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Lionnes

1994
No2



This scroll commemorates

Private K. Gaunt
Auxiliary Territorial Service

held in honour as one who
served King and Country in
the world war of 1939-1945
and gave her life to save
mankind from tyranny. May
her sacrifice help to bring
the peace and freedom for
which she died.

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960- No 206184

Founded in 1919

Headquarters, WRAC Association, PO Box 212, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6ZD

Tel: Operator (0252) 24431 ext 8583

Direct (0252) 355583

ATN 722 8583

Fax (0252) 355533

Fax Mil 722 8533

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Lieutenant Colonel D Dunn

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General Secretary:

Honorary Treasurer:

Editor of Association Magazine:

Assistant Editors:

Typist

ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds, PO Box 212, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6ZD

Tel: Direct (0252) 355562

Tel: Operator (0252) 24431 ext 8562

Tel: ATN 722 8562

Chairman of Trustees:

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Lieutenant Colonel M W Soames MBE

Mrs A H S Matthews

Front Cover Photograph
Commemorative Scroll

Back Cover Photograph
Private K Gaunt



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EDITORIAL

The first half of the year has been one of memories and memorials. The D-Day Commemorative events have been the most public display of remembering but there have been other occasions. The Grand Reunion remembered 75 years of comradeship, the additional badges on the Memorial Gates at Tenby remind us of the service given by the ATS and WRAC at the School of Anti Aircraft Artillery and the beautiful plaque at Great Yarmouth honours the memory of the 26 members of the ATS who died 51 years ago. The cover of this edition centres on Private Gaunt but she has been chosen to represent all those who made a sacrifice for freedom and to focus our thoughts on them.

CONGRATULATIONS

Our congratulations to:

Lieutenant Colonel Diana Frances (Di) Davies OBE on being made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in the Operational Honours List 1994.

The following on being made Members of the Order of the British Empire in the Honours List 1994:

Major Christine Helen Merrington-Rust MBE
Sergeant Ann Lisbeth Sayer MBE
Corporal Tracey Gifford MBE
Corporal Debbie Ann Driver MBE

Captain Carol Erica Travers Burnell on receiving a Joint Commanders Commendation for service on Operation HAMDEN in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia 11 May-17 Nov 93.

Colonel (Retired) Sue Wing who was ordained on Sunday 3 July 1994 at The Cathedral Church of Christ, Canterbury. Sue was supported by her mother, June, (ex ATS), many other relatives and many friends at the Ordination of Deacons and of Priests. She will service the parishes of SS Peter and Paul, Appledore with St Augustine, Brookland and St Thomas A' Becket, Fairfield and St Eanswith, Brenzett with St Dunstan, Snargate and St Mary, Kenardington.

Captain (Retired) Evelyn Anne Irvine on reaching the semi finals of Radio 4s "Brain of Britain 1994".

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CALLING ALL OFFICERS

If you have not booked in for the Officers Lunch at Worthy Down on Saturday 17 September 94 please do so as soon as possible (Telephone: 0252 355583 to register your name).

The subject of a ~~PDF Compressor Free Version~~ WRAC Officers Dining Club (explained below) will be discussed at that meeting.

WRAC OFFICERS - DINING CLUB

At the final meeting of the WRAC HQ Mess the idea of forming a WRAC Officers' Dining Club was floated with considerable support. Two years on, with the encouragement of many officers who attended the WRAC Association reunion, I am attempting to implement the proposal.

First thoughts are to organise two dinners a year, one in the north and one in the south probably based in a large hotel which can provide a good meal and accommodation at a competitive rate. This may encourage younger members with families to attend.

The Club would have to be self supporting financially and an annual subscription of £5.00 will cover basic administrative expenses.

I now need to gauge the level of genuine support and canvas ideas for suitable venues or alternative suggestions. If you wish to Join, please complete the proforma and return it to me by 30 September 1994.

Not all ex-WRAC Officers are members of the WRAC Association so please do photocopy this notice and send it to your friends who may also be interested in this new venture.

VAL TROUT

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB

Lt Col (Retd) V E Trout
Maybank
28 London Road
Amesbury
Wilts
SP4 7DY

I support the idea of a dining club and wish to register. My cheque for £5.00 made payable to WRAC Officers' Dining Club is enclosed.

I would like to make the following suggestions in respect of possible venues or other related matters:

SIGNED ADDRESS

NAME

RANK/TITLE

RETURN BY 30 SEPTEMBER 1994 PLEASE TEL. NO:

NOTES FROM DIRECTOR WOMEN (ARMY)

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BRIGADIER J M ROULSTONE
Director Women (Army)

This is my last contribution to 'Lioness' because, as reported in the previous edition, the Directorate's functions are to be assumed later this year by a new Equal Opportunities Branch under the Director of Manning. Arrangements for the staffing of the Branch, to be headed by a Colonel, are well in hand, but at the time of writing are not yet public.

Undoubtedly, the last two years have been a challenging and interesting period in which women in the Army are to be commended for the remarkably positive way in which they have adapted to integration. I acknowledge that this has not necessarily been easy and there are still obstacles to be overcome. However, my advisory and monitoring role has enabled me to speak first hand to many female officers and soldiers of all ranks throughout the Commands. Hearing their frank and honest views has proved extremely informative and helpful in developing policies to help them. For example, the Army's policy on sexual harassment has recently been widely promulgated. This forms a keystone in reinforcing the rights of individuals to enjoy Army life free from harassment. In addition, the difficulties of women being able to perform the full range of duties in some of the more physically demanding employments is now widely recognised. This is being addressed by the development of Gender Free Physical Assessment (GFPA) to be introduced into the Army in 1995. GFPA will be the same for men and women, being devised on a gender free basis. The tests will be administered at an early stage in selection and recruit training, and prior to final allocation to Army or Service. They will therefore be critical in sifting and suiting individuals, male or female, to employments that match their physical potential.

On a more general note, it is clear that despite its unique role, the Army must continue to adapt to change at an ever increasing pace. Of particular importance is the requirement to keep abreast of national legislation largely stemming from European Community Directives, to ensure that our legal and equal opportunity obligations are understood and implemented accordingly.

Of particular relevance to the employment of women is the EC Pregnant Workers Directive due to be implemented in the UK by 19 October this year, which will have far reaching implications, especially in terms of the health and safety of pregnant servicewomen whilst still allowing them to compete on equal terms with others in their field of employment, yet not overburdening those who have to take on additional duties. In addition, the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights (TURER) Bill, due to be enacted in October next year, contains a number of clauses which will have a significant impact on equality of opportunity for women. There is still considerable work to be completed before the enactment of the bill, but the consequences of such legislation should not be underestimated.

This work will be carried forward by the new M4(A) Equal Opportunities Branch when it is formed later this year. However, it is important to understand that the Branch will not only deal with women's issues but will have a wider remit encompassing all aspects of equal opportunities in the Army. This acknowledges the high profile which equal opportunities has now rightly assumed in military life and reflects the civilian experience.

Finally, I am confident that the future is set to ensure that our high calibre young women have employment and career opportunities commensurate with their abilities and aspirations on an equal footing with their male counterparts. I wish all women in the Army, wherever they may be serving, every good fortune and success in their careers.

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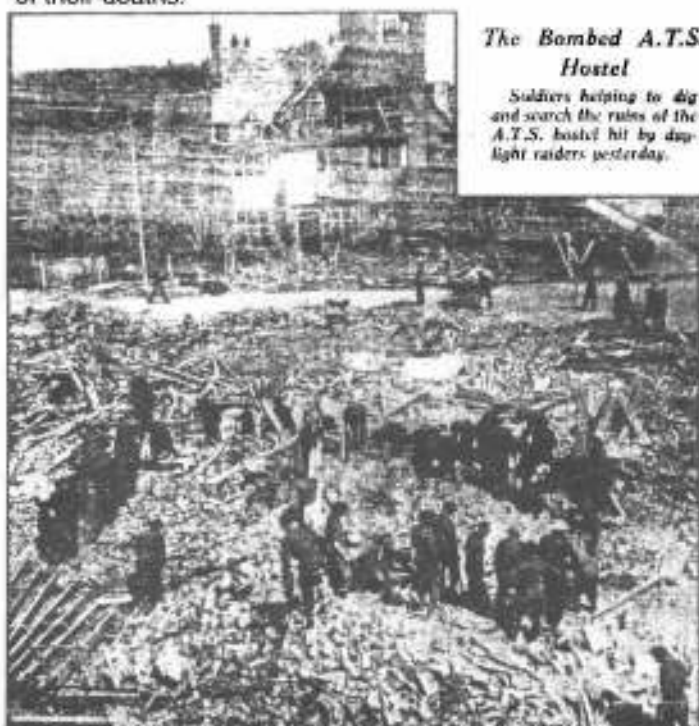
COMMEMORATION AT GREAT YARMOUTH by Mrs Joan Awbery

11 May 1994 is a day which will be long remembered by the families and friends of the twenty-six girls whose deaths in 1943 were at last commemorated. Having grieved over the loss of a dearly loved one for the past fifty-one years, many felt that this recognition brought about a fitting climax.

As those present will know, the appearance of so many former members of the ATS from all over the country and ex-service Associations from far and wide with the comradeship that we all remember from our service days, made it a most moving and memorable occasion and their support was greatly appreciated by the relatives.

During the evening of May 10th several sisters, brothers, cousins, nephews and nieces of the girls, staying overnight at Great Yarmouth, gathered in the hotel where there were many emotional meetings. Mrs Meg Watson and I were at last able to speak to those whom we had only known through letters and telephone conversations. Not only was it with others who had suffered the same loss but, as in the case of Private Elizabeth Mackay, the eight members who came met together for the first time in fifty years. Other families, too, were re-united. Travelling from Stornoway, Mrs Macleod, sister of Private Anna Macleod, came with her daughter, also named Anna; Mrs Pollock, sister of Private Jessica Lewis, came from Cornwall. Nine members of the family of Private Doris Wimbush came from Northampton. Mrs Marsland, a niece of Private Kathleen Gaunt brought along a photograph of Kathleen. On her last leave Kathleen asked her mother to keep her engagement ring safely at home; she never returned, and Kathleen Marsland, named after her aunt, was wearing the engagement ring. Mrs Marsland brought also an autograph book in which several of the girls had contributed a verse or a line; one of those who had written in the book was Sgt Myra Waite, who as Mrs Swaby was present at the commemoration. It was wonderful that so many relations had been able to travel from far and wide and it seemed that almost every part of the country was represented.

The relatives and friends had such stories to tell each other that it was obvious that the lapse of fifty-one years had not dimmed the memory of their loved ones, nor the shock of their deaths.



The Bombed A.T.S. Hostel

Soldiers helping to dig and search the ruins of the A.T.S. hostel hit by daylight raiders yesterday.

(London Evening News 12 May 1943)

During the morning of May 11th, the Adjutant General's Corps Band played a concert in the Market Square. They had a very large and appreciative audience and made the townsfolk of Great Yarmouth aware of the occasion for which the Band was present.

At 1 pm with low clouds, and a cold wind blowing off the North Sea which chilled us all, the Parade of some 50 Standards with a very large number of ex-servicewomen and men formed up under the guidance of three Parade Marshals, and to the accompaniment of stirring marches from the AGC Band, marched along the sea-front to the site of the plaque. The numbers taking part in the Parade were far greater than could ever have been anticipated with the Standards flying in the breeze and everyone so smart, taking such pride in their bearing, it was a most wonderful and emotional sight. Our own Mrs Edith Ellett, a member of the Yarmouth group, proudly bore the ATS Standard at the head of the parade accompanied by the Queen's Colour on her right and the King's Colour on her left.



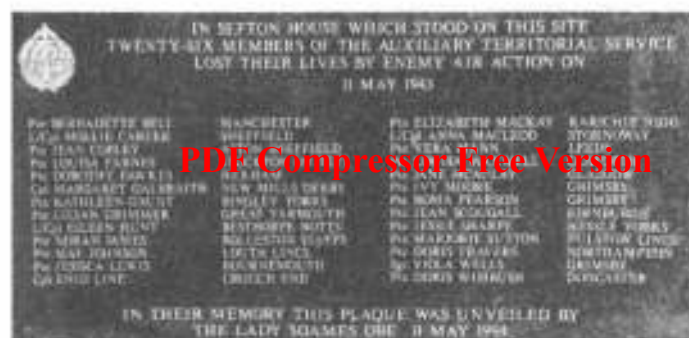
*The Parade forms up
Front row Mrs Joyce Hales, Mrs Elsie Blanchflower
and Mrs Edna Dodds*

We were very proud and honoured that The Lady Soames accepted our invitation to unveil the plaque. She, accompanied by Brigadier Anne Field, inspected the parade, stopping to speak to so many people.

In his opening prayer, Father John Reid called upon us to "Pray for the 26 members of the Auxiliary Territorial Service who lost their lives by enemy air action on this location 51 years ago, remembering also the 12 young men killed in the same raid, to pray for their relatives, those who had come today, those not able to travel and those who had gone before us. To pray especially for those who still grieve and suffer the loss of their loved ones".

The first lesson was read by Mrs Enid Simmons, who as Corporal Bennett, had been one of those commended for devotion to duty at the time of the raid. The second lesson was read by Miss Audrey Told, of the Norfolk and Suffolk Branch, who had planned the Service.

In her address, The Reverend Mair Talbot described the events of that day 11 May 1943 - "And so we have come here today to unveil a plaque to those who gave their lives in the service of their country ... we have come to remember people ... people like you and me, with families to love them and to mourn their loss; people with human feelings, just like you and me. We are pondering before Almighty God the Creator, the infinite value of each child of his creation. We are valuing human life in what we are doing today, and we are praying for all victims of war. We are committing them to God and sharing in his valuing of each one of them; we are praying for ourselves, and if and when the day comes that we have to show courage and unselfishness to resist evil when it threatens then we will be doing just that. We are asking for courage to be brave in whatever comes to us in order that we may stand up for good and for the value of life that God has given us..."



The Plaque

Lady Soames, unveiling the plaque, said "Conscious of the great honour placed in my hands, on behalf of you all and in particular those whose relations' names are inscribed on this plaque, I shall now unveil this memorial in pride, in loving remembrance and in great gratitude".

This was the first occasion for all to see a very splendid memorial. It is of dark polished granite, headed by the ATS crest in gold leaf, with all the twenty-six girls' names and home towns incised and painted silver.

Lady Soames laid beautiful flowers, pale roses, carnations and sweet peas, followed by Mrs Elizabeth Hunt who, as Private Norcup, was commended for devotion to duty, laying flowers "From all former ATS comrades".

Mrs Margaret Wilson then read the names of all the girls and Mr Brian Gibbs, Royal Signals Corps Association, the names of the twelve men who died.

It was a very beautiful and dignified service.

Afterwards wreaths, flowers and crosses were laid at the foot of the plaque in the name of relatives and friends of our Branches, and of men's ex-service Associations. During this ceremony, the Band played the ATS theme 'Greensleeves' which brought forth many an emotional memory.

Later more than five hundred people gathered in the hotel and there were many great and joyous reunions among Association members and meetings with friends some had not seen since their service days.

Brigadier Field introduced Lady Soames who, in welcoming relatives and friends and ATS comrades, said she was honoured to share this proud day with relations and friends of the girls who so sadly lost their lives in 1943. "Their memories have always been separately alive in the hearts of their families and close friends and it is remarkable and moving that so many of you have, despite difficulties of distance and in some cases, frailty, managed to be here today. It has taken over half a century before a lasting memorial to those who died has been placed here at the scene of their sacrifice as a focus of sadness and pride of those who loved them".

Lady Soames thanked Mr Valentine Grimble "without whose far-reaching and painstaking research the full story would not perhaps have been told" and for the support of WRAC Association Branches nationwide for helping in the search for relatives and friends and their contributions towards the plaque and expenses of the day and thanked too the officials and townsfolk of Great Yarmouth, the clergy, the police and organisations, both military and civil present at what had been an intensely moving and memorable occasion.

Lady Soames welcomed the presence of Mrs Enid Simmons and Mrs Elizabeth Hunt, both of whom had been commended for devotion to duty in maintaining communications throughout the whole day and night and dealing faultlessly with the heavy signals traffic at the time of the raid.

She continued ... "Now the plaque is in place, our flowers are reverently laid, our thoughts and prayers gathered in the beautiful service of remembrance and soon we will disperse to our various homes. Is there anything left that we should do? I think there is. With us here today are not only the relations and friends and contemporaries of those who died in this tragic incident over half a century ago, in an episode which was part of the pattern of war-time suffering and loss endured by our nation for five long years, but today those who remember from personal experience have been joined by younger relations and friends and by quite a number of young people outside, who are certainly not of our generation. There is I think something that we can all do, whatever generation we belong to. Stop for a moment to reflect what a high price was paid in those war-time years to secure for us our lives in a free country. Down the years in these lives come the voices of those who did not come home:

"When you go home, remember us and say - for your tomorrow we gave our today".

"Look around at the unstinting service that is freely given to millions of good causes ... those who give their professional lives to the care and betterment of our society. This desire to serve in some way our fellow men and women in the community in which we find ourselves is one of the brightest faces of patriotism, and despite the troubles and faults in our society ... yet, in our nation the spirit of service is very much alive and shines brightly. Let us, young or old, cherish and burnish it. We can all do something. Let us recall President Kennedy's words; 'Ask not what your country can do for you, ask rather what you can do for your country'.

If we get that answer right, that will be the best memorial of all for those for whom, with pride and honour, we remember today".

Lady Soames' speech was received with great appreciation.



The Lady Soames talking to Mrs Lucy Bowyer

Our London, Ontario Branch, also held a service on that day. A recent letter from their Secretary, Mrs Marjorie Brough, described the occasion. All their members attended, of former ATS in the city. As the local press had made a mention of the forthcoming service, Mrs Brough had a telephone call from Mr Les Davison, asking if he might attend as he had been with 195 Field Ambulance Corps stationed Great Yarmouth and was one of those who helped in the rescue attempt. He was able to describe graphically the events of that day. Another gentleman made contact - he was the cousin of one of the 12 men killed in the same raid. A further coincidence was that Mrs Brough's own neighbour had been, at the time of the bombing, living just north of Great Yarmouth.

The Reverend Frank Manz conducted the service and

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ONTARIO BRANCH

Left to Right: Hilda Kenny, Enid Latham

Front: Margaret Carson

Rear: Edith Street, Doreen Metcalf, Marjorie Brough, Joyce Lang



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spoke of the great sacrifice made by those killed. Speaking of the ages of the girls he said "They hadn't lived, their whole lives were ahead of them". He thanked all those who served during the war, those who still lived and those who had died, for their dedication. He went on "We in Canada owe them so much, where would we be without their sacrifice?" After the Last Post he read out the names of the girls and a member of the Association each placed a flower before the altar.

It was one more tribute paid by so many on that memorable day and a fitting conclusion to an episode that had lain forgotten for so long by all but the grieving families who now know of the sympathy and support of countless people throughout this country and beyond.

THE TENBY MEMORIAL GATES

On Thursday 26 May 1994 badges of the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Women's Royal Army Corps were added to the gates of the War Memorial in Tenby, Dyfed, South Wales. The gates had been manufactured by the Workshop of the Royal School of Artillery to commemorate the closing of the School of Anti-Aircraft Artillery at Manorbier in 1972 and had the badges of the Royal Artillery, Royal Signals and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers on them. It was Major Joan Theresa Crooke who had noted the omission of the ATS and WRAC badges and put up a project to have this remedied. Major Crooke had been in both the ATS and WRAC. She was conscripted as a private in the ATS in 1942 and rose to be a Senior Commander by 1947. In 1949 she obtained a regular commission in the WRAC. She had commanded the WRAC unit at Manorbier from 1960 to 1962 before becoming Second-in-Command at the WRAC Centre in Guildford. She retired in 1968 to nurse an ailing mother but later rejoined the Army as a Retired Officer.

Because of her desire to have the service by women at Manorbier from 1943 to 1972 recognised she approached the Director WRAC and after obtaining the permission of the Mayor of Tenby to add to the existing gates, the workshops of the Royal School of Artillery at Larkhill agreed to make the badges. The workshops are commanded by Major D R Chapman REME, and Lance Corporal P Hinchcliffe actually made the badges.

Sadly Major Crooke died on 20 December 1993 before the project was complete but her brother was able to represent her at the handover ceremony on 26 May.

Brigadier M S Rutter-Jerome, Commandant of the Royal School of Artillery, handed over the badges to the Mayor of Tenby, Councillor Lewis Day, at the ceremony. As well as Major Crooke's brother, Major Margaret Athoe and Mrs Veronica Barrington were at the Ceremony representing the Association.

The project was financed by grants from the Royal Artillery Institution, the WRAC Association and the late Major Joan Crooke's estate.



*MEMORIAL GATES AT TENBY
WITH ATS AND WRAC BADGES ADDED*

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UNITED NATIONS - VIEW FROM THE VITEZ POCKET
by Lieutenant Frances Susan Pennell AGC(SPS)

When I volunteered to join the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards in Bosnia, way back in the mud of a wet Soltau exercise, I didn't think I would be given the opportunity. Luckily, Lt Col Peter Williams (Commanding Officer 1 Bn Coldstream Guards) called my bluff and I joined the Battalion in January. Employed as a primary watchkeeper, I worked mainly in the Operations Room but did stand in as Adjutant at times. The Coldstream Guards (BRITBAT 1) part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) have their base in what used to be the school in the small village of Stari Bila near Vitez. The playground is now a sea of mud, after hundreds of Aid trucks parked there during the winter. The engineers have made many modifications to the rest of the school to make it suitable for an operational base. The accommodation is simple; the soldiers live in ISO city and the SNCOs and officers in a series of houses rented from the local population. The rest of the school has been "hardened" to ensure minimum damage should any incoming rounds impact within the perimeter.

