P Nield CBE ADC BA.

The preparations started well in advance with series of lengthy discussions and meetings between WRAC Directorate Officers, the Commandant and PMC. The main logistic problem was how to seat 110 officers at 14 tables in a suitable layout for the Corps Dinner night. Strange noises were to be heard emanating from the PMC's rooms at night as she counted tables (not sheep!).

There is, of course, a saying "It'll be alright on the night" and in this we laid our trust. The Officers' Mess refurbishment programme had been completed only weeks earlier following a considerable amount of effort and hard work from the Quartermaster in conjunction with outside agencies, and the Corps Officers were able to dine in style "at home". The food was of a high standard and naturally the company was charming!

After the Dinner, the Deputy Controller Commandant, Brigadier A Field CB reminded the Mess of the many achievements of our outgoing Director. Brigadier Nield responded with a particularly memorable speech cataloging aspects of her long and varied career.

The speeches were followed by a cabaret provided by the WRAC Staff Band. This was of the usual excellent standard. As a finale the Director was invited to conduct



From L-R. Brigadier A Field, Brigadier S P Nield, Colonel N R Robertson.

the band during the playing of the WRAC Regimental March which she did with suitable aplomb and gusto.

The evening was brought to a conclusion by a display of musical talent and ingenuity from a number of extremely talented Officers who performed a Gilbert & Sullivan rewrite entitled "A Director's Lot is not a Happy One!" Hopefully after 35 years in the Corps, the Director disagreed.

VISIT BY CHIEF OF STAFF TWOATAF TO TELEPHONE EXCHANGE BY SGT JENSEN

On the 1 August 1989 the Chief of Staff Two Allied Tactical Air Force, Major General Eberlein, visited the new switchboard at HQ NORTHAG/2ATAF Telephone Exchange.

The exchange is manned by WRAC from Victor Troop 28 (BR) Signal Regiment. The Supervisor Sgt Jensen briefed the Chief of Staff on the facilities available to the subscribers.

The exchange, consisting of three computerised consoles, replaces the "very old" plugboard (hurrah). In addition to the new switchboard the Enquiries position also had installed a computerised console which gives information for German civil enquiries.



Sgt Jensen briefs the Chief of Staff on the facilities available to the subscribers.

25 TPT AND MOV REGT RCT WRAC MOVEMENTS PERSONNEL

The Air Transport Liaison Troop RCT is a sub unit of 70 MC Squadron RCT (the "Movements" of 25 Tpt & Mov Regt RCT) and is located at RAF Gutersloh in West Germany. Apart from the primary function of providing movements support to individuals and units moving through RAF Gutersloh, the Troop maintain an invaluable liaison function between the RAF Air Movements Squadron, and the many military units using the airhead. In addition, Troop personnel are tasked to support the Squadron for routine and exercise movement by rail and surface agencies.

The Troop has an established strength of nine Movement Controllers, two of whom are WRAC. Cpl Jenny Brewin and LCpl Jan Hood. Although the working hours can be long and unsociable, the girls are tasked for Movements duties in exactly the same way as their male counterparts, which is essential for good working relations and the morale of both the male and female "Movers". A typical day might see the girls come in to work in the early hours to process a Territorial Army unit returning to the UK, then it's off to the local railhead to load Royal Artillery A vehicles to rail flats before returning to RAF Gutersloh to load Rapier Firing Units to Hercules transport aircraft and meet the routine Trooping flights carrying passengers between LUTON and GERMANY. All this makes for an interesting and varied job which both girls enjoy to the full.

As one would expect on an RAF station the size of



We all need a break!

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Mr. A. is a double above-knee amputee confined to a wheelchair, very dependent on his wife's care. The couple live in a FORCES HELP SOCIETY bungalow carefully designed to make life easier for the disabled and those who care for them. Nevertheless, coping with disability is stressful for both of them, and they and many other disabled ex-servicemen and their wives need a holiday that takes account of their special needs.

To help meet the demand for such holidays, the FORCES HELP SOCIETY's newest project is the building of a bungalow-style complex consisting of self-contained units all purpose-built for disabled, in the grounds of its Convalescent and Retirement Home at Ryde, Isle of Wight, which will enable short-stay accommodation to be offered either for married couples together, or for the wife to stay in one of the units while her

disabled husband is cared for elsewhere; for a woman widowed after years of caring for a disabled husband, or for a disabled man or woman who can stay independently provided there are the right facilities and there is someone to call on in an emergency. This project, like the building of more specially designed homes for the disabled, depends on your support through donations, covenants and legacies.

Please help us to help those who served us so well.

THE FORCES HELP SOCIETY & LORD ROBERTS WORKSHOPS

122 Brompton Road, London SW3 1JE

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Gutersloh the facilities are varied and of the highest standard. A new gymnasium complex, ample sports fields, sauna, golf course, large book and music libraries, education centre, gliding club and a wide variety of social entertainment are but a few of the extra mural options. Outside work Cpl Brewin, who is married to a "Mover" in 70 MC Squadron, is interested in computers and jogging while LCpl Hood who is single, enjoys trampolining, squash, keep fit and tennis.

In brief the WRAC Movement Controllers at ATL Troop RCT, RAF Gutersloh enjoy a job which is both varied and demanding whilst being able to enjoy life to the full in their leisure time.

THE FORCES HELP SOCIETY

"Helping According to Need"

A young WRAC servicewoman discharged with a spinal disability following an accident. A man of 82, once a regular soldier, now in bad health and needing to be nursed by his unmarried daughter. A veteran of World War Two, now suffering from acute arthritis and very dependant on his wife's help. These are all members of the service and ex-service "family" of which the more fortunate members try to give a helping hand to those less fortunate.

The Forces Help Society has played a part in channelling help to those in need for 90 years, and its Voluntary Workers in the UK and many foreign and Commonwealth countries have been making contact with those in need of financial help, advice and support or just a friendly visit. Now the Society's welfare network has been integrated with that of SSAFA so that the two organisations can together provide even more comprehensive care for those in need.

When visiting disabled ex-service men and women, the

Society's Voluntary Workers have frequently reported that the man or woman, sometimes with a young family, was living in unsuitable, often very expensive accommodation. For some of these the Society has been able to provide better living conditions in the Cottage Homes it has maintained for many years in different parts of the country. Then in the late 70s a decision was taken to build Cottage Homes specially designed for the disabled. The Society now has 35 of these, and their special features have been warmly commended by those who live in them and by all concerned with the welfare of the disabled.

The Society has also perceived a growing need for very flexible short-stay accommodation, at an affordable cost, to provide convalescent and respite holidays for disabled men and women and those who, day in day out, help them to cope with disability. It was decided to use a piece of land owned by the Society, adjacent to its St Vincents Retirement Home, to build a bungalow-style complex of six self-contained units, all with the features that make life easier for the disabled, as in the purpose-built Cottage Homes. The staff of St Vincents would be near at hand should any help be needed.

The complex is due to open early in 1990, but a large balance of the money needed to pay the bills still remains to be raised. The Society has spent more than £1½ million on its building projects, given from both Service and civilian sources. It now needs to seek even wider support. Don't let the family down!

Applications for the Society's permanent or short-stay accommodation designed for the disabled are welcomed from any ex-service man or woman who has a disability, whether or not it is the result of service.

Applications, donations and requests for further information to: The Forces Help Society and Lord Roberts Workshops, 122 Brompton Road, London SW3 1JE. Tel: 01-589 3243. Registered Charity No 209753.

10 COMPANY WRAC

EXERCISE HOT FOOT

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By Pte S Scott and Pte T Gifford

On the 7 April 1989 a party of eight servicewomen from 10 Coy WRAC and two from 82 Ord Coy, led by Capt Birkett set off to the Lake District on an arduous week of Adventure Training.

Taking turns at map reading we set off into the hills for two days. The famous saying "It's just around the corner" led us to soggy ground where we spent the night. We awoke the next morning to find fog so thick that we could not see a foot, or map in front of us. We all regained our senses of humour when Pte Scott, through the sheer weight of her rucksack, fell rather ungracefully into a small stream, and Pte Gifford stepped into a bog, up to her knees.

During the next two days we attempted to canoe on Coniston Lake where the world speed record was set. We



LCpl Fletcher and Pte Matthias try their hands at canoeing.

came close to the record but sank a few times on route! Pte Purse, the expert canoeist, demonstrated rapid water canoeing down one of the rivers during low tide, and grounded himself in the middle of the river!

The following day the heavens opened, but this did not stop Capt Birkett, CSM Paul, Cpl Callow and Cpl McCann from wandering off in search of some good rock faces for us to climb and abseil down. Nevertheless, we braved the weather and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, especially those of us who have never climbed or abseiled before. Fortunately, the next day was blessed with glorious sunshine so we could admire the scenery, which added to the enjoyment of the exercise.

The last day of the week was the most memorable as we climbed Scarfell Pike. Even in April, the top was covered by thick snow and blowing a blizzard, which only allowed us to see a foot in front of ourselves. The most exciting part was climbing/sliding down.

During the full week we all took turns at attempting to poison each other in the kitchen – fortunately we had a chef with us, whose encouragement helped us to make the most of our limited cooking experience. We would like to thank Capt Birkett for their help in the rock climbing, abseiling and canoeing.

EXERCISE MERCURY LIONESS

By Pte T Gifford WRAC

Ex MERCURY LIONESS was the name of the 10 Coy WRAC and 251 Sig Sqn's joint Annual Military Training camp held at Crowborough Camp over 3 x 1 week camps. Capt Birkett of 10 Coy WRAC was the OC of the Military Training with Lt Robertson of 251 Sig Sqn as her 2IC.

On arrival at Crowborough Camp we saw the dreaded hill that everyone had told us about. There was the Guardroom at the top, the accommodation half way down and the cookhouse at the bottom. After finding our accommodation we gathered for potted sports where we were divided into our sections for the duration of the camp. This was a nice light-hearted way of getting us into the spirit of the exercise. Then, absolutely ravenous we stopped for lunch.

That afternoon, and for the following two days, we went over the theory of first aid, NBC, map reading, dry weapon training and fieldcraft. We went outside to learn about practical fieldcraft, and 2Lt Gray, who had been camouflaged amongst the bushes, jumped out to demonstrate how well concealed he had been, and the art of surprise. He promptly tripped and fell flat on his face!

Most mornings we started the day at 0700 hrs with PT which for some of us was quite a shock to the system, and would explain our dubious efforts on the sloping football pitch. Each evening we would be briefed on the following days' events so that we were always prepared.

On the Tuesday we all attended the obstacle course and



Assorted members of 251 Sig Sqn led by Capt Val Robertson.

for those afraid of heights it was a major achievement. For others, it brought tears to their eyes as they tried to clamber over the walls.

The weapon training was carried out on Lydd ranges the next day. It passed by uneventfully except for the fact that we were stopped from shooting whilst a boat was passing by. Apparently, this would not normally happen but they were obviously extremely cautious as we were WRAC!

Everyone enjoyed the last two days the most as they were all part of an intersection competition to see who had the best military knowledge and skills, and included an orienteering exercise between stands where we were tested on NBC, first aid, basher building and stripping re-assembling an SMG. The hardest part was trying to put a tie on whilst wearing a respirator and NBC gloves! Later on that evening we had to sleep in the bashers we'd built, so we were all praying that it would not rain.

On the final day we did command tasks, which everyone enjoyed and found quite challenging.

The week was over before we knew it and was much more fun than we had expected.

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The WRAC Staff Band led the WRAC marching contingent of sixty servicewomen headed by Major D F Davies MBE in the Lord Mayor of London's Procession. This year was the 45th Anniversary celebrations of the City of London TAVRA and the 800th Anniversary of London's First Mayor

RA RANGE HEBRIDES

By Capt S Davison WRAC

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Greetings from Benbecula . . . Yes, we are still alive and well up here with the WRAC Detachment currently 37 strong out of a total permanent military staff of approximately 250. For those a little unsure of our whereabouts Benbecula is part of the Outer Hebrides, sandwiched between North Uist and South Uist off the North West Coast of Scotland. Our three links with civilisation are a daily British Airways "Budgie" flight to Glasgow, a two and half hour ferry crossing to the Isle of Skye or an eight hour ferry crossing to Oban. (There are however, no Sunday flights or sailings in the winter!).

Statistics abound in Benbecula. For example were you aware that Benbecula is 650 miles from London ie twice the distance from London to Rheindahlen? To put it a different way, Monaco and Copenhagen are closer to London than Benbecula! Although it is called the RA Range Herbrides the range is actually used by visiting units from all three services plus some foreign units. Of the 37 WRAC personnel 28 are employed as Range Assistants and are directly involved in the work of the Range by the monitoring of various radar installations to enable safe firing. A small number of the Range Assistants are concerned with the visual flight safety and filming of each missile that is launched. The remaining nine WRAC personnel are employed respectively in the Admin/Staff Clerk role, Cooks, Medic, Military Accountant and PTI.

Crofting and fishing are the main occupations in the Hebrides alongside an increasing fish farming industry. The MOD is the biggest single employer providing jobs for approximately 200 local inhabitants. Gaelic is widely spoken and is usually the first language for most local people. The weather is the dominant feature of life on the Island with the most significant fact being the constant strong winds that produce many severe storms during the winter months. Rest assured that the hot summer of 89 certainly never made it up here to Benbecula!

Sport is an important part of WRAC life on Benbecula and every effort is made to attend the various Zone finals at York. These trips must be carried out by road (due to financial constraints!) and entail three days away from the islands and a round trip of 800 miles! Between January and July 1989 the WRAC detachment has travelled approximately 3,600 miles in the pursuit of sporting achievements! The effort resulted in 2nd places in Rounders and Tennis, 3rd in Athletics and LCpl McCormick was runner up in the Badminton singles and winning the doubles with WO2 Keys (York). All credit must go to Cpl Cowling PTI who stage manages these sporting adventures.

Sailing has proved a popular pastime, with LCpls Clements and Elliot and Ptes Stow and Summersgill helping to sail a Nicholson 55' from Gosport to the Isle of Skye in April 1989. In July 1989 Ptes Pace, Percival and Stow took part in Exercise AILSA CRAIG sailing around the Western Isles in a Halcyon yacht. Dinghy sailing takes place two or three times a week in summer (weather permitting) and LCpl Scott, amongst others has been seen braving the elements. The Outer Hebrides provides some of the best diving in the country due to the clear water and in July Cpl Carroll, LCpl Kirkwood and Ptes Ralph, Padgett and Percival took part in a Unit run Introductory Diving Course.

July 1989 was Nijmegen March time with the RA Range Hebrides providing the only all female team from the UK.

Led by Sgts Maund and Dolan the team of LCpls Dack and McCormick and Ptes Budden, Crowhurst, Johnston, Latimer, Sparks and Stow began training in May. A useful part of the training which included the regular 14 Mile march back from work. In a flurry of activity raffles were



Nijmegen '89. Pte Crowhurst and Pte Latimer.

conducted and a Disco arranged to raise funds for the trip. The hard work paid off as the team successfully completed the march with the addition of a few blisters!

Life for servicewomen in Benbecula is certainly different and provides some exciting and interesting opportunities. St Kilda, a group of Islands 45 miles west of Benbecula is manned all year round by the Range for radar tracking purposes. Pte Hankins and Pte Sinnet take it in turns to accompany a light aircraft on a regular mail drop to the Island and other members of the WRAC detachment visit St Kilda by LCL or Helicopter when spare seats are available. Out of hours activities mainly centre around the outdoors; sea fishing, fly fishing, bird watching, windsurfing, walking, climbing and canoeing are all available weather permitting but for those who prefer to stay indoors the nearest hostelry is five miles away! As you can see a good sense of humour and a keen sense of adventure are quickly developed by all members of the WRAC working on Benbecula!

THE ARMY AIR CORPS EAGLES TEAM

By Pte H Beedles WRAC

One of the best things about being in the forces for me, apart from having the privilege of writing this, is the opportunity to have been involved in working as groundcrew for The Army Air Corps Eagles Display Team, as I and Pte Karen Wheatley WRAC did last year.

My favourite weekend of the nineteen display venues was spent with the team at Mildenhall American Air Base. It was like entering another country! The atmosphere was electric with hoardes of people waiting in anticipation to see these heroes (otherwise known as pilots) perform with courage and skill.

The display team show off two types of fixed wing aircraft; the Beaver and the Auster. The Beaver first flew in 1947, an outstanding feature of it being its incredible ability to become airborne at a mere 45 mph. The Auster is one of two in flying condition with the Army. They are the last remains of a sturdy breed.

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We come from two World Wars, Korea, Kenya, Malaya, Aden, Cyprus, Ulster, The Falklands and all those areas of turmoil where peace must be restored.

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THE FIRST STEP
by a recent, young double amputee



The AAC Eagles Display Team.

The rotary wing aircraft consist of five types of helicopter; the Sioux, Gazelle, Skeeter, Scout, and the Lynx which holds the world speed record of 249.1 mph. The Scout is my personal favourite; if it is possible to fall in love with an aircraft, this is the old man of the air to choose. This helicopter has proven itself for 26 years, and its withdrawal from service has been deferred until the year 2000, after which, who knows.

Even though working with the team was time consuming and sometimes very tiring we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and hopefully we will be chosen again next year.

EXERCISE HIGHLAND FLING

12 INT & SY COY (NORTHERN IRELAND)

By LCpl Abbott WRAC

Ex HIGHLAND FLING was an adventurous training exercise based in Scotland led by Lt Jayne Sneller the Coy Admin Officer. Activities included rock climbing, abseiling, canoeing (river and sea), hill walking and pony trekking. The extreme weather conditions we encountered (the heat) meant that on two occasions Plan B was brought into operation. Participants in week one managed to help overcome this by seeing some of the local indoor places of interest. Funnily enough, they said the only place that was open was a local distillery, amazing!! On week two the fantastic weather continued, Majorca couldn't have done better. In fact on our last day it was so hot that we headed towards St Andrews beach for sea canoeing and surfing!!

The base diary proved that the WRAC contingent of our party far outshone most previous units' efforts, and we managed 15 miles on "Jocks Pass" on one day.

All in all, adventure training gives one a chance to learn new skills and reacquaint ones self with old ones. It was amazing how many times I heard people say "I've done this before, but it was a long time ago when I was at school". It doesn't matter what standard you're as long as you're willing to "have a go"!! Ex HIGHLAND FLING went down so well with our Coy that another visit to Scotland is being arranged for the near future.