During my 4 months in Vitez there were remarkable changes. When I first arrived the war was ongoing, the Vitez Pocket was still in a stage of flux and there were a series of small offensives by both sides. The Battle of Santici (a small village to the east of Vitez) was just one example of the small localised offensives launched by both sides. It was watched from afar by several members of BRITBAT, as spectators in someone else's war. Signs of the war and ethnic cleansing are everywhere: bullet riddled houses, burnt-out houses, destruction and the devastation. The lack of normal civilian movement at the beginning of the tour was evident, but once the ceasefire was established, freedom of movement was introduced for civilians, though this was a gradual move as both combatants wanted to maintain control over the civilians and had fairly ex-Communist approaches to many problems!

Our mission was to facilitate the delivery of aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina: to that end, BRITBAT provided security on the Main Supply Routes and support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The routes all have nicknames, hence reports of ROUTES DIAMOND, TRIANGLE, MONCK and PACMAN as well as countless others that run over the UNPROFOR area. During the winter the harsh conditions - snow, ice and very cold temperatures - meant the aid convoys and UNPROFOR resupply convoys took up to three days to move from the coast, north to Vitez or to the UNHCR warehouse in Zenica. During this time the war was ongoing and BRITBAT armoured vehicles were constantly in demand to secure the route and escort convoys through trouble spots. Perhaps the most famous of these trouble spots is "Bon Bon" corner. This is in the area of Lisac and Opara on ROUTE DIAMOND, where women and children regularly held up convoys with improvised blockades and then raided them. At its worst, soldiers fired shots over the crowds and then the civilians stripped the vehicles of anything worth taking! At other points on the route UNPROFOR vehicles were sniped at from bunkers and there were some very near misses and two casualties, one shot through the shoulder and another through his boot. In the end BRITBAT fired 30mm HE into the bunkers which stopped it for a while!

As a watchkeeper my tasks were primarily to coordinate the flow of convoys north and south on the Routes and act as a point of contact for all the BRITBAT Liaison Officers. Additionally I tasked callsigns to escort convoys through problem areas, and ensured convoys were able to pass on narrow parts of the route. At the same time the Operations room kept an eye on the military activity in the area, and

watched the military progress of both sides. The military tactics of the Croats and Muslims were fascinating, almost First World War tactics, but with a few modern weapons.

After the signing of the Peace Accord the efforts of BRITBAT 1 turned to setting up UN checkpoints on all major routes where they entered the Vitez Pocket; these were jointly manned by Muslims, Croats and UNPROFOR. Additionally, the Liaison Officers mapped the confrontation lines in conjunction with Officers from both sides, and confidence building patrols were sent out, to enforce both the separation of forces and search for weapons over 12.7mm. These weapons had to be removed to either a Weapon Collection Point and Active Site or moved out of the Exclusion Zone laid down by the Peace Accord. The Weapon Collection Points allowed weapons over 12.7mm to be rounded up and deactivated; the Active Sites were set up to allow Muslims or Croats to return fire against the Serbs (BSA) but not each other, to that end Artillery observers were located at each Active Site to ensure the accuracy of the fire - possibly for the first time during the war! The ceasefire turned the emphasis onto the provision of civilian utilities and the re-establishment of the local infrastructure. In many cases the root of the problems lay on the other side of a confrontation line, caused by the opposing faction. In trying to aid negotiations a series of Joint Commission meetings were set up at all levels to coordinate the move from war to peace and military to civil authority. These meetings brought together both the Military leaders and their civilian counterparts to - discuss the implementation of the Peace Plan.

At the beginning of their tour the Coldstream Guards had one Company in Gornji Vakuf and the rest of the Battalion in Vitez. As time went on and the area expanded the Battalion dispersed. With the arrival of the Augmentation force of BRITBAT 2 (the Duke of Wellington's Regiment Battlegroup), the deployment of the Battalion expanded. No 2 Company spent over 10 weeks in Sarajevo as part of General Sir Michael Rose's force to enforce the Ceasefire. Number 3 Company pushed north to Maglaj to provide security for UNHCR in Maglaj and Tescanj, C Squadron Light Dragoons established a base at Zepce and were the link between Vitez and Maglaj. Alma Company DWR)D Squadron Light Dragoons and an attached Belgian Company were allocated areas in an around the Vitez Pocket while No 1 Company retained Control of the Main Supply Route under control of BRITBAT 2. As a result all battalion watchkeepers had a busy time keeping an eye on the 5 company size sub units under the control of BRITBAT 1 and the two detached Coldstream Guards companies.

It was a time of great change for Central Bosnia and great progress was made towards peace. It was a very interesting time to be serving under the United Nations Blue Flag.



*19 COUNTY OF LONDON PLATOON ATS,
HOBBS BARRACKS, LINGFIELD. MARCH 1940*

COUNTY OF LONDON ATS
by Mrs Penny Riddy (nee Penson)

The 19th County of London Platoon ATS was, on formation in about December 38, attached to Artst's Rifles. We were embodied at Dukes Road on 1 September 1939 but mid-September were attached to our War time unit, the Training Battalion Irish Guards, and via Coulsdon where we were under canvas, and Woolwich where 30 women and one officer occupied the former house of a Brigadier, we arrived at Hobbs Barracks Lingfield during a very cold and snowy February where the contractors were still finishing the camp, but by 17 March the parade ground was ready for the St Patrick's Day Parade, which included the ATS platoon.

Of the December 1938 nucleus of the platoon I can name Edna Anderson, Kay Burn, Doris East, Megan Evans, Theo George Davies, Gwen House, Kay Jones, Pam Lumsden, 'Penny' Penson, Joan Say and Catherine Watts. Sadly, I read of Megan Tucker's death in the last issue of the Lioness and Catherine Hasting is in this one. I wonder if anyone in the group will see the photo, if they do and would like to contact me I am in the Richmond, Surrey telephone directory under M D Riddy. I lost touch with Theo Wheeler, (nee George Davies) (not in the picture, she was on detachment) a long time ago, does anyone know of her? After more than fifty years, I still remember the kindness with which the Guards treated us, entirely regimental, but we were given a wonderful grounding in military traditions which must have

influenced the rest of our wartime service, I counted the 18 months I was with them a great privilege.



*19 COUNTY OF LONDON PLATOON AIR RAID
PRECAUTIONS*

CITY OF LONDON UNITS
by Mrs Ivy Bracegirdle (nee Sheppard)

I am always interested to read all the news in the Lioness and in the latest edition No 1/94 there was news of Mrs V E Duckett (nee "Flips" nickname "Flip" 153 Strocker Road, Chelmsford, Essex. She claims that the 11th City of London Yeomanry were the first unit to wear the City of London shoulder flash of the city sword.

This claim is not correct as the Lord Mayor of London at the time of the formation of the ATS in 1938 gave permission for all City of London ATS Units to wear the flash, which was considered an honour! I joined the ATS and there were so many applications to become members of the Platoon (only 23 members) that I had to join as an Orderly instead of a Clerk. I was called up the last week in August 1938 and posted to Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, London, where I was employed as an Orderly from 7am to 12 noon and as a Clerk (amending King's Regulations) from 2 to 6pm!! pay 1/4d. per day but after a week I was promoted to Clerk at the much higher rate of 2/6d. per day. I was only at Wellington Barracks for a week as the London Rifle Brigade were a front line Unit and they were posted elsewhere and our ATS Platoon went to Slough with the MTSD.

April 1940 I was posted with the BEF in France to a little village, St Etienne near Nantes, with an ATS contingent of cooks, orderlies and clerks and attached to RASC. We were only there from April to June 1940 as the Germans approached so quickly through France and we had to be evacuated very swiftly and wondered if we would get away and decided if we were unlucky enough to be caught we would burn our uniform and become a deaf and dumb nudist colony! We were a platoon of 23 occupying a Nissen hut.

Thanks to the Army and Navy we were transported through France to Le Mans, where we met up with other ATS units from all over France and finally arrived at Le Havre. There was considerable bombing here and we finally boarded a troopship in the evening and were all night on the ship in the Channel, not being able to get into Southampton at night as the waters were mined. Back in England just two days after the capitulation to a Training Centre where the recruits gave up their ration of water so that we could all have a bath. After a medical examination it was home on seven days leave and then a posting to Chatham in Kent where I stayed during the Battle of Britain. This was quite hair-raising at times and I was actually employed on Shorts Aerodrome and actually there when it was strafed from top to bottom. We saw many of the "dog fights" over Kent and experienced a great deal of bombing, and was then posted to a quieter place - Warley Barracks in Essex and by this time in 1941/42 I was promoted to Sgt.

I still hankered after an overseas posting and towards the end of 1942 was selected to become one of the members of No 1 East Africa Clerical Company, but we were not of course told of our Company and destination. There were 150 of us, all very keen and although the journey, in convoy, was long and tedious we managed to have lots of fun and we still hold a reunion every year for both No 1 and No 2 Clerical Companies in London, but alas our numbers are greatly depleted.

When I was discharged in 1946 for family reasons, although married, it seemed to be almost a disgrace and when I returned to UK it was difficult to find two Warrant Officers as escorts!!

Life in the ATS was quite a wonderful experience and I made many friends (if anyone recognises me please write) and I now belong to the Colchester Branch of WRAC/ATS and here there is that great feeling of comradeship.

MEMORIES
by Mrs D M Crussell nee Bardwell

I was most surprised to see in Lioness No 2/93 on page 68 a photograph of Frances Nunnally (nee Huppert) taken in Torquay 1944. I also have photographs taken at the same place, same wall, of myself and other ATS ladies (friends) sitting on the same wall, perhaps one photographer took all photos. I was stationed in Torquay 1943-1944 I was on the permanent staff of Southern Command Holding Unit - ATS personnel were sent to us for posting perhaps through illness, defaulting, girls waiting for posting abroad etc. Girls were sent to us to sort out for jobs, for various units. We were like a sorting unit for jobs and arranging transport, food, telegrams to the units at which the girls would be arriving, and as you can imagine it was a very rewarding job. We saw and handled so many women each week. We left Torquay and went to South Wigston, Leicester, then Devizes, Wiltshire (another story), then to Aldermaston Court, Berks. I was eventually demobbed at Guildford, Surrey.

I took my training at Talavera ATS Training Centre, Northampton. My sister Jean was a telephonist there on the Permanent Staff, her telephone exchange was in an underground bunker. The girls on shifts even had to sleep there, although they had other quarters in Barrack Huts for off duty. I joined my sister on the permanent staff after my Company had passed out. I was in the Sick Bay at the time and so stayed on at Talavera Camp on Staff in with my sister in her Barracks, till the camp closed and I was sent to SC Holding Unit, Torquay. My sister went to Luton and was later discharged, because of ill health, through living in Nissen huts, ankle deep in water. We used to call it 'Little Russia' as our clothes and our bedding were always damp. She was discharged about four months before her wedding (which got tongues wagging!) but she had asthma and bronchitis and still gets a pension now. Jean, my sister, met and married her husband Bill in Northampton, and now lives there. Her husband's friend who was my boyfriend at the time, a Pilot Officer married a local Northampton girl. We often see him when visiting my sister and brother-in-law, when we visit Northampton RAF Club. I've always believed our lives are mapped out for us, I don't know who by though.



Pte Bardwell (now Mrs Crussell) Torquay 1943

MORE ON THE OLDEST ATS
by Mrs Sybil Kirkus (nee Heilds)

My memories of Private Eley Wybergh BEM differ slightly from those on page 16 of Lioness No 1/94. Those came from the Company Office, mine come from ground level auxiliaries.

We were stationed with her at 'Liverwood', Curzon Park, Chester in what was the Chief Engineers Accounts Office (CEAO) at Western Command. The CO was Major Johnson and the RSM was WO1 Vera Bagnall (later Hoyland). They were known somewhat irreverently as "Baggie & Johnnie" and kept us hard at work for long hours.

When off duty we had the chance to go to parties in Chester at Quaintways and Clemences, the Red Cross and sometimes to the US base at Oulton Park. We were furious to discover that Private Wybergh had confiscated the iron! Lance Corporal Rita Tinker pulled rank and pointing to her one stripe said "See this Wybergh, go and get the iron so that the girls can press their skirts - now!"



When the US troops came to a pre D-Day party Wybergh chose to go to her sleeping quarters across the lawn in front of the party. Clad in a voluminous white flannel nightie with her white hair billowing in the breeze, she brought some unforgettable expressions to the Americans' faces! Apparently when she was detailed to attend for the award of her BEM she declined on the grounds that it was her "Laundry Day". Truly a remarkable woman.

The photo of Pte Wybergh came from Miss Irene Walker, her Company Commander.

SECRET INTELLIGENCE
by Winifred M Deacon (nee Goodyear)
(aged 97 years)

(Readers will recall Mrs Deacon's article on the First World War in Lioness No 1/94 at page 5. She has sent a photograph of herself in uniform with an Army Service Corps (ASC) cap badge and further reminiscences. She was famous for refusing to buy a poppy on the grounds that in 1918 politicians promised that it was "a war to end all wars" but started another one 21 years later).



When the second World War started a man came to the door and asked to see my husband. I thought it strange that he did not give me his name but I fetched my husband from his study. I went to make a coffee as I had just finished my evening work in the kennels we had.

My husband came to tell me that he had been asked to be of service again and we were to use the kennels as part of the background. We were asked to open a pet shop in Torquay and he was to travel around the country with a permit anywhere to get meat, biscuits or sacks of damaged brown flour, and the people who had dogs stood in all kinds of weather in a queue for sometimes only a lb of biscuits and meat when a notice was put in the window. Other days I sold all kinds of articles for animals, trimmed coats and shampooed, gave advice because I had worked with Captain Rance, a very clever vet where I lived in Totnes, and my kennels and land were commandeered to make a wide road outside the town because tanks could not pass under the archway up the main street if Dartmouth was attacked. We had two shops destroyed by bombs, another burnt out. My husband had told me that the sacks had parts of the 'radar' in them which were assembled outside near Babbacombe, and were all along the channel. One was in a house on top of the cliff on Torquay front. The Germans had their intelligence all along the coast and one day as I was

serving the rations out to the customers, one of two ladies (always dressed as children's nurses, dark grey suit, white blouse and black tie, hand knitted stockings and flat shoes) asked me where was Captain Deacon? He was a very charming, educated man and all the pet owners were fond of him. He had no rank or title. I just said "I think he has gone to near Plymouth to the abattoir where the hounds for the hunting were kept".

I told my husband and he replied "Oh, we'll leave the sprats alone - we are after the mackerel". Because we realised we were being suspected, we closed the kennels and moved to a flat in Montpellier Road, Torquay. A short time after that a flight of German planes on the Sunday morning came over St Mary's Church and severely bombed the town and one came over to drop a surface bomb on the tennis court of our kennels. I should have lost my life as half of the house was destroyed. The Radars were assembled just outside Babbacombe.

I knew what is now called D-Day was being arranged because my husband as a special Constable had been absent from home several days and one night told me to prepare to take my two daughters and their babies across the road to a friend's very safe dug out, and not to use any light whatsoever. I stayed to the last and, when I went onto the balcony which overlooked the sea front and harbour, I saw against the faint light of the night, many ships of all types on the sea. I locked the door and went into the shelter. I did not speak of it and I did not see my husband for some time. No one had known until I was loudly rebuked in Paignton because I refused to buy a poppy. I told her old soldiers did not want charity but a decent pension, and I wrote to our "Westender", a very interesting local newspaper, in answer to a letter that was printed about Poppy Day. It was the first time I had broken my silence, but I had read a book by Katherine Gaskin who writes about radars along the coast. One was in a house on the cliff overlooking the Torquay Harbour, so I am not disclosing any 'secret intelligence'.

NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND **by Mrs Lily Roberts (nee Cooke)**

I enlisted on the 8th July 1941 at Croydon going on to do my basic training at Aldermaston, at the same time as Mary Churchill, the daughter of Sir Winston Churchill. Then it was to be Corsham Ammunition Depot, in the Signals as a switchboard operator. From there I volunteered for overseas duty and ended up at GHQ Cairo.

On route to the Middle East my contingent was off loaded in Durban, South Africa whilst awaiting another ship. The powers that be found jobs for us, the clerks clearing a backlog of military mail and us switchboard operators ended up doing a variety of jobs in the forces canteens, like cutting up fruit for operate.

During this time, I met my husband to be, an RAF Flt/Sgt who had just finished his tour of overseas duty and was in transit awaiting a ship back home. I had only known him three days when he asked me to marry him. I said yes, never thinking we would get married in Durban. However, all obstacles were brushed aside by my fiancé, we got married by special licence after first obtaining permission from our officers.

The ATS had been distributed in various hotels - how luxurious it all was, the abundance of food, the exotic fruits and lights on everywhere, so different from a dark and dreary war torn London. The hotel that I was in, along with two other ATS girls, offered to put on a wedding breakfast for however many people we wished to invite all at no charge. It was a fabulous meal but little did I eat as I was so excited, all the hotel guests kept showering us with kisses and best wishes. My own officer bought me a nightdress - real silk!

The honeymoon, eight days on a very romantic island called Isipingo, paid for by an advance in pay, how lucky we were to get that. My new husband proclaimed he wasn't going home without me, knowing that I was going to the Middle East, he said he'd wangle another posting having already done the Middle East, Greece and Burma. So in spite of everyone saying he couldn't do it, he ended up in Heliopolis some two months after I left Durban (July 44). Duties permitting we were able to get a sleeping out pass at weekends. I left the Middle East when I was expecting my first child, leaving my husband behind. Back in London the flying bombs had begun.

In 1952 my husband and two sons came out to New Zealand. I had my husband for 45 years when he died of cancer. He never could settle after coming out of the RAF, which he had joined as a boy apprentice and risen through the rank to a Flt/Lt. He joined the RNZAF as a Corporal and finished as a Sqdn/Ldr.

Since joining the British ATS Club here in Auckland, I have met two others who were in the Middle East, Agnes Milne (nee Head 769091) and Norah Shucksmith (nee Good 4108842), both having since died of cancer. Although I never new them in those days Agnes did show me some photos of girls she worked with and I knew all of them but Agnes couldn't recall me. The only names I can recall are Kath Knott and Bunny Warren - both at Corsham and the Middle East. Betty Sykes was my Sgt at Corsham.

We have a great group in Auckland and spend much time reminiscing about our days at Hellfires Corner and in Belgium, Germany etc. as well. We continue to parade each year to mark ANZAC and Armistice Day.

I look forward to maybe hearing from someone who has been able to recall me. Do please write to Lily Roberts, 14 Alan Avenue, Henderson, Auckland 8, New Zealand.



DURBAN 1943
Lily Roberts (nee Cooke) and Kath Knott

THE 31st COUNTY OF LONDON COMPANY
by Mrs Dorothea Colver (nee Moran)

When I left Chatham Garrison in January 1945, I was the last of the original group of volunteers who had made up the 31st County of London Company. Now it was a large general duties company which serviced Kitchener and Brompton Barracks, the School of Military Engineering, the Garrison HQ and many other offices in the Chatham area.

Thinking back, it all started in September 1938. It was the day of the Munich Agreement and London was preparing for war. Sandbags were appearing in front of Whitehall buildings, children were being evacuated, ARP workers were getting organised. I was walking past a TA Drill Hall, near Victoria Street when the Sgt Major talked me into going inside and filling in a form to join the ATS. I told him, with some relief, that I was not yet old enough to join but he persuaded me to add a year to my age. That night Mr Chamberlain returned from Germany with his famous agreement and I thankfully imagined that I would hear no more about being a soldier and going off to war. I was wrong. An order came to report to Scotland Yard. More form filling, still claiming to be of age in spite of being told that it was a Court Martial offence to state an untruth on the form. I was then detailed to a Drill Hall in New Street, Kennington, where I was joined by one other, Mary Scroggins, and we two were lectured and actually drilled, wearing hats and high heels, always expecting more girls to join us. After the Christmas break, we two were transferred to the Braganza Street Drill Hall, near Kennington Park, and there the 31st City of London Coy was formed. We were a very mixed group of secretaries, shorthand typists, clerks, domestic workers and a tailoress ranging in age from seventeen to the late forties. Our officer was a lovely young girl, Miss Rosamund Parker and she was very keen and did a superb

job in training and drilling us into some semblance of a smart ATS company. There was much to learn. After a few months we were issued with our uniform which consisted of a cap, jacket, skirt, two collar attached shirts with matching tie, two pairs of thick khaki stockings and brown Oxford shoes. The "trying on" session was riotous. Nothing fitted and the caps were very odd shapes on account of having been badly packed. I took my uniform to a local tailor and he made quite a good job of altering it to fit, but no way was I going to be seen wearing it in public. I used to carry the jacket and cap in a case to the drill hall.