UNIT NEWS
BAOR
16TH SIGNAL REGIMENT WRAC
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EXERCISE CROSSBOW 1989

Exercise CROSSBOW 89 was a military skills competition held over five gruelling days and run by HQ (BR) RCZ. 16th Signal Regiment entered three teams two male and one female, each consisting of eight members. They were made up of one Officer, one SNCO and six Other Ranks.

The competition started with a BFT run over a three mile cross-country course, made more difficult by the scorching heat and a certain team member who wanted extra time (for her age). The team finished in third place.

After a brain-straining orders session we moved into our night location, prepared our Bashers and made the most of a few hours sleep. The next morning we were all eager and willing for whatever the DS could throw at us.

The second day started with a map reading exercise, and after a small problem with distances was overcome we did fairly well. Pte Paula Matheson managed the feat of holding her compass five metres away from her watch! Next it was on to two NBC Stands which was great fun, and extremely hot. We were all "glowing" just putting on our suits, but at least they kept the mosquitoes off!

After an exhausting day fortunately free from any major crisis we were left to dig in on Arsbeck and stay out of trouble. That was easier said than done. Using our vivid imaginations, we quickly set up our one trip flare and numerous trip wires. This was done without informing the DS who were sneaking around trying to find us. The next thing we know one of them had set off the flare, well at least it worked!

The third day turned out to be a wet one. We started with a "quick" run over the assault course, finishing in 16 minutes, with no casualties, and even Pte Maggie Thomson managed to get over the 10ft wall! Next was a river crossing. Being roughly-toughy WRACs we stripped off (much to the surprise and delight of the DS) and "bimbled" across. The command task was no problem, and nil penalty points were incurred. Cpl Jayne Chinery succeeded in getting everyone's kit across DRY by giving a demonstration on how to wrap it properly. The day ended with the First Aid Stand and then off to the ranges for a bit of weapon handling!

The night held some lovely surprises for us all as we trundled off to an RV point in a Car Park and then a further walk to our OP location. A few hours were spent observing "enemy" activity, and getting well and truly bitten to death by every insect possible – I think we'd identified 50 species by the end of the night.

Later, we rejoined our Landrover and its trusty driver, LCpl Wheat who described how she'd spent all night "camming it up." We moved on again, back to Arsbeck and managed a few hours sleep – then it was good old rolled oats for breakfast and Day Four . . .

Day Four the penultimate day – how we thought it would never end – consisted mainly of field craft stands, congratulations go to 2Lt Philippa Ward for her verbal orders – 98%, Well Done! These took place, may I add, before we were visited by Col A A Kelly, who was impressed with morale – need I say more? A lesson or two were learned by all when it came to judging distances, but we all did very well on the Soviet Recognition Stand. Last, but by no means least, was the Gas Chamber – Help!

The day ended in yet another new location and with a



Back Row: Pte Mags Thomson, SSgt Angie Warnes, Pte Paula Matheson, 2Lt Philippa Ward.
Front Row: Cpl Jayne Chinery, Pte Michell Potter, LCpl Max Wheat, LCpl Cath Hollingworth.

celebration meal, and then came the dreaded CFT. Pte Thomson sadly had to be left behind due to a foot injury and it was LCpl Max Wheat who kept morale high among us and with a fast pace we soon had Arsbeck in our sights. Apparently it was quite a sight seeing us run towards it – I really didn't think we'd make it. Thank you to everyone in the team for keeping going.

All that was left to do was the shoot and then the long, agonizing wait for the results. We came second overall out of the WRAC teams – well done!

Finally a big thank you to all our supporters for the beers and to the organisers for such an interesting competition. See you all next year!!

OUT AND ABOUT WITH 29 COY WRAC EXERCISE JOINT BACKSTOP

29 Coy WRAC has had an active Summer and Autumn.

We began in June with a combined Adventure Training Exercise with members of Victor Troop, 28 (BR) Signal Regiment called Exercise Joint Backstop from 2 June to 16 June based in the RCZ Hut "Haus Magnus" in Wertach, Bavaria. The period was split into two one-week groups of approx 30 students per group. Each week the students carried out the adventure training pursuit of Hill Walking, Canoeing, Rock Climbing and Abseiling. The programme was planned so that everyone would spend two days on two of the activities and one day on the other, leaving a day off for a trip to places of interest such as Dachau, and an introduction to White Water Rafting.

The Exercise was a great success with all the students despite Arctic conditions during week one and blazing sun in the second week.



Pte Edworthy singing "The Hills are alive with the Sound of Music!"

CHARITY DISCO AND BARBEQUE

On the 8 July 1989, 29 Coy WRAC held a Charity BBQ and Disco organised by Cpl Cannon assisted by Cpl Duncan and many more members. The money was donated to the WRAC Benevolent Fund and the St Francis Special Play Group in Rheindahlen Garrison which provides specialist care for the handicapped children and their parents in the area.

THE IMM COMPETITION



The 29 Coy WRAC team still in good spirits on Day three

On 16 September 1989 the 6th International Military Competition was held in Monchengladbach. The competition is for regular and reserve NATO forces and this year saw some 70 teams from all over Europe battling it out including three teams from 29 Coy WRAC. Some sixteen different aspects of military skills were tested and the whole competition was timed from start to finish. The event was enjoyable for all participants and 29 Coy "A" Team took third place in the ladies section and the Garrison Team including SSgt Marner 29 Coy WRAC, came first in the mixed team.

COMMENDATION FOR EXCELLENCE

Congratulations are in order to Cpl Medley WRAC who received the Commander Rhine Troops Commendation for outstanding work as a draughtswoman in HQ BAOR. Cpl Medley, whose original trade was a cook, has specialised in draughtswomanship since Jan 88. Her work involves the creation of graphics to illustrate the numerous papers and presentations produced by her branch in HQ BAOR and used in top level International briefings.



Cpl Medley 29 coy WRAC receiving the Commander Rhine Troops Commendation presented to her by Maj Gen The Hon T P Boyd-Carpenter MBE.

SPONSORED TANDEM CYCLE



The tandem team with HRH Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

Also in September WO1 Pat Rosewell 29 Coy WRAC, with LCpl Hilary Greig WRAC Staff band, cycled by tandem from John O Groats to Land's End in aid of the Royal British Legion Women's Section. They pedalled 1037 miles and during their travels met many interesting people including Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. They have raised over £10,000 so far and a donation will be made to the WRAC Museum Fund.

SPORTS ROUND UP

It has been a successful season for 29 Coy WRAC in all the Summer Sports. After a long hot summer, with lots of grit and determination they gained notable victories in BAOR Women's seven-a-side hockey, BAOR Women's tennis championships and were either second or third in the remaining Summer Sports. At the end of the season 29 Coy WRAC was presented with the Robertson Cup for being the most outstanding unit in BOAR in the summer season.

REGIMENTAL WEEKEND

To finish on a high note, 29 Coy WRAC had their Annual Regimental Weekend 11-12 November. The first day included many interesting presentations on drugs, Road Safety and terrorism. The final day started with OC 29 Coy WRAC's Inspection and Coy photograph and then a March to the Remembrance Sunday Church Service.

The Weekend was rounded off with "Sporting Trivia" in the Army gym and a Coy get together in the Sportsman's Club for "Chicken and Chips" and suitable liquid refreshment.

EXERCISE MAIDEN TRAIL 1989

By Lance Corporal M Hunter WRAC

On Friday 26 May 1989 10 WRAC Provost from Sennelager Training Centre boarded the PRI minibus and set off for Bad Laasphe. We had been entered for the 11th Laasphe March. Everyone was in high spirits little knowing what lay ahead!

Our minibus slithered to a halt at a German Training Camp about 18 km out of Badd Laasphe where we were all accommodated in two-man luxury rooms in the Sgts' Mess, which to our horror was inhabited by members of the opposite sex. This made showering an experience, having to have guards posted the whole time! We had a couple of free hours to relax and do our kit before heading to the equivalent of the NAAFI bar for a lemonade before supper. After a quick drink we were back into the minibus

and on our way to the local town for supper, chaperoned by SSgt Bishop RMP. Lucky for us that our Admin Officer can speak German otherwise it would have been 10 lots of *Bratwurst* and *pommes frites*.

Over our meal we were all discussing the following days event. You know, the usual stuff, 20 kms 'NO PROBLEM'. I mean, we all had at least one practice march around Sennelager (Note: SENNELAGER is nice and flat!).

Next morning after breakfast we made our way to the starting point and got into two teams of five. There were 15 teams altogether but only two were female.

The first team started off half an hour before us and soon we were all on our way happily marching out of the town.



L-R. Back Row: LCpl Conner, Pte Wood, Sgt Wilkinson, Cpl Howes, LCpl Robinson, Capt Myers.

L-R. Front Row: LCpl Hunter, LCpl Teller, Lt Parks, Sgt Smith.

We had walked 400 metres before we came to the first hill, but this did not worry us because "what goes up, must come down". Well, that's what we thought. Wrong! The further we walked, the further up we went, heading away from civilisation. It was quite tough going at first and if it was not for Sgt Carol Wilkinson keeping us going I'm sure morale would have dropped like a lead balloon.

However, despite all of this the march was completed by both teams in very reasonable times with one or two blisters to prove it. Team A finished in two hours 35 mins and Team B two hours 42 mins. It should be noted that the Bunderswehr reserve teams who came both 1st and 2nd in their group had a slower time than both WRAC teams!

The presentation of the cups took place at 1400 hrs and it was nice to see that the two WRAC teams were the only ones to show any military discipline by standing at attention while Capt Jo Myers marched smartly out for the presentation of the Ladies cup to the delight of all the locals present. After the presentation we all had our photographs taken so many times we lost count. Both the locals and the Bunderswehr were somewhat surprised at first to see women in uniform but once they realised we were for real, their reception was very friendly and inquisitive!

All in all the march was a great success despite all the aching feet, a great time was had by all who entered. Our thanks must go to Sgt Cath Smith who had the brainwave to enter and who also put a lot of time and effort into organising the event.

Hopefully next year we will have no problem getting volunteers for the 12th Laasphe March.

RMAS 891 VISIT TO 19 FD REGT

GIRLS ON TOP

WRAC Commissioning Course 891 had a taste of life in the Gunners when they visited 19 Fd Regt, Dortmund in July.

The girls would be calling for fire whilst on final exercise in Vogelsang and so the opportunity to gain "hands on" experience of the ABBOT 105mm field gun was invaluable.

When WRAC 891 passed out of Sandhurst in August, many were looking forward to first postings as Assistant Adjutants. Lts Hilary Carmichael (19 Fd Regt) and Carolyn Armstrong (5th Regt) warned the girls what to expect being the only girl in the regiment. Although a daunting prospect for some – WRAC 891 had no objections!

Finally the girls brought the ABBOTs into action on the parade square. The verdict on their day with the Highland Gunners! "Fantastic!"



O/Cdt Ross – gun number 1.

"IRON WOMAN"

**By Corporal K L Ramsey WRAC
68 SQN RCT**

It all began with those unforgettable words "the OC wants to see you".

"How would you like to compete in a Swiss Army Ironman competition?" he asked.

It was the first time a British Team had entered and I'd never been to Switzerland, so, of course, I jumped at the chance. Little did I know what I had let myself in for.

A briefing at 2 Group RCT, in Dusseldorf, cleared up this query. There would be 56 men and two women competing on a course consisting of a three mile swim in a river, a 40 mile cyclé ride and a seven mile run. These last two were both to be done in combats and boots. I couldn't decide whether I was looking forward to it, or whether I would finish, but it was definitely a challenge. Anyway, it was too late to back out now.

The day we were due to leave I couldn't find my passport – maybe I could get out of this after all. No such luck. After turning my room upside down I found it and we set off on the long drive to Switzerland.

After a good nights sleep we began the next day, our

course recce, with an introduction to our bikes. Bike? No gears and a seat made of leather and old springs. How was I going to survive 40 miles on that? It looked more like a butcher's bike than a "mountain" bike. Anyway, just to get used to it we cycled half way round the course we'd be doing the next day. We followed this with a trip round the running course (not running!) and a short swim in the river. By now I was dreading the competition the next day.

Saturday morning arrived far too quickly. I couldn't eat a thing, my stomach was constantly turning over. "Only eight hours to go and it will all be over" I kept telling myself. At 11 o'clock the 58 competitors were lined up in the freezing cold water waiting for the countdown. I knew I could do well in this bit, swimming was my strongest event. The gun fired and we were off. The water was freezing and very murky. I kept expecting to come face to face with some horrible object – that probably made me swim even faster. 27 minutes later I climbed out of the



Climbing out of the water – very cold but in second place.

water in second place, not too bad a start. I changed quickly, trying to get my breath back, and was off on the 40 mile ride. 40 miles of hills, Swiss mountain roads and lots of cursing on my part. I wouldn't be allowed to write what I said on the way round, but it worked, I didn't stop. Mind you, it wasn't very encouraging because the course doubled back on itself and I could see the leaders stretching out on the second leg back to the finishing line. To keep my mind off the cycling I counted everyone who was on their way back – I was 52nd. I would have been happy to finish the cycle ride except that I then had to do a seven mile run.

I crawled off my bike and set off. It took me three miles just to regain control of my legs and stop them shaking. Half way round I had a coughing fit and one of the officials drowned me with water. I bet he thought I was dying – so did I!

After wondering if I'd ever finish, the sight of the actual finish line was almost indescribable. After five and half gruelling hours I actually crossed it – with a smile on my face. Thank goodness it was over. A Swiss official planted a sloppy kiss on each of my cheeks and hung a medal round my neck. It felt so good.

I'd never exercised continually for five and half hours before but I wasn't going to let the lads get the better of me – it was definitely determination that got me through. Would I do it again? Yes, probably, even though it all hurt. The feeling at the end made it all worthwhile. Mind you if there is a next time, I would definitely train for it first!

THE BERLIN MARATHON (or how to give up Maltesers in one easy lesson)

**By Captain P E Jump WRAC
41AEC**

The televised London marathon has always made me feel slothful. This year, whilst perusing the thousands of lean running machines and machines, it produced sufficient emotional blackmail to move me to extract myself from the "Malteser-encrusted" armchair and to sign on the dotted line to enter the Berlin marathon.

After the 100 metre dash to and from the post box, (into which I had pushed the cheque and committal papers), I began to regret this hasty act of folly. Shares from BUPA in the event of coronary failure, (or at least the investment in a custom-built oxygen tent or mobile resuscitation team) seemed worthwhile.

Training involved building up to runs of one and half to two hours with a 30 km run two weeks prior to the glorious day. Boxes of Maltesers were *verboten*. I became known as the "munching pasta-pusher" – a diet I was assured would fuel my "glycogen" stores to avoid "hitting the wall". I was more concerned about scraping my knees during the final crawl to the finishing line!! I admit now that I looked forward to never seeing the inside of an Italian restaurant or recipe book again.

The big day arrived and I joined the seething mass of 17,000 other runners on the start line in front of the Brandenburg Gate. The 26.2 miles/42 kilometres through the seven districts of Berlin seemed a daunting prospect. All the horror stories circulated in previous weeks by my workmate mentors, added adrenalin to an already nervous competitor.

I ate a good supply of bananas (good carbohydrates) and I drank plenty of water along the supporter-lined streets. The whole event turned out to be an experience I will treasure. I ran the whole course with my German clubmate – it's worthwhile joining the local running club (Laufgruppe). Once the phenomenon of running in kilometres as opposed to miles became more familiar, we completed the course in three hours 30 minutes.

I would recommend the run to any keen or aspiring athletes out there. The course is fast and flat. Even for the first time marathon runner, the support and the atmosphere from the crowds lining the route is enough to carry you round. I, for one, hope to be lining up on the start line again next year.

ARMY BADMINTON ASSOCIATION TOUR OF HONG KONG

By Pte J Ure WRAC

In 1988 plans were formulated for an Army Badminton Tour of Hong Kong the following year. On the 8 May 1989 the selected team met at Cavalry Barracks, Hounslow proving that everyone's efforts had been successful and the tour was on!

The Army Team comprising six male players, six female players, two officials, and the coach, flew out from Gatwick Airport on the 10 May, all very enthusiastic and excited at the thought of eight days in Hong Kong. After a very long and tiring flight of 14 hours, with one stop in Dubai, the team arrived safely at HMS Tamar, HQ British Forces Hong

Kong, where we were met by the Hong Kong Badminton Association officials.

Friday 12 May was the first of four matches of the tour against 'The Chairman's Hong Kong Select Team' at HMS Tamar. An easy victory went to the Army team (20-7) although some members of the team were suffering slightly from jet lag, tiredness and most of all the heat.

Saturday 13 May proved to be a match which I think the Army Team will remember for a long time, against 'The Hong Kong Junior National Team'. There was certainly a lot of nerve-twitching and excitement during play, especially when the final result depended upon the last game, a mixed doubles. Victory went to the Army Team with an overall match score of 8-7.

On Monday 15 May the Army Team travelled to the New Territories to play against 'The Brigade of Gurkhas at their training depot. This proved to be an intriguing match. I do not know if it was the Gurkha tactics to fill us with real Gurkha curry before the match, but it did not pay off, as another victory was claimed by the Army Team 24-2.

Wednesday 17 May was our last match of the tour, against British Forces Hong Kong at HMS Tamar. The result was 15-12 to the Army, although the opposition took all three sets of mixed doubles.

When not playing we took the opportunity to see the sights and "shop". The goods available were both Occidental and Oriental and the variety was vast.

Getting around Hong Kong seemed to be no problem, there are so many buses, taxis and trams, and also "The Mass Transit Railway". One thing which was definitely an eye-opener, was a trip to the top of the Peak on the Peak Tram, showing the whole panorama of Hong Kong glittering below. The Kaleidoscope of neon lights and the bustle of people on the streets made our tour of Hong Kong by night as exciting as Hong Kong by day! Certainly a tour for the Army Team never to be forgotten.



The Badminton team.

EXERCISE DOLPHIN WATCH 1989

**By Sgt S Janson WRAC
Cpl J Goodman WRAC**

Exercise DOLPHIN WATCH was an RCT Yacht Club sponsored Adventure Training Exercise based in Gibraltar, aboard the RCT Yacht "Waggoner". We left Normandy Barracks with four other crew members (all RCT) on 3 July and travelled to Luton, from where we were to fly on the following day, and enjoyed our last decent shower for a fortnight!

Arriving in Gibraltar we were shown our luxury accommodation, which turned out to be a small triangle at

the front of the 33 foot yacht. As there were no power points we did not need our hair dryers and irons.