On the outbreak of war we were ordered to meet at Charing Cross station and eventually arrived at the Daily Express Camp at St Mary's Bay, Dymchurch, Kent. There we were attached to the 163rd OCTU (Artists' Rifles). The training staff were Coldstream Guards and Light Infantry. The ATS were billeted in the large camp pub. Sleeping quarters were in the main bar and the Orderly Room was behind the bar. There was always a heavy smell of stale beer and sea-weed and damp. Although it was only September, the weather turned cold and it rained incessantly. After the thrill of 'going off to war' had worn off there was dreadful home-sickness to contend with. But looking back, the things remember are the funny ones. Like the weekly bath. Having to get the soyer stoves lit to warm the water - outside in a field. It then had to be poured into a hip bath and the water pan re-filled for the next one.

Our first morning we were assigned to our various jobs in the camp and I had to report to the PRIs Office wearing my khaki overall to save my jacket. My overall reached down to my ankles and was belted with brass buttons down the front. Not exactly a pretty sight. The PRI was a Lt Colonel and there were also a Sgt and Cpl in the office which had only just been set up and so we all learned the procedure together. The Artists' Rifles was a very select TA Regiment. Even

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THE FIRST STEP
by a recent, young double amputee

the Privates seemed to be known names in art and the stage etc. They were all eventually commissioned. My 'desk' was a 6ft trestle table covered with a grey blanket and sitting in the middle of it was my typewriter. It was an Oliver machine. The keyboard wasn't standard and so difficult for a touch typist and the noise it made was extreme. As I typed the table would rattle and people had to shout to one another to be heard. Eventually the Colonel said "Enough. In future all letters will be hand-written". Seven copies of each, for all Companies, took a lot of writing.

Our meals were taken in a curtained off section of the Men's Mess. The first breakfast consisted of boiled liver and onions with bread and margarine, next day was kippers. After that all our money was spent on food and trips to Dymchurch for a meal at night.

After a month of wind and rain which made training difficult for the cadets, we were moved along the coast to Risborough Barracks. This was much better. We ATS were put into Risborough House. We had our own cook and orderlies. Cooking was done on a large coal fire with side oven, there was no gas or electric stove. We had a lovely mess-cum-living room with a coal fire which was really luxury after the camp. That winter as early and very severe.

Saturday nights we all used to walk into Folkestone to attend the dance at the Leascliff Hall. One night there the band stopped playing and the manager announced the presence of sailors from the Ajax. They had been in the battle with the Graf Spee and were our first war heroes.

We were issued with gum boots and great-coats of all shapes and sizes - left over from the First World War. Mine was lined with a heavy red woollen cloth and was much appreciated as a bed cover which brings to mind the ritual of going to bed. Our bedrooms were bitterly cold particularly in the morning when we dressed. And so shirts and underwear were neatly folded and placed in the bed to be warm to put on. The skirt was folded beneath the mattress to remove creases and the jacket laid out flat beneath the mattress at the foot of the bed. Of course, shoes had to be polished, also the brass buttons, in readiness for parade and inspection next morning. We had only the one uniform and two shirts. One shirt was sent to the laundry each week and so the other had to be worn for that length of time. They were the most dreadful garments and it was wonderful when the others were later issued.

As nothing seemed to be happening on the war front, we were told we could all go on Christmas leave for two weeks. The first group of our cadets had passed out and been commissioned. The barracks were left with a small caretaker group to get ready for the next input of cadets. In the spring of 1940 we all moved further along the coast, this time to Shornccliffe Camp on St Martins Plain. The ATS once more had the COs house - Underhill House, and again we had our own cook and orderlies. We were an isolated group without an officer except for pay parades. Some of our original members had been posted away, others had decided to return to civilian life. We weren't yet under Military Law and so could leave at any time. There were also some new arrivals.

Early in May the war on the Western Front really started to get serious. It culminated in the Dunkirk evacuation. Across the channel we would see the flashes of explosions at night and then there was the wonderful sight of boats and ships of all sizes and description coming and going all through the days of the battle. It was the most emotional experience to see the troops landing at Dover and Folkestone. It left us feeling very depressed and pessimistic until Mr Churchill rallied us with his "fighting on the beaches" speech. Now the shelling and bombing really got severe and our Cadets were being trained under very difficult conditions. We were warned that invasion was likely and so we

were confined to camp. Every night before "lights out" the cook would distribute all the food left in store. Each of us had a loaf of bread or margarine or tea etc. to put in our kit-bag together with a change of stockings and underwear and toilet bag and towel - nothing more, in readiness for a quick move inland. One night there was a strange bugle call from the camp, then a hammering on the front door. From my ground floor bedroom window I saw that it was RSM Archer. He told us to get out onto the front lawn in five minutes in marching order. So, with respirators at the alert and tin hats and flowing gas capes, which had only just been issued, we made a sorry sight. We had to march to the Officers' Mess which was quite a distance from the Camp. It was a very dark night and we nervously proceeded, all the while expecting parachutists to jump out of the hedges. On arrival at the mess an elderly Lt Col answered the knock on the door. He knew nothing about an invasion and suggested that as the air raid warning was sounding, we had better jump into a trench which ran along the front of the building. In the dark it was an awkward manoeuvre getting down as it was quite deep with a thick layer of very wet mud at the bottom. The all-clear eventually sounded and we saw no sign of enemy activity and so as soon as it got light we marched back to camp. The men were collecting buckets of tea and shaving water from the cookhouse and there was no sign of them having had a disturbed night at all. Back at Underhill House the fire had to be lit before we could have hot water for tea. Most of us went to bed until our breakfast was ready. We were all very late getting to work next morning. It had been a false alarm and reckoned to be good practice.

We soldiered on through 1940 and I know we did a really good job with the OCTU. I had been working for the Chief Instructor for many months and realised that the shelling, which was very frequent, cut down training time for the cadets and it was decided that the OCTU would move to Pwllheli. Our 31st County of London Coy would be split into two. Half, mostly cooks and orderlies, would go to Ripon, the other half to Chatham. The Chatham half would still be the 31st County of London Coy. The blitz was now in full flow and we were a very miserable group who marched to Folkestone Station on a cold, wet afternoon. On arrival at Chatham we were taken to Old Brompton where we were to be quartered in Kings Bastion (small houses, married quarters in peace time). One house was used as a kitchen and living room downstairs, two bedrooms and bathroom upstairs. In our house, six of us lived in the living room which had three double bunks. No other furniture. There was a large fire place, with side oven, but we were ordered not to light it as there was no fuel to spare. But on moonless nights when smoke couldn't be seen, we scavenged for anything which would burn. On our first night the air raid alarm sounded and we had to take shelter. It entailed carrying our blankets down a metal ladder into the moat of the fort, then through a chalk tunnel where there were iron bunks. The smell of damp was sickening and drips of moisture added to the general discomfort. We decided we would rather chance the bombing. We later found out that we could have drowned if the wall at the end of the moat had been breached. After one very noisy night an aerial torpedo was found in the field in front of our quarters. We had actually walked past it on our way to work. Bomb Disposal dealt with it and we heard that it had been packed with rubbish which was fortunate for us.

Gradually all the houses in Kings Bastion were filled with new arrivals from Training Camps. I was working in the Garrison Adjutant's office in Brompton Barracks and within a few weeks a Garrison HQ was formed in a large married quarters building just outside Kitchener Barracks. I was then posted to Dover where I worked for the Brigadier who was

responsible for siting coast artillery. This included the big cross channel guns "Winnie" and "Pooh". The Brigadier had quarters in Dover Castle where, each morning, I had to report for dictation. Each large gun had a book written about it and sometimes the day's dictation almost filled a notebook. Then I had to go down to an office in the casemates which were tunnels in the White Cliffs. There I did my typing etc. It was very exciting work which finished when the Brigadier retired. I was then at SE Command HQ where General Montgomery was our C-in-C. He really got things going operationally and I was pleased to be sent back to Chatham to work for the Garrison Commander. He was busy with the Plan to Defeat Invasion which necessitated frequent exercises to test the Plan and our Home Guard took an active part in these. On the top floor of HQ were pigeon lofts for the carrier pigeons which were sent out daily with messages to District HQ. We also had a 'Beetle' set for wireless messages. One evening, in readiness for a large scale exercise, our local Home Guard came to Garrison HQ to learn about signal procedure and filling in the message forms. Some were unable to attend, the excuse being that they were at sea, testing a submarine which was in the dockyard for repair. It made us realise that they were doing far more dangerous work than many of us in the Forces.

Some mornings we would hear the Royal Marines Band marching down Military Hill and would stand outside our offices to watch them. They were followed by the Navy, marching along with kitbags on their shoulders, to the docks, where they would join their ships for 'hostile waters', sometimes they were off to join the Russian convoys. We were always glad to see them safely home again.

This period reminds me of our first Sgts Mess party. We now had our own Sgts Mess which consisted of two small rooms and a kitchen on the ground floor of a house in Garden Street. We had been invited to Christmas and New Year parties at the local barracks and POs Mess and decided to reciprocate. The bar was stocked up and our cook saved part of our rations for sandwiches etc. As usual we were short of fuel for the fire. I went out to the back of the house looking for anything we could possibly burn in our fireplace and found a lovely thick white wood lavatory seat, chopped in two it would be just the job. I left it in the kitchen to dry out. Gradually all the guests arrived, the gramophone was playing, plates of sandwiches were circulating, when I noticed the fire could do with a little attention. I went out to the kitchen and fetched the lavatory seat and quietly laid it on top of the fire. In a couple of minutes it was burning beautifully. Then the smell hit us. I have never known anything more disgustingly pungent. We had to open all the doors and windows and carried on the party on the pavement outside until the air cleared and we were able to close the windows and return indoors. Funnily enough it made our party the success of the year and we have never forgotten it.

I well remember the night of 5th June 1944. There was a lot of aerial activity and the roads were busy with army transport. I was in bed, asleep, when I was summoned to Garrison HQ to decipher an urgent message. No time to dress, just tin hat and raincoat over dressing gown. The message read "OVERLORD stop OVERLORD" which we knew meant D-Day was upon us. The activity on our roads to the coast had been to give the enemy the impression that the SE coast was going to be used for the operation. Our office orderlies were all sent back to their regiments and also our Staff Officers because now we were no longer operational.

We then had the trauma of the V1s and then the V2s. They seemed worse than bombs and shells, listening for the engines to stop and then waiting for the explosions.

By January 1945 it was a foregone conclusion that the war was coming to an end. I had to go to the War Office for

interview and the outcome was an overseas posting. I had been Garrison Chief Clerk for two years and it had been a really exciting job and there had been wonderful people to work with. I left my old 31st County of London with the good feeling that we had seen the war through together.

I eventually landed at 21 Army Group in Brussels and was among the first ATS to go into Germany. That posting I considered to be the 'icing on the cake'. I often wondered what eventually happened to the 31st County of London (GD) Company ATS.



ATS Continental Group Normandy July 1944

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

Mrs Rita Turner, a member of the Bolton Branch lost her brother during the war when he was serving in the Royal Navy and his ship was sunk. As there was no special remembrance symbol for the men and women of Bolton who gave their lives in the service of their country, Rita decided that it was time something was done. For a long period of time Rita had written to the press. Her letters had appeared but only in a very small way and she received little or no response.

On her brother's birthday last year she made a definite move and after many enquiries she finally made contact with the Bolton Branch of the Combined Ex-Servicemen and Women's Association who promised to co-operate with her in the colossal task she was undertaking. Captain William Harris (Retd) made approach to Mr James Wilkinson, a local historian and researcher, and enlisted his help. Between Rita and Mr Wilkinson they delved into the archives at Bolton Library and placed notices in the local papers asking for details from families and relatives of the fallen men and women of Bolton, made widespread enquiries and travelled many miles checking and collecting names from a wide range. Eventually almost 1600 names were received, checked, collated and the final result means that a BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE is now in the process of publication, and will be dedicated by the Vicar of Bolton in the Parish Church on Sunday August 15th when a service on the anniversary of VE Day will be held.

Rita is to be congratulated for her determination and dedication, and our thanks also to James Wilkinson for his invaluable time and effort which he gave free and unstintingly. At long last the efforts of Rita have borne fruit and we owe her a great big THANK YOU.

The Book of Remembrance will be housed in Bolton Town Hall and may be seen on request.

MINI REUNION by Mrs Peggy Binns (nee Bell)

I would like to congratulate all concerned in organising yet another successful reunion, this time at Guildford. A wonderful week and enjoyed by myself and friends from the Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Sunderland ATS Branches.

I had a successful reunion of my own with one of my ATS friends after 49 years and this is now the reunion came about.



*Mini Reunion
Babs Smith (née Jones) and Peggy Binns (née Bell)*

Late in 1993, I received, out of the blue a letter from my friend, ex-ATS Barbara Jones, now Mrs B Smith of London, Ontario, Canada. It appears she had been on holiday here in England and had actually passed by my home town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne whilst she travelled south to visit another ATS friend of hers in Cheltenham. She remarked that another friend of hers, Peggy Bell, lived in Newcastle but she had no address.

Whilst staying with her friend Diane, she was looking through some back numbers of the "Lioness" when she came across my appeal for her, which was printed in 1989. In that appeal, I said we had worked together in Sick Bay when attached to A Coy and were billeted in McAdam Square, Aldershot. We continued to work together when the Sick Bay was moved to "The White House - a large detached house in it's own grounds - in a small village named Heath End on the way to Farnham.

When she arrived home, she immediately wrote to me and we once again renewed our friendship by post.

I mentioned the reunion and a letter came back with the news that she had booked her place for the reunion through the generosity of her husband Nelson.

However, we failed to meet at the Cathedral and had to wait until the Reunion Dinner at the Lakeside Hotel, where she happened to be staying.

As there were no arrangements, nor announcements allowed for locating friends, I started to work my way from

table to table, asking the same question, "Does anyone know a Barbara Smith from London, Ontario?". As I asked I was holding up a 14-inch doll dressed as a replica ATS girl thinking "Well if she doesn't recognise me, she will at least recognise the doll that she had made and sent to me". Incidentally it was greatly admired and I could have taken few orders for her, as I was asked so many times how I came to have it.

Almost at the end of my search and thinking that I must have missed her, I asked again the same question and to my delight someone said "Yes, she is right behind here". Then it happened, the shrieks, hugs and kisses along with the usual "You haven't changed!", our reunion had happened. I then introduced her to my ATS club friends from Newcastle and she stayed the night with us and what a wonderful happy night that turned out to be. The meal and service offered by the staff at Lakeside was superb, along with the first class music played by the WRAC Band and was certainly a night to remember.

Barbara came up to my home and stayed a few days the following week and we talked almost non-stop. She did in fact try to talk me into coming to her own ATS Reunion in Ontario in September of this year. I couldn't make it this year as our holidays were already booked. However, she went away with a promise that I would try to make it in 1995 when she celebrates with Nelson their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Barbara said "that would be perfect Peggy. As you attended my wedding in 1945, it seems right that you should be there at my Golden Wedding celebrations". I'm certainly going to try and make it!



BABS ARMY
*L to R: Pte Flo Shepherd, Pte Peggy Bell (now Binns) and
Pte Barbara Jones (now Smith)*

SHOPPING LIST

Now that the Museum Shops has closed the only item available for sale from the WRAC Association HQ is the Association Badge. These cost £1.95 including package and posting.

If Branches order from 10-20 badges they may deduct 5% from the cost.

For orders over 20 they may deduct 10% from the cost.

All cheques to WRAC Association please and sent to:

WRAC Association HQ

PO Box 212

Guildford GU2 6ZD



WRAC Association Badge

EARLY DAYS

by WO1 Lydia Newnham

After having good intentions for so long to communicate with the Lioness, I have at last got down to it, after seeing the "brief" from Miss Muriel Tatum whom I remember. I too started my service at ECRD Saltdean in June 1940 and was a recruit in training when the Unit moved to Bournemouth.

Is there any one else out there who remembers that operation? As I remember it, we reluctantly left the splendour of the Ocean Hotel, Saltdean, to move into empty boarding



6 (Independent) Company WRAC
Sgt Newnham, Sgt Jones, Sgt Milne, Sgt Nairne,
the terrible twins and the CSM outside the
Sergeants' Mess



KANZAL The Mess Pet
(Sgt Newnham on right)

houses in Bournemouth, arriving before the "goods and chattels". The transport failed to meet us at Bournemouth Station and we, as recruits, had our first experience of marching through the town to our various billets. The beds had not arrived, so we rolled ourselves in blankets to sleep on the floor, the orderly NCO sprinkling Keatings around to keep the cockroaches at bay! They were real ATS pioneering days and I am sure that we learned more about self help and self reliance then than at any other time in our lives.

I wonder if anyone is around who was at Weedon. Again, a station where we started from scratch, learning more about making do, until better arrangements could be made. Whilst waiting for improvements to the water supply, we travelled in 3-tonners once a week to the Barracks in Northampton for baths/showers. They were very happy days, where we all pulled together, making light of difficulties, inventing our own entertainment as relaxation from long working hours.

A great experience was my tour of duty with the British Army Staff, Washington DC. Only a few of us were ever posted there. Probably my proudest memory is as a member of the "British Cecilian Singers". We rendered forth with "Land of Hope and Glory", among other items, including our National Anthem after VE and VJ days, in no less a place than Washington Cathedral!

A tour of duty in Klagenfurt with British Troops Austria, during the days of occupation added to my list of interesting postings, where I took full advantage of the ski-ing facilities, with reasonable success.

BAOR was my final posting out of UK and I culminated my service with some happy days with the TA.



The last UK Match for ATS Hockey XI who beat the WRNS
2-1 in 1949



No 1 VEHICLE REPLACEMENT DEPOT, FELTHAM WITH MARCHING TROPHY

CONVOY DRIVERS

I read the Lioness, I have lunch with the ATS Dinner Club, I hear all about the Royal Artillery girls. Pay Corps and all other branches of the ATS but never a word about the Convoy Drivers.

The photo of us at Feltham was taken when we won the cup for marching, something of which we did very little being drivers!

At the time we were with No 1 VRD at Feltham and when they moved to Laleham nr Staines, we went with them and lived at the Welsh Girls School. As drivers we went all over the country with all kinds of vehicles and always seemed to get the open ones in the winter.

For many months before D-Day, we were very busy getting vehicles to the right place. They all went off brand new, not a dent or scratch anywhere but not long after D-Day we were collecting them again but this time all battered and broken.

But life was not all hard work, we had some great times and as any convoy driver will tell you, some very funny things can happen on convoys. I made some very good friendships, some of my friends are in the photo, we have been meeting for many years at the Victory Club, so Convoy Drivers, where are you? We can't be the only ones about, can we?

For more details write to Mrs Tommie Worsell (nee Simpson) 31 Park Avenue, Eastbourne, E Sussex BN21 2XG.

THREE IMPORTANT DAYS

by Mrs Audrey Stevens (nee Mathers)

D-Day. I was a Corporal Switchboard Operator with the HAA Signals stationed at Upwey House, Weymouth.

On the 6 June 1944 I went on duty at 0820 hrs until 1300 hrs in the Gun Operations Room at Upwey House. My shift was informed that D-Day had begun. We were highly active all morning as Allied troops embarked for the assault.

Strong forces of Americans left from Weymouth for Omaha and Utah beaches. In the first onslaught our young Medical Officer was killed. I returned to duty at 1700 hrs and we were again fully operative until 2230 hrs.

VE Day. In May 1945 I was stationed at Dover Castle, the violent shelling was over and the celebrations started early in the evening and went onto the early hours. The hospitality we received was overwhelming.

By VJ Day I was in Bristol at Muller's Orphanage. Early on this August morning the ship's sirens, bells, hooters etc. began to ring out over the city. We rose from our beds and rushed to the gates in our night attire. This meant so much to me as my youngest brother was a POW in Hong Kong, Kowloon. Emotions ran high as we realised at long last it was all over. Later in the day we were inundated with street parties which took place in nearly every side street in the area. Upright pianos appeared, singing and dancing proceeded unabated in the sunshine, all were united in celebrating the Victory.

ANTI AIRCRAFT COMMAND
by Major E S Beedle (nee Jacobs)

I wasn't at the Reunion, but there are two aspects on which I should like to put the record straight.

Not all the Mixed Regiments were disbanded at the end of the war. I was posted, as the Senior Commander, to 10(M) HAA Regt in 1946, stationed at Bostall Heath (just outside Woolwich). To my knowledge and recollection there was another Regiment in Washington in the north of England, and another - I believe 96(M) HAA Bty - in Devizes. We were the penultimate to be disbanded in 1948, and I don't know when the last one went.



Major E S Beedle with her 3.7 inch gun

Incidentally, the ATS officers always believed we were the first women to dine in the Gurkha Mess at Woolwich - after a regimental boxing match and after the usual dinner hour!

Before the end of the war, mixed regiments were disbanded, and a large programme of re-assessment for other duties was instituted. It was a sad period for those who had enjoyed the close comradeship of battery life in the outdoors, to be split up and posted in other capacities. Brigstock in Northamptonshire was the HQ of this process and I was the junior commander at the out-station at Thrapston, where I spent VE day.

How many of us remember the first time we were together as a Battery when the various operational and non-operational components arrived from their diverse training regiments and centres to eat the first meals cooked by "our" cooks? Where? The Practice Camp.

And how many of us remember the first time we saw and heard "our" guns (though they belonged to the unit we were attached to) firing - not yet in action against the enemy, but really firing at something (though it was only a sleeve gently fluttering in the breeze over the sea? Where? The Practice Camp.

And how many of us have wondered what happened to all those wooden and Nissen huts in which we lived our inte-

grated lives? Perhaps we have even looked for them over the years, and never found an old gun site?