After settling in and unpacking, we set sail for Tarifa (Southern Spain) and spent a couple of nights there enjoying some windsurfing and snorkling. We then sailed across the Straits of Gibraltar to Medique in Morocco where we spent the afternoon on the beach with the locals. Neither of us could speak the language but sign language sufficed. Our shower that night was from a hose pipe on the quay from a French Naval Ship, fortunately we remembered to pack the Timoteil!

We set sail the next afternoon for Puerto La Dequesa, and from there we had an over night sail which was quite an experience. We split into two crews, WRAC and Skipper V RCT, needless to say who were the best crew apart from



The yacht.

the sea-sickness!! Whilst we were on watch we saw schools of dolphins, a marvellous sight swimming along with the yacht and getting quite close. We then visited Fuengureola, Marbella and Estepona before sailing back to Gibraltar where we spent our last night. The last day was spent cleaning the yacht but before we flew back to England we had a tour of Lower St Michaels Caves in the famous Rock of Gibraltar which only military personnel are privileged to visit. We couldn't leave Gibraltar without seeing the Apes lovely creatures and quite friendly even while sitting on your head posing for photos!!

We flew out of Gibraltar back to Luton on 18 July, all sun tanned and healthy looking having enjoyed a very strenuous exercise.

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT US? or THE STORY BEHIND THE WRAC W/E at Depot RCT TA, Grantham 17/16 June 1989

**By Major S Carnson WRAC(V)
OC 284 MC Sqn RCT(V)**

Whenever the WRAC weekend is mentioned in my squadron, there are usually mutters, groans and moans from some of the lads who ask why they can't have a similar weekend all to themselves? So before I relate the highlights of the weekend I'd like to take a moment to explain some of the reasons for a weekend specifically for us, the WRAC.

Firstly, it is the chance for us, from both Specialist and Independent units, to get together as a Corps. We love being permanently employed by the RCT and we would

rather soldier alongside you, lads, than anyone else. But we do have our own Corps and we are proud of it in the same way that you are proud of the RCT. And so, once a year, we get together and talk about the things that are relevant to us. For example, now the discussion on the wider employment of women in the Army (the Crawford Report) is progressing, looking into where we may be allowed to serve.

Secondly, it gives us the opportunity to be visited by senior officers of our Corps. This year we welcomed Colonel Frances Hutley, Commander WRAC UKLF, and Lieutenant Colonel Rosemary Cornwall, Commander WRAC London/Eastern Districts. It is a useful time for THEM to meet their TA Officers and Service-women and to gather ideas and feelings from US on many differing topics.

Thirdly, and equally important (and then I'll stop banging the drum!), is that it gives us, as individuals, a chance to participate in whatever activity is going on – on an equal basis. When a group is mixed it is sometimes difficult to stop the men from taking on the arduous tasks, or from taking over. When it is an all female group we have to overcome whatever problem or task is set – and do it by ourselves. And it is not only the actual task that is important, but the satisfaction of being able to say at the end of the day 'I did that myself'. We all need space to be able to tackle and complete tasks in our own way and in our own time, and by extending our own skills we gain confidence in ourselves and can achieve ever greater aims and are better able to serve alongside our RCT colleagues.

Enough tub-thumping... on with the weekend story.

Saturday morning dawned with the promise of a sweltering hot day. The squads were paraded under the watchful eyes of WO2s Elaine Parkin and Cathy Howard. After a brief inspection they were dispatched to the four corners of Prince William of Gloucester Barracks. Captain Karen Chambers had accepted the challenge of our Senior Officer, Major Neo Notley, to organise the weekend and had spent much time devising a competition which



"A strange detail"

From L-R. Major Neo Notley, Lt Col Rosemary Cornwall, Major Sherrida Carson and Colonel Frances Hutley being instructed on the SA 80 by two RCT instructors.

involved the six squads visiting each stand. If prizes were to be awarded for the stands themselves then circuit training in the Gym under the eagle eyes of RCT Instructors WO2 Lardner and Corporal Horne-Smith would get the prize for the most exhausting. At various intervals throughout the day groups of pink faced and "glowing" girls could be seen emerging from the Gym trying to regain their composure and/or their breath.

The comments from the driver training 10 Tonne and the Land Rover and trailer stands ranged from a well satisfied "and they let me drive it on my own" to a joyful "I think I've cracked reversing with a trailer at least!". This is ALWAYS regarded as challenging and good fun amongst the WRAC and show great alacrity for leaping into whatever vehicle

happens to be around!

The first aid stand was quite a shock for those entering Rosie's Bar – as the Band Hut had been renamed. It looked a good imitation of a sleazy dockside joint. There were broken chairs, bottles and overturned tables and bodies lying all over the floor. The task here was to practice putting people back together again and to make order out of chaos. The casualties were convincing, both in make-up and behaviour. It was a good exercise.

The signals stand attracted a great deal of attention – a skill that most of us do not get enough practice in. Even in peacetime it is salutary to remember that we are all part of the Electronic War, and must practice at every opportunity.

The firing of the SA 80 on the 30 metre range was, I suspect, the highlight of the day for many of us. We fired it standing, sitting, kneeling and prone – and we would have fired in any other position had there been any suggested! It seems a most user-friendly weapon and is more comfortable to hold and better balanced than either the SMG or SLR. All concerned were well pleased with their performances on the Range. And late in the afternoon a strange detail could be seen donning combat jackets over white blouses and lovat green skirts and the odd red tabs. Yes, even the VERY senior WRAC Officers leapt at the chance to fire this new weapon! And although the skirts precluded two of the positions the groupings were excellent and morale was definitely high. Our thanks to Major Peter George who made these weapons available.

For an hour on Saturday evening Cpl Horne-Smith and



Learning the "HSUSS" of Tai Kwon Do.

his Tai Kwon Do Club gave a most enthralling display of this Korean martial art.

On Sunday morning there was an orienteering exercise around the airfield. Capt Chambers had devised a most tortuous scheme for losing people north, south, east and west. The tasks were to either follow bearings, find a grid reference or solve a set of cryptic clues. All involved the expenditure of a great deal of effort, but deemed to be "good fun" and worthwhile training too.

The weekend was wrapped up with an address by Col Tony Stormer, Commander RCT TA, and a talk on the current state and status of the WRAC by the two visiting Colonels. Views were exchanged at the end of this and our opinions and suggestions will go back with Col Hutley and Lt Col Cornwall to UKLF and London.

Congratulations to Squad Two who won the overall competition under the leadership of Capt Carole Wakefield – and were awarded Yorkie bars all around. Next year there might be a silver trophy awarded to the best team!

So, to sum up, it was a good weekend; we achieved a great deal; we worked hard and we worked together as a team. For all those WRAC/RCT(V) who couldn't make it this year make a note to come next year. It is YOUR weekend. Our thanks to all involved with the arrangements and to those who took part in the event and made it such a success.

HOLDING PLATOON

By Mrs J Weedall (née Jackman)

My short time spent at Chester Castle can only be described, had I been an associate of Mr Picasso, as my "green period". When Dorothy (Bunny) Austin and I arrived there on that lovely September morning in 1943, little did we know what experience we would acquire with a paint brush.

The CO was in a quandary as she really didn't know what to do with us when we were dumped into her car that day, and her tight little group stationed in the castle was suddenly called a "Holding Platoon". Luckily at the time there were only two of us, any more would have meant special instructions from HQ.

However after thinking hard and going through all the menial tasks that we could reasonably be expected to perform for a few days, it was suggested that maybe we could paint. "There is a small room at the top of the castle we wish to use for blanket storage. Do you think you could possibly redecorate it? It's in a filthy condition at the moment, the ceiling needs to be whitewashed, the walls distempered and floorboards stained." We had to occupy our time somehow, so we, who had never held a paint brush in our hands since art classes at school, now were to be launched into our new careers as painters and decorators, with green distemper and paint.

The small room took us less than a week, and we must have made a good job of it as it was then suggested that we would like to have a go at the little kitchen in the corner of the courtyard used by the Officers and NCOs.

Our next task was far more adventurous, we must have been pleasing someone as in the opposite corner of the cobbled courtyard was quite a large room divided into five or six bathrooms. It was green paint again, but instead of the tins of ready mixed paint we had become used to, we were now issued with a large tin of green powder. I read the instructions on the tin, but somehow I think we got a bit confused, as too late we realized that double the amount of water had been added, and stir it as we might it just wouldn't get any thicker. It was just a watery wash out and partitions, and it took us ages to cover, as we had to retrace our steps so many times, up and down steps climbing the ladder over and over until everywhere was covered. Finally we were given our most daunting and important job of all.

The married quarters were to be our next assignment, all thirteen of them. To whom the occupants were married I didn't discover, maybe their soldier husbands were overseas, but what they must have thought and said when two rather juvenile, inexperienced ATS painters turned up to paint the outside of their homes, I can only guess.

Of course being outside work and again new to us we were issued with green gloss paint. It went on thick, it went on thin, we had no knowledge of thinning this stuff down, so whilst some were dry next morning others may have taken days, and to this day I cannot remember anyone leaving their front door or windows open to assist us. In fact I think the occupants kept pretty clear of us except for one house where, we were warned, lived a "mad woman", and this dear lady we did see – often – in fact every time we approached her home she chased us away, not riding her broom but waving it furiously at us, shouting "go away"!! But finally she was reassured and made to see that we were not Jerry's secret weapon, "little green women from Berlin", and her home was duly turned green to match the rest.

And so our few days in Chester had stretched into a month. We had used up a considerable amount of various

cans of green paint, much of which I wonder may have been purchased for an entirely different purpose, perhaps they really meant to camouflage the castle to blend with the nearby racecourse, but whatever, we had enjoyed the experience of being painters of the ancient castle, and I think we didn't make too bad a job of it.

To those of you who know Chester Castle you must forgive me if my memory fails me, as I have so far never returned and if Dorothy of Liverpool happens to read this, I would dearly love to see you again.

"MEMORIES"

By Miss B J Andrews ATS

The rain lashed down onto the impervious Leicestershire clay soil. Inside one of the Nissen huts in the Army camp Lily Wilks shouted "the water is coming in t' bloody back door girls!" Everything was picked off the floor and flung onto the top bunks as the brown flood poured in. Just then Helen Hoole returning from annual leave opened the front door and gazed in amazement at the torrent she had let loose. Some girls clung to each other on the bunks in the cold of the hut. Others in knickers and shirts tried to sweep the water away. One sat making funny little sketches to show her mother what a weird life her daughter now led.

We were in D Coy, Leicester Group ATS, Old Dalby attached to the RAOC. It was a weird life for us, who had no desire to make a career of the army. We learnt to cope with the rules and the uniforms, and the drill, and to become Clerks RAOC.

We weren't always flooded, only sometimes, just frozen or baked according to season in those Nissen huts. We worked hard, sometimes to exhaustion and beyond. I am thinking of the six months before D Day when all leave was stopped, and the hours were long.

We played hard too, and sometimes we were very happy and sometimes we just wanted to go home.

Nobody from our hut became an officer, or was posted abroad, or did glamorous jobs or brave deeds. We just did the best we could, and, like so many others, when we were needed *we were there*.

SRI LANKA REVISITED

Lt Col (Retd) J L Lawson MBE

Day was breaking as the plane touched down at Katunaike Airport. Formalities over, I entered the concourse to see the welcoming faces of Majors Kumudini Weerasekera and Ramini KangaraArachchi of Sri Lanka Army Women's Corps. A lovely basket of flowers was presented by Chandima and Majitha, four year olds, the son of Kumudini and daughter of Ramini. There too were Ajith, Ramini's husband, and Cpl Mahinda SLASC, my driver from earlier times, and outside was Ariyavanse who was to be driver for the duration of my visit. Immediately I felt at home, having been invited to Sri Lanka for the 10th Anniversary Celebrations of the Sri Lanka Army Women's Corps with whom I spent a memorable three and half years.

First stop – the new, well appointed SLAWC Officers' Mess where I was to be accommodated and my every wish attended to. The intervening years slipped away as I met again, breakfasted and chatted with the SLAWC Officers in their lovely dining room with its impressive display of silver and trophies. A very full programme was ahead of me.

Celebrations began on 1 September 89 with a Regimental Parade. Early on a gloriously sunny morning,

tempered by a light breeze, we drove on to the Army Sports Ground, preceded by Sgt Jayawardena SLAWC the Military Police Motor Cycle escort, where three SLAWC companies were drawn up on parade. Many very familiar faces apparent to me, all new Senior NCOs, was most impressed by the smartness of turnout and the precision of a March Past which would have done credit to the Guards. A lump came to my throat as I felt a deep sense of pride in the Corps and the effort that had gone into achieving and



Inspecting the Parade with Major K C Weerasekera, Commanding Officer, Major R L Kangara Arachchi, Parade Commander, Lt P Kurukulasuriya, Platoon Commander.

maintaining such a very high standard and providing such a polished performance.

A cheerful, delicious and colourful All Ranks Lunch followed. It was attended by Lt Gen H Wanasingha VSV, The Commander of the Sri Lanka Army, and by past Commanding Officers of the Corps. All guests received, and the Ceremonial Lamp, decorated with Jasmine flowers, lit, we entered the dining room to see tables, with delightful floral decorations and groaning with food. We settled down to a fine repast of mixed fried rice and a variety of curries followed by marshmallow pudding and coffee. A fitting reward for all those who a few hours earlier had paraded so well.

One afternoon, a few days later, at a home for the disabled, members of the Corps gave tea to all patients, some of whom were severely handicapped. This tea was followed by a concert for all patients able to attend. There were some excellent and highly professional performances. The Corps boasts a Cultural Platoon highly trained in Sri Lankan dancing. The patients thoroughly enjoyed the concert as did I.

The Officers' Mess Ante Room and garden were transformed with unusual floral displays for a most enjoyable cocktail party at which I met again many old friends. It was a most colourful and relaxed occasion with the Army Band playing and a fine vocalist, who was at other times, a Military Policewoman.

A blisteringly hot afternoon was reserved for the Corps Sports Day. A family event which was great fun for both participants and spectators. It included a Fancy Dress Parade where a "Matchmaker" offered her services! In addition to the many prizes a large number of the SLAWC, including the Commanding Officer, were presented with Army Colours. A raffle was drawn in which the unit's only male officer, the QM, won the first prize of a refrigerator!

Celebrations ended with a Pirith Ceremony which is a Buddhist protection service. This began about 7.30 p.m. with the procession of monks who then sat inside the Pirith Mandapaya, an octagonal edifice which had been constructed in the dining hall. The congregation sat on the floor to listen to the prayers and chanting which continued till about 6 a.m. During this time we were supplied with the occasional refreshment of tea and I was able to have a long chat with many of the Senior Ranks. In the morning the monks all departed to return shortly after to be served with breakfast.

Between events and after completion of ceremonies I was able to visit most parts of the Island and all the detachments. At Diyatalawa, high in the hills, four cadets are currently under training at the Sri Lanka Military Academy, and I saw the Corps firing team in action. They were later to come third in an All Army Firing Competition. In Boosa, in the far south I was pleased to meet the platoon currently under-going a three year Nurse Training Course in Galle.

The Corps has now grown to a strength of almost 600 with 13 SLAWC officers, although there are about 18 other women officers in the Army specializing in medicine, dentistry, law or accounting. Earlier in the year Major Kumudini Weerasekera, one of the first Sri Lankan Officers to be trained at the WRAC College, was the first member of the SLAWC to be appointed Commanding Officer. As well as clerical and signals companies there is a nursing company, now greatly needed during these unhappy days in Sri Lanka. The Military Hospital has been expanded and



Visiting nurse trainees in their accommodation with Major R L Kangaraarachchi.

vastly improved with facilities for Army families, including a maternity ward. Weapon training is of a very high standard and the Corps has gained many trophies for proficiency with weapons and for sport.

Members of the Corps are not only permitted to but expected to continue serving after marriage and childbirth, although both officers and servicewomen have to wait three years before marrying. Three months maternity leave is given and because of the current political situation consideration is being given to provision of Army crèches and schools.

It is sad to see the country in such turmoil. So many killings, the sight of tyre garlanded, charred bodies by the roadside is not unusual. One 18-year-old member of the Corps and her entire family were recently annihilated in a revenge killing. Other Corps members and their families have been affected in some way or another. There are many refugee camps for both Sinhalese and Tamils and for Service families. Tourism has diminished and the sunny beaches with swaying palms fringing the warm seas are almost deserted. The centre of the Island with its vast archaeological sites and the nature reserves teeming with wild life are scarcely disturbed. It seemed strange to see the security precautions we have taken for granted for years, now in operation in what was such an idyllic spot. It is hoped the political difficulties will soon be solved.

In spite of all this, the overwhelming hospitality of the Sri Lankan people continues and I received so much kindness from so many, both military and civilian. A vehicle and driver were put at my disposal and for longer trips I had the privilege of being carried by Air Force planes and helicopters. It was a marvellous visit and as well as renewing old friendship and acquaintances I felt very honoured to have been invited back and treated so royally by the Sri Lanka Army Women's Corps.

WRAC Association Grand Reunion 1991

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SCOTLAND

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 13 APRIL 1991

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 09.30 a.m. | Circular tour to Loch Lomond departs. |
| 09.45 a.m. | Bus for visit to The Burrell Collection departs.
(Scotland's No 1 tourist attraction with over 8,000 exhibits). |
| 11.00 a.m. | City Chambers open for sale of souvenirs, raffle tickets and for meeting friends. |
| 11.30 a.m. | Branch Secretaries Meeting in Council Chamber in City Chambers. |
| 12.30 p.m.–2.00 p.m. | Council and Secretaries Luncheon in Satinwood Room of City Chambers. |
| 2.30 p.m. | Annual General Meeting of WRAC Association in Banqueting Hall of City Chambers. |
| 3.45 p.m. (approx) | Grand Raffle Draw and Tea. |
| 4.30 p.m. (approx) | Disperse. |
| 6.00 p.m. | Bars open in Albany Hotel – St Andrews Suite. |
| 7.00 p.m. | Grand Reunion Dinner and Band Concert. |

SUNDAY 14 APRIL 1991

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 10.00 a.m. | City Chambers open to accept luggage. |
| 10.30 p.m. | Buses from City Chambers to Glasgow Cathedral. |
| 11.00 a.m. | Morning Service in Glasgow Cathedral. (WRAC Band will play as congregation assembles) |
| 12.00 noon | Buses to City Centre. |
| 12.45 p.m. | March Past in City Centre. |
| 1.15 p.m. | Civic Reception in City Chambers. Hosted by The Lord Provost. |
| 2.00 p.m. | Disperse. |

Entry to the AGM will be by display of Association membership card.