For those whose first Practice Camp was Weybourne, they need look no further. Having a holiday in East Anglia a couple of years ago, my husband (who had not had the luck to be a gunner!) and I decided to investigate Muckleburgh Camp in Weybourne - this is the home of the largest private collection of tanks and guns in the country - and which, though we did not know beforehand and which I certainly did not recognise, was my second Practice Camp - and partly is housed in the NAAFI and Reading Room of the old Camp.

The entrance is flanked by two 3.7s. The old Camp has not been demolished. It is in a parlous state and cannot be approached by the public but it is THERE.

Who remembers the steps at Whitby or the visits to Barmouth from Tywyn? I could go on for ever, and tell you that Humph (Humphrey) was at AA Group HQ when 101 was at Bostall Heath, and that Eleanor Bowles was a junior officer with 101.

DIARY ENTRIES REMEMBERED
by Frances Nunally (nee Huppert)

I was rummaging in my attic and came across my WWII ATS diaries. I would like to share a few lines here and there with those who served in later years.

January 14 1942. We are being posted! We arrive at our destination, Bury St Edmunds, in Suffolk and are taken to Gibraltar Barracks by lorry.

January 15 1942. I start work at the Officers' Mess. I am on duty from 7.30 am till 2.00 pm and again from 6.00 to 9.00 pm. When returning to our barrack room after work, I find a pair of lovely hand-knitted bedsocks on my bunk. It is a gift from Canada to HM Forces. Just what I need, for our rooms are icy cold.

January 22 1942. I know most of the officers now and am beginning to like my job of waiting at table.

January 27 1942. What a day! The entire Officers' Mess staff had to report to the MI room because the Medical Officer had, at dinner time, found a louse on his spoon. Mary, one of girls think's its the joke of the century. Of all people on the MO's spoon!! His exam is futile, we are all OK - no lice found.

January 30 1942. Pay Parade at 2.00 pm. I get £1 and 18 shillings and one week's ration allowance for I am to go on leave. Since I had no family to go to I'll head for London and try and stay at a Services Club.

March 9 1942. Beginning today it is forbidden to burn paper or dispose of it in a way it cannot be used for salvage. Persons putting paper into the dustbin with other swill can now be fined.

March 19 1942. In the evening we have Drill. All the boys are looking from their windows, trying to catch a glimpse of us girls doing "soldier's drill".

April 13 1942. It's my day off. In the afternoon I have a date with Wilfred John. We have tea at the Atheneum, then go for a walk in the green windswept country. We pass some gypsies in a caravan. Wilfred wants to linger in the country but unfortunately I have to go and represent the Officers' Mess at "Platoon Evening". I am sorry because Wilfred is a really nice boy.

June 10 1942. Princess Mary, the King's sister, is expected on Friday to inspect the ATS. The whole camp is upside down as everything is being prepared for the Royal visit. I am among the 60 girls chosen to be on "Parade". We have drills and rehearsals with Captain Elio. **PDF Compressor Free Version** Friday afternoon when the great moment has come at last, it starts to rain. As it keeps on raining we have to be inspected by HRH in the gym instead of the Parade Ground. She wore the ATS uniform of a Brigadier.

June 21 1942. When I come home from the pictures at night, I learn the tragic news that Tobruk has fallen. Another link in the chain of losses on our side. When will the tide turn?

July 21 1942. Liesl has gone to the hospital for 3 days. This, with one girl being on leave, means that 2 of us have to do the work of 4. Yesterday, we worked 14 hours straight.

August 17 1942. We learn that Mr Churchill has been to Moscow for 4 days. There are talks about opening a "Second Front".

November 4 1942. At Pay Parade today, I received my proficiency back pay - £3 and 2 shillings. Quite a nice sum!

November 6 1942. I stop at the Services Club for something to eat and see Wilfred with another girl. He doesn't look my way.

November 12 1942. I go to the ATS dance in the Corn Exchange and meet a nice Sergeant. We make a date for Sunday night.

December 15 1942. I am going to be inoculated tomorrow morning. That means 48 hours off duty and being confined to Barracks for 2 days.

December 23 1942. It's Christmas Eve tomorrow. What a to-do in the Officers' Mess. Decorating and baking and putting up holly and mistletoe. Everyone is in a wonderful mood and we have heaps of fun. I have to remind myself that a bloody war is being fought all over the world.

December 25 1942. We have a marvellous midday meal despite food shortages; turkey and pork, bread sauce, new potatoes and sprouts. For months Mrs Watts, the Officers' Mess chief cook, has been saving sugar and other rationed ingredients to prepare the plum puddings and mince pies. There is much merriness and kissing under the mistletoe.

December 30 1942. The first snow falls overnight. How beautiful the dull barracks look covered by thick, white snow. When I look out of our window I see a magic landscape overcast by the pale light of the moon. Gone are the tedious red brick barrack buildings and the wooden cookhouses.

December 31 1942. On the last day of this year I want to wish and pray that the coming months will see the end of this war and lasting peace. I pray for my family, trapped on the Continent. Whether they are alive or dead I do not know. I tried to send Red Cross messages, but there was no reply. But many other girls in my platoon are in the same boat. And also we hope for the end of the War in 1943 and to be together again with our families.

FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE 1994

With kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, this year's Field will open at 11.30 am on Thursday 10 November, when a short Service will be held.

We understand from Clarence House that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother intends to open the Field, which will then remain open until 4.00 pm on Thursday 17 November.

The WAAC/QMAAC/ATS/WRAC plot will be Number 116 which is on the Parliament Square side of the path running East-West through the churchyard.

JOIN THE ATS AND SEE THE WORLD by Mrs Joan E Huxtable (nee Taylor)

In the October of 1939 I became 18 and old enough to volunteer to serve in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the women's section of the Army. I left my job in the anticipation of an early call up but had to wait about 8 weeks for the papers to arrive. In the meantime a weekly event for me was attendance at the local Unemployment Exchange to sign for 'dole' money, seven shillings and six pence.

Finally the papers arrived and I reported to the local recruiting centre in the Ocean Hotel, Saltdean, on the outskirts of Brighton. For many girls it was their first time away from home and as we were volunteers we were given three days to settle in. Several asked for a railway pass back to their homes but I was very keen and thoroughly enjoyed the experience of kitting out, lectures, route marches and the food. Physical training on wet days was held in the ballroom which had a sprung floor. It took some pounding from about a hundred auxiliaries jumping up and down. Our pay was 5 shillings a week.

At that time there were only three types of jobs available, cooks, orderlies and clerks. I became a clerk and was posted to the Royal Artillery Records Office in Sidcup, Kent, to join the 25th City of London Company. We were billeted in private houses which meant that some of us had quite a walk to work. A short time after I arrived the British Expeditionary Force was driven out of France by the Germans and we had to work overtime sending our notices to the next of kin reporting the men who were wounded, missing or dead.

In September of 1940, the office was moved to Ibex House in the Minories, a short distance from the Tower of London. The Company was billeted in the Bourne and Hollingsworth Hostel in Gower Street, opposite the main University of London building.

The Blitz (air raids) started soon after we had settled in. For a while we were able to travel by bus from the hostel to the office but gradually due to the bombing of buildings and roads we had to travel by underground railway. Finally we had to walk to and from the office going different ways because the diversions due to unsafe buildings or bomb craters, some of which were huge, that had been caused by land mines.

There were basements in the hostel and when an air raid siren sounded at night we had to leave our beds, take a blanket and our gas mask and go down and lay or sit as best we could in the small spaces available which meant that nobody was able to get a good night's rest. After a few weeks we didn't go down but went out into the corridors so that if there was a bomb dropped near us we wouldn't get cut by the glass being blasted out of the windows. A few

more weeks of that and still not getting a proper sleep, we were given permission to sleep in our beds and risk getting hurt. One night a bomb landed just across the road from the hostel, it went straight down by the central tower of the University of London building. The blast shattered all our windows so I got covered with broken glass as my bed was near the window. Fortunately, none hurt me and I was able to shake all the pieces off. We were all evacuated from the building and spent the rest of the night in the basement of the School of Tropical Medicine which was next door. It was a bit strange trying to sleep surrounded by large bottles containing specimens of weird looking tropical spiders, snakes etc.

Due to the force of the blast the hostel wasn't safe to stay in so we moved to Gloucester Gate in Kensington which involved quite a long journey each day on the underground from Gloucester Road to Aldgate in the City. Each day we wondered if the office (Ibex House in the Minories) was still standing because so many buildings had been flattened round it and the Tower of London and Tower Bridge were prime targets a short distance away. The warehouse next to the office was hit one night. It was full of sugar which burned furiously to start with, then the sugar turned to syrup so it took the firemen a long time to cool it, and the smell of burning sugar was awful.

In July 1940 I went on a Typists Training Course at Strathpeffer in Ross-shire and stayed in the Ben Wyvis Hotel. It was my first visit to Scotland and I enjoyed it very in the glen as the soldiers went on their route marches. The home of one of the girls I shared a bedroom with was a short distance away at Alness and she kindly took the other girl in the room and me there one day. Her home was a A cottage in the grounds of the distillery and we were shown the vats of whisky etc. The river nearby was in full spate, a wonderful sight.

During the time I was in Scotland the office had been moved from London to Rugby in Warwickshire. The hostel had belonged to Rugby Public School and contained study cubicles surrounding three sides of a quadrangle. The fourth side housed the toilets. There were cubicles with no doors which might have suited the boys but didn't please us, so blanket 'doors' were hastily put in place.

Civilian clerks began to take over our jobs so I was posted to a Royal Engineers office at Stratford on Avon and was billeted in a private house. I spent a very uneventful day for my 21st birthday there.

In 1943 I went to the Deverrel Barracks at Ripon in Yorkshire to attend No. 2 Engineer Clerks Course (Advanced). It was January and very cold. The ablutions had a four inch space at the top and bottom of the bathrooms. The wind seemed to come straight off the Yorkshire moors and it took courage to have a bath under those conditions.

After the course I went to Leamington Spa for a while and then was posted to a Royal Engineer office at Tettenhall in Staffordshire where I stayed in a private billet again. Mrs Duckworth was a good cook and I can still remember the lovely meals she gave me. During my stay there the 1000 bomber raids by the RAF were taking place. At dusk they would start flying over to Germany, wave after wave, the sky was full of them. The ominous drone of their engines made me at one moment feel safe that they were on our side and then I thought of the terror they would be causing in Germany.

Finally my application to serve overseas came through and I was posted to London to prepare for embarkation. There were over a hundred girls in the company and we were given lectures on how to keep healthy in a hot country and had several injections, one being for yellow fever. That

particular injection made several girls ill but I was alright. The issue of tropical kit caused a few laughs especially the bush hats, and we had to have several practice packings before we finally got all the kit stuffed into the one kit bag. We had to wait a few weeks and the time began to drag but finally the great moment arrived and we set off in Troop Transports across London on the evening of 12 November 1943 to board the overnight train at St Pancras Station. All movement of troops were secret in those days, but the wise ones among us guessed we must be heading for Scotland.

In the morning we arrived at Gourock on the River Clyde and carried our kit bags from the station down to the quayside where we boarded a tug which took us out to the SS Arundel Castle lying off shore. Already aboard were a lot of RAF personnel and many officers of the various services. After we had been allocated our cabins we trooped to the dining room for breakfast. The food was wonderful, plenty of it, well cooked and such a change from the restrictive rationing of war time Britain.

That night the ship sailed from the Clyde and we settled down to life aboard. The weather in the Bay of Biscay was very rough and many were sea sick but I wasn't, I ate my meals as usual. The only thing that worried me was the way the ship rolled. My life jacket hung on a door knob when I was in the cabin and it swung from side to side with the roll of the ship. Once it seemed to stay at one side for longer than usual and I felt sure the ship would capsize but fortunately it righted itself. The ship was in a convoy of about 20 vessels and to keep our movements as secret as possible we waited until night time to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar. All the ships were in darkness but we were allowed on deck to see the lights of Gibraltar on one side and those of North Africa on the other. German fighters and bombers raided the convoy twice whilst we sailed through the Mediterranean Sea. The men on board spread lots of scary tales about what would happen if the ship was bombed and sunk but luckily our boat escaped unharmed although some ships were hit.

The narrowness of the Suez Canal surprised me. Our large ship only just got through in places. The convoy stopped overnight in the Bitter Lakes to allow another convoy to pass on its way north. The next day we continued our journey along the rest of the canal and arrived at the port of Aden where we were allowed ashore for two hours. There wasn't much to see, a few shops where we bought hand-made leather sandals and the Post Office where I bought stamps. It seemed strange walking on land and not to hear the throb of the ship's engines. The so-called 'fresh' water that the ship took on at Aden was awful, so with every drink of water we put some fizzy Andrews Liver Salts in it and a lot of us landed in hospital for a few days after we arrived in Nairobi.

After leaving Aden the rest of the convoy went on to India where I had hoped to go but we were taken on to Mombassa in Kenya. I can't remember what happened to the RAF personnel but only ATS disembarked at Mombassa where we boarded a train to take us to Nairobi. It was a long journey from sea level up to 3000 feet. The train stopped for us to have a meal about half way and there at a railway halt were tables set out with lots of lovely food and fruit and a boiler of tea for those who liked it. Very refreshed we continued the journey and on arrival at Nairobi found the band of the Kings African Rifles playing a welcome. Our camp outside Nairobi consisted of a series of wooden huts surrounded by a tall fence. Owing to being on the equator the days were very hot and the nights cool. The sun set very quickly which took us by surprise to start with. There was a staff of 'boys', men of the Kings African Rifles, who cooked and served our meals, cleaned our bedrooms, washed and ironed our

clothes and cleaned our shoes. Their language was Swahili which we tried to learn but they learned English quicker. We were taken by Troop Transporters each day into Nairobi to work in the offices of the East Africa Command Headquarters. Whilst I was in hospital getting over the effects of the Andrews Liver Salts, I found I had a 'jigger' in one of my big toes. It is a small worm that burrows into the skin and forms a sac of liquid round itself. The African medical orderly soon prised it out of my toe without breaking the sac; if that had been broken the worm would have re-buried itself deeper and would have been more difficult to remove.

I was disappointed at not going to India so I asked to be sent to an active theatre of war hoping that a special application might be granted. After only three months in Nairobi a contingent of thirty ATS in which I was included, went by train to Mombassa to board the SS Cameronia. I still had hopes of going to India but after arrival at Aden the ship continued in the direction of Suez Canal so I knew I wouldn't be going there. My reason for wanting to go to India was because my father had been there in the 1914-1918 war and I hoped to see some of the places he used to talk about.

We were all glad to leave the SS Cameronia at Port Tewfik. The ship was old, it creaked loudly and was overrun with cockroaches which would scurry away when we opened our blankets to get into the bunk beds. From the ship we sailed in a tug manned by Egyptians. It was so low in the water I was amazed we didn't sink. After landing safely we climbed into Troop Transporters that took us to a tented transit camp to spend the night. The desert sand was very fine and seemed to cover everything. The night was bitterly cold and we were glad to unpack our greatcoats, scarves and gloves. These were very necessary the next morning at 5.30 am when we left the camp to board a train which took us up the Egyptian side of the Suez Canal to Port Suez where we boarded the SS Volendam on 23 March 1943 and by then the sun was up and we re-packed our greatcoats etc. To embark on SS Volendam we had to carry our kit bags across a pontoon bridge and up a suspended stairway which moved alarmingly.

The Dutch ship was a complete contrast to the SS Cameronia. It was spotlessly clean. We were allocated cabins with comfortable beds and the food was first class. After leaving Egypt, it seemed a short journey to Italy, passing through the Straits of Messina on the way and we were soon in the Bay of Naples. In the port of Naples many large vessels had been bombed and sunk. One such vessel lay close to the quayside and as we disembarked we walked along the upturned keel to get to the shore.

A large apartment at 10 Del Parco Margareta in Naples had been commandeered as our billet. From there we set out to work in the various offices of the Allied Advance Headquarters in Italy. The front line was about 30 miles away and we constantly heard the rumble of large guns being fired. A few weeks previous to our arrival the volcano Vesuvius had erupted and it was still smoking and occasionally spitting rocks. At night there was a red glow from its crater.

Soon the Germans were in retreat and the Headquarters moved to the Royal Palace at Caserta, not far from Naples. There we were billeted in the home of a Count of the Vatican. It was a typical large Italian house with a courtyard and a balcony on which were various large statues and pitchers. The room I slept in had an adjoining door to the private chapel in which were many religious relics. Little girls played outside this house and every day gave a different ATS girl a posy of flowers and a picture card.

The Royal Palace is a very grand place with wide marble staircases. One day one of the Italian staff let a few of us into a private room where we saw some of the presentation

books that had been given to past Kings of Italy. They were magnificently bound, some in leather with gold tooling and some in silver with precious stones in typical Italian ornate designs. Leading off from one of the several inner courtyards was the entrance to the private Opera House and there I saw two operas, *Cavaliere Rusticana* and *Paliarchi*, sung by the members of the San Carlo Opera Company of Naples, a great experience. In the grounds of the palace, a straight mile away, was a large waterfall down a hillside, at the bottom of which were several fountains and many statues. The water was channelled into a wide stream edged with a stone wall on either side and had waterfalls at regular distances down the long straight path until it went underground near the palace. Along each side was a road which was a popular walk, where at night there were many fireflies to be seen and also many mosquitoes to bite us.

When the assault on Monte Cassino took place the noise of firing and convoys of troops going to and ambulances coming from was continuous. After the Germans were driven out of Rome, the Headquarters moved in and on our journey there it was very sad to see the ruins of that fine Abbey of Cassino and all the countryside devastated where the bitter fighting had taken place. From Naples to Rome there is a 40 odd kilometre straight road called the Appian Way, one of Mussolini's proud plans, but driving along such a long straight distance is very monotonous.

The billet in Rome was in a Catholic Girl Students Hostel of modern design, all white inside and out. In the entrance hall, in a niche in the circular staircase, was the figure of the Madonna wearing a royal blue cloak standing on a pedestal which stood in a pool of water, a very attractive sight. The office of the Italian Air Ministry had been commandeered as offices for the Headquarters. When we were off duty most of the interesting places to see were within walking distance of the hostel. I went to St Peters several times and a Private of our company was married there which was a great honour for the couple concerned. The catacombs where religious people were buried long ago interested some people but I was terrified of the narrow sloping passages which always seemed to be going down. We carried lit candles and passing the recesses carved out of the rock it was eerie to see skeletons lying there. At one spot we went into a small cave and were asked to put out the candles and then just one was lit to show a holy relic of St Theresa. I was glad to get out of there. Another scary place was the cemetery of the Capuchin Fathers in a crypt below one of the many churches in Rome. Skeletons of some 4000 people had been arranged in various designs on walls, floors, ceilings and to come face to face with a whole wall covered with skulls can be a shattering experience.

One very pleasant sight was La Grotta, so difficult to describe, it was an amazing display of models beautifully arranged that one would need at least a week to study them all. I went twice to the Royal Opera House in Rome. The first time I was lucky enough to sit in one of the red plush boxes to see the opera *La Tosca*, the other time I sat in the circle to see the opera *Manon*.

I had a week's leave from duty which I spent at Salerno staying in a YWCA Hostel. Across the Bay of Naples was a wonderful view of Vesuvius. One day I went in a rowing boat with several others across the bay to Capri. After landing we went into a smaller rowing boat and were taken to the Blue Grotto, a sea water cave in the cliffs of Capri. It can only be entered by going through a tunnel at certain states of the tide and we had to lie flat in the boat as there was only just enough room for it to get through. The fluorescent blue water has to be seen to be believed, a real wonder of nature but I was glad to get back to dry land as I'm not keen on small boats. Later in the day I went on a car tour of the

island and saw Gracie Field's home and the house San Michele of book fame. Whilst in Rome I was among the ATS who were a Guard of Honour to General Mark Clark, the Commander of the US Fifth Army, when he presented a plaque to the American Women's Army Corps.

There was so much to see in Rome that our stay seemed short and as the armies were advancing rapidly after the retreating Germans we also had to move, this time to Sienna in Tuscany.

The billet was another students hostel but was so crowded that some of us were moved into a private billet with very nice people. When off duty for a day we were taken by Liberty truck to Florence where we saw more of Italy's splendours.

The Headquarter staff of the Allied Armies were gradually dispersed as their particular jobs finished and another girl and I were posted to the Army School of Education in Perugia. Our billet was with the Lady Secretary of the University for Foreigners, in a flat at the top of the building used by the school. There was a wonderful view across the valley terraced by vineyards to the town of Assisi on a distant hill. I worked at the library which had a large collection of books in English. In my off duty time I managed to get a lift to Assisi to visit the church and tomb of St Francis, and also to see the church of the Poor Clares, the Order of Nuns who were associated with St. Francis.

It was distressing on the journeys around the countryside to see the cemeteries that had been hastily created by some particularly tough battles. One would be all Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, British or American. War is so stupid.

I had a week's leave at Riccione on the Adriatic coast. It wasn't long after the armies had passed on and in the middle of a road junction was a surface grave of a British soldier, buried where he was killed. His steel helmet lay on top and a rough wooden cross stated his name and number. The grave was left there to remind the local people that he had given his life for them. Very early one morning about 4 am I heard a lorry stop and the sound of shovels. I looked out of the window to see soldiers putting the blanket shrouded corpse into a lorry with the steel helmet and cross, then they shovelled the soil away so that there was no evidence there. The dead soldier would be just another body put in one of the numerous military cemeteries.

In 1945 peace in Europe was declared and troops were being sent home for demobilization. When my turn came I boarded a train at Rimini which stopped at Milan for the night. The next day the train continued its journey through the long tunnels of Switzerland but there were glimpses of the Alps and chalets in us to see. The journey across France was alarming in places when the train went round sharp corners at a perilous angle.

I left the train at Calais and stayed the night in a Transit Camp. I had lived by the English Channel for the first eighteen years of my life but this was my first opportunity to sail across. After looking at dry and drab lands for over two years it was an exciting experience to see the White Cliffs of Dover and the countryside looking so very green and fresh.

The demobilization depot for ATS returning from overseas was the place where I had waited so eagerly to go abroad. After passing through all the formalities of receiving the necessary forms to return to civilian life each girl was personally thanked for her service by the Commanding Officer of the unit. In my case she was Mary, daughter of Sir Winston Churchill.

496 MIXED AA BATTERY RA by Miss Vivien Stride

The Battery was formed at Arborfield and then sent to Practice Camp at Weybourne. I should think none of us will ever forget being on a Norfolk beach from am until it was dark in January, with only half an hour indoors for the mid-day meal. We froze!

We were supposed to go to sites at Cardiff, but they were not ready for us so the men were sent to the Fun Fair at Barry and the girls to Llantwit Major to live in St Donat's Castle. I am sure that everyone will remember arriving there, accompanied (for reasons best known to himself) by the BSM. On the journey to the Castle, he invented a particularly nasty ghost for the Castle, and as the owners had given instructions to absolutely clear everything out before we arrived - including light bulbs - most of the girls would not go upstairs that night.

We did a lot of nothing much as, of course, we were completely non-operational but lots of drill in the dry swimming pool and a scramble to get to the little local cinema before the RAF at St Athan took all the seats, were our main activities.

When we were finally re-united with the men, we were still non-operational as there were only 4 wooden guns! The CO did his best to get the real things with no result; finally the Site Commander took things into his own hands. He bought some pretty green paint for the 'guns' and planted daffodils round the gun pits. Obviously some 'Brass Hat' must have passed and noticed this, and a rocket arrived from the Regiment, but also - our GUNS. At last we were ready for action!



496 BATTERY AT ST DONAT'S CASTLE,
SOUTH WALES

I am still in touch with the two 'old girls' but would love to hear from any others.

We had a song which went -

Hurrah, hurrah the 496 are we

Hurrah, hurrah, the whizz-bang Battery

Why should England tremble when she's got such girls
as we

Up with the good old Anti-Aircraft.

SHIP SHOOT - RANGE PARTY OFFICER by Mollie Gale (nee Sutherland)

All HAA Regts RA had to fire a "ship shoot" whilst attending annual camp. The range party consisted of Range Party Officer (RPO), ATS Pte and Signaller (RCS). The RASC provided the launch and target from Great Yarmouth and the party was picked up at Cromer.

I was the ATS Officer in charge of the Gun Park Detachment. OC 331 said to me that as all his young Royal Artillery officers were being demobbed, I would have to be Range Party Officer on the Ship Shoot. I went as understudy on one trip.

The Range Party were duly picked up at Cromer Pier, then rowed out to the launch, which then proceeded on course, the target was lowered into the sea and when floating the correct distance behind the launch and the red flag hoisted so that firing could commence. The RPO sat in front of a rake in a small cabin above the deck. The rake was a device to measure plus and minus of shots being fired at target, it was mounted on revolving tables and the RPO gave results to the ATS Private and she gave them to the Signaller, who relayed them back to Gun Park. This enabled the gun sights to be realigned properly.

For the first shoot on my own there was a new skipper, his expression on seeing an ATS RPO was comical. However, he had to admit that he had no charts for the course and did I know it? I had a vague idea but didn't want to be shot at so suggested we sent a message back to the gun park to say that we were going to do a dummy run.

On my last shoot there was very stormy weather - we lost the target twice in heavy seas but finally got underway. The ATS Private was seasick, the signaller beside the radio relayed messages and I could hardly keep the table from spinning round. Finally the skipper decided that as the weather was deteriorating we should return to Cromer but was doubtful if he could land us there and he might have to take us back to Yarmouth. The small boat was lowered and I noticed there were life jackets in it - the skipper shouted that we had to put them on. We made land but had to "jump for it". We watched the small boat struggle back to the launch, glad we were on dry land. That was the last shoot for the winter.

331 Bty disbanded shortly after and the OC disclosed that he had not been serious about me being RPO but as I took it just as another duty he let me carry on. I wonder if I was the one and only Range Party Officer ATS for a Ship Shoot.

THE STORY OF THE WRAC RIDING HABIT by Lieutenant Colonel Cynthia de Garis Martin

The strange ways of the Army were revealed to me at the very beginning of my career.

I was enrolled as a volunteer on 6 January 1940 for General Service with the ATS Pay & Records Company Shrewsbury. On the 8th January was sent to ATS Recruit Training Centre, Ripley Barracks, Lancaster for my Recruit Training.

I had the following appointments before being sent to OCTU in the autumn of 1941:

PT Sgt Ripley Barracks, Lancaster
Recruit Trg Sgt Aldermaston
Senior Leader (SCM) RASC Coy ATS Ashchurch
Depot Senior Leader (RSM) ATS Trg Centre Oxford
Depot Senior Leader (RSM) Mxd Trg Regt Arborfield

I passed out from ATS OCTU Craigmillar, Edinburgh as a Subaltern on 1 October 1941. From Oct 1941 until the disbandment of Mxd Btys RA after VE Day, I served on gun-sites. Promotion to Senior Commander (Major) followed and a posting as Second in Command of the Home Postal Depot ATS Grp Nottingham. Followed by OC Driver and Clerks (ATS) Trg Centre, Aldermaston, in order to organise their move to Rhyl and finally to Bicester to be OC No 2 Camp ATS COD Bicester until I was demobilised in October 1946.

I rejoined as a Captain in May 1947 and was granted a Regular Commission on 1 February 1949. From Feb 1949 to 1952 I held staff appointments

Saboteur with The Artist's Rifles (23 SAS/TA) and 1952-1955 was Commanding Officer of East Lancashire Battalion WRAC/TA based in Manchester, 1955-1957 I was seconded to the Federation Police of Malaya - working in Special Branch at HQ Kuala Lumpur, Selangor. In 1957 I returned to UK to be DADWRAC Aldershot District.

When I arrived as DADWRAC at HQ Aldershot District, the GOC was most anxious the QARANC & WRAC Contingent on the Aldershot Queen's Birthday Parade should be commanded by a WRAC Officer, riding side saddle. As I had ridden but never side saddle, I was given six lessons at a Leatherhead riding school, then supervised by the RSM and CSM of the Mounted RASC Coy. DWRAC asked Wetheralls for advice on designing my habit, whereon Bernard Wetherall himself designed the uniform and supervised the fittings.

I duly rode side saddle at the 12 June 1958 Parade, although I was then a Lieutenant Colonel and Inspector of Recruiting (Women's Services) at MOD. I presume the next DADWRAC - Major Stroud now deceased - wore the same habit at the next Parade but this is only a guess.

Both my mount, Boxer, and myself wore the Coronation Medal much to everyone's amusement. Boxer had been one of the pair of horses drawing Winston Churchill's carriage on the Coronation Parade.



Lt Col Cynthia de Garis Martin on Boxer - June 1958

ANOTHER AVENUE TO EXPLORE

Channel 4 run a tracing service - write to:

SERVICE PALS
Teletext Ltd
PO BOX 297
London SW6 1XT

RESIDENTIAL CARE for ex-Servicemen and Women

At the end of July 1994, the Forces Help Society completed another stage in the refurbishment and extension of its St Vincents Home, Ryde, Isle of Wight, to provide residential care accommodation of a high standard. Part of the old building, the internal structure of which did not allow for single rooms, has been reconstructed internally to provide five comfortable single rooms with the necessary facilities and a nearby staff bed-sitting room, to be available at any time during the 24 hours, for residents who need assistance.

St Vincents has always been a "men only" Home and we regret to say that we still cannot take women in the five new single rooms, mainly because they are needed for present residents. This stage has been a more modest one than we had hoped, due to the slow growth of funds for the project.

This autumn, however, we are beginning the next phase; an entirely new wing comprising ten single bedrooms with en suite facilities and balconies, lift to all levels, assisted bathroom and indoor and outdoor sitting areas. It is hoped that this wing can be completed, equipped and furnished in about a year's time, and for these rooms, applications from both men and women will be equally considered.

Meanwhile, there are from time to time vacancies at Princess Christian Homes, Knaphill, nr Woking, Surrey for elderly and disabled ex-servicemen and women requiring residential care. Application forms can be obtained from The

Forces Help Society and Lord Roberts Workshops, 122 Brompton Road, London SW3 1JE.



A HISTORIC OCCASION IN MAY 1949 AT CARTER BARRACKS, BULFORD

Senior Controller Dame Mary Tyrwhitt DBE Director ATS accompanied by Senior Commander K Cooper ATS cross the square of 46(M) HAA Regiment on the occasion of the Attestation Parade for ATS Other Ranks entering the newly-formed Women's Royal Army Corps



"No place like home!"

When Princess Margaret visited Princess Christian Homes, residents were proud to show her their "homes from home".

The FORCES HELP SOCIETY tries to ensure that disabled and elderly ex-service men and women can stay in their own homes as long as possible. But when increasing difficulties with day-to-day living call for help to be at hand throughout the 24 hours, the Society aims to provide the best possible residential care, with equipment and staff to give the personal assistance needed, without loss of personal dignity, with companionship or privacy, stimulating activity or rest, as each resident chooses.

This quality of life has been made possible at Princess Christian Homes. Now the Society plans for similar residential care at its St. Vincents Home, Ryde, Isle of Wight. The necessary extension, refurbishment and installation of equipment is being carried out in stages. How soon the entire project can be completed depends on funds coming in.

Please support us now with donations and covenants and help our work to continue into the future with a legacy.

THE FORCES HELP SOCIETY & LORD ROBERTS WORKSHOPS
122 Brompton Road, London SW3 1JE

Tel: 071-589 3243

Registered Charity No. 209753

COMMEMORATIVE WINDOW



PDF Compressor Free Version

I would like to thank all of those who responded to my appeal in the last Lioness for donations to the Commemorative Window in Guildford Cathedral. There was a magnificent response and I am most grateful. Those who have seen the window consider that it is a fitting tribute to those who served in the Women's Corps. A list of donors is given below and I would like to emphasise that it is still not too late to make a donation.

(Cheques to WRAC Association, please).

Vice President

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

ATS Dinner Club
Canadian Corps Association

BRANCHES

Accrington	Cheltenham	Hastings	Norfolk & Suffolk	Sunderland
Aldershot	Chester	Hereford	Plymouth	Swansea
Aylesbury	Colchester	Hull	Portsmouth	Swindon
Ayrshire	Crewe	Ilford	Rhyl	Ulster
Barnsley	Eastbourne	Isle of Wight	Rochdale	Westcliff
Bath	Edinburgh	Leeds	Salisbury	Weymouth
Birmingham	Exeter	Liverpool	ShIPLEY	Wimbledon
Bolton	Fife & Tayside	London	Somerset	Wincanton
Cambridge	Greater London	Medway	Southampton	Wolverhampton
Canterbury	Grimsby	Middlesbrough	Southport	York
Chelmsford	Harrogate	Newcastle	Stockport	

INDIVIDUALS

Mrs Mary Andrews	Miss Mary Dowie	Mrs E C Jolley
Lt Col W D Andrews OBE	Lt Col E J Edwards OBE	Mrs J E Jordan
Maj D M Athoe	Kay N Edwards	Mrs M E Joslin
Miss D A Badcock	Miss S K Edwards	Ann Kelly
Mrs M Bateman	Miss E D Elliott	Mrs Y J T Kingdon
Maj E S Beedle	Miss M Elliott	Mrs E Kisby
Mrs Gwen Beelaert	Lt Col R M Engel	Mrs D Lammas
Mrs M P Beeston	Brig Anne Field CB	Miss C I Lawrence
Mrs N G Bounds	Col V I Fisher	Maj A M Lea-Cox
Mrs E M Boulter	Col B I Forbes Adam MBE	Miss A G Learmouth MBE TD
Col E J Bowles	Mrs G M Ford	Miss M Learmouth
Lt Col A Bray	Maj Jean Fyfe	Miss D C Lett
Miss I Bray	Lilian Gibbard	Mrs D M Lidstone
Miss B M Brewster	Col E W Gibson MBE	Mrs A M Lindsay
Mrs Lorna Brien	Mrs Lois Gilbert	Miss G K M Lively
Mrs K M Brierley	Miss B M Godin	Mrs G M J Mackowiak
Mrs E M Buckingham	Miss S Goldingham	Mrs I L McCombie
Nora M Budd	Miss A E H Grant	Mrs B McGhie
Miss P E B Bury	Miss J P Gray	Mrs H C McLellan JP
Mrs J A Cant	Miss I Greaves	Mrs Doris Madill
Miss N K Cavanagh	Mrs A R Hale	Miss P K Marison
Capt M E B Chidgey	Mrs E Halliday	Miss June Marmont MBE
Lt Col Naomi Christy TD	Miss S Hartley	Miss M Marshall
Col A M M Clissitt	Miss A Hayward	Lt Col C de Garis Martin
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Mrs M Croft	Mrs J M Hicks	M J Maule
Mrs J Croom-Johnson	Mrs D G Hill	Miss D H Maynard
Maj J M Collyer	Mrs P M Hillier	Col B M Metcalfe MBE
Mrs Jessie Cook	Mrs J M Hodges	Mrs B Millbourne
Mrs R Curtis	M J Holland	Miss B Moor
Mrs E A Davies	Mrs J E Hollinshead	Mrs M B Moore
Col L M Davies CBE	Mrs N Houldsworth	
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Miss S Denoven	Miss E Poole-Hughes TD	
Miss K Donnelley	Col M D M Humphrey CBE	

Please notify General Secretary of any errors and omissions so that they can be rectified on the next list.

Miss E J Morgan	Mrs J Richmond	Mrs C E Tilbury
Miss Janet Morris	Mrs I M Ritchie	E Townsend
Capt Allyn Murison	Lt Col A R Robertson	Mrs M I Upex
Brig E J Nolan CB	Lt Col E A Robinson	Miss I C C Vaughan Morgan TD
Maj F Odell	Mrs J M C Robinson	Mrs R Virtue
Mrs K M O'Kelly de Canejera	Maj F A Rose	Maj C H Wales
Miss D Oldham	Mrs P Rowe	Mrs E M Walford MBE
Mrs I B Pellow	Mrs D Rumsey	Col M U Walker
J C Petrie	Mrs L M Salmon	Miss H M Walter
Hon Mrs H R Phelps	Miss F M Santer	Lt Col E M Walters
J M B Phillips	Maj R M Shaw	Miss J, A Ward
Brig The Hon Dame Mary Pihl DBE	Maj G E Simmonds MBE	Mrs G M Warner
Miss D S B Potter	Miss M M Slaven	Miss A M Weightman
Mrs J M Q Preater	Miss M L Slocombe	Miss E C Wheat
Mrs V Price	Miss E Stark	M E Wesson
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HOUSING 21

Current Accommodation Opportunities

Retirement Accommodation

Housing 21 has accommodation across England mainly for single people and couples of retirement age.

Our housing registers are always open and priority is given to those in the greatest housing need and is not determined by the length of time someone has been on the register. Demand does however vary in different areas of the country and for those applicants who can be flexible as to where they live we should be able to find a speedy solution to their housing problems. It is generally much easier to help with accommodation in the North of England and the Midlands, than it is in the South.

Although applicants should be of retirement age, consideration can be given in exceptional circumstances to those under 60 years who are retired from full time employment. This could include people who are physically disabled or who have learning difficulties but are capable of independent living with minimum support.

Head Office, PO 32, St John's Road, Penn, High Wycombe HP20 8JF

MEMORIES NEEDED

The National Army Museum are conducting a series of taped interviews to obtain anecdotal evidence of contemporary history. If you believe that your experiences would be of value please fill in the slip below and send to National Army Museum.

To: Mrs Sylvia Hopkins
National Army Museum
Old College RMA Sandhurst
CAMBERLEY GU15 4PE

I am willing to attend a tape recording session at Sandhurst to discuss my military experiences which were involved with

Name: Maiden Name:.....

Address:.....Unit:.....

.....Dates:.....

Post Code

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How do you feel about leaving the Army?

As you're well aware, serving in the Forces isn't just a job. It's a way of life. So, it's no surprise, that after leaving, many people feel as though they're high and dry, like a fish out of water.

But there's no need for you to feel this way. It's perfectly possible for you to keep up with old friends, make use of the unique skills you've acquired, and make a vital contribution to the nation's defence into the bargain.

How? Simply by becoming a member of the Volunteer Forces, which make up a third of our Army and represent a significant part of our commitment to NATO.

There are two options open to you.

Firstly, you can join one of the Territorial Army Independent Units based in the TAVRA region in which you have decided to settle. An ideal route for those leaving Infantry or Cavalry regiments.

Secondly, if you are leaving a Corps, you could retain your capbadge and become a member of either an Independent Unit or a TA Specialist Unit. In either, you can maintain and extend the special skills that you have learned.

You can contribute as much time as you want in any one year. The minimum that we ask is that as a member of the Independent TA you complete 6 weekends, a two-week Summer Camp and some weekday evenings. As a Specialist we ask only 15 days training and two weekends.



In return you will receive payment equivalent to the rates paid to Regular Army soldiers plus an annual tax-free bonus.

If you would like more information about how you can stay in the swim of things, write to the address below, giving details of which option you are interested in, your current age and address, your intended county of residence, and of the regiment you have left or are leaving.

The Territorial Army, Freepost, 4335 (Ref: 9000), Bristol BS1 3YX.

GRAND REUNION 1994

It was with a sense of déjà vu that we all assembled at Guildford Cathedral on Saturday 16 April 1994. Could it really have been over two years since we were last there en masse on 25 April 1992? Not much seems to have changed. The Cathedral Church of the Holy Spirit stood majestic on the summit of Stag Hill and the wind whistled around the building creating a vortex of hat destroying potential but at least it was not raining. This was to be the start of a long day for the Grand Reunion 1994 which was to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the Comrades Association in 1919. The only other occasion to celebrate an anniversary for the Association had been its 60th in 1979 when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited the WRAC Centre for a reunion. Other anniversaries connected with the formation of the various women's Corps had been celebrated notably the 5th Anniversary of the ATS in 1942 and the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS in 1988 and the 35th and 40th anniversaries of the formation of the WRAC in 1984 and 1989 but now that women's Corps have gone as such the continuous existence of the Comrades Association for three quarters of a century seemed worthy of a salute.

The first members to arrive at the Cathedral were Corporal Ludlow and others from the Salisbury Branch, 156 members had been accommodated overnight at the University of Surrey, also on Stag Hill and they were able to saunter up or scale the hill after their breakfast to get an early seat. Others were arriving by various means. Trains were being met at Guildford Station and those staying in the town were able to get a lift from the Station too. Some had left their cars at Frimley at the Lakeside Country Club, scene of later activities and been given a ride to the Cathedral together with those staying overnight at the International Hotel. As well as offering accommodation on the Campus the University of Surrey had also allowed the free use of their car parks so that a steady procession of members converged on to the Cathedral. They were able to view the new commemorative window and see the preparations for the unveiling of the plaque, they were able to listen to the entracte music played by the Staff Band of the Adjutant General's Corps under the direction of Captain Malcolm Torrent and Band Sergeant Major Annette Peters and they were able to read the short history of women's corps in the British Army in the order of service. By 10.20 am 812 members had taken their places.



HRH, Vice-President, Lord Lieutenant and Dean leaving the Cathedral

Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Kent, the President of the Association arrived at 10.25 and after being greeted by the Lord Lieutenant and the Dean and Chapter, formed procession with them and the Bishop of Guildford (Very Reverend Michael Adie) and Cadet RSM Emily Carroe (soon to join the Royal Signals) and after an elegant and exciting fanfare, took her place under the Tower. The three Association standards, the main one carried by WO1 Sandy Barclay and the ATS standard carried by Mrs Edith Francis and the QMAAC standard carried by Mrs Norah Kendall, led the procession of branch standards.



Standards in procession down the main aisle

The three Association standards halted under the Tower facing HRH near the Queens chapel whilst the remainder went to the high altar. Bidding prayers were said by the Dean and during the hymn "Father hear the prayer we offer" Her Royal Highness, preceded by the three Association standards went to the new commemorative window created by Miss Susan Arthur. The Dean led the Act of Dedication, the Chaplain General led the Act of Remembrance, a lone trumpeter played the Last Post and Reveille and Her Royal Highness uncovered the plaque carved by Mr Derek Benney which read:



The Bishop of Guildford then preached the sermon. It was his last major service in the cathedral before retirement. He took his text from the Psalms

I will remember thy name from one generation to another:
therefore shall the people give thanks unto thy name
world without end. Psalm 45:18

"We treasure our memories. My recollections of a brief and inglorious military career are mixed and mainly embarrassing: failing to obey a command from RSM Britten because I was trying to work out how it was possible for one human chest to produce so much noise: the kindly Sergeant driving instructor who allowed me through my driving test on the strength of my performance on a motorbike and a lorry, neither of which I have driven since. Many of you will have fuller, richer and more serious recollections, and you will enjoy and treasure those memories. Today alongside individual recollections, we all share a corporate memory of the WRAC and its precursors, and what it has achieved over the past 75 years. As society at large slowly recognises the achievements and distinctiveness of women in general, so there is a steady recognition of the particular contribution of women in the army in war and peace. At one time during the second world war the ATS numbered more than the total army of today. And Guildford has a special place in those memories because of the Queen's Camp, later the Queen Elizabeth Camp.