Members are responsible for their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

British Rail offer weekend breaks combined with reduced rail fares. Details are in Gold Star Holiday Brochure available from Travel Agents or phone (0904) 628992.
Glasgow Tourist Centre is at 35 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2ER.

WRAC Association Grand Reunion 1991

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SCOTLAND

APPLICATION FORM

(Application can only be made by the individual named. You cannot apply for someone else)

Numbers for the Dinner are limited to 800. Applications will be dealt with in order of receipt.
Priority to Association members.

Surname.....Miss/Mrs/Title/Rank.....

First names

Address

.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Association Branch

Army No Date of Enrolment.....
(If known) (If known)

I wish to apply for tickets for the following events:

GRAND REUNION DINNER @ £15.00

VISIT TO BURRELL COLLECTION @ £3.00

VISIT TO LOCH LOMOND AND TOUR @ £3.00

AND ENCLOSE CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER £

I intend to take part in March Past YES/NO

NOTES

1. ALL APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED.
2. TICKETS AND INFORMATION SHEET WILL BE SENT OUT IN EARLY 1991.

PHOTOCOPIES OF THIS FORM ARE ACCEPTABLE

Send to:
CORPS HEADQUARTERS WRAC
QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK
GUILDFORD
SURREY GU2 6QH

Telephone: 0252 24431
Ext Guildford 8583

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date received

Member YES/NO

Life/Annual

Length of membership

Subs paid for 1990 YES/NO

Branch confirmed.....

Branch Official.....

TICKETS SENT

Dinner.....

Burrell

Loch Lomond.....

Secs Lunch

INITIALS

Receipt No.....

Date ack sent.....

INITIALS

"YES I REMEMBER IT WELL"

By Barbara Crabbe (née Rowbottom)

(The music from Giel was chosen as part of the band programme at our commissioning)

The article entitled "Where are you now", written by Kathy Howard, spurred me on to write this as the twentieth anniversary of my joining Cadet Course No 51 has just occurred.

I can remember as if it was only last month, boarding a train at Waterloo, with four other likely looking candidates for Camberley. We all wore hats and gloves too! I almost got off after five minutes, as someone was telling us what we were in for. She was obviously well informed and seemed so self assured and confident; I was not so sure that a lass from Lancashire could cope with this. However from a corner an exotic looking potential officer made some witty comment in a good Yorkshire accent. I relaxed and made it eight months later to the end of the course. Ruth Henderson (the one whose confidence terrified me) was the last survivor of the course, but she married last year and has produced a potential recruit for the WRAC. This in itself is an interesting statistic for I know that at least three members of Course 51 have produced three daughters. Was there something in the water at Camberley?

So what happened to us all? How are all those talents and abilities, which the Army identified as making us officer material, being used today?

At least two of us have been reduced to the ranks of camp followers and have happily followed our itinerant army husbands around the world. Coping with brilliant logistical efficiency with numerous moves, or various roles required of regimental wives which certain inner knowledge we had made easier, ie knowing who in the regiment to chat to, to get things done! Still reading the Royal United Services magazine and any other publication to keep us abreast of thinking within the army whilst changing nappies. A working knowledge of pay and allowance regs came in useful at times too!

Do you remember those times as cadets when we used to come back from swimming on the back of a four tonner and be expected to be down in the mess for lunch looking pristine in six minutes? Marvellous training for a future mother of three, a few years later managing to get all three fed, bathed and in bed before having to attend some regimental function. How the instructors would have been horrified if they could have witnessed me breast feeding a baby in a small back room in a mess, prior to emerging attempting to look cool, calm and collected and hopefully not lopsided to watch a "Beating Retreat".

There have been times when we have been offshore sailing "en famille" when the memories those leadership exercises "six of you stuck on a mountain, one with a broken leg, two with yellow fever . . ." came flooding back. Fortunately the girls seemed to have inherited the sense of adventure from both of us, unfortunately they seemed to have inherited a double dose of "leadership ability" which loosely translated means they are bossy.

Do you remember those "official" cocktail parties? Do they have them still? It was supposed to help you practise your social skills. They would have been proud of me (I hope) at a recent NATO reception with a Turkish General on one side a Belgian Commandant on the other and the ADC to the American Ambassador completing the group. My husband was somewhere at the other end of the room.

Pay duties was a subject I hated, I have to confess that I never mastered AB 397, so I have used another tool they

taught us "delegation" or it could be called abdication?

Teaching, well with three daughters you soon find this skill utilised though they really don't believe that "Mum" knows anything. I have thoroughly enjoyed helping in classrooms throughout the postings and have learnt a lot, but perhaps the most alarming was when I was left on my own on only my second day in a school for 20 minutes with a class of eight-year-olds most of whom were American.

Public speaking, "Mrs Crabbe would you mind reading the lesson?" This was on Christmas Day in a packed church, having extracted the children from their presents and deep in prayer about the state of the turkey, and it was the difficult lesson. Whew!

Catering for a regiment? My husband is convinced I expect one to arrive every time we have a party. But I think my provisioning can cope with any eventuality. Map reading, ah the main cause of our marital argument . . . but isn't it everyone's? I have always enjoyed flower arranging, but this is not in the new curriculum, but organising 10 other ladies to help produce the arrangements for a function without there being a major diplomatic incident? Thank you WRAC College.



Officer Cadet Course 51.

Man management, we have been married for 18 years so I think that was successfully assimilated. Though organising five international Chaplains in my present job can be a challenge.

Sport, I still manage a game of tennis though much slower than I used to be and I don't mention that I used to play for the army (they were desperate at the time). During training I seemed to do a lot of cleaning loos and scrubbing floors now that has come in handy when handing over quarters, 11 to date.

What possible use could all that parade ground training have in my life today? Who else but Tawny Owl to get the Brownies to march properly at Parade services? The parade ground voice so delicately nurtured behind the MT sheds at Guildford is marvellous for rounding up errant children from the other end of the garden.

There were those delightful professors who used to come and try to teach us logic and current affairs. According to my husband they failed miserably on the former and I now rely on Radio Four for the latter.

In more recent times I found myself suffering from what Canadians call "cabin fever". Having spent the years rearing the daughters, I then found a yearning to do my own thing. My own thing of course was originally the WRAC, and I felt that I still had all those skills and abilities required of an efficient officer, possibly even "new and improved" with maturity. I even proposed that there was a role for the old and bold. A dormant commission, which

could be revived when it was feasible for both the army and the officer could make good economic sense I thought; two for almost the price of one. However it's not to be, I was informed by someone when I was no doubt berling them at a Queen's Birthday Celebration that I was too old, past it and out of touch!! Where do they think I have been for the last 14 years!!

My long suffering husband having got fed up with my bemoaning my fate suggested that I apply for a job advertised in unit orders. Secretary to the Padre!! Lo and behold I got it and in fact share the job with an ex-WRAF officer, which is a delightful arrangement as we work week on week off. Of course the MOD wins again, those skills taught to us both are utilised every day and they pay us less than the lady who cleans the office!!

As we are currently stationed at HQ AFCENT I have been able to study first hand how other nations' women's services fare. I was cajoled into attending the "Allied Service Women's Dinner" earlier this year, by the American woman major who is in the same branch as my husband. It was a pleasure to meet Brigadier Shirley Nield again, but I found I had been "volunteered" to propose one of the toasts and then described as a VETERAN in the programme!! Needless to say I made strenuous efforts not to look like a veteran!

Will I encourage any of my daughters to join? The oldest hopes to become a scientist so she could be interested in one of the technical corps, and could be lured away from industry if the army were to offer lots of foreign travel which she has come to love and lots of adventurous training. The middle one has many qualities required but she will not be interested in a career which offers no future after children. The younger... well she can't stay clean so she would never have come up to the scrutiny of CSMs Doig or Powell-Price and she wants to be an actress.

So how are the rest of Course 51 utilising their abilities? Bobbie Barratt, Shelagh Green, Ruth Henderson, Pippa Jarman, Di Kinchin, Cathy Lewis, Mary Anne Linklater, Mary Palmer, Mary Rosser, Rosemary Scoffham, Sue Stewart, Maggie Spencer and Rosemary Warne.

WRAC STAFF BAND REUNION TO CELEBRATE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FORMATION (1 July 1949-21 July 1989)

With the Royal Marquee in place and banners flying, everything looking festive, the hottest day of July dawned and we were ready for the celebration of the Band's 40th Birthday. With a full complement of members of the WRAC Staff Band, including three girls from Kneller Hall and two from Pirbright, all resplendent in No 1 Dress, we eagerly awaited the arrival of our guests.

Once the first guest had arrived, it seemed continuous, some with husbands, children and friends, all looking for a familiar face; the exclamations rang out "You don't look any older", "Are they really your children", "Has it been that long". It all seemed never ending, people happy to meet old friends and make new ones. In the Bandroom, guests and members of the band could be seen looking at the many photographs which festooned the corridor, all depicting different eras. Outside in the Marquee mementos of the day could be bought, these included sweatshirts, T shirts, small banners and records or tapes of the band at its best.

We called upon a photographer to capture the occasion though it was a mammoth task getting everyone in, 250

people, not including children, husbands and friends.

During the morning, a band of ex-members with instruments and marches, led by our newest member, Musician Tara Hardman, proceeded to strike up with "Colonel Bogey" and march round camp to the amazement of the WRAC Centre. Nothing seemed to get in their way! Amidst this chaos, WO2 Phil Bourne and his own "merry band" were putting the final touches to what was to be a superb buffet lunch.

To help us celebrate we also had with us some very special guests. Major Jean McDowell (1st female Director of Music) and her husband, Mr Ted Stevens (Band Sgt), Captain Zara Bowness-Smith (ex Director of Music) with husband and family. Lt Col Mick Lane (Director of Music) and his wife Pat, Major Lynette Hopkin (ex Director of Music) and Mr Malcolm Wallace son of Naomi Wallace whose name is given to the award presented to the best musician by Kneller Hall. One of the wishes voiced from



Cutting the cake.

past reunions was to have a full band session involving all past and present members. This indeed happened; each piece was played and conducted by an ex-Director of Music. Captain E. P. Forster (present Director of Music) also participated. Major McDowell concluded the performance by conducting her arrangements of the Women's Royal Army Corps Regimental March "Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill".

No celebration would be complete without a birthday cake. The honour of cutting was given to both Mrs Jacquie Warsop (née Fox) one of the first members and Musician Tara Hardman.

This great day will live on in all of our memories for many years to come but sadly it was the last time that many of us were to see "Col Mick" who died shortly afterwards. He will always be remembered as being part of a special family.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that Association subscriptions run from 1 January to 31 December and should be paid to your Branch Secretary by 31 December.

The February issue of *Lioness* is not sent to members whose subscriptions have not been paid.

REUNIONS

NORTHERN AREA REUNION 1990

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The 1990 Northern Area Reunion will be held in Harrogate on Saturday 15 September from 2–5.30 p.m.

Full details will be published in the next issue of "Lioness" but meanwhile, please make a note of the date.

Advance information may be obtained (after Easter) by contacting:

Miss M Bradley
60 West End Avenue
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
HG2 9BY
(Tel: 0423 – 507023).

SOUTH WEST AREA REUNION 1990

The South West Area Reunion will be held at Portsmouth on Sunday 13 May 1990.

Assemble at the D Day Museum, Southsea Front at 1.30 p.m. for a tour of the Museum. Reunion at 4.30 p.m. at The Naval Home Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth.

A fund raising Raffle will be held.

Cost of tea £6.35 and entrance fee to the Museum £1.55 or £2.00.

Anyone interested, please contact the Secretary Portsmouth WRAC Association:

Miss I Bray
153 Clive Road
Fratton
PORTSMOUTH
PO1 5JD

Tel: 0705-812838

Before the 1 March 1990 please.

235 SIGNAL SQUADRON (MALTA) REUNION

A Reunion is to be held on Saturday 10 March 1990 at the Posthouse Hotel near Leicester. If any members of 235 Signal Squadron (Malta) would like to attend, please contact:

Mrs Sue Edmonson (Ex Pte Richards)
17 Calver Crescent
Sapcote
LEICESTER

Tel: 0455-272757

The last Reunion of October 1988 was a huge success, attended by about 40 people, but we would welcome more.

So if there are any ex-Signals, Pay Corps or clerks out there who served at some time with 235 Signal Squadron, please come. (Husbands are welcome.)

WESTERN AREA REUNION

The Crewe Branch are to host the Western Area Reunion at the Crosville Social Club, Chester Street, Crewe on Saturday 29 September 1990.

ALFSEA REUNION

Mr D J Lafferty of 2 Stirling Way, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 5RP. Tel: 0403 60085, would like to hear from any ATS who served in HQ Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, as he wishes to arrange a reunion.

ATS "L" COMPANY

Each year since 1986 "L" Coy have held a Reunion. We would like 1990 to be the best one yet. We would like to hear from anyone who served in "L" Coy at Hobart House or Holland Villas, Shepherds Bush. Contact: Miss K Sullivan, 46 King's Avenue, Greenford, Middx UB6 9DB.

NOTICES

Dover District Council are commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Dunkirk Evacuation 19–28 May 1990. Full details if interested from:

Tourism & Marketing Unit
Dover District Council
Honeywood Road
Whitfield
DOVER
CT16 3PT

ATS DINNER CLUB

A Luncheon will be held on Saturday 13 October 1990, at Wellington Barracks, London. Further information obtainable from Membership Secretary, Mrs Betty Jagger, 40 Uplands Park Road, Enfield, Middx EN2 7PT. Membership now over 1,000 and new members always welcome.

ATS REUNION WINCHESTER 1990

King Alfred College

The reunion for ATS who were employed at the King Alfred college (1942–46) will be on Fri/Sat/Sun 6, 7, 8 July 1990.

Bed and Breakfast may be booked in advance, and the programme and application form is sent in April. Further details from either:

Miss C I Ellis
Whitehaven
Boyatt Lane
Otterbourne
WINCHESTER
SO21 2HP (for accommodation etc)

or from the Principal's Secretary, King Alfred College, for details of 7, 8 July events.

ATS GRAND REUNION CANADA 1989

By Mrs D Hailing-Keep ATS

On my recent visit to Canada, it was my pleasure and privilege to be invited to attend the Grand Reunion of the ATS in London Ontario.

This took the form of a weekend of events starting on 15 September with booking in and getting to know one another, a Pub Night, entertainment, and general get together.

On 16 September, there was a bus tour of London in a double decker bus, English tea in the hospitality room, Cocktail Hour, Dinner and Dance.

September 17th started with a Buffet Breakfast, followed by a discussion on the formation of the WRAC Association in Canada, and an interdenominational Service conducted by the Rev Manse. There was a Service at the Cenotaph and laying of wreaths with the Royal Canadian Legion.

Over 115 ex-members of the ATS attended the weekend celebrations to renew old friendships and to make new ones. Most of these ladies had joined the ATS in England during the War, married Canadian soldiers and travelled to Canada to join their husbands at the cessation of hostilities. They all spoke warmly of their service days, and of their love of England, it seems that distance and time has not dulled the happy and sometimes poignant memories of "home".

The weekend was ably organised by the President Mrs Enid Latham, Vice President Mrs Joan Calvert, Honorary Secretary Mrs Joyce Lang, Honorary Treasurer Mrs Wyn



From L-R. Barbara Smith, Diana Hailing-Keep, Betty Anderson.

Raven, and Publicity Officer Mrs Betty Anderson, who had spent over a year setting the wheels in motion and making sure that the event was a social and financial success. The Committee are now hoping that all the ex ATS members in the Province of Ontario will now form a WRAC Branch of the Association, and hold further meetings and get together.

NORTHERN AREA REUNION – 1989

A very happy Reunion took place in Harrogate on Saturday 9 September 1989. Unfortunately attendance was rather lower than usual for various reasons, including the date being earlier than planned and thereby clashing with holidays and other commitments, but nevertheless most of the Northern Area Branches were represented.

The Chairman of Northern Area, Lt Col Roulstone, welcomed everyone and introduced the Director WRAC who had travelled north for the occasion. Brigadier Nield said she had been honoured to be in office during the 50th birthday celebration year and gave a fascinating account of her official travels which virtually amounted to a World Tour – commencing with the NATO Women's Conference in Ottawa and on to various areas of the USA, the Far East, Hong Kong and Brunei, Australia, Gibraltar and the

Falklands etc with sundry strange and interesting experiences en route.

The Chairman thanked the Director for her vividly described travelogue which had made everyone feel as though they had been there. We then came back to Harrogate with a bump to enjoy a Yorkshire tea and much chatter following which the lucky prize winners in the raffle were identified.

ATS DINNER CLUB REPORT 1989

The ATS Dinner Club held its Annual Luncheon on Saturday 14 October 1989, when 404 members assembled at the Bloomsbury Crest Hotel, which after its refurbishment looked splendid. Following the Toast, the Chairman Mrs Audrey Juby, gave a warm welcome to the principal guest Brigadier S P Nield CBE ADC BA, the Director WRAC. We all, listened with interest when we heard of today's Corps. We know that they carry on the traditions and standards set by the QMAAC and ATS, and that the future of the Corps is in good hands. Our next guest was Capt (Retd) Kate McGregor, Curator of the WRAC Museum at Guildford. It was her first visit to our "Club" and she gave a short talk about the history of the Museum. Mrs Juby was pleased to hand over to Capt McGregor, for safe keeping in the Museum, a plate of the Coat of Arms of the City of Antwerp, and a booklet showing pictures of the City. Doreen Peters made us green with envy when she spoke on behalf of six former ATS, who had been invited to take part in the 45th Anniversary of the Liberation of Antwerp. A member of the Committee Jean Ogden gave details of next year's Luncheon (1990) which will be held at Wellington Barracks. A special thank-you must go to the WRAC Association London Branch for so splendidly organising the raffle. The Chairman paid tribute to the Dinner Club Committee, "who have worked hard in arranging this Luncheon and all the other duties during the year". A teletext message of loyal greetings was sent to HM The Queen and the following reply was received:

"Please convey to all members of the ATS Dinner Club assembled for their Annual Luncheon my sincere thanks for their most kind and loyal message of greetings. I greatly appreciate this message and send to you all my warm good wishes for a most enjoyable and successful occasion.
Elizabeth R."

WRAC MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT APPEAL BENEFACTORS

List No 7

This list is in addition to lists 1-6 published in previous editions of Lioness.

Names here are those who have subscribed since the previous lists or whose details require amendment.