Memories of the past shape our present and our future. The reverse is also true: our present shapes our memories of the past. It is not just that we must keep our history alive. We must be continually reviewing, revising and rewriting it. It is a well known maxim of historians that those who control the present control our vision of the past. As our self-understanding grows and matures, so our memory modifies or enhances the past. "The dullest of us knows" said a writer recently "how memory can transfigure; how some momentary glimpse of beauty in younger days is a whisper that memory will warehouse as a shout". And CS Lewis wrote at the end of his life, "Don't talk to me of the illusions of memory. Why should what we see at the moment be more real than what we see from ten years' distance?". So if our recollections of the past are hazy or have matured over these years, they are still part of us and of our identity. As the old Chinese proverb has it, "If you want to understand a person, you must first know his memories".

Recollection is then part of our understanding of our own identity. It is also part of securing our integrity, or integration. Life as we experience it is fragmentary. We do a quick job at home, go off to some public occasion, have some isolated conversations, dash into a shop to buy something we had forgotten, and then to see an elderly person on whom we had promised to call. So life is bits and pieces, each fragment no doubt of value in itself, but where and how does it all hang together? Where is the magnetic power that draws all these shards and filings into a pattern. "Recollection" in the Christian tradition is not just recalling the past or reminiscing. Recollection is the discipline of bringing back together what we should never have been split up - re-collection. It is the discipline of holding all the bits and pieces of life together, keeping them in focus, centring them on God. It is discipline and an art, which secures the strengths and stability to turn to the future.

Here today for us is a moment of recollection. As an association you have recollected people from different parts and places, from different generations from different outlooks. We are recollecting our shared experiences and giving them here in this Cathedral a focus, a memorial, a place of recollection. Here are brought together proud memories of what has been achieved; a touch of sadness, perhaps,

that the WRAC as we knew it no longer exists; here perhaps are memories of disaster, death, comedy, pride, gratitude, hurt and glory - jumbled because memory is happily disordered. Here in this window all those memories are held up to the light and shot through with glory as we give them focus in God's house.

At the heart of the Christian faith is the simple conviction that in the person of Jesus, God entered this world. He lived as a human person drawing together all those varied fragments of human life and holding them together in coherence, so transforming them and drawing them into his divine life. He provides the thread on which the little beads of human experience string together. He is the magnet that draws human filings into a pattern. As we recollect ourselves before Christ, so we rededicate ourselves and our brothers and sisters in the armed forces to securing that peace and justice for all which Christ came to establish."



Lt Col Westlake and Standards lead the Parade

Following the service a march past took place outside the West end of the Cathedral. Her Royal Highness, the Vice President (Brigadier Anne Field) and the Lord Lieutenant were on the dais flanked by Brigadier Gael Ramsey, a former Director and now Area Commander at Aldershot and Brigadier Joan Roulstone, the present Director, Women (Army). 376 of the 812 members in the congregation joined in the March Past in columns of six under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake, and led by the ten standards. The parade had been marshalled by WOII Kate Woodstock and into the teeth of the gale still swirling around Stag Hill, the intrepid marchers marched to the steady beat of the AG Corps Staff Band.



The March Past



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The March Past

Having defied the wind to remove her hat the Duchess talked to members of the Association before departing to another engagement. In a letter from her lady-in-waiting to the Vice President, she said:

"The Duchess of Kent so enjoyed joining you and members of the WRAC Association at the Service of Thanksgiving in Guildford Cathedral yesterday and she would like to thank you again for the warm welcome given to her.



Lt Col Sue Westlake leading the March Past

The Duchess has asked me particularly to say how moved she was by the service and how proud and honoured she felt for the Association that it should have had its 75th anniversary marked by the unveiling of the splendid new window. She sensed too an atmosphere of pride and comradeship amongst the members as they joined together for the March Past. It was a very striking scene to watch as they marched past and then away on down the square.

Her Royal Highness congratulates and thanks you all for bringing to fruition such a memorable occasion and she hopes that the rest of the day was equally as successful."



The March Past



*Vice President, Brig Roulstone, HRH,
Mrs Marsh (Lady in Waiting)*



*HRH talks to Miss Learmouth, Miss Thomson,
Brig Meechie, Brig Nield, Dame Mary Pihl
and Brig Nolan while Brig Ramsey talks to
Mr Thornton (Lord Lieutenant)*

The focus for the rest of the day then switched to the Lakeside complex at Frimley Green, some ten miles from Guildford. There are several buildings there clustered around the Wharfenden Lake, not far from Deepcut and the former RAOC Centre now home to the Royal Logistic Corps. The buildings involved with the reunion included The Lakeside International Hotel where some 100 members were staying and where the Council of the Association entertained Branch Secretaries to lunch in the Peninsula Lounge to thank them for the year of hard work that they had given to keep the Association going through the trauma of the loss of regular assistance from the WRAC and absorbing the concept of an Adjutant Generals Corps. As its name implies the Peninsula Lounge juts out into the lake and is surrounded by water on three sides. Away from the wind and with a view of a Mississippi steam boat and myriad water fowl, it was a charming setting.



Secretaries Lunch

The Annual General Meeting took place in another Lakeside building, the Canal Suite. 350 members attended and the main business was to approve the Rules of the Association which is its licence to operate as a Charity recognised by both the Charity Commissioners and the Inland Revenue. A precis of the meeting is at page 96 of this edition of *Lioness*. Ten recipients of the Association Certificate of Appreciation were announced and seven of them received their certificate from Brigadier Field, the Vice President.



Mrs Dennis

CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION



Mrs Stinson



Miss Wright



Miss Hayward



Mrs Hardinge-Francis



Mrs Barton

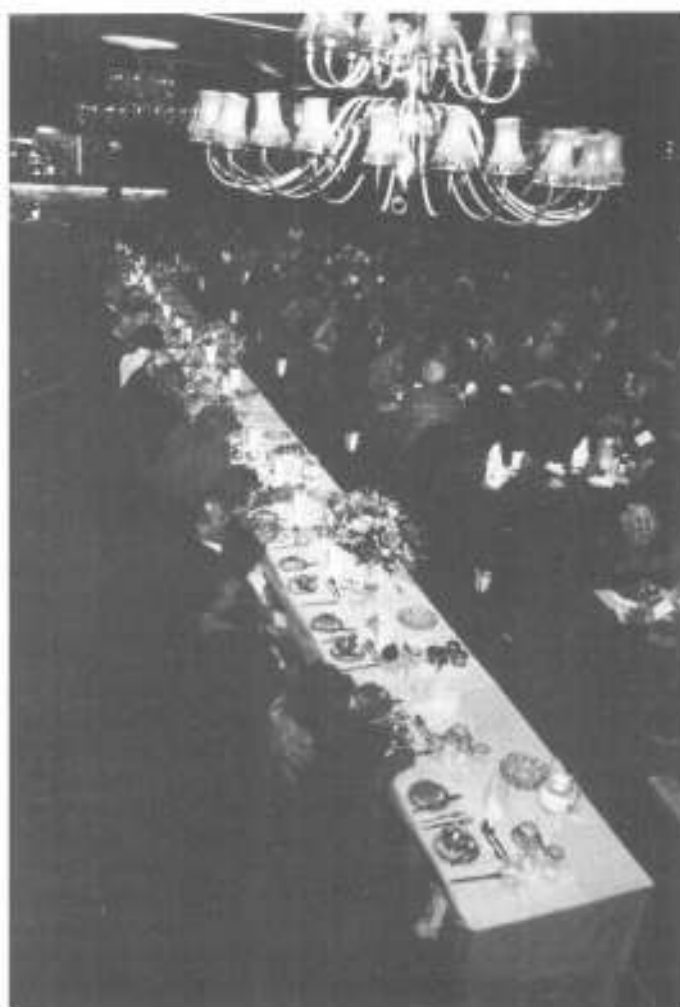


Miss Brett

After the AGM the draw was made for the Grand Reunion Grand Draw and a list of prizewinners is at page 96.

Tea was available in the Canal Suite at the close of the draw and souvenirs of the occasion were on sale. The sales team was led by WOI Elaine Smith ably assisted by Miss Linnegan, Staff Sergeant Gill Turner and Tina Pittock (née Gould) the former Assistant Curator returned to the fold especially for this occasion. Members were arriving by car and coach from all points and exploring the other facilities of the Country Club especially the Kingfisher Hotel where some members had stayed and snax were available, and the Leisure Centre where in the interests of health and fitness the bar was always open!

The main building of the complex at Lakeside is the Cabaret Suite famous to many as the site of the World Darts (One hundred and eighty!) Championships. The dance floor had been raised to be level with the stage to provide a large platform for the Adjutant General's Corps Staff Band who were to be the principal entertainment. The doors to the Cabaret Suite were to be opened at 6 pm so by 5.40 there was a crush of gigantic proportions in the lobby waiting for admission. Mr Bob Potter OBE, owner of the Lakeside, has some tall, well built, muscular young men in dinner jackets who patrol the establishment and in another context would be called "Bouncers". They were on duty to control the throng but confessed to the intimidating nature of the scene in a paraphrase of the Duke of Wellington saying "I don't know what they did to the enemy but by God they frighten me". The Cabaret Suite has a pre-planned and set layout to give the best view of the stage and tables of 16, 12, 10 and 8 places are tiered on three sides. Stewards from the Aldershot Branch were on hand and by 6.45 everyone had found a place and the two bars were doing brisk business.



THE TOP TABLE

At 7 pm precisely the top table was ushered in with a fanfare. Colonel Chris Marriott, Chairman of the Reunion Committee, welcomed everyone and invited the Chaplain General to say the Grace.

Dinner was served to the 689 members and guests present and Colonel Chris Marriott rose to propose the two loyal toasts to the Association's most distinguished Life Member, Her Majesty the Queen and the Patron of the Association Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. Lieutenant Colonel David Dunn, the General Secretary, read the following messages:

From Buckingham Palace:

"Please convey my sincere thanks to the Council and members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association (which incorporates Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades Association) for their kind message of loyal greetings on the occasion of their Grand Reunion Dinner."

I received this message with great pleasure and send my best wishes to you all for an enjoyable and successful event. ELIZABETH R".

From: Clarence House:

"I was very touched by the kind message of loyal greetings which I received from the Council and Members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association on the occasion of their Grand Reunion Dinner."

I send all of you gathered together at the Lakeside Country Club, Frimley Green, my best wishes for a very happy and enjoyable evening. ELIZABETH R Patron".

From: York House:

"To the Vice President, Council and all members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association (which incorporates Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades Association) I send my loyal greetings on the occasion of your Grand Reunion Dinner on Saturday 16 April 1994."

KATHERINE HRH The Duchess of Kent."

From Unit 47 of the Canadian Women's Army Corps Unit:

"From Toronto, Canada, the Executive and Members of the Canadian Women's Army Corps Unit 47 of the Canadian Corps Association offer their hearty congratulations to the Women's Royal Army Corps Association upon reaching their 75th Anniversary of Formation."

May your Reunion celebration of the 16th of April marking this significant event, together with the unveiling by HRH The Duchess of Kent, of a very fitting Commemorative Window in Guildford Cathedral at a Memorial Service, be a rewarding and proud day for all ex-servicewomen and indeed to those who continue to serve."

We salute you whilst keeping you in our thoughts on that day. In comradeship, Doris E Madill"

From the Women's Army Corps Foundation of the United States Army:

"We extend our heartfelt congratulations as you gather at a special service and reunion to mark your 75th Anniversary. Your dedication of a new window in Guildford Cathedral is a worthy tribute to the memory of all who served in your Corps and its predecessors."

We praise your achievements and patriotism throughout 75 years of distinguished service to your country."

May God bless each and everyone of you."

From the members of the United States Women's Army Corps Foundation."

Sincerely, Bettie J Morden, Colonel US Army Retired, President".

Brigadier Anne Field then proposed the toast to the guests. She said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen - a short opening to this historic occasion - the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the formation of our Old Comrades Association in 1919."

So after the Church Service in Guildford Cathedral, the dedication of the window commemorating the Corps we served in throughout these years, the business meeting this afternoon, it is only right and proper to have a party this evening. Welcome to you all from far and wide, Canada, USA and Australia."



General View of the Reunion Dinner

Before I welcome our guests there are one or two entries for Part One Orders

A very big thank you to all those who sent donations for the appeal for help with the stained glass window dedicated today. I am sure you will agree the four badges are a tribute to those who served in these Corps."

Many congratulations on today's turnout and bearing on parade."

The following are thanked for their part in today's activities:

Colonel Marriott - Chairman Executive Committee, OIC Raffle Prizes.

WO1 Smith - I/C Raffle tickets, souvenirs and sales.

WO1 Barclay I/C Association Standards and Parade RSM.

All Standard Bearers

WO2 Woodcock - Parade Marshal

Lt Col Westlake - Parade Commander

Mr Maurice Mager - I/C applications and donations.

Captain Platt - MTO - getting the troops to the "Church on Time", to Lakeside and home.

Aldershot Branch and other Branches - Stewards at the Cathedral and here - all as volunteers.

The Staff Band of the Adjutant General's Corps -

Director Captain Malcolm Torrent.

A special thanks to the trumpeters in the Cathedral and in particular, Band Sergeant Major Peters."



Adjutant General's Corps Staff Band

Last but not least - staff of the Association Headquarters for everything."

Mr Maurice Mager is appointed an Honorary Member of the WRAC Association."

The stained glass window appeal raised £4,041 to date and the raffle raised £3,500."

That ends Part 1 Orders. Now a very big thank you to: Cathedral staff - Dean will you please pass on our thanks to Bill Groves, your Chief Virger and Tony Yates.

All the staff at the International Hotel, Lakeside, especially Mrs Crickmore and of course, the owner, Bob Potter, who gave a raffle prize.

The Savoy Singers, under Ken Boon, in conjunction with Captain Bettison who will be performing later.

The Red Cross - who provided the first aid cover.

Surrey Constabulary for making us secure at both Guildford and Camberley.

Our members. Thank you all for coming.

Now to welcome our guests. I have divided them into groups:

The Borough

The Church

The Family (less the Master Gunner)

The Ladies

The Master Gunner

The Borough - Councillor Richard Marks. We are very conscious of our association with the Borough of Guildford - after 52 years - many of our members have so many happy memories of Guildford - including marching up the hill. We treasure your granting of the freedom to the WRAC and are delighted you are here to represent the civic element of our celebrations.

The Church (less Family) - The Very Reverend Alec Wedderspoon, The Dean, and Canon Richard Fenwick, Precentor. Dean, we are so pleased that you are dining with us this evening as it does give us all an opportunity to say thank you most warmly for allowing this morning's service and dedication to take place. The original window was installed some 33 years ago and I know that many who have contributed to the new window, have reminded us that they bought bricks for the Cathedral too. So those 52 years I mentioned earlier have seen the building of the Cathedral and many other changes on the top of your hill. Thank you for all your kindnesses and assistance.

Precentor - Canon Fenwick knows more about choreography and service design than anyone. He also knows which hymns our Royal Patron likes - so we thank you again for your help in 1992 and today. Thank you Precentor - I know you have given much of your time to us and we all appreciate the result.

The Family - We have three serving and one retired officer here as guests. Two are paying for themselves - guess who? - Brigadiers Ramsey and Roulstone. Sadly they are both retiring this year. Those staying at the Pavilion in Aldershot are grateful to Brigadier Ramsey for arranging the accommodation - and indeed, the rest of us are to her gar-

ison, for providing the saluting base today. Thank you both for the marvellous support you have given and are giving to the Association and lots of success and good fortune in the future.

Chaplain General - The Reverend Jim Harkness - I reckon you count as family on 3 if not 4 scores. One - you are the Army's Chaplain General: two - your son is in the Army; three - your daughter in law is in the AG Corps and was in the WRAC; four - you first ventured into the Training Centre, then at Hobbs Barracks, Lingfield, some 30 years ago.

Apart from the four points mentioned, you have been a marvellous support on many historic occasions over the years. St Pauls Cathedral in 1988, RMAS Chapel in 1992, Guildford 1992 and 1994. We are sorry you are not taking over Queen Elizabeth Park but are pleased you could join us today to celebrate our 75th anniversary.

The last member of the family is Lt Colonel Dick Pearson, a Trustee of the Association's Benevolent Fund and also Secretary to the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund. There are two other male Trustees of the Fund but sadly they could not join us this evening. So Dick is a very worthy representative. He knows more about the welfare and caring side of those in need than anybody. We cannot thank you enough for the support, advice and time you give to our cases and our Fund.

The Ladies - Dame Mary Bridges and Miss Susan Arthur. Dame Mary - we know from Who's Who that you have a very busy life - politically, charitably and I was pleased to note your association with Exmouth Cricket Club. An illustrious career has led to your appointment as Chairman of the RBL (Women's Section). We are so delighted to welcome you this evening. You will know that there are many ladies in this room who are also members of the Women's Section - indeed some are Chairmen and Presidents of their branches - Secretaries, Treasurers and on the ceremonial side, standard bearers too. We also have in common a very gracious Royal Patron. Your organisation has been most generous to us in the past - we first met when you presented £2000 pounds to the Museum Appeal, a joint venture if I remember correctly - a cycle ride from John O'Groats to Lands End with a stop off for tea at the Castle of Mey. Your generosity last year - £16,000 towards our benevolent cases was quite something and we do appreciate your help. We wish you every success with your conference next week.

Miss Susan Arthur - the artist. We are glad that you are here this evening so that we can say just how much we like your 'creations' and to say thank you most sincerely for the thought and time spent in their completion.

M comes after L - which leads me on to the Master Gunner of St James's, General Sir Martin Farndale - our principal guest. Saying M comes before L reminded me of those great leaders - Mountbatten and Montgomery. Admiral of the Fleet comes before a Field Marshal said Mountbatten - 'Ah' said Monty 'but Alamein comes before Burma'. We are indeed honoured and privileged that you accepted our invitation for this evening. I won't mention all your appointments - a horse gunner commanding the RHA, Director Public Relations, Comdr 2 Division, Corps Commander, Commander in Chief BAOR and Northag - now the Master Gunner - a very distinguished career now being carried on in the city and in industry. No stranger to the servicewomen. I know you are a very busy person - one hears of you everywhere - Polish Veterans - Yorkshire Veterans and tonight you can add the Army ladies to your collection.

We think it is very appropriate that you should be our principal guest this evening. The bond between those serving with the Royal Regiment was cemented during World War II.



General View of the Reunion Dinner

Just to remind you - there were ATS serving with:

1,200 in Fd Regts
500,000 in Heavy Ack Ack incl 1100 officers
1,600 in Light Ack Ack
6,500 in Searchlight Regiments
670 in Coastal (Plotters)
196 in Maritime
2,000 in Gunner Schools

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a total of over 62, 000 ATS, 25% of the service were employed in Ack Ack Command at the height of the conflict.

All the girls in whatever trade/employment were part of the batteries. By 1944 there were more women than men in AA Command. 93rd (H) Searchlight Regiment RA was entirely composed of ATS. An "onlooker" at Twickenham saw a mixed battery bring down a flying bomb and sent a donation to the ATS Benevolent Fund.

Ack Ack Command was disbanded in 1955 and as a mark of appreciation the Regiment presented a silver model of a 3.7 inch HAA gun which is now in the National Army Museum. The tradition to employ servicewomen - after 1949 WRAC, in the Gunner Schools, Ranges and in the Regiments as A/Adjutants continued for many years will leave you to mention what is happening now. The ties still remain. Many of the ATS - WRAC married into the Royal Regiment.

Some of the girls sitting here this evening - perhaps a little older - certainly a little greyer but with memories so strong and so deep. No wonder we asked you here this evening".

General Sir Martin Farndale replied on behalf of the guests and said:

"Ma'am, Ladies and I am glad to see a few brave gentlemen here too.

We are here to make the 75th Anniversary of a most remarkable event in the history of the British Army, that is the formation of an Association formed entirely of soldiers who were all women. We are here to remember those who gave their lives and those who were wounded and all those who gave devoted service to King, Queen, their country and their Corps.

It is therefore a great privilege to stand here and thank you on behalf of the distinguished list of guests. But even more I am sure that everyone here would wish me to thank you, your officers and your Reunion Committee for getting everyone assembled here tonight. It makes D-Day planning pale by comparison.

I am particularly glad to be here as Master Gunner, St James's Park, as so many of the Auxiliary Territorial Service served with Gunners in World War II. Of them 72 were killed in action and 313 wounded. Many of you may not have heard of the Master Gunner. In fact I have found it is the best conversation stopper that I know. When I say that I am the Master Gunner people say "Oh really! What do you do?". It is not an easy question to answer. There have been Master Gunners since 1485 but none have ever laid down the duties of the Master Gunner and I intend to keep it that way.

Women have served in combat over the centuries. Who has not heard of Boadicea. Women accompanied men in battle, indeed they often provided the only medical help available to the wounded. They also helped in stripping the dead of their valuables and travelled in the baggage trains. Perish the thought. . .

Women first played a part formally in the British Army in the First World War and they served in many capacities.

But 75 years ago in December 1919 something special



General View of the Reunion Dinner

happened. A permanent Association was formed to look after those women who had served in the Women's Army Auxilliary Corps and Queen Mary's Army Auxilliary Corps in World War I and this Association survived when the QMAAC was disbanded in 1921. The Auxilliary Territorial Service was added to that title in 1941 and finally the Association was incorporated into the Womens Royal Army Corps Association in 1949.

In 1939/40 the Royal Regiment of Artillery saw a massive increase in size nowhere more than in Anti Aircraft Artillery. By 30 September 1943 there were 697,153 men and women in the Royal Artillery of which 424,582 were in Heavy Anti-Aircraft/Light Anti Aircraft and Search Light Regiments. There were over 1,000 Regiments in the Gunners and by 1945 one man in four in the whole British Army was a gunner but there were simply not enough men. Accordingly, in 1940 Winston Churchill said:

"We will now carry out the greatest experiment ever tried in the British Army; we will ask our women to go into action alongside the Gunners of Anti-Aircraft Command."

There was much sucking of teeth, great men turned in their graves others fled in anguish, RSMs shook heads but soon it became a great success.

The first battery was 435 (Mixed) Heavy Anti Aircraft Battery trained at Ty Croes in Anglesey. I did claim this at a recent reunion in York and was given stick afterwards but I stick to my guns. Anyway, it was first deployed in the defence of London in August 1941 and their first success was an enemy aircraft shot down in November of that year.

No doubt there were problems but equally there can be no doubt that girls of the Gunners ATS served their country with much courage and bravery. Let me quote from the Royal Artillery Commemorative Book on the Second World War:

"They lived in bell tents in a sea of mud on the bleak marshes around Rye on the south coast with the most primitive amenities. There they sat by their guns awaiting the VI Bomber attacks. They suffered rain, sleet, snow and gales and everywhere was thick slimy black mud up to a foot deep. They sat at 10 seconds notice for action day and night and they were continuously in action. Even those off duty could get no rest because of the roar of the guns. They endured this for months on end and when given a chance to return to the comforts of London only 6 out of 700 did so. In spite of all this their guns knocked down 90% of all VI Bombers that crossed the coast so saving London from certain destruction. The Nation owes the men and women of those batteries a very great deal".

All this is written up in a new book published recently and titled "History of Anti-Aircraft Artillery" which can be purchased from the Royal Artillery Institution at Woolwich. The story will also be illustrated well in the new Gunners Museum to be built at the Woolwich Arsenal in a few years time.

But by no means all the ATS served as Gunners, they served in many places in many roles, perhaps personified by the story of Violette Szabo of 137 HAA Battery, married to a French officer. One day she left the Battery and no-one knew why. Then after the war came the citation - she had volunteered for dangerous and secret work in France and was parachuted in in 1944. Twice arrested and twice escaped, eventually surrounded with a Resistance Group, but "seizing a sten gun she exchanged shot for shot, killing many of the enemy until she fell exhausted". She was captured and atrociously tortured but never by word or deed gave away any of the Resistance. She was then executed. For her courage she was awarded the George Cross for extreme gallantry". It later became known that she had volunteered for this duty because her husband had been killed at Alamein.

It was girls like Violette Szabo who set the standards for the ATS, WRAC and the girls in the Army today.

Personally, I believe we had it right with a Women's Royal Army Corps in the Army and I believe that today we have gone too far. But whether I am right or wrong, the girls today serve alongside men in the Army and I am sure will maintain the standards which you have all set.

You all have reason to be proud of your service to your country and to your Corps. I know I echo the sentiments of military leaders over the years when I record our thanks for what you did and I salute you for your courage.

It is one of my duties as Master Gunner to report to Her Majesty the Queen in her capacity as Captain General of the Royal Artillery and herself once in the ATS. I will be pleased to tell her of your splendid evening here tonight."



General View of the Reunion Dinner

The Savoy Singers from Camberley organised by Captain Kate Bettison and led by Mr Ken Boon then gave a spirited performance of songs from Gilbert & Sullivan and led the assembled members in rendering versions of the songs of the 40s which was done with gusto but unlikely to dent Dame Vera Lynn's sales. Miss Susan Arthur who had worked for over a year on the Commemorative window, said that during her work she had understood the symbolism and history of the badges but it was only by being among nearly 700 members of the Association that she realised what the badges meant in terms of loyalty, esprit de Corps, pride in achievement and comradeship to those who had worn them over 75 years.

So by midnight on 16/17 April 1994 it was all over. The car parks were empty, the tables cleared, the bars shut, the souvenir stalls closed, the money in the safe and to the outsider as though nothing had happened. But two and a half years of planning, arranging, fixing, logging, conferring, ordering, publicising and participation had created a Day to Remember. A day to remember life, death, friends, comrades and service.

HISTORY OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY

In his speech to the Grand Reunion Dinner the Master Gunner, General Sir Martin Farndale mentioned that a history of Anti-Aircraft Artillery had been published recently. Details are:

HISTORY OF THE REGIMENT Volume IV
Anti-Aircraft Artillery 1912 - 1954

Available from:

The Royal Artillery Institution
Old Royal Military Academy
WOOLWICH
London SE18 4DNH

Price: £33.10 incl Postage and Packing
Cheque to "RA Institution".

CALLING ALL ATS PROVOST

Were you in the ATS Provost during the war years? If your answer is 'YES' and you were that soldier then you can help. I am collecting stories about people and/or events relating to ATS Provost war experiences. You know the sort of thing. All those stories that you tell after dinner or at get-togethers. Stories about everyday life, characters you met and have never forgotten, unusual postings, unusual experiences and unusual jobs. A couple of years ago at the celebrations of the ATS/WRAC Provost at Chichester I had the good fortune to bump into three ATS Provost comediennees. Talk about tales to tell, they made me think what a loss it would be if somebody didn't collect together the information. It seems even more important now and anyway I want to know what ATS Provost were up to during the war. If the experiences of Dorothy, Pam and Irene whom I met at Chichester, are anything to go by, I should be in for a splendid time.

If you are ex-ATS Provost or know someone who is or if you belong to any Association which might shelter the missing species, then please give me a call for a chat. You never know who else might have called. You have a story to tell so tell me:

Olga Hill
29 Willowdene Lane
Pontefract
West Yorkshire
WF8 1RR
Telephone (0977) 798204

GRAND REUNION 1994

GRAND DRAW

PRIZE WINNERS

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TICKET NO.	NAME	PRIZE
20916	Mrs J Watmore	Weekend for two in Paris
07117	G B Barker	Treatment at Inglewood Health Hydro
13077	P Bukrsi	Portable Radio donated by Roberts Radio
19570	L P Rose	Case of Wine donated by Lady Kemble
14826	Joy Hollingsworth	Case of Wine donated by Brig Field
05503	Mrs Cartwright	Case of Wine donated by Col Marriott
22576	Mark Wilson	Dinner for two at Lakeside Country Club donated by Bob Potter OBE
07574	Adjutant, New College RMAS	Two tickets for Epsom Downs Races donated by Ever Ready
01273	C G Steele	Moulinex Electric can opener and electric knife donated by Col Denne
11052	Mrs M J Sugden	£40 Gift Voucher
15728	V Ford	£30 Gift Voucher
20849	Mrs E Dugmore	£30 Gift Voucher
10972	C Robinson	£30 Gift Voucher
02670	Isabella Fairbairn	£25 Gift Voucher
19088	Miss Hickling	Selection of Teas donated by Sussex Tea Company
01476	M Angear	£20 Gift Voucher
22584	Lt Col E M Walters	£20 Gift Voucher
Not Recorded	Mrs S Alexandra	£20 Gift Voucher
12236	S Wright	£20 Gift Voucher
03241	T Lewis	£20 Gift Voucher
06153	Dawn Curran	£20 Gift Voucher
18025	Col M R Green	£20 Gift Voucher donated by Boots
21924	Geoffrey Barlow	Dimple de luxe 15 yr old Whisky donated by Col Bowles
19025	P Bailey	£10 Gift Voucher
01421	Mrs A Schofield	£10 Gift Voucher
19579	Mrs Salisbury-Jones	£10 Gift Voucher
04040	Mrs J Anscorb	£10 Gift Voucher
24324	Miss P Lusby	ATS Doll
Not Recorded	A J Robb	Personal Alarm
07985	Col C E Hammond	Framed Picture donated by Capt Bettison
03435	M Hughes	"Lawrence" The Cuddly Camel donated by Mrs D M Hill
02617	Mrs J Hall	Two Bottles of Wine
02447	Miss M M Gibson	Westclox Alarm
21240	W Wilson	Italian 'Lisa Canali' Scarf
18501	Miss A R Thomson	Rowenta Alarm Clock
24469	Mrs A Stockham	Book..Wartime Kitchen Garden donated by Mrs E Carter
23309	Brig Meechie	£8 Gift Voucher

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1994

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Canal Suite, Lakeside Country Club, Frimley Green, Surrey on Saturday 16 April 1994 at 3.00 pm. The Chair was taken by Brigadier A Field CB, Vice President and Chairman of Council. She thanked WO1 E D Smith AGC SPS for her work on the raffle and the selling of souvenirs.

Apologies for absence had been received from the following members of Council: Colonel C E Hammond CBE, Colonel V K Stead OBE TD, Lieutenant Colonel A Trehern AGC SPS, WO1 K Blake AGC SPS, WO1 L R O'Brien AGC SPS and Mrs A L C Massey MBE.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 3 April 1993 having been circulated were taken as read and signed and there were no matters arising.

Brigadier Field reported that the Council had met twice since the last AGM. The main item which had been considered was the arrangements for the Grand Reunion. The form of the Commemorative window and the wording of its accompanying plaque had to be negotiated with the Cathedral authorities.



The Annual General Meeting

Membership of the Association was now 5908 and this was an increase of 300 over the year. These were mainly retired members but there was an increasing number of serving members of the Adjutant General's Corps who had been in the WRAC who were joining our Association. No new branches have been created but the Penrith Branch had closed.

350 members had attended the Cenotaph Service and Parade on 14 November 1993 and 15 members attended the service inside Westminster Abbey on Remembrance Sunday.

As part of the continuing cut back in defence it is probable that the Association and Benevolent Fund offices would move to Worthy Down by 1 April 1995 and the staff cut back to a Corps Secretary and one Administrative Officer. The Benevolent Fund Case Secretary would continue to be paid for by the Funds.

Birmingham Branch moved the adoption of the report and Bath Branch seconded. The motion was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Mrs A H S Matthews, the Honorary Treasurer, said the portfolio of investments of the Association has increased in value by £83,000.

The total cost of publishing LIONESS had fallen by £4846 but this was very much as a result of producing fewer copies. Overall the costs of paper, printing and labour had all risen and would continue to do so.

Income to the Association had fallen by £5,436 again accounted for by the loss of subscription income from servicewomen and the fact that the Museum account had closed and transferred to the National Army Museum.

The Association was in a reasonable financial position but must be prudent to keep the subscription to members the extremely good value that it is at present.

Wimbledon Branch moved the adoption of the report and Wolverhampton Branch seconded. The motion was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Lieutenant Colonel D Dunn stated that since the departure of the Assistant Corps Secretary, he had edited four editions of the Lioness magazine. Members would have noticed a change in the perspective of the magazine. There were now very few items from serving soldiers or unit news and the emphasis was very much on nostalgic items, factual accounts and comrades seeking each other.

The two editions in 1993 were 40 pages and 60 pages respectively. The extra 20 pages had put the cost per edition up from 76p to £1.09 and the postage from 34p to 49p so members had received £2.68 value for £2 subscription which was a bargain. He hoped that VAT would not be put on magazines.

Rhyl Branch moved the adoption of the report and York Branch seconded. The motion was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Lieutenant Colonel M W Soames reported that the Trustees of the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund had met twice during the year and the report of the funds had been sent to all Branches.

Increasing the income to the Fund was as important as ever - the case load remains the same at over 1,000 a year but the income was 50% less than in 1992. Serving soldiers no longer gave a day's pay to the fund. £146,000 had been spent last year when 700 ex-ATS and 3000 ex-WRAC benefited. In addition the Army Benevolent Fund and The Royal British Legion (Women's Section) gave £21,500 and £16,000 respectively. Total grants were £183,500.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund provides a small annuity for 60 members who are elderly, housebound, living alone and impoverished. A further 23 annuitants receive a weekly sum from the Army Benevolent Fund which is administered by the WRAC Benevolent Fund.

The Trustees are most grateful to members for fund raising and donations and for knitting. Legacies too are most welcome. The budget for 94/95 was to be £125,000 - even less than 1993 - so members were asked to continue to help the Benevolent Fund.

Brigadier A Field reported that the Liaison Team from the former WRAC Museum of herself, Maj Simpson, Miss

Ellison and Lt Col Dunn visited the National Army Museum on 11 February 1994. They had been received and briefed by the Director who had said that as part of their mission is to tell the story of the British Soldier, keeping the names of disbanded Corps and Regiments alive was very important. The Museum are still collecting and welcome any item.

The Liaison Team had been shown where the items from the Guildford museum would be displayed but there was no question of trying to reproduce the Guildford layout and design. The new display would be in position for about 2 years when that gallery would be ready for the next major phase of refurbishment for the National Army Museum. At that point items from the WRAC collection would join the chronology of the history of the Army and since women in the Army go back to 1843, the artifacts would be throughout the museum (but their origin would be acknowledged on the display case).

It is hoped that the display based upon the WRAC Museum would be open in the Autumn of 1994 and that the next AGM would be held in the National Army Museum on 22 April 1995.

Shipley Branch moved the adoption of the report and Aylesbury Branch seconded. The motion was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Council proposed and Somerset Branch seconded that Lady Kemball and Mrs A L C Massey MBE be elected as Council Vice-Presidents and Newcastle Branch proposed and Southampton Branch seconded that the Rules of the Association published in Lioness No 2 of 1993 should be adopted. The whole meeting carried the motions unanimously.

The Vice-President then presented Certificates of Appreciation to the following:

MRS M BARTON.....	Liverpool Branch
MISS M BRETT	Shipley Branch
MRS D DENNIS	Canterbury Branch
MISS A HAYWARD	Liverpool Branch
MRS R E HARDINGE-FRANCIS	
MBE TD	Somerset Branch
MRS R A STINSON	Canterbury Branch
MISS B E WRIGHT TD	Wimbledon Branch

Certificates for Miss V M Falkner of London Branch and Mrs T Goff and Mrs H C Grigg, both of Shropshire Branch, were to be presented at a later date.

The 1995 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 22 April 1995 at the National Army Museum, Chelsea SW3 4HT.



**WRAC FLAG BEING FLOWN OUTSIDE
NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM ON 1st FEBRUARY 1994**

SPORT

THE CHANGING FACE OF FEMALE SPORT AT SANDHURST

by Sergeant Carol Matten APTC

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Most people who have been to Sandhurst either as a posting or on passing through will remember the excellent facilities it offers. On a games afternoon the grounds and gymnasiums are a buzz with activities from fencing to football, and from rounders to rowing.

On the playing fields often there are sounds of grunting and groans as someone is over excited on a tackle during a rugby practice. So what's so different about that? Nothing, except the team training are all women.

Tradition aside, the first Women's Rugby Team was formed by two keen members of the Senior intake, OCdt's Bell and Cock. A challenge was laid down by the Commandant, Major General Toyne Sewell, to play a match at the end of the term on the first XV pitch and before his departure. With this in mind, fifteen cadets and two members of the Directing Staff, Capt K N Thurlow (AGC) - OIC Women's Rugby and Sgt C Matten APTC - 2IC Women's Rugby, started the learning and practising process. Sgt (SI) Witcomb APTC trained the team.



Sandhurst Women's Rugby Team

Back Row: (Standing): OCdt's Cock, Bell, Atkinson, Russell.

Middle Row: OCdt's Launders, Davies, Goldstraw, Buckingham, Clelany, Taylor

STS(SI) Carol Matten APTC, Capt Kim Thurlow AGC(SPS)

Front Row: OCdt's Murphy, Penhallurick, Turnbull, Gould.

A match was arranged with Camberley Ladies Rugby Club to be played at the end of term. With little knowledge of capabilities except that they were good, this was the target we were aiming for.

The day arrived to put the challenge into action. Camberley Ladies arrived and we all wanted to go home. Although we were a fine body of women in our white strip, nimble and quick on the feet, Camberley outsized us in every way. The game was hard and fast, tackles were rough and bruising. In the end we were very happy with losing 32-0. Everyone was in one piece although bruised. We loved every minute of it and the crowd that gathered to watch did as well.

Now that Women's Rugby is well established at universities and at local club level, when will we see it introduced as an Army competition? It certainly won't be the first and last match we will see at Sandhurst. The new season is looming fast and plans are already being laid for the next match.

NETBALL

In the Inter Corps Netball Championships on 21 Jan 94, the AGC A Team were winners and the B Team 4th. The A Team consisted of Capt "Doris" Foxley, Sgt L Camley, Cpl K McVey, Cpl Karen Rayment, Cpl "Lofty" Lofthouse, and Cpl L Jackson; the B Team members were Capt J Clark, Lt Sally Empson, SSgt C L Tredwell, Sgt Jo Antoine-Cahill, Sgt V M Preece, Cpl A Priestley, Cpl R L Kidby and Cpl Bev Bates.

Five members of the team have been chosen for the Army side to play in Barbados in May.

CROSS COUNTRY

The Worthy Down Station Women's Cross Country Team, consisting of Captain Tanya Collier-Jackson, Capt Nicki Miller (nee Everitt), Capt Rowena Griffiths, 2Lt C Y Mavin, SSgt Jeanette Critchell and SSgt Julie Stanton, ran a hard race over a difficult course at the Army Cross Country Championships at Longmoor on 2 Feb 94 and are to be congratulated on coming 2nd.

Capt Miller represented the Army in the Inter Service Cross Country Championships on 18 Feb 94.

Cpl Kelly Holmes (holder of the UK 800m record) won for the Combined Services against the English Cross Country Association last month, coming in 23 seconds clear. She also retained her Inter Corps Championships title. The AGC easily won the team event, ahead of the RLC. The other members of the AGC team were Cpl Sarah Bradbury and SSgt Betty Gash.



Worthy Down Women's Cross Country Team

L to R: SSgt Julie Stanton, SSgt Jeanette Critchell, 2Lt C Y Mavin,

Capt Tanya Collier-Jackson, Capt Nicki Miller (absent Capt Rowena Griffiths)

HOCKEY

AGC A Team won the Army Women's Inter Corps Championships on 27/28 Nov 93. The AGC B Team were runners up in the B Pool.

Seven AGC members were in the Army team who are now Inter-Service Champions having beaten the RAF (on penalties) and the Navy (3-0) at Plymouth in Mar 94. OCdt Janet Waring AGC (PRO) and Cpl Terry Bennett AGC (SPS) have been selected for the Combined Service squad.

ORIENTEERING

AGC Colours for orienteering have been awarded to Capt "Woo" Allen AGC (ETC) from Princess Marina College at Arborfield and Capt Bev Walters-Davies AGC (SPS) from the AGC Depot.

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Captain Wendy Allen on the Orienteering Course

Capt Allen and Capt J Hornsby represented the Army in the Inter Service Championships (Female).

The AGC won the Inter Corps Championships (Female) at Penhale. Capt Walters-Davies was individual champion and represented the Army in the Inter Service Championships and Wales in the Senior Home International Championships. She was also the individual female champion at the UK Minor Units Championships.

The AGC Centre won the UK Minor Units Championships (Female).

REGULAR FORCES EMPLOYMENT ASSOCIATION

The Association, together with the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Employment, is part of the Forces Retirement Service. Our task is to assist all non-commissioned men and women who served with good character for a minimum of three years, or less if discharged on medical grounds to find civil employment at the end of their engagements.

Our services are free, and we take a long term interest in ex-Regulars so they are available to them throughout their working lives.

Our Employment Officers are situated in Branches throughout the United Kingdom and they maintain close contact with local employers and Jobcentres.

Their addresses and telephone numbers can be obtained from Unit/Ship Resettlement Officers, Jobcentres and local telephone directories.

During the period 1st April 1993 - 31st March 1994 the Association assisted 12,771 men and women with their resettlement and placed 4823 in employment.

Of those placed 2794 were men and women from the Army and 43 were from the WRAC.

REUNIONS

ATS DINNER CLUB

The ATS Dinner Club is arranging a re-union weekend at Buxton the first weekend in June 1995. This is open to ALL who served in the ATS at a maximum cost of £85 plus travel and bed and breakfast. This promises to be a great occasion and those interested can get further details from:

Mrs Joy Balmain
57 Greenbank Road
Preston
Birkenhead L42 7JT

Stamped addressed envelope essential

ATS DINNER CLUB

The members of the ATS Dinner Club may like to know that the Annual Luncheon will be held on 1 October 1994 at Wellington Barracks. Details in the News Letter. This function is for members only. If you are ex-ATS and would like to become a member of the ATS Dinner Club, write to:

ATS Dinner Club Membership Secretary
Mrs M Fellows
20 Mount Nod Way
Coventry CV5 7GY

Once again, SAE essential for a reply!

YOU WILL BE MOST WELCOME

0684 577 063

WE'LL MEET AGAIN (WE HOPE!!)