Association Branches

Cheltenham, Rochdale, Somerset, York

Units

WRAC Centre (collections at Passing Out Parades)
4 Sqn 16 Sig Regt
29 Coy WRAC

Individuals

Maj M G Campbell MBE
Col A A Kelly
Capt N A Murdoch
Miss I G Ray

Col N R Robertson MBE
Miss K A M Sullivan
Mr J Urwin
Mr J D Walker

AN OBITUARY TO AN ATS GIRL 1941 to 1945

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Whilst on Active Service

Her name was W/ Pte Doris Fellowes, she came from Birmingham and had been in our Battery, 476 (HAA) Bty 137 Regt RA since the formation in 1941.

She was like us all a Volunteer, quite unremarkable, in her late teens, and good looking with grey eyes an open smile, tall and slim with an unusual inflection in her voice, which made her Birmingham accent quite attractive.

She was one of the telephonists in "476" of a very cheerful disposition, smart and well disciplined.

We were initially on gun-sites in the North of England, finally we came South to London. We were kept quite busy during those years. Make no mistake though we worked hard we also enjoyed ourselves thoroughly. In early January 1945 the Regiment went to Belgium (a very hairy crossing from Dover to Ostend with quite a few mines sighted) though we were never used operationally again. As a well knit group we were used as personnel on Vehicle Parks maintaining vehicles as they came back from the Front. As the Armies advanced so did we.

Then came the end of the War to end all Wars and we were there to accept vehicles being handed back for good.

Doris was in a jeep with a Paratrooper showing him where to park his vehicle. It was a beautiful sunny day two happy young people laughing, with their futures ahead of them. They didn't see the hawser stretched across the road.

I went to the funeral in Ghent. Doris was buried there, it was one of the saddest and most desolate days I have ever known.

I don't know where the Paratrooper was buried. I'm sure though that they've both made it home.

ANTWERP 1989

By Doreen J Peters (Subaltern ATS)

During the Spring of this year there were six ex-ATS members who were in a state of anticipation. In response to an invitation from the Royal British Legion of Antwerp, they had put their names forward for inclusion with a party of veterans of the Liberation and Defence of Antwerp in 1944 who would take part in the 45th Annual Celebration of the liberation of the City from the German occupation.

During this time we all contacted each other and made a number of plans and arrangements in the event that we each received the official invitation from the City fathers. Many sighs of relief were heard when we all received our official invitations from the Burgomaster. Acceptances were quickly despatched and the dates of September 7th to 11th were marked in our calendars as red letter days.

Travel arrangements were made and hotel accommodation was offered at the expense of our hosts. Three buses set out from Bournemouth on September 7th with some of the veterans already aboard and the main body of the party joined in London. The buses then proceeded to Ramsgate, crossed to Dunkirk and journeyed on to Antwerp, arriving very late in the evening.

The British contingent numbered about 100 of which we were, of course, the only women and later was joined by about 50 Canadians. One of the very nice features about the invitation was that it included spouses, so our party, when assembled consisted of the following:

Mabel Bolton (née Dee)	525 Bty
Lucy Bowyer and Charlie	487 Bty
Iris Clover	564Bty
Doreen Peters and Alec	531 Bty
Roddy Roper (née Roddick) and Dick	487 Bty
Eunice Watson (née Lewis) and Ron	531 Bty

Alec and I arrived by car (and caravan, since this was part of our holiday) and Mabel Bolton arrived by air.

Her arrival was that of a VIP! In one of her replies to the British Legion, she had mentioned that she remembered a young boy – Joseph – who, during her wartime stay, collected laundry which his mother did in exchange for the soap that was included with the soiled clothes. On arrival at Brussels airport, not only was she met by a Legion member, but also by Joseph, with his wife and daughters and members of the Press! What a welcome!

All this was reported in the papers and subsequently Mabel received a call from a girl who had served in Belgium and who now lives there and who wanted to contact old friends.

As the rest of the party arrived we were pleased to greet each other face to face, and also to welcome a seventh member – Molly Ritson (née Oakey) 137 Regiment.

After our first night in our very comfortable hotel, we rose on Friday morning, and refreshed by sleep and breakfast, we were off to a briefing session in the town Theatre. Here we were delighted to receive a special welcome for the "ladies of the ATS" and a round of applause later when we stood up for a rehearsal of our places in the parade.

With so much wonderful hospitality being extended to us, we had at least, expected to find our own lunches each day but no, these had not been forgotten either. Excellent beer and sandwiches at the Pantomime Restaurant were provided and then back to our hotel for an hour to ourselves. There were a few opportunities for relaxation, but usually, this meant missing out on an optional item in the programme.

The bus arrived at 17.30 to take us to the Arcade Hotel, where the main party was staying and where they joined us for the evening which we were to spend on one of the fine pleasure boats – Flandria 20 – which ply on the River Schelde.

Here let me tell you something of the security arrangements. This was an aspect which none of us had considered but we soon discovered that the City and the Legion were taking no chances after the recent terrorist incidents on the Continent. The buses were escorted by six police motor cyclists on our journeys through the City. They went ahead of the buses, lights flashing and sirens wailing, and blocked off the side roads and shepherded the traffic to a standstill as we approached. Thus we were enabled to streak through the town, over lights at red when we approached and the populace must have wondered who these grey and white haired old strangers could be to command such attention.

Each person had a named ticket for each function on the programme and these were checked against lists of those invited to be present both as a security precaution (and to prevent gate-crashers!).

Dinner on the Flandria 20 was the first of the excellent meals laid on for us by our hosts. There was always a large selection of drinks and delicious snacks available at the receptions.

Later we went to the Town Square, which was close at hand, where, against the magnificent back-cloth of the



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L-R. Sgt Lucy Bowyer, SSgt Iris Clover, Sgt Dee now Mabel Bolton, Sgt Roddick now Roddy Roper, Cpl Eunice Lewis now Watson, J Cmdr Molly Oakey now Ritson, Sub Doreen Peters.

ancient Flemish houses and Antwerp's lovely floodlit Cathedral, we were entertained by a British musical pageant. This depicted the British presence in Belgium during two World Wars. We played our part by marching on to the Square for the short service which was included. Have you ever marched on large cobblestones – with sizeable gaps between them – in high heels? I managed it on tip-toe – a very odd feeling indeed!

Two of us then went to a reception for retired officers, held in the Town Hall – a magnificent old building – and thus ended our first day.

Saturday morning started with an optional visit to the Military Cemetery. Some took the opportunity to take a short trip to the shops and were intrigued to compare Marks and Spencer's prices in Belgian francs with their sterling value. We lunched again at the Pantomine Restaurant then took a short walk to the assembly point for the big parade through the City. All wearing flat shoes today, soberly dressed, handbags deposited with husbands (who were viewing from the stand behind the saluting base taking pictures).

"Fall in in sixes" came the order from Harry Harding (an ex-patriot married to a Belgian) about 6' 4" and formerly a Drill Sergeant in Guards Armoured Division. It was over an hour before we moved and then it was only to re-shuffle into fours. Along comes Harry, 10 minutes later, and in the World War 2 NCO fashion says, "Now you all know me and you can all trust me. If I say sixes, sixes it is and you stay in sixes"! So we reshuffle and then wait. We're all very mature and the feet and legs don't do as well these days. But after seven bands had gone by, with considerable intervals between each, we moved off. It must have been nearly a mile march past General Roberts, who had commanded the 11th Armoured Division which liberated the City. Every step of the way we were applauded and in places the crowd was five or six deep on both sides of the road. It was a great thing to do and a wonderful occasion to be part of.

When dismissed, we were all pretty tired and in need of a drink. Across the road were about six cafes and the men all hastily provided themselves with beers. Two of our party had returned to the stand to tell our husbands where we were. The rest of us stood unable to do anything to relieve our thirst. No money – handbags deposited with the fellows. After about 10 minutes, a girl crossed the road to us and said "I've heard that you've no money. Come on, I'll buy you one! I'm Captain Doreen Mapley WRAC stationed here". What a marvellous friend!

A hundred yards to the Town Hall for the official speech of welcome by the Burgomaster and, once again, a special

mention for us. A delicious cold meal followed during which we handed over our tickets for the reception and had them returned 10 minutes later together with a magnificent bronze medal, with the coat of arms of the City on one side and, on the reverse, in both English and Flemish:

"45th Commemoration of the Liberation
of Antwerp

As a token of recognition to
(Name)

September 1989"

We were all very touched and very humbled at this wonderful gesture

Our evening continued with a Military Tattoo on the Town Square. Seven fine bands entertained us with the British Band – that of the 1st and 3rd Royal Tank Regiment having pride of place.

Here may I say how proud we were to be involved in a programme of events where we, the British, took first place. It was "dear British Veteran" and "dear British Liberators" – the first to be addressed, the Union Flag flown in so many places and our National Anthem the first to be played.

It was a short walk from the Tattoo to a Flandria boat, which we boarded for a magnificent firework display, set off from a barge moored on the river opposite. The lovely classical music which accompanied it and the fabulous finale filled eyes and ears and brought to an end a full and memorable day.

Early start again on Sunday for the Tank Ceremony, so called because it takes place annually at the site of a Cromwell tank which forms a memorial. We had front seats at this moving ceremony; a short service followed by wreath laying by many organisations, British and Belgian, and finally, a march past in which we took part.

A Magnificent lunch (I'm running out of adjectives) followed in the ancient and impressive Stock Exchange building. Very leisurely and an opportunity for us to sit together and exchange reminiscences. We introduced ourselves to General Roberts, a charming gentleman, for whom this weekend must have been something of an ordeal physically and emotionally.

The inauguration ceremony of the Liberation Monument, in the afternoon, was followed in the evening by the final dinner aboard the Flandria 16 as it cruised up and down the Schelde. Speeches of thanks were followed by presentations, including that, by us, of two ATS plaques – one to the Burgomaster and one to the Royal British Legion, Antwerp. A final gift to each of us of a framed copy of an ancient Plantin print of the City during the time of the Holy Roman Empire (measuring 20" x 24") sent us back to our hotel quite stunned by the kindness and generosity of the people of Antwerp and the Royal British Legion.

Monday morning and we made our farewells. I know I speak for the other six as well as myself when I say that this weekend was an unforgettable one, full of sights and sounds and memories. Some of the most vivid were not items in the programme – Lucy carrying the standard for us so expertly, Mabel's meeting with Joseph, the lady who, on the last night, kissed all the police motor cycle escort, the Resistance lady who talked to us at luncheon in the Bourse and the young man who came up to my husband after the firework display and said to us in broken English "I would like to thank you for what you did for us. Without you we would not have been saved".

We set out to represent our service to the very best of our ability, we marched well behind our ATS Standard and were proud to accept the welcome and compliments from the Belgians and our fellow British veterans.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1990

The AGM of the WRAC Association will be held at the Victory Services Club, 63/79 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday 21 April 1990.

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AGENDA

1. Chairman's opening remarks.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Confirmation of Minutes of AGM held on 15 April 1989.
4. Business arising from the Minutes.
5. Report of Council.
6. Financial Report.
7. Report of Editor of *Lioness*.
8. Reports of Committees:
 - (a) ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds.
 - (b) WRAC Museum.
9. Resolutions:
 - (a) Amendments to Rules:

To accept the Report of Council for revisions to the Rules of Association.
 - (b) Council Resolutions – Certificate of Appreciation
 - (c) Branch Resolutions.
 - (d) Election of Council Vice-Presidents.
10. Reunion 1991 in Scotland.
11. Any other business.
12. Date and place of next meeting.
(Saturday 13 April 1991 in Glasgow)

Note: Item 9(a). The proposed revision of the Rules of the Association as agreed by Council on 10 January 1990, has been circulated to Branch Secretaries so that Branches may consider the changes before a vote is taken. Any member who may not be able to attend a branch meeting, but who would like to see the proposed rules may apply to the General Secretary for a copy.

BRANCH NEWS

ANDOVER We continue to meet every month and although we do not do anything spectacular we all enjoy the pleasure of each others company and the feeling for our branch grows stronger every time

Our Chairman and Secretary attended the South West Area Reunion in October and we do look forward to the various events; Portsmouth hosting the Area Reunion on 13 May 1990, and the Isle of Wight for a weekend in 1991, then of course the Glasgow Reunion also in 1991.

We were sorry to hear that Colonel Hutley was leaving us, but on the other hand we were so pleased to know that she has obtained such a fabulous posting. We wish her every success and good luck.

One of our members attended the Field of Remembrance Ceremony at Westminster Abbey and laid crosses on the ATS/WRAC plot. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother was seen and admired by all and she spoke to as many people as she possibly could.

Six of us also attended the Remembrance Parade in Andover and laid a wreath on behalf of our Association. Incidentally, we were the only female ex-service association represented at the service, which was very good and helped on the day by brilliant sunshine.

The Salisbury Branch (our neighbours) have very kindly suggested we join with them on a day out to Guildford to see the Museum and the Passing Out Parade, as we are not a very big branch it will help us to share the cost of transport.

BATH Membership of the Bath Branch now stands at 66 and at our twice monthly meetings between 16 and 20 attend but many live too far from Bath to come regularly. Between 35 and 40 members attend the Christmas Luncheon held at a local hotel.

The social activities during the past year have been very successful the highlight being the Area Reunion hosted by the Weymouth/Portland Branch. The weather during 1989 was very much in our favour and a visit to Upton-on-Severn where we boarded a steamer for a trip on the river to Tewkesbury was delightful, as was a visit to the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester Dockland.

Fund raising took on a new look with a Fish and Chip Lunch held in the Luncheon Club of a large Anchor Housing Complex. The event gave much pleasure to the elderly residents who supported us. The gardens of two members were put to good use for an "Afternoon Tea" and "Coffee Morning", on both occasions a "Bring and Buy" stall was held. Profits from all these events help towards the running costs of the branch thus enabling us to concentrate the proceeds from our stall at the Bath Charities Halloween Fair to our regular Christmas donations. Recipients in 1989 were The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund, The Ex-Services Mental Welfare Fund, The Royal Star and Garter Home, a local Cheshire Home, The Mayor of Bath's Age Concern and a local Hospice for the terminally ill.

Two of our members attended the Founder's Day Celebration at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and they were most impressed watching the elderly gentlemen being inspected by HRH The Duke of Kent.

During November we enjoyed a shopping trip to Salisbury followed in December by our Christmas Lunch where besides good food, there was much chatter among old friends.

Some members have knitted children's garments for our Benevolent Fund which Mrs Laurence-Smith informs us are much appreciated, so we hope to be able to produce more garments in 1990. The New Year will begin with a tea party at which we will make our future plans.

BRADFORD The branch has had a very happy and prosperous 12 months with all the officers being re-elected at the AGM. We have had good attendances at Meetings and we welcomed six new members. We had some excellent speakers and two trips, one on a barge on the canal on a most glorious day and the other to the Army Transport Museum at Beverley. We also travelled over the Pennines to support Rochdale Branch at their coffee morning. In spite of a cloud burst while we were there we all enjoyed ourselves.

We attended the Combined Services weekend at Bridlington and four members went to the ATS Luncheon Club in London. The President Mrs Kenny, Vice-Chairman Mrs Hudson and the Treasurer Mrs Houldsworth were on parade in Whitehall on Remembrance Day. Two mini-buses took us to Harrogate for the Northern Area Reunion and this year we arrived without mishap; the last two years the buses have broken down. In March we welcomed our Canadian member, Edna McFarland who travelled with a few of us to visit the Metro Centre at Gateshead.

Our Standard was paraded at a service held in Bradford Cathedral to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the outbreak of War, also with the RAFA on their Battle of Britain parade, and at two Festivals of Remembrance at Bradford and Oldham. We thank Norah Kendall for the very efficient way she carries out her duties. We have entertained the WAAF Association and the Association of WRENS to a Social Evening and Supper, enjoyed by all.

Once again we hosted a lunch for the 1914-18 Veterans, and we are very lucky to be able to use the RAFA Club. On December 10th Mrs Kendall is having a Bring and Buy sale and we are hoping to welcome some Rochdale members. A number of members hope to attend the 50th Anniversary of Dunkirk in France and Belgium next May, travelling with the Bradford Branch of the Dunkirk Veterans Association. Mrs Kendall has been asked to carry our Standard on the parades there. We are now saving up for the Grand Reunion in Glasgow in 1991, both the coach and hotel have already been booked.

CREWE We have 31 Annual members and two Life members of whom 10 live in the Stoke-on-Trent area making attendance at meetings difficult during the winter months, but on average there are 15 members which allows thorough discussion of all items.

The year began with our most enjoyable Christmas Dinner to which husbands and friends were invited. The annual donations were decided at the AGM and will be sent to the WRAC Benevolent Fund, Princess Royal's Memorial Fund, the Museum Fund and one or two local funds mainly hospitals.

A party of members attended the AGM in London in April, and we had three coffee mornings during the year, one jumble sale and a Meat and Potato Pie Supper, all adding to our pleasure in running these ventures.

Our Chairman, Elsie Humphreys was surprised and pleased to receive an invitation to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. She had a marvellous and unforgettable day.

We have attended at least five Anniversary Parades this summer not least the Normandy Veterans Standard



Mrs Francis carries the Standard for Crewe Branch at the Battle of Britain Parade. (Photograph courtesy of the Staffordshire Sentinel.)

Dedication at Stoke-on-Trent and the Birmingham International Tattoo at the NEC. We have been proud to carry the Association Standard at these Parades, this being done by Mrs Humphreys, on one occasion and by Mrs Francis for the rest and feel that our Standard has had an extremely good airing in this district.

On October the 5th we had our branch 5th Birthday Party at our favourite watering hole, and Lt Col M Harwood was our special guest, with the Mayor and Mayoress of Crewe and Nantwich and representatives of all local Ex-Service Associations.

Our usual party attended the Service and Parade at the Cenotaph in London, and enjoyed meeting old friends. Our Secretary, Edith Francis, carried the Association Standard at the Royal Albert Hall on 11 November which was indeed an honour and an unforgettable experience.

The Crewe Branch send regards to all Branches of the Association and many thanks to HQ staff for their hard work throughout the year.

EXETER The branch has since the last report recruited new members, and has had a successful year with a Bring and Buy Sale in August, and several buffet lunches at Members' homes.

A luncheon is planned at The Lord Nelson Inn at Topsham again this year in October. Several attended the Exeter Remembrance Festival at Great Hall, Exeter University, and five of our members represented the ATS.

Our Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of alternate months at the Royal British Legion, Exeter by kind permission of the Chairman and Committee.

GLASGOW Our new session opened on 12 September 1989, when we held a Bring and Buy Sale in aid of Erskine Hospital, which is our main project, and one which is well supported by the Branch.