We have just returned from Bridlington where our "Reunion within a Reunion for 514 (M) HAA Battery and Others" has been a tremendous success. Out of the seventeen ex ATS "Ack-Ackers" who assembled at the Spa on Friday evening 17 June 1994, three 514 and two 510 Bty "Bods" had met up at previous reunions, but the others, representing 435, 476, 497, 503, 568, 586, 610, 625 and 2nd AA Group HQs were meeting me for the first time, even though we had been corresponding prior to the Reunion. "Strangers" we were to begin with but, bonded by the common factor of having served our King and country during WWII in the Royal Artillery, experiencing similar conditions "on duty and off", we parted after the Remembrance Service on Sunday 19 June "firm friends" pledging to "do it all again next year!"

Anyone tempted to join us in June (16, 17 and 18) 1995 should contact me as soon as possible:

Beryl (Betty) Holder (nee Lewis)
10 Dale Road
Dronfield
Sheffield S18 6YG
Tel: 0246 - 412951

REUNIONS

WRAC ASSOCIATION, SCOTLAND AGM AND REUNION

15 OCTOBER 1994
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The Annual General Meeting and Reunion of the WRAC Association, Scotland is being hosted by the Ayrshire Branch at the Station Hotel, Burns Statue Square, Ayr on Saturday 15 October 1994 at 11.30 am. "The AGM will be followed by a 3-course meal and coffee with Mr Alan Hodgson - SSAFA Ayrshire speaking after the meal. Raffle prior to a cup of tea, will conclude the meeting. Tickets price £9.00 may be obtained from Secretaries of Scottish Branches or direct from Area Secretary, Captain P M Stevenson (Retd) ACIO Glasgow, 78 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3DN. Cheques payable to WRAC Association, Ayrshire Branch.

Members wishing to stay overnight on the Friday or Saturday evening are being offered a special rate of £25 per person per night, based on sharing a twin-bedded room, including breakfast, price includes VAT. Bookings should be made direct with the Hotel quoting WRAC membership. Tel No. 0292 263268 or in writing to The Station Hotel, Burns Statue Square, Ayr KA7 3AT.

NORTH EAST REUNION

The North East Reunion will be held in the York & Ainsty Suite at York Racecourse on Saturday 10 September 1994 from 12 noon to 4.30 pm. Cost will be £10 and includes a 4-course hot lunch with waiter service (not a buffet as previously intimated) and also drinks of tea before departure. Tickets are obtainable from Miss M Bradley, 60 West Avenue Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 9BY (Tel 0423 507023) not later than 27 August 1994.

Please send SAE and cheque/postal order payable to "WRAC Association (Northern Area)".

SOUTHERN GROUP - WARNING ORDER

REUNION 1995

The 1995 Southern Group Reunion will be held on the Isle of Wight in 1995. Secretaries of Branches in the Group are asked to contact Mrs P K Annis 2B London House, York Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 8ET with some idea of numbers likely to attend as soon as possible and before the Marchwood Reunion. She promises that there will be little walking to do!

ANOTHER AVENUE TO EXPLORE

Channel 4 run a tracing service - write to:

SERVICE PALS
Teletext Ltd
PO BOX 297
London SW6 1XT

"FRONTLINE BRITAIN '94"

50th Anniversary of the End of Frontline Britain

Sunday 25 September 94

Throughout the day the "Dunkirk Little Ships" will be arriving and on Dover seafront there will be a vehicle rally. In the evening to officially open the week's events, there will be a "Beating Retreat".

Monday 26 September 94

The parade and unveiling of the memorial followed by a march past with the salute being taken by a member of the Royal Family and many service VIPs.

All veterans and partners will then be bussed to lunch and entertainment throughout the afternoon.

During the rest of the week plans are being made for dinners, concerts, lunches, film shows, exhibitions, charabanc trips, sport matches and so on to Friday in Calais where a parade will be held to mark the liberation of the town.

(Participation in the parade etc. on the 26 September 94 is for medal applicants only.)

Details from:
Frontline Britain '94,
107 Mongeham Road,
Great Mongeham
Deal, Kent CT14 9JL

BLETCHLEY PARK BRITAINS BEST KEPT SECRET

The Trustees and officers of the Bletchley Park Trust Ltd welcome you to the site of Britain's best kept secret the home of the Allied codebreaking activity throughout the Second World War. So secret was this work that for 30 years after victory in 1945, the wider public were unaware of the tasks carried out here

If you would like to visit or to help, either by donation or becoming a Friend of Bletchley Park, please contact

The Bletchley Park Trust Ltd
Bletchley Park
Milton Keynes
MK3 6NB

Tel: (0908) 640404

MY ATS EXPERIENCE by Maisie Harradine nee Puttock

I was living at Reading in 1941 when I called up. I had been evacuated from Putney in London after my home was demolished in an air raid. I was very shocked to see it like that in the morning after spending the night in an air raid shelter on Putney Common.

My brother, who was in the army, had been killed at the beginning of the war, my father had died and my fiancée, Monte, had been posted to Egypt in 1940. It was to be 4 years before we met again.

After being through such a harrowing time I remember feeling pleased at the prospect of a complete change in my life.

I attended a Selection Board to join one of the Services and was enlisted into the ATS after a medical and being given the "King's Shilling". I had assumed I would be offered a trade not to my liking, I was therefore surprised when I was accepted to go on a driver's course.

Two weeks later I received my posting and railway warrant to Aldermaston for Basic Training and, by now, I was really excited. While I was waiting at Reading Station I saw another girl carrying a case and looking as apprehensive as I was feeling. We struck up a conversation and found we were both bound for Aldermaston. Her name was Jackie Westfield and this was the start of a friendship which has lasted for 53 years.

At Aldermaston we met up with a lot of other girls from all over the country. After we were given a meal and issued with all our kit, we were allocated beds in Nissen Huts. Today the conditions would seem very spartan and basic but then we accepted it all without demur.

We were given various intelligence tests and had our first experience of drill. After this basic training the prospective drivers were posted to Camberley on a Drivers' Course. We had driving lessons every day. Truck loads of us girls going out on the roads taking half-hour turns at the wheel. I took to driving easily and really enjoyed the training. We were taught basic mechanics, maintenance and map reading. We had a lot of drills and parades. Our platoon was judged the smartest and best when we finally had our 'Passing Out Parade' at Sandhurst.

At the end of the course those who had passed were given their postings. My friend Jackie and I were posted together at Bulford Camp on Salisbury Plain for more training. Before we left we were issued with a lanyard and RASC flash which we could not wait to sew on our sleeves. We were told we could 'put up' our cap straps to denote that we were fully fledged drivers. I felt really special.

At Bulford Camp we learnt aircraft recognition, First Aid and more map reading before being posted to Salisbury where we were billeted in a large house. Jackie and I shared a room with another driver named Vera Tubbs, unfortunately I have since lost touch with her. Finally we were put on driving duties, I was given a utility van and one of my jobs was to collect the post from the Army Post Office and take it to Wilton House which had been taken over by the army. We had a petrol filling station at Wilton where we took it in turn to 'man the pumps'. I then progressed to driving Staff Cars where my map reading knowledge proved essential as all signposts had been removed in case of an invasion. The spire of Salisbury Cathedral was a welcome landmark when returning from a long day's driving.

A year later I was sent on a mechanic's Course to London and I had to report to a civvy garage in Streatham. There I met up with other ATS girls, we were billeted in a large Victorian house which had bare floorboards and no furniture except our beds and a locker each. It was at the time of the bombing raids so it was quite hectic and noisy especially at night. In every road there were piles of rubble where houses had once stood and many of the shops were boarded up. I remember I was glad when the course was over and I was posted to Catterick Camp in Yorkshire. It seemed rather bleak but there was lovely countryside all around. At first I drove a truck and had to deliver stores,

rations etc. Subsequently, I was put on Ambulance Duty and attached to Catterick Military Hospital which included stand-by duty at the rifle range. This was an easy duty but I remember one soldier breaking his arm by falling over a gate. After a while I was transferred to Staff Cars which was enjoyable, especially as I was given a Humber Snipe and drove officers far and wide around Yorkshire and Durham.

I had spells at out-stations in Darlington, Northallerton, Scarborough and Whitby attached to ATS Units. I was always glad to get back to Catterick Camp between postings as there finding a dance being held by one of the many regiments. The NAAFI was also a very popular venue for socialising.

One dark moonless night at midnight I was driving an officer back to his barracks from an officers' mess at a neighbouring camp. As we only had masked headlamps with just a slit to let out a small amount of light it was most difficult to see the road ahead clearly especially if it was raining or foggy. As I drove along a narrow country lane I felt a bump. On stopping to investigate I found I had knocked over two men, I could not see them clearly at first but on hearing one of them say in a distressed voice, "Oh Lordy, Lordy", over and over again, I guessed they were black American GIs. They were not badly hurt, just bruised and shaken, as I had been driving slowly owing to the conditions. I only caught one man's arm as I passed them causing him to pull the other man down with him as he fell. The officer I was with arranged that we took them both back to their camp. When I reported the accident I had heaps of forms to fill and I was most surprised when I was given seven days confined to barracks with extra duties. I had to report to the cookhouse every evening for a week to clean pots and pans and peel potatoes (which was called "Spud Bashing"). Even after all these years I still think the GIs were to blame as they must have heard my car coming and should have got out of the way.

About this time my friend Jackie was posted back to Southern Command.

The winters were very harsh in Yorkshire, we had to put chains on our wheels for deep snow. One day I got stuck in a snowdrift while driving an officer to a meeting many miles away. It took a farm tractor to pull me out. The officer was not best pleased as we both got quite wet and bedraggled in the deep snow. He was most concerned about his once well polished boots and leggings.

We did our own maintenance on our vehicles, the big jobs being done by ATS Fitters. We were not integrated with the men so were quite self-sufficient. When I change a wheel now on my Mini it seems so easy compared with changing the wheels on heavy vehicles.

In November 1944 I was given a medical and told to be prepared for an overseas posting. I had mixed feelings about this. Then out of the blue, I had a telegram telling me my fiancée had returned from overseas. I applied for Compassionate Leave to get married, some 'joker' in the Orderly Room issued me a Leave Pass for 'Passionate Leave'. I bet they all thought it was a huge joke.

We were married in church by special licence and spent our honeymoon at the Catherine Wheel Hotel, Henley on Thames. On returning to Catterick my Overseas Posting was cancelled and I was discharged the following year under "Paragraph 13" which was Pregnancy.

It will be our Golden Wedding this year, we have three children, ten grandchildren and one great grand-daughter.

I really enjoyed my four years in the ATS and I feel privileged to have had such a great experience with so many happy memories.



No 4 Platoon - Hut 53 Heathfield Camp, Honiton, Devon March 1942

*Back: Ptes Nilson, Veale, Kerswell, Russell,
Harkness, Wood, Arnold, Harding, Willis,
Reynolds, Parnell, Dyer*

*Front: Gray, Richardson, Cheek, Lewis
(Mickey the Dog)*

BRANCH NEWS



*Admiral Sir Henry Leach talks to Mrs Norah Kendall at Oldham
Civic Centre on 29 May 94*

ACCRINGTON. The Branch membership remains much the same, we have lost a few but we have also gained a few. Once again we have received invitations to participate in church services and parades within the area, our last one being the D-Day Commemoration Parade and Church Service as the guests of the Padiham Branch, Royal British Legion.

In March Mrs Torrance gave us the use of her home for a Cheese & Wine party. The party was very successful as it helped to boost our funds. Our thanks go to Isabel and her daughter Melanie who were our hostesses for the evening.

In June, sixteen members and friends enjoyed a coach trip through the picturesque Ribble Valley which ended at Slaidburn at a 13th century Inn where we enjoyed a very pleasant supper. Whilst there we just had to see the old Courtroom, photographs were taken and we hope to have them for the next issue of the Lioness. Another outing is planned for August.

We have again rented a stall for the Padiham Festival and are now very busy collecting bric-a-brac for this event.

AYLESBURY. The most poignant event that we have to report was the unexpected and sudden death of our devoted Secretary, Sophia Hooper (ATS), only three days after our April meeting, where she was in her usual high spirits and so full of enthusiasm. The Branch was represented at the funeral by our Chairman Alma Stride. There were no flowers and a donation was sent to International Cancer Research at the request of the family.

I am delighted to report, in the best traditions of the British Army, when one person falls another steps forward to fill the gap. One of our younger members, Josie Mead (WRAC) volunteered to take on that all important job of Branch Secretary.

Fourteen members attended the Service of Dedication for the Commemorative Window in Guildford Cathedral and the AGM at Lakeside. A most moving and enjoyable time was had by all.

We were pleased to receive a visit at our May meeting from our Group Chairman, Mrs Eileen Carter. In a letter to us, following her return home, she said how much she had enjoyed her visit to Aylesbury and meeting so many members.

Alma Stride, Joan Shrimpton and Catherine Woodford represented the Branch at the Dedication Service and Unveiling of the Memorial Plaque at Great Yarmouth on 11 May 1994 to the 26 girls killed there in 1943.

Our Garden Party was another success attended by 20 members. The weather could have been kinder, however it takes a lot to dampen our spirits.

Future activities include a visit to the Cotswolds, with a conducted tour of the area, led by the Rev John Acreman, son of Pam, one of our members, concluding with tea laid on by the local parish ladies. In September we have our Group Get-together at Wellington Barracks. Watch out, the Brigade of Guards, we're coming in! More about how we fared in our next report.

BATH. The Branch continues to thrive with two meetings a month usually attended by an average of 25 to 30 members. We have welcomed several new members this year.

Sadly we lost Miss Doris Sayers, our Treasurer for many years who expertly looked after our finances. Her effort ensured that when she retired from that role, the Branch was in a healthy position.

The death has also occurred of a former Committee member, Miss Kay Keynton, who nobly travelled from Bristol to Bath even when her health was not good. She had attended our AGM and her death just a few days later was a shock to members.

Several social activities have taken place; a trip to Lord Denning's home, the uncle of one of our members; a coffee morning to commemorate D-Day when we were able to hand over £220 to SSAFA. We look forward to Tea Parties, the Group Reunion at Southampton and a day at Weston-super-Mare when we meet up with our members from that area who are not able to attend our regular meetings. Five members very much enjoyed the Reunion at Guildford. Two members represented the Branch on the County of Avon Public Transport Forum. Members who are not able to get to meetings are kept in touch with events by regular newsletters.



Catherine Woodford, Jean Shrimpton and Alma Stride, of Aylesbury Branch visiting graves of ATS members in Caister Cemetery on 11 May 94



Sue Dolphin (youngest member) cuts Birmingham Branch 6th Birthday Cake



Chelmsford Branch



Dorothy Shofield (née Lingard) of the Bolton Branch with her husband Jack following his investiture at Buckingham Palace

BOLTON. Our 1994 activities got into full swing with four members attending the Reunion in Guildford. The service in the Cathedral was very impressive and the stained glass window was much admired. The clicking of the many cameras ensure us of a lasting memory of the occasion.

We spent a lovely day out in Chester in April, the weather was very kind to us and the photo shows some of us partaking of a refreshing ice cream on the banks of the River Dee.

One of our local charities "Vision Aid" which works for blind and partially sighted children requested the help of our members to collect from the audience at the performance of King's Rhapsody by a local Dramatic Society. The overall collection raised 370 and our help was much appreciated. We were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from their committee, this is beautifully framed and each member of the Branch will keep it for one month, until we find a permanent home for it.



BOLTON BRANCH IN CHESTER

*Standing: Sybil Yates, Alwyn McFadden, Vera Worthington, Kathleen Leyland and Betty Byrom
Seated: Hilda Connolly, Joan Nadin, Betty Crompton*

On Sunday 8th May a parade and Service of Remembrance was held in the Town Hall Square. Lucy Ainsworth laid the ATS wreath to commemorate both VE Day and D-Day. This was followed by a buffet lunch at the United Services Veterans Club.

On 22nd May we were invited to take part in the Civic Procession to the Parish Church in support of His Worship the Mayor. This again was followed by refreshments in the Town Hall. On 1st June, 16 members went to the theatre in Manchester to see the Phantom of the Opera, this was a great success and we are hoping for some more of the London productions to come to the North. On Friday 10th June, 14 members visited Fleetwood, again the weather was kind to us. The visit to Fleetwood is becoming an annual feature in our calendar.

We have quite a busy programme for the next few months including a coffee morning, North West Area Reunion and a visit to Hebden Bridge.

BRADFORD. Welcome to all members. Our meetings are held on the 2nd Monday in each month commencing at 1400 hrs and we average 30 to 35 members in attendance.

Mrs Nora Houldsworth (Treasurer) and Mrs Ada Hudson (Vice Chairman) have recently been in Catterick Military Hospital for operations and are now well on the way to recovery. We wish them both well and continuing good health. They speak very highly of the care and attention given to them by the doctors and staff at the hospital.

Our Secretary, Miss Ivy Weston, has been out of action for the last three months but will be with us at our next meeting - fighting fit and raring to go we hope.

In April we attended the Reunion at Guildford, our coach of 48 augmented by members from Rochdale and Sheffield. Once again I had the honour to carry the standard of the QMAAC at the Memorial Service in Guildford Cathedral. The memorial window was unveiled by the Duchess of Kent (very smart and looking elegant as always). I still get butterflies when performing this duty, I am always afraid something will go wrong but happily it went off without a hitch. Afterwards there was a march past - aided and abetted by a gale force wind. After dinner at the Lakeside Country Club we said farewell on Sunday morning and set off for home stopping at Stratford on Avon for lunch and sightseeing.

On May 11th, accompanied by Mrs Peggy Kenny (President) and Mrs Connie Osborne, I carried the Standard at the parade and service afterwards to unveil a plaque in memory of the 26 ATS girls killed by enemy aircraft on a bombing raid at Great Yarmouth on the 11 May 1943. This was a very sombre but beautiful occasion. Our members did us proud, turning out from all over the country and many Association Standards plus over a hundred relatives of the deceased. At the reception later, speeches were made by Lady Soames, Brigadier Field and Mrs Joan Awbery. The words spoken were so sincere and with such feeling that quite a lot of us were in tears. Thanks and appreciation to Mrs Awbery, Mrs Watson and members of the Norwich and Great Yarmouth Branch and anyone else who helped with this event. Really stupendous.

On 29th May eleven members attended a "Warring Forties" concert in the Queen Elizabeth Civic Centre, Oldham, where I was on stage with the Standard representing the ATS. A most enjoyable concert and very well attended. At the Guard of Honour beforehand I was presented to Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Henry Leach GCB, who during the programme was presented with a cheque for St Dunstons of which he is Chairman.

On the 6th June I was the only standard bearer at the short service held at Bradford City Cenotaph attended by the Lord Mayor and afterwards invited by him to City Hall for coffee and biscuits.

In July we will be having a Bring and Buy sale and pie and peas lunch at Eccleshill Cricket Club, organised by Ivy Wheelhouse. This is now a yearly event and last year in appreciation we presented the Cricket Club with a new ball and as these are quite costly they were pleased to accept the gift.

CANTERBURY. The Branch has had a very busy and happy year with good attendances at our meetings and various activities.

Since our last report in the Lioness we sadly lost a very active and well loved member, Nancy Waters, after a long and painful illness very bravely borne. She is greatly missed by us all.

In July, we again joined the Thanet Burma Star Association for a trip to the Royal Tournament and what a wonderful show that was.

Last November, we were invited to send a team to a Wine & Wisdom evening organised by the local Normandy Veterans Association and consisting of teams from the RA Association, the Buffs, Dunkirk Veterans, The Royal British Legion, Burma Star Association, RNA, Market Garden Association. Our team ended up with the highest marks and won a lovely trophy to be kept for one year. Of course, we have to put up with a lot of ribbing from the men as we were the only women's team taking part, but we showed them what we were made of!!

We seem to have done a lot of eating over the year, with a Fish & Chip lunch, entertaining 25 wartime WAAFS to a tea party and later in the year being invited back by them. At our party, four of our members took part in a skit called "Mum's Army". It was written at least 30 years ago but our producer updated the script and judging by the laughs it got from the audience, it was very much enjoyed. It was about four girls who served in the ATS together and made a pact to meet up years later at a cafe.

Some of our members went to a "We'll Meet Again" evening with the Italy Star Association, and then at the end of the year we had our Christmas Lunch. Later this year we



Canterbury Branch members with their self drive mini-bus at Royal Pavilion, Aldershot where they stayed for the Grand Reunion

have been invited by Medway Branch to join them and the Hastings Branch on a visit to Chatham Dockyard followed by tea at the RAFA Club. We have attended several Service Parades and our Standard has been taken whenever possible. The highlight of this year has been the visit to Guildford in April for the Dedication of the Window in the Cathedral, and the AGM, when two of our members were presented with Certificates of Appreciation. The dinner in the evening at Lakeside was unforgettable. Eight of us stayed at the Royal Pavilion, Aldershot for two nights, the home of the QARANC and we were made very welcome. Our thanks to the officers who arranged this for us.

We are looking forward to taking part in some of the D-Day events taking place in our area.

Our best wishes to all our friends and acquaintances in the Association.

CARDIFF. We are still having our monthly meetings with a very good attendance and are looking forward to the re-opening of the TA Centre which was demolished and rebuilt, where we used to hold our meetings.

An enjoyable evening was held in the Bridgend College of Catering in March where we had a meal under the supervision of the Head Chef and Lecturer, Peter Marshall.

Mrs S Cawley and Mrs E Thomas enjoyed a very nice lunch in the Union Jack Club at the Didcot Reunion. We are now looking forward to the Telford Reunion, also the lunch at Wellington Barracks.

We have five new members this year, but