100 of our members attended a Civic Reception on the 2 October 1989, given by the Glasgow District Council. The



L-R. Mr G Baird, Miss E Alexander (Secretary), Lord Provost Mrs Susan Baird, Mrs C Lindsay (President), Mrs J McGavin (Treasurer) - Glasgow Branch.

Lord Provost of Glasgow (Mrs Susan Baird) in her welcoming speech, spoke highly of the achievements of the ATS and their tremendous contribution to the War effort. Miss Muriel Thomson replied - then introduced our oldest member, Miss Chris Kelly, who presented the Lord Provost with a beautiful bouquet. We were also delighted to receive a letter from the Controller Commandant, HRH The Duchess of Kent, conveying her good wishes for a happy evening. We enjoyed a delicious meal, also the excellent musical entertainment which followed - altogether a "wonderful evening".

On the 10 October 1989, Lt Col Janet Lawson MBE showed slides of her recent visit to Sri Lanka's Women's Army Corps, and spoke of the progress made since its formation in 1980.

The Association of WRNS joined us in November, when Mr T Dailley took us back in time to 1988 - The Glasgow Garden Festival - showing us coloured slides, which brought back happy memories of our visits to that wonderful event. We now look forward this month to our Annual Christmas Dinner.

Sadly we lost one of our senior members, Miss Christine Davidson, who died on the 23 September 1989.

We expect to be busy in 1990, preparing for the Grand Reunion, and look forward to welcoming those of you who will travel north of the border to join us in Glasgow in April 1991.

GRIMSBY We have had a wonderful year full of events, outings and social evenings with the many male Associations in our area. The Branch continues to grow, meeting on the second Wednesday of each month at the TA Barracks in Grimsby. There are 19 members, mostly ex ATS with a few ex WRAC members.

January 1989, began with a 50th Anniversary of the ATS Buffet Dance held at the Memorial Hall Cleethorpes. It was a grand evening and most of the male Associations came. Guests included The Mayors of Grimsby and Cleethorpes with their consorts, and we hope to have another Dance in 1990.

In March the Branch presented an ATS plaque and wired embroidered WRAC Association Badge to our Chaplain The Rev Wendy Isam, of St Andrews Church Grimsby. She will wear the WRAC badge on her black stole when she is with us for services, and the ATS plaque has a place of honour at the side of the Altar. The church is very proud of its association with the branch.

Our greatest event of 1989, was the Dedication of our Standard on 16 April. We had worked so hard to raise the



Grimsby Branch 16 April 1989 – Dedication of Standard.

money over the past 18 months to pay for it, and it was dedicated at St Andrews Church, by our Chaplain. The British Legion and many ex service Associations in the area paraded with us, including a few members from Hull with their Standard. Many of us had purchased green jackets, skirts and berets etc, for the occasion, and proudly marched through Grimsby with our newly dedicated standard at the front of the parade, carried by Mrs Grace Taibutt with two escorts. After the parade a Buffet was provided by all Branch members at St Andrews Church Hall.

We have had Jumble, Bric a Brac, and raffles to subsidise outings for the members. We have been to Beamish open air Museum near Durham, The Beverly Transport Museum, and Eden Camp near Malton, which is a tribute to all the people of Great Britain during 1939 to 1945; a most interesting place to visit.

In August we visited Leconfield, as guests of the Royal Corps of Transport, and the WRAC, made possible by kind permission of Brigadier Branch and his wife Jane. Major Laverick of the RCT organised a tour of the Motor Training School, and vehicles followed by a splendid Buffet in the Junior Officers' Mess. Our escort throughout the visit was Captain Dunn WRAC, who made our day very pleasant, as did the WRAC servicewomen whom we visited in their Quarters. The Branch Chairperson Mrs Olive Grainger, presented Captain Dunn with an ATS plaque to commemorate our visit, which would be placed in the WRAC Quarters.

This year members have paraded for The Mayors' Sunday Parades in Grimsby and Cleethorpes, with the new Standard, and at a Marine Drumhead Service to

dedicate a new Royal Marine Association Standard at Cleethorpes Boating Lake. Hull Branch joined us for a Social afternoon at the TA Barracks, when the members put on a delicious Buffet. Hull have invited us for a return visit next year.

Donations this year have been made to St Andrews Church to help repair the heating system, The British Legion and The Boys and Girls Brigade Band, and flowers sent to sick members.

At our AGM in October the present committee was returned, for another term of office. We are now looking towards 1990 and our visit to London and Guildford during the summer months.

We send good wishes to all WRAC Association members for 1990.

HARROGATE We have had another successful year with good attendance at meetings which members appear to have enjoyed, and our membership remains more or less static.

Sadly, Mrs "Dixie" Witt, a founder member of the branch who had been unable to attend for many years due to disablement, died in September and the Branch was represented at the funeral. On a happier note, Maud Hofmann and Margot Liddell were lucky enough to be chosen to attend the Royal Garden Party in July and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and the Secretary, on a more mundane level, represented the Branch at the Mayoress of Harrogate's Reception.

1989 has been quite a busy year, with our Christmas Party producing the usual mixture of hilarity and delicious food and the January and February meetings taking the form of a Get-Together and Beetle Drive respectively. In early March we enjoyed the Harrogate Operatic Society's splendid production of "Fiddler On The Roof" and this was followed by an excellent Dinner at the Open Arms Restaurant at the end of the month.

In April Mr Thompson of Daltons gave us a very interesting talk on Seasonings and Spices. On the May Day Bank Holiday we were busy with our usual Tombola at Bilton Gala which raised £129, and for once we did not need to use our umbrellas and plastic sheeting! In May we managed a glorious day for an outing to Bakewell in Derbyshire, but in June a visit to the Piece Hall in Halifax produced monsoon conditions.

Our activities were somewhat restricted during the last four months of 1989 due to the temporary loss of our meeting room which has been completely reconstructed and refurbished, but we were grateful for the hospitality of Margaret Potter, Gwen Watkinson and Ethel Marsh who packed us all into their homes during this nomadic period. Meanwhile we are looking forward to starting 1990 in much more comfortable and elegant surroundings.

The Cheese and Wine Party planned in August had to be postponed due to the meeting room situation and was replaced by a Pot Luck supper. This was followed in September by a Holiday Reminiscences evening, the star contributions being an account of Kempies's travels in Russia accompanied by photographs and souvenirs, and details of the visit to Buckingham Palace from the lucky pair. October brought the AGM and in November Dr Sheila Moore gave a most interesting talk on "Harrogate's Medical Moments", detailing Harrogate's medical history from the beginning of the spa era to the present day.

HEREFORD We started our Branch in July 1989 and now have 26 members. We meet on the last Wednesday of each month at 2.30 p.m. in the RBL Hall. We owe the RBL a great deal and thank them most profoundly.

In October the Secretary went to the Area Meeting at Stafford, where the friendship of the Association was much in evidence, and information was gained for our Branch. Birmingham Branch has shown us much kindness and generosity, and look forward to more meetings with their members 1990.

A Jumble Sale with a produce and raffle stall was held in October, enabling us to start to smile on the way to the bank! In November we watched the Festival of Remembrance parade of Standards on TV with pride. Well done Edith!

In December we enjoyed a delightful meal at The Green Dragon Hotel, but owing to the "flu bug" only seven members were present. One member remembered she was eating her meal in the room that served as her bedroom during the War. Several of our ladies were billeted at the Hotel during those years.

We extend to all members of the WRAC Association best wishes for a healthy and happy 1990 and many reunions of friendship talk of "happy days".

Hereford Branch also extends a warm welcome to more members to join us - Please!

HULL The activities of our branch are supported by the loyal few. This year we had had some very successful outings. In June we visited the Eden Camp Museum which is the only Modern History Theme Museum of its type in the world. To quote their leaflet:

"The Peoples War, The Story of Civilian Life During World War Two. Experience the hardships, the drama, the humour".

Eden Camp is on the A64 York to Scarborough road, just outside Malton and our visit on one of the glorious days of last summer was a truly great experience. The same day we went on to Whitby, over the wide expanse of the North Yorkshire Moors, where a number of our members were able to trot down "Memory Lane" having been stationed there during the War.

In April we were able to send our Standard, carried by Mrs Eve Hermann, to Grimsby on the occasion of their Standard Dedication. In September Grimsby Branch entertained us for the afternoon, and despite the Humber Bridge being closed, following an accident, and a thunder storm on the way home a very good time was had by all.

LONDON Sadly we have to announce the death in July, of our much loved President, Mrs N I Giles. Mrs Giles served in the QMAAC and the ATS and was a founder member of London Branch. Until she went to live in Devon she was very active and served the Branch in many capacities. In latter years we did not see as much of her as we would have liked but she never forgot to send her good wishes to all our functions and she would have loved to hear about the memorable luncheon we held in October to celebrate the 70th Birthday of London Branch, founded in 1919. Mrs E Parks made a beautifully decorated cake which was cut by our Vice-President, Mrs M V Curtis. Once again we were very happy to welcome an Association member, Mrs Rhoda Swanson from America who happened to be in London visiting her mother.

We had an outing to Mapledurham House in September and travelled by launch from Caversham up the Thames to arrive in style for a most enjoyable visit. Thanks to the initiative of Miss Vera Falkner, a small party of members had a delightful guided tour of Knelier Hall and another of the new Princess of Wales Conservatory and Herb garden at Kew.

The Branch was honoured to have two tickets for one of the Queen's Garden Parties in July and in spite of the

transport strike Miss Brown and Miss Ellison had a lovely afternoon admiring the gardens and criticizing the hats!

Eight members were in the congregation at the Guards' Chapel when this year's Remembrance Sunday Songs of Praise was televised. It was strenuous work singing against the might of the band of the Blues and Royals and a large contingent of Welsh Guardsmen but it was a moving occasion.

At the AGM in November Mrs M V Curtis was elected President of the branch and Mrs B Alexander Vice-President.



Mrs M V Curtis, Vice Chairman London Branch at the 70th Birthday lunch.

MANCHESTER We seem to have been quite active during the past few months, with some of our members attending the Harrogate Reunion, and the lovely concert at the Free Trade Hall to commemorate the 50 years since the outbreak of War on 3 September 1939. It stirred many memories for all of us.

Our branch was well represented at the Armistice Parade in Manchester. We are fortunate to have a territorial army servicewoman as one of our members, and she puts us through our paces, or at least keeps us in order. We laid a wreath together with the other units present. We also had a trip to Blackpool Opera House for the annual Festival of Remembrance which was well worth the effort.

Our annual Bring and Buy sale was held in November, the proceeds went to the fund for the Royal Marines at Deal.

We held our Christmas party in December. Everyone brought plenty of food, but attendance was disappointing. On the 11 December, our gourmet group went out to dinner at the Garden Restaurant in St Ann's Square.

We wish all our members a Happy and Peaceful New Year and hope to see them when meetings resume on the first Wednesday in March, and again at our dinner in May.

PLYMOUTH The Branch has had a very eventful and happy year.

On April 28th 1989 the Memorial Service for the Anniversary of "Exercise TIGER" when so many American Servicemen were lost was held at Stapon Sands, Devon on 28 April 1989. Along with other Associations our Standard Bearer, escorts and members attended the moving ceremony with American Veterans who had travelled to join us.

The Highlight of the Year, was the ceremony of the Laying up of our old Standard and Dedication of the new. The service was held in the Church of St Katherine-on-the-



Back Row L-R. Escorts Dot McCoy, Eileen Morgan, Lt Col A L Moorby (CO 29 Cdo Regt RA), RSM W Gillitt.

Front Row L-R. Chairman Mrs Lenora Hannaford, Standard Bearer Doreen Greenaway, Escorts Megan Tucker, Audrey Hammond.

Hoe, The Royal Citadel, on 11 June 1989 by kind permission of the CO 29 Cdo RA, and with the whole-hearted support and encouragement of RSM Gillitt. The Chairman has arranged, with the CO's permission, to hold an Anniversary Service in 1990. RSM Gillitt has again extended to us an invitation to a lunch in the WO's & Sgts' Mess after the Service.

The Chairman also arranged a meeting in Truro in May, and we particularly enjoyed meeting all our far-flung Cornish members. It was voted a great success with our grateful thanks to Truro RBL and its charming ladies who made us so welcome. The Cornish members voted unanimously to stay part of the Plymouth Branch, and it is hoped the same occasion can be repeated next year.

We held a successful Jumble Sale to boost funds, and the Branch also enjoyed a meeting come social occasion, at Nan Heywood's home in Coads Green.

On September 3rd 1989, the International Air Memorial to all men and women who served in the Allied Air Commands was unveiled on historic Plymouth Hoe. This was an International occasion, and a huge crowd gathered to watch the proceedings. Our Branch Standard Bearer and members attended with other Associations.

The year will end with our members joining the RA Association for a Service at the Royal Citadel on 3 December 1989 St Barbara's Day. Our Christmas Party will be held in the WO's & Sgts' Mess, The Royal Citadel on 5 December 1989.

Plymouth Branch sends Sincere Greetings to all sister branches of the WRAC Association.

SALISBURY Salisbury Branch continues to meet on the fourth Thursday of the month, with evening meetings in the summer months, and lunch time get-togethers in the winter. Last July we had our deferred trip to Gillingham and Shaftesbury. The day was arranged by Mrs Pope from Mere, who booked lunch for us at the Royal Hotel at Gillingham. 14 members then went to Shaftesbury by car, where they were met by Colonel Miller, Chairman of Shaftesbury British Legion, and by the Town Crier dressed in full regalia, complete with wig, on what was one of the hottest days of the year!

We had a guided tour of this ancient town, visiting St Peter's Church, the Abbey Museum and gardens with the wonderful view over the Blackmore Vale. We went on to the Gold Hill Museum where Colonel Miller bought us tea. We drank this sitting at the top of the "Hovis" hill, basking in the sunshine. Our thanks to everyone who made this such a delightful day out.

Our AGM was held in September, when sadly we said goodbye to our Shaftesbury and Gillingham members. We shall miss them at our meetings but we wish them well in their new branch they have formed at Wincanton. The Officers of the committee were re-elected en bloc, and events were arranged for the coming year.

In October our Secretary, Mrs Joan Morgan, and her WAAF friend, Mrs Peggy Churchill, entertained us in the Common Room of the British Legion flats, in Salisbury. Mrs Morgan showed members over her flat, and then we were treated to a delicious supper. Two ex-WRNS residents joined us giving a distinct Joint Services flavour to the evening.

Our Standard was paraded on Remembrance Sunday, at the War Memorial, and then in St Thomas's Church for a service. We are delighted to have had three serving NCOs with us. Our thanks to SSgt Carol Skippon and her colour party for carrying the Standard. Salisbury Branch always march round the City with the other associations, and this has become a daunting task to the older members. Please come again girls! At our November meeting we held a Silent Auction, raising £28 for branch funds. This was a good effort, for attendance was lower, due to competition from the Marks and Spencer open evening.

Our Christmas lunch will be on 12 December at the Playhouse Restaurant, when we hold a grand raffle for the funds.

We are sorry to report the death of one of our oldest members, Mrs Pearce from Shrewton. She had served in both the ATS and WRAC.

So we look forward to a busy year in 1990, and we send our good wishes to our friends in other branches.

SHROPSHIRE Some said "At your age", - "You'll never do it", some said "You're mad" and to be honest we had our doubts too. We, being four members of the Shropshire Branch joined on the day by two more sporting members, who took part in a sponsored "Whistle Walk" from Nesscliff to Shrewsbury in aid of the World War Memorial Fund for Disaster Relief.

The walk was part of an international campaign to raise a permanent capital of £400 million, income from which will be used for disaster relief where other monies are not available. Target represents £5 for each of the 80 million lives lost in two World Wars. The full distance to be walked was 16 miles, being the length of the battlefront of the Somme, with whistles blown as they were on 1 July 1916 to send the men over the top and soldiers participating in the walk carrying packs of 65 lbs as had men in 1916.

This sponsored walk was organised by the 5th (Shropshire & Herefordshire) Battalion. The Light Infantry

(Volunteers) ably assisted on the refreshment side at A Company HQ by Lucy Bowyer, Olive Dowell, Beryl Lane and Nancy Meredith.

And the walkers? They were Col Sue Richards, Lt Col Liz Robinson, Scott Mills and Pat Cooper joined on the day



Col Sue Richards, Pat Cooper, Scott Mills and Lt Col Liz Robinson.

by Sue Hatton and Mary-Anne Richey. Yes, we did "train" for the walk in a fairly leisurely way, by three walks up the Shropshire hills using long forgotten map reading skills. (Is that the Lawley? No, it's Caradoc – visibility isn't too good!) No one got lost even if a bog nearly claimed one pair of boots.

Came the day, the 4 November, 67 heavily laden Volunteers and four logistically minded (Mars bars) ladies left from Nesscliff, two from Montford Bridge, destination Shrewsbury, observed with some amusement, or amazement by passing motorist en route. Reserves of stamina and will power were very well tested especially over the last six mile circuit – but we made it!

A splendid reception at A Company HQ, then on to home comforts courtesy of Pat Cooper. Boots off . . . hot baths followed by brandy-laced chicken fricassée beautifully prepared by Brenda "Cookie" Cookson.

And so we had proved that it could be done – perhaps we weren't so mad after all – and our sponsors' generosity was justified.

SOMERSET This year has once again shown an increase in membership, with a total of 76 members (45 Annual and 31 Life).

We started our year with a dance, helped by a member's husband who is Chairman of a local Village Hall. Our out-goings were very low and we made a tidy amount for our funds. A trip to see "Cabaret" was enjoyed by 18 of our members.

Our Annual Dinner followed in February with 27 members attending and sharing an excellent meal. In March we held a lunch-time gathering at a pub with 29 members and friends. This event seemed very popular and included several new members.

April saw us holding a skittles evening, and most members tried their hand at skittles. Again we were pleased to meet two more of our new members.

Our visit to Hornsbury Mill in May was attended by 17 members. What an interesting place to visit but the cream tea did nothing to help our waistlines! Also in May 8 members went to Portland for the Sub Area Reunion, and were impressed with the tour and the very good tea. They

had a most enjoyable day out.

In July we held our Annual B-B-Que at the home of a member (Rebecca Harding-Francis at Pitney) – 65 members and friends enjoyed good food and good company on fine evening.

August Bank Holiday Monday was the day of our Car Boot Sale. We made a few pence short of £100 which has helped to boost our funds.

Members from the Wincanton area of Somerset have started their own Branch. They held their first meeting on 18 July, and we wish them well.

Sadly we lost Mrs Edith Aspey of Yeovil. Although she did not attend meetings, she kept in touch with her many letters.

SOUTHAMPTON In June we welcomed members of the Association of Wrens to an American Supper, followed in July by our Cheese and Wine evening, but with an added treat of mouth watering gateaux provided by our Founder member Mrs Audrey Pickett in celebration of 25 years of wedded bliss!

All through the year fund raising has been mainly directed towards three local causes; ie Children's X-Ray



L-R. Miss Beryl Blampied, Mrs Mavis Burton, Mrs Gail Langton, Miss Doreen Pledge, Mrs Brenda Danby, Mrs Sheila Clement.

Department, Hearing Impaired Children and Neonate Babies. As a result of a combined effort over the last 18 months our September meeting was the occasion when we presented £400 each to the three respective recipients. Next year our fund raising will be geared more to the Association and to our own branch members. Actually we have already started our effort for the coming year – running our own table at a Combined Samaritans and RNLI Christmas Fair with considerable success.

1989 ended for the Branch on a very happy note with our usual Christmas party with excellent buffet put on by Louise and her husband, plus presentation in appreciation, of an ATS embossed glass to Mrs Sheila Clement, our Chairman (retired). Even this last event of the year gave our fund raising yet another boost!

STAFFORD We continue to meet on the second Tuesday of each month at the Royal British Legion Club Stafford and now we have 35 Annual, five Life and six Associate members. During the past 12 months we have lost two members from the Branch. One has transferred to Leicester as it is nearer to her home and the other one, I regret to say, died earlier this year.

We have had an enjoyable year with several interesting speakers and social events. Last November 10 members attended the Wreath Laying Ceremony and Service in Stafford on Remembrance Sunday and three of our branch

attended the Cenotaph Service in Whitehall. For our November meeting we went along to the County Record Office where we were shown the art of preserving old documents including letters written by Queen Victoria to the Earls of Bradford and Lichfield.

In December we enjoyed a Christmas Dinner at a local hotel and in January we had a Social evening at our meeting place.

The Mayor of Stafford invited us to his Parlour in February where we were entertained and shown the Borough silver and given a talk on local history. In March we had our AGM and in April celebrated our 25th Birthday with a social evening.

We had a talk on old Stafford and surrounding villages in May by a local man and he illustrated it with very old postcards and in June his wife came along to our meeting to demonstrate microwave cooking. As there is no speaker in July owing to several members being on holiday, we had a Fish and Chip Supper at the British Legion Club. Also in July the Secretary and one member were invited by the Queen to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party which was most enjoyable.

On 7 October, we hosted the Western Area Reunion in Stafford and we were pleased to welcome members from all the Branches in this area with the exception of Cardiff/Newport Branch. We were particularly pleased to welcome representatives from four new Branches Birmingham, Coventry, Hereford and Rhyl.

STOCKPORT Hello again. It is some time since we were in touch with you, and for this our apologies. I am very pleased and delighted to tell you that our branch was honoured in being asked to hand in the poppy wreath on behalf of you all at the Remembrance Day Parade last November. For those of us unable to attend the parade it was thrilling to see on television our Chairlady, Mary, handing over the wreath.

1989 has been a very fruitful year for us. The attendance at our meetings has been very good and friendships prosper as time goes on.

Since I last wrote to you, we have had a trip to Catterick Camp in Yorkshire which is a training centre for the Royal

Talking about a grand lot of girls – do you like our photograph? It was taken for one of our local newspapers. They had a special supplement to commemorate the start of the War. What a lovely lot we are – no wonder we won the War (with your help of course).

What else have we done. Well, we were pleased to give a generous donation to our local Heart Start Wythenshawe Hospital where one of our members had a by-pass operation.

We have had various functions to raise money including a most successful Bring and Buy Sale, and we are now looking forward to our Christmas celebrations. We also look forward to this New Year 1990 and wish you all good health and happiness for the future.

ULSTER Our Annual Luncheon was held in February, with 55 members attending. This was most enjoyable and included a "Bring & Buy Sale" at which we made £141. The Golden Anniversary was celebrated by cutting a special cake, baked by one of our members. As a memento, photographs were taken by a local newspaper photographer and – surprise, surprise – appeared in a future edition of the paper!

A Summer Outing, by coach via the Antrim Coast and Glenariff, took place in June, finishing up in Broughshane for dinner. A very pleasant evening.

In September a luncheon was held by the Omagh Branch – which 27 Ulster Branch members attended. Again travelling by coach which particularly appealed to the car drivers, who could, on this occasion, appreciate the lovely scenery en route and the beverages afterwards!



Members of the Omagh and Belfast branches of the WRAC Association.

In early November the N Ireland Secretary of State, The Rt Hon Peter Brooke, hosted a Reception at Hillsborough Castle for ex-Service personnel, which four of our Branch attended. We had our photo taken with Mr Brooke on what turned out to be a very special evening.

The AGM was held on Saturday 18 November preceded by a lunch, both of which were very well attended.

We were delighted that Major Bridget Richardson, OC WRAC N Ireland Command was able to conduct the elections. She then gave us a most interesting talk on Recruiting of WRAC and about "her girls" in the N Ireland Command.

WOLVERHAMPTON We meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. above the offices of the Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council, Bell Street, Wolverhampton. Out of 55 members we have an average of 25/30 at meetings. As we have about 12 members living either abroad or too far afield the general attendances are excellent.

We have had a very varied and enjoyable year ranging from a talk by a representative of the local newspaper, a



Stockport Branch.

Corps of Signals. We were very excited at going to see how the WRAC are housed and work in these modern times. We were quite prepared for the difference we thought we would find in their accommodation etc. What we were not prepared for was the super VIP treatment we received from the members of the WRAC. Their kindness and friendliness was overwhelming – what a grand lot of girls they are.

visit to the Mayoral Suite to view the Civic Silver etc, and an insight into the Mail Sorting Office. In June we had a very enjoyable trip on the Staffs/Shrops Canal and in between we have had two Bring and Buy, Bingo Sessions and one member demonstrated how to make sweets.

We have had one member, Mrs Emily Roberts reach the grand age of 90 years. Mary Beeston went to see Mrs



Mary Beeston and Mrs Emily Roberts admiring the cloth.

Roberts and show her the table cloth on which she is embroidering the names of members.

Members will be attending Wolverhampton's Festival of Remembrance on Sunday 5 November celebrating 40 years of the WRAC, and where the WRAC Band will be playing.

YORK Since we formed the Branch in 1982 we have met on the first Wednesday of the month (except August) in the HQ of York RAFA 3/4 Aldwark where we have always been welcome. The RAFA entertain us in February and in turn we entertain them in September. Lots of good food, games and laughter on these occasions. This year in September we presented the RAFA Branch with a WRAC Association plaque, which is now displayed with their collection.

We have had some very interesting talks this year including one on making liquors! 12 of our members attended the Northern Area Reunion in Harrogate where we ran the raffle and had a hectic time. We held a Christmas Shopping Lunch time session on 29 November, so that our members could do their shopping and pop in for a breather and refreshments.

A good number of our members support the York Council of Ex-Service Associations events ie Hymns of Praise, Carol Service, Service at the Garden of Remembrance Parade.

Visitors to York would be very welcome at Aldwark on the first Wednesday of the month from 7.30 p.m. onwards.



Correspondence

Betty McNab (née Nevin) and Maureen Lenton (née Browne) both of 476 (HAA) Bty 137 Regt RA; where Betty was Coy Clerk. We met four years ago by a stroke of luck in Auckland New Zealand where we have both been living for many years.

If there are any of you who remember us, who would like to get in touch our addresses are:

Mrs M Lenton, 12 Ferhaig Street,
Papakira, Auckland, NZ.

Mrs B McNab, 23 West Hoe Road, Orewa,
Auckland, NZ.

It is always a pleasure to hear from our readers and Mrs Sadie Lewis (née Simpson) has written from her home in New Zealand requesting information about ex members of the 93rd Searchlight Regiment who were chosen as pre-fab house demonstrators. Please write to her at Lewis Road, Karaka, Papakura RD1, Auckland, New Zealand.

Miss Maureen E Hickman served in the WRAC as a stewardess from 1956-1964. Anyone remembering Cpl Hickman should write to her at 29 Eglinton Hill, Ground Floor Flat, Woolwich, London SE18.

Mrs Alice Lumsden (née Manterfield) has written from 45 Perry Street, Barrie, Ontario, Canada L4N 2G2 and would like to hear from any wartime comrades who remember her. Mrs Lumsden attended her first ATS Reunion held in Canada in September and she was delighted to meet Mrs Mina Kennedy (née Pearson) who served with her in 461 HAA Bty, RA and whom she last saw in 1944.

Mrs Patricia Sinclair who lives at 5010 East Cheyenne Drive, Apt 2015, Phoenix, Arizona 85044, USA is still trying to contact former ATS colleagues Mrs Nesta Evans (née Owen) and Greta Crowe (née Welch) and would welcome any news of these ladies.

Mrs Evelyn O'Neill has written from 33 Bede Burn View, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear with the good news that after publication of a letter in the "People's Friend", a former colleague from 484 HAA (M) Bty RA got in touch with her. When Mrs O'Neill visited Eastbourne they arranged to meet at Worthing Pier and they spent a happy afternoon catching up on the last 44 years!



**Mrs Evelyn O'Neill and
Mrs Dot Wills née Addison.**



Germany 1945.

Mrs Elizabeth Jane Weaver of 17 Paxhill Lane, Twynning, Nr Tewkesbury, Glos GL20 6DU, is hoping to contact wartime associates of her mother, Doris May Clark, who was employed in the WAAFI, ATS and stationed at Manor House, Keynsham, Nr Bristol from 1941-43.

Mrs Connie Mark of 57A Stowe Road, Shepherds Bush, London W12 8BE is still seeking former ATS who served in Jamaica, and would love to contact S Comd Gettin-Hall, Sub Hudson, S Comd Barbara Oakley and Sgt Wilson.

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Mr F Rixon BEM has written on behalf of the George Cross Island Association hoping to trace Army personnel who served in Malta between 1940-43. The Association aims to keep alive the memory of the deeds of those who served and died in defence of the island. Please write to Mr Rixon at 10 Nepal Road, Tidworth, Hants SP9 7EU giving details of your service and more information about the Association will be sent to you.

Mrs V J Peribonis writing from PO Box 1779, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe is trying to contact Pte Jean (Sally) Bilton from Hull who worked in the Records Department, REME, Aborfield in 1944.

THE OLD HOUSE, DOGPOLE, SHREWSBURY. During the war a number of ATS members were billeted with Miss E J Peele in the sixteenth century mansion in Shrewsbury. Miss Peele's brother, Mr Michael de Courcy Peele, left it to the Shrewsbury Civic Society, whose members have been preparing the house and contents for public exhibition (by appointment only).

A history of the house is being compiled, and we should very much appreciate receiving any memories or impressions of the house and of Miss Peele from ATS members - to add to the stories of ghosts, and of the short stay of Mary Tudor during the reign of her father Henry VIII. Please write to Mrs Joan Fidler, Shrewsbury Civic Society, Bear Steps, Shrewsbury SY1 1UH.

Mrs Susan Johnson (née Bailey) who served with the ATS between 1942 - 1946 would like to contact former colleagues. She joined on 24 July 1942 and trained as a wireless operator. After a year at two Corps HQ at Felsted, she moved to Catterick and Scarborough, finishing her service at the War Office, billeted in Queen Anne's Gate. Please write to Mrs Johnson at "Sandbanks", 17 Deganwy Road, Deganwy, Gwynedd LL31 9DH.

An historical work is in preparation on the entire aspects of Ammunition Inspection by the RAOC and the role of Explosive Ordnance Disposal, and those involved from all services, RAOC, RE, RAF and RN. An activity in which very few ladies were involved, were you one of the few, if so in order to give due credit to the ATS/WRAC, please contact the author, Peter Birchall, Postal Buildings, Windermere LA23 3EB.

Mrs R Nicholson of 24 Trentbrooke Avenue, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 5JN, would like to hear from anyone who remembers her mother LCpl Elizabeth Casey a cook with N Company, 3 Group of Northern Command.

Mrs Minnie Lawrence (née Bossons) who was a member of 3 STAFFORDS Coy is keen to contact Vi Fisher with whom she served at "Ramsey-Hunts" in 1940. Mrs Lawrence is now living at 104 Rivermead Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 4RL.

Mrs Kay Anderson (née Karney) writes that she has contacted ex-ATS members as far apart as Devon, Essex and Lincolnshire and last July a small reunion lunch was held at the Victory Services Club in London. It was a great success and Mrs Anderson asks that any former members of 435 (1st mixed) HAA Bty HA who have not already contacted her should do so at 17 St John's Close, Ryhall, Stamford, Lincs PE9 4HS.

Mrs Olive Durkin (née Wairing) has written from Sydney, Australia to say that she would love to hear from anyone from 569 HAA Bty Penarth, Sully, where she served with her sister Freda. Mrs Durkin has kindly offered accommodation to any member travelling to Sydney, and says that the British Ex-Services Club, 44 Market Street, Sydney also welcomes British Ex-Service personnel. Please write to her at 7 Stanley Street, TEMPE 2044, NSW or phone 02-5580397.

Don Lafferty of 2 Stirling Way, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 5RP (phone 0403-60085) is hoping to arrange a reunion of former ATS and RASC personnel who served at HQ Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, during 1945-47.

The ATS (No 2 Coy) were the first to arrive from the UK. Two ex-ATS Mrs Rita Chafer (née O'Sullivan) and Mrs Mary Megan (née Manning) have been traced together with 16 ex-RASC. Rita has provided the following names: Anne Barlow, Noreen Barratt, Annabel Black, Flo Bragall, Vera Coleman, Angela Crafton, Ena Dale, Dot Davidson, Bette Dickson, Bettina Duke, J Elliott, J Fender, B M Giles, M E Goodall, M M Grogan, Margo Carr-Griffen, Marjorie Hargreaves, C Hickey, Muriel Holding, M Horgan, (?) Horsendorf, Anne Jones, Lyn Jones, Freda Koen, Jean Lampspeary, P Lewcock, Iris Millar (bridesmaid to Rita in Singapore), E MacMohan, G McCann, Beatrice McKea, Joy New, Gladys Norman, Mary Page, A E Potter, Joyce Edith Read (née Sgt Blackmore), Nellie Seymour, Joyce Stringer, M N Varely, Margaret Warwick.

All who respond should give their Rank and Branch at HQ ALFSEA and phone number at home to enable former colleagues to get in touch with each other before the reunion.

Mrs Dorothy Woolley would like to hear from any girls who were with 33 AA Bde HQ, 40 AA Bde HQ, 44 Bde HQ at Liverpool, Manchester and Prestwick. Mrs Woolley remembers Dorothy Taylor, Marion Rodgers, Vera High, Peggy Harrison, Gay Enders, and Una Davidson. Please write to her at 152 Waterhouse Moor, Harlow, Essex CM18 6BJ.

Mrs E Hales (née Evans) of 102 Colesmead Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 2EG writes that she and a friend, Joyce Darling (née Gibson) wish to contact former ATS



Mrs Hales and Cilla Black

colleagues who served with them in Bournemouth (RAPC). The girls were in shows together: Kay Kirk, Peggy Sollit, Rose Asker, Vi Laver and Myra Samuels. Joyce was a dancer and Mrs Hales a whistler and recently she whistled again for Cilla Black on "Surprise Surprise".

Mrs K Trowbridge (née Tait) has written to say that she remembers Controller Stirling with affection and admiration, serving with her at John Watson's School and Edinburgh Castle becoming her Chief Clerk. Mrs Trowbridge would like to hear from ex-members of Scottish Command, Edinburgh Castle from 1946-1948 and



Sgt Jean Tait ATS/WRAC.

Dumfries 1948-1949. Please write to her at 4 Yelfs Cottages, Spindlers Road, St Lawrence, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1XB.

Mrs Iris Boytor (née Addinall) writing from 449 Parnell Road, Parnell, Auckland 1, requests that the two ladies from 490 (M) HAA Bty who met her in the Barbican Centre, please contact her at the above address.

Mr T C C Davies of 27 Tre Telynog, Cwmbach, Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan CF44 OAP was stationed at Wimbledon in 1944 and would like to contact former ATS Pte Vera Doreen Sawkins who was with F Coy London District Group. She was at Southlands College, Parkside, Wimbledon Common.

Mrs Alice Walker is seeking former comrades who served with her in 501 Searchlight Battery during the war. Please write to her at 25 Harris Close, Darnhill, Heywood, Lancs OL10 3PJ.

Miss Helen Slocombe would like help with her attempts to trace Mrs Patrick Vine (née Josephine Storey) who served as an ATS officer during the war and whose home was at Beacon Hill, Hindhead. They lost touch in 1960 when Mrs Vine was living in N Rhodesia. Any information about her present whereabouts should be sent to Miss Slocombe at 11 Braganza House, High Street, Old Portsmouth PO1 2HS.

Mrs Beryl Lancaster (née Rogers) of 1 Hawthorn Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 2PU would like to hear from anyone from E Coy (att REME) who were stationed at Greenford COD between 1943 and 1946, especially anyone who worked in the gun shop.

Mr A White of 49 Southlands, Kirkham, Lancs PR4 2TR is seeking former members of the ATS who served at COD Bicester between 1942 and 1946, particularly LCpl Marian Taylor from Gatley, and Pte Joan Guy from Ipswich. Preston now has a branch of the RAOC Association which is open to ATS/WRAC who have been associated with the Corps.

Mrs Doreen Stubbs (née Cutter) writing from 6 Glenholme Gardens, Poulton-le-Fylde FY6 7PX says that she served from 1942-45 at HQ Northern Command, Secretary to 3 DDATS's namely Controllers Wagstaff, Whiddington and Elgal. In spite of attending many reunions she has never met anyone else who served there. If anyone remembers SSgt Moffat or any of the other girls please contact Mrs Stubbs.

Miss Pamela Froom has written from Croft Corner, West End Road, Mortimer, Berkshire RG7 3TE saying that she has not heard from anyone in connection with members of the BEF at Aldermaston, but had several useful letters from people who knew the opening and closing dates of the Depot, the latter coinciding with the date of the arrival of the Americans. "It is amazing that Aldermaston people should cherish the idea that the Queen, only 16 when the Americans came, should have trained there!" After VE Day and the departure of the Americans it would appear that the Unit was called Southern Command Holding Unit, and the Unit cat called Schu-Schu. Further information should be sent to Miss Froom please.

Mrs Enid Cox (née Mallard) has sent a photograph of a predictor team of 665 (M) HAA Bty RA 1943 where she was



665 (M) HAA Bty RA, Predictor Team 1943.

stationed with her sister who thought it was no fun having her sister as the Sergeant-Major.

Mrs Cox also responded to the notice in Lioness for the Reunion of 94 (New Zealand) Bty RA, as she was one of the WRAC flown out to Gibraltar in 1952 to form this mixed battery. The reunion was held in Colchester in November and from the moment that she was collected she felt like a VIP. It was a weekend packed with nostalgia and Mrs Cox feels sad that more ex WRAC did not know of the reunion or take up the opportunity to meet again.

Mrs Rhoda Bugler (née Tuck) of 46 Flaxhayes, Bridport, Dorset DT6 5DT has written to ask if anyone remembers her at Fillongly, Nr Coventry in 1942. Mrs Bugler remembers that during an enemy raid over Coventry and No 1 and 2 guns were on target, No 3 gun was given instructions and bearings to engage the enemy planes, but as it was raised it jammed. The order to fire had been given and it fired straight over the Command post killing one or two of the predictor girls and injuring some others. Mrs Bugler wonders if anyone knows what happened to the injured girls and any further details of the incident.

LONDON GAZETTE

NEW YEAR HONOURS

PDF Compressor Free Version

Major A N Notley T D (V)
Lieutenant P A Owens

BEM

SSGT D J Hicks
SSGT P S Marcroft
SGT R A Amy

SERVICE AWARDS IN ULSTER

Mention in Despatches

Major H E Mc Mahon

PROMOTIONS

Regular Army

Brigadier: G K Ramsey MBE.
Colonels: C R Bolland, M S Wing
Lieutenant Colonels: V Batchelor, J C A Smith.
Majors: S Pratt MBE, I J B A Corrigan, J M Dunn
J E Grafton, M F Lauder, L A Mackinnon, B E
Richardson, R E Walton, A Maskens-McIntyre.
Captains: F A Rose, F E Frost, A A W Hudson.
Lieutenant: S L Gowland, A E Munro, E W Harris.

Short Service Commission

Captains: A J Tindall, S E Buncombe, T E Bowden,
J A Henry, H F Scott, W A Smith, G C R Wright, C A Airey,
B A Froud, R C Garrett, R S Evans, R R Littlejohn, M
Oliver, L J Richardson, V C Robertson, G A Ingham, D P
Andrews, J H McKee, J L Strong, D Mitchell, C E L
Bratten, H S Davison, S C McGowan, P E Jump.
Lieutenants: J I Wright, G M A Hicks, D J Bell,
D Dronsfield, J P Heron, C E Foxley, A Livesley, E A
Whichelo, L F M Swinyard, C J Windsor, A B M Black, S J
Lee, K N Thurlow, S M Wood, S A Bredin, B S Coote,
D M Green, K L Perkins, I A Rolland, F J Say, B F Targett,
L C Torrington, A F Wade, D G Wadsworth, C L Mather,
M R Hall, L C McGahan, J C Short, T J Tong, P J
Williams, S J Proctor, V S Collins, M J Westwood, S J
Bennett, J A Cave, H Allan, E E Finney, T L Gower, C S
Pearson, R M Reid, H E Rose, J M Souch, N M Everitt, L F
Finney, D M Spirous, J A Jones, A J Wort, J A Bredin, M P
Campbell, R C Ashkenazi, C F M Drury, A E S Lucas, T R
D P McQuoid, S A J Povey, W K Smart, C J Tipper, M M
Watson, E G Wise.
Second Lieutenants: C T Almonds, Z J S Almonds,
K L Bulgin, J Hutchinson, J K Medley, J Naylor,
B A Nicholls.

Short Service Volunteer Commissions

Lieutenant: G S Wroe
Second Lieutenant: T K P Ranson

RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Regular Army

Colonel A A Kelly
Majors: M Randall, S P Hawkins, J P R Ridley-Jones, E A H
Dunn.
Captains: C R Paxton, F A Mallam, A M Hayle, B A
Watkinson.

Special Regular Commission

Major L B Smith

Short Service Commissions

Captains: K P Sawford, H V White, C A Bevan, C L Lee, C A
Prosser, D L Porter, S K Reed, L M Cameron, S P
Coulthard.
Lieutenant D M McFall

Short Service Limited Commissions

Second Lieutenants: P J Ward, E E Mawdsley, A E
Carpenter.

Long Service and Good Conduct Medals have been awarded to:

WO2 F M S Carr, WO2 T M Keys, WO2 A E Mackie, WO2 A W
McDougall, WO2 J Pollock, WO2 D Stockdale, SSGT L
Cooper, SSGT D A Dupree, SSGT D Foster, SSGT S M
Krywyszn, SSGT H Meen, SSGT J A D Morris, SSGT D J
Newton, SSGT E D Smith, SSGT A K Warnes, SSGT N
Wellings, SGT H A Aaron, SGT F P Bleasdale, SGT C C
Hoban, SGT D A Hunter, SGT N Hutchings, SGT M
Moran, SGT L A Morgan, SGT M Woolford, ASGT P J
Allen, ASCT J J L Flanagan, ASGT A W Grant, Cpl J S M
Whitney-May.

PERSONAL COLUMN

PERSONAL COLUMN CHARGES: 4 lines £6.00. Additional
lines 90p each. Non-members 50% extra. Write to the
Editor at Corps HQ.

FOR SALE Officers No 2 Dress, Barrack Skirt, Moss Bros
Summer Shirts to fit Size 14. Height 5'8". Also Mess Dress
Silk Sash and other uniform. Contact: T M Nation on
Leicester 0533-700800.

FOR SALE WRAC Officer's uniform, all size 12. Height 5'5".
Mess Dress (with Silk Sash) £55. No 2 Dress £70. Barrack
Skirt £25. For details please contact: Mrs K M Bagguley on
01-508-9251/7877.

FOR SALE Officers Mess Dress with Silk Sash, Size 12/14.
Height 5'3½" £40. No 2 Dress Size 12/14 £50. Forage Cap
Size 7½ £20. Contact: Capt Billson - Warminster Mil ext
2362.

FOR SALE Officers Greatcoat with red lining £50. Mess
Dress (unlined) with Silk Sash £50. Two No 2 Dress Jackets
£30 each ono. All Size 10/12. Height 5'1". Telephone:
Evenings Chippenham (0249) 659298.

FOR SALE Officers Mess Dress with Silk Sash £50. No 2
Dress (two available) £50. Officers Greatcoat £75. Forage
Cap, Beret, Jerseys, Shirts etc price negotiable. All items
in good condition. Size 12/14. Height 5'5". Contact: Ginny
Curry 01-948-1795.

FOR SALE Officers No: 2 Dress and Mess Dress, size 10/12
Height 5'4". For details contact Capt A Birkett. Daytime
0252 24431 Ext 8570 Evenings and Weekends 0252 627 037

Wanted Three Officers No 2 Dresses. Size 12/14. Heights
5'3"-5'5". Contact: S Hitchen. Telephone: 0206-763491.

**FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE SERVICE
WESTMINSTER ABBEY
THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 1989**
PDF Compressor Free Version
"Wear Your Poppy with Pride"

By Cpl G Wood WRAC

It was a glorious crisp and sunny day for the Field of Remembrance this year, one could almost say it was hand-picked by the "Powers That Be", a perfect Autumn morning.

A handful of girls from MOD(A) Platoon, Mill Hill volunteered for the service, which is held annually in the grounds of Westminster Abbey. Former and serving members of the Armed Forces attend headed by everyone's favourite member of the Royal Family, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.

For every Service, Corps and Regiment, old and new, plots had been laid and representatives both military and civilian had filled them with assorted poppies. To think that these poppies accounted for lives lost, for relatives and friends of those attending was a poignant thought. The stories that these men and women could tell would fill a thousand books. We strolled around admiring their medals and memories and one thing stood out more than anything, their pride. Every year Remembrance Day brings out the best in comradeship. Bygone and modern day, we are all part of the same team. It is a feeling that can be matched by no other. After our own WRAC Memorial Service conducted by Colonel F E Hutley, Commander WRAC HQ UKLF, we all took our positions for the Royal Walk About.

The Queen Mother is wonderful, there's no other word for it. She has an indescribable air about her, very quietly spoken but full of concern and genuine interest. She rises above all the pomp and ceremony and her kindness simply beams through. I was fortunate enough to be presented to her and during our short conversation became completely captivated by her friendliness and compassion for everyone involved. I can understand what an inspiration and comfort she must have been to all during the war.

It was a tremendous day, enjoyed by all who attended. Freezing feet and numb noses aside it was an occasion well worth being involved in. We all wore our poppies with pride.

OBITUARY

ADAMS. Mrs C Adams TD (née Sedgwick) of Suffolk on 5 September 1989. Subaltern ATS.

AMBROSE. Miss D E Ambrose of Birmingham on 27 July 1989. ATS.

ANDERSON. Miss I F Anderson of Ayr on 28 October 1989. Subaltern ATS.

BARTLETT. Miss K R Bartlett of Athelstan House, Bodmin. Senior Comd ATS.

BLACK. Mrs M D Black of Sunderland on 20 September 1989. ATS.

BLAY. Miss G P 'Pat' Blay of Worthing on 3 January 1990. Captain (QM) WRAC

CALVERT. Mrs E Calvert of Somerset on 11 August 1989. ATS.

CAREY. Mrs Gladys I Carey of Birmingham on 2 October 1989. ATS.

CLOUT. Mrs A M Clout of St Leonards-on-Sea in June 1989. ATS.

COOKE. Colonel (Retd) S Cooke CBE TD of Cosham on 7 December 1989. ATS/WRAC.

DAVIDSON. Miss C H Davidson of Glasgow on 23 September 1989. ATS.

DAVIN. Mrs Mabel Flora Mary Davin MBE of Lymington on 13 July 1989. Senior Comd ATS.

EDWARDS. Mrs May Edwards of Crewe on 11 October 1989. ATS.

EPPLESTONE. Mrs U M Epplestone of York on 24 October 1989. WRAC.

FELLOWS. Miss C Fellows of Hull on 7 August 1989. WRAC.

FFORDE. Major Mary Fforde. ATS/WRAC.

GILES. Mrs N I Giles of Plymstock Devon on 26 July 1989. QMAAC. President of London Branch.

GILLESPIE. Mrs H S Gillespie on 18 December 1989. Captain ATS/WRAC.

GOLIGHTLY. Miss E Golightly of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne on 12 August 1989. ATS.

GRAEME-CALDWELL. Mrs G Graeme-Caldwell of Poole Dorset on 7 July 1989. Junior Comd ATS.

HODGE. Miss G M Hodge of Stafford on 16 July 1989. ATC.

HUTCHINSON. Miss Judy Hutchinson of Oxford. ATS.

LEBBELL. Mrs L V Lebbell of Portsmouth in November 1989. ATS.

McCALL. Mrs Sheila McCall of Stratford-Upon-Avon on 12 October 1989. ATS.

MANNING. Miss Lillian Alice Manning (Major Retd) of Bournemouth on 5 September 1989. ATS/WRAC.

MARTIN. Mrs W R Martin of Wembury Devon. ATS.

MILES. Mrs V R Miles of Weymouth on 4 August 1989. ATS.

MORGAN. Mrs B K Morgan (née Taylor) of Leicester on 17 June 1989. ATS.

OLIVER. Mrs Sybil Oliver. Senior Commander ATS.

PEARCE. Mrs E Pearce of Salisbury in November 1989. ATS.

PIM. Miss Norah Violet Middleton Pim TD of Grantham on 8 January 1990. Chief Commander ATS.

RODGER. Mrs M Rodger (née Menzies) of Edinburgh on 2 August 1989. Junior Comd ATS.

ROGERS. Miss Annie Costello "Nancy" Rogers on 20 December 1989, in Bristol. QMAAC.

ROSE. Mrs B K Rose of Newport, Salop on 17 November 1989. ATS.

SAUNDERS-DAVIES. Lt Col (Retd) G Saunders-Davies CBE TD of Stanford-in-the-Vale, Oxford on 5 October 1989. ATS/WRAC.

SHEWARD. Miss Norah F Sheward of Tewkesbury in September 1989. Junior Comd ATS.

SMITH. Mrs I B Smith of Nairn, Scotland in November 1989. ATS.

SMITH. Mrs W M Smith MBE of New Sawley Long Eaton on 10 August 1989. ATS.

STUTTARD. Miss E M (Kitty) Stuttard of Leeds on 15 October 1989. ATS/WRAC.

SUPPLE. Miss E M Supple of Exmouth on 29 November 1989. Subaltern ATS.

TOWNEND. Mrs K Townend of Bradford on 9 August 1989. ATS.

TREANOR. Mrs Ellen Burn Treanor of New Zealand on 19 June 1989. ATS.

WHITE. Mrs N M White of Taunton on 22 August 1989. Chief Comd ATS.

WISEMAN. Mrs J T Wiseman of Chigwell. ATS.

WITT. Mrs Muriel M (Dixie) Witt (née Dean) of Knaresborough on 23 September 1989. ATS/WRAC TA.

RUBY WEDDING

HOULDSWORTH-HAY. On 18 March 1950. John E Houldsworth Ex 13 Corps of Signals to Nora Hay, Ex ATS Northern Command Signals, York.

TRIBUTE

Colonel S Cooke CBE TD

Colonel S Cooke CBE TD died on 1 December 1989, started at HQ Eastern Command at the beginning of the war, she was promoted Senior Commander before the end of the year and continued to command general duties groups in that command until she went as ADATS Aldershot District in April 1944. She was Deputy Director of Personnel Administration after the war until that appointment was abolished and she became AAG AG16. In these two appointments Colonel Cooke was responsible for much of the planning for the WRAC. Her last appointment was as DD WRAC AA Command 1951-54.

Colonel S M Crawley TD writes:

I was in Ack Ack when Colonel Cooke was at HQ AA Command and served on her staff at the War Office in those exciting years when the WRAC was formed.

Our paths crossed continuously during our careers, and I kept up with her after her retirement until her death. I had a great admiration for her abilities. She was an exceedingly good administrator, and took pains to master all the intricacies of Army Organisation and War Office procedure which many of us found intimidating in the early years.

She was meticulous in everything she did herself, and required the highest standards from her subordinates but her cool, businesslike manner concealed a warmth of humanity which her staff were quick to appreciate.

SMC

TRIBUTE

Lt Col G Saunders-Davies TD

Gwenfra Saunders-Davies, who died on 5 October 1989, was a gentle and unassuming person but beneath her quiet exterior was a wealth of talent and ability.

Gwenfra joined the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry before the War and was appointed an Officer in the ATS in September 1939. As a FANY she gained much experience both in MT and as a driver.

In 1938 with a FANY colleague, Vera Woodburn, better known to some of us later as Controller Woodburn DDATS AA Command they competed successfully in the Monte Carlo Rally. During the cold winters of the early War her drivers at AA Command and Bulford were grateful for her expertise. If anyone could get a frozen truck going it was Gwenfra. She had varied experience during the War and by 1946 commanded Hants Group ATS.

She was an exceptional rifle shot and in 1951 was the first woman to shoot for the Army. She competed for the Army again in 1952 and for the Army Women's Team for several years and was Chairman of Army Women's Rifle Shooting.

She commanded Cadet Wing in 1955-56 and later as a Lieutenant Colonel served on the RCB and was ADWRAC Scottish Command, much involved with the WRAC(TA). After her retirement in June 1968 she was a regular member of the Grants Committee and also served as Chairman of Council. At home in Oxfordshire she worked for the Red Cross and SSAFA.

Gwenfra was a loyal and cheerful companion who will be much missed by her friends.

DHIW

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC IRISH GUARDS BAND SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MUSIC GUARDS DIVISION

Lt Col M G Lane ARCM PSM

Lieutenant Colonel "Mick" Lane was Director of Music of the Women's Royal Army Corps Staff Band from 1971-1974. During his time at the WRAC Centre he worked tirelessly to enhance the musical standards of the band and did much to ensure that the Band was kept in the public eye.

He was a charming man with a wonderful sense of humour and an ever present twinkle in his eye. He had presence and charisma and there is no doubt that he touched the lives of all those he met and served with in no small way.

The Corps, the Centre and particularly the Staff band will miss this truly great man who died on 7 November 1989. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family at this sad time.



Lieutenant Colonel "Mick" Lane.

Miss E M Supple sadly died on 29 November 1989, her 80th Birthday, as a result of severe head injuries sustained when she was knocked down by a car in Exmouth whilst crossing the road. Miss Supple had joined the 12th Devon ATS early in 1939 and was mobilised to serve at the Exeter Record Office in August that year. She served throughout the war.

WRAC ASSOCIATION APPOINTMENTS

For security reasons and based upon MOD advice, names and addresses of those holding appointments in the WRAC Association will not be published in future editions of Lioness, but will be circulated separately to those concerned.

For the information of members, branches exist in the following places and full details can be supplied to members on request to Association HQ.

South-East Area

ALDERSHOT
BRIGHTON
CANTERBURY
DEAL
EASTBOURNE
HASTINGS
ISLE OF WIGHT
MEDWAY

Western Area

BIRMINGHAM
CARDIFF AND NEWPORT
COVENTRY
CREWE
HEREFORD
RHYL
SHROPSHIRE
STAFFORD
SWANSEA
WOLVERHAMPTON
WREXHAM

London and Eastern Area

BRAINTREE
CAMBRIDGE
CHELMSFORD
COLCHESTER
GREATER LONDON
ILFORD
LONDON
NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK
WIMBLEDON

Scottish Area

ABERDEEN
AYRSHIRE
DUMFRIESSHIRE
EDINBURGH
FIFE AND TAYSIDE
GLASGOW
INVERNESS
STIRLING

Northern Ireland Area

OMAGH
ULSTER

South-West Area

ANDOVER
BATH
BOURNEMOUTH
CHELTENHAM
EXETER
GUERNSEY
PLYMOUTH
PORTSMOUTH
SALISBURY
SOMERSET
SOUTHAMPTON
SWINDON
WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND
WINCANTON

Northern Area

ACCRINGTON
BARNSELY
BRADFORD
BOLTON
CHESTER
CLEVELAND
GRIMSBY
HARROGATE
HULL
KEIGHLEY
KENDAL
LEEDS
LEICESTER
LIVERPOOL
MANCHESTER
NEWCASTLE
PENRITH
RICHMONDSHIRE
ROCHDALE
SCARBOROUGH
SHEFFIELD
SHIPLEY
SOUTHPORT
STOCKPORT
SUNDERLAND
YORK

The Eastern/London District Area reunion will be held in the Connaught Hall, Duke of York's HQ Chelsea on Saturday 5 May 1990 from 11.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

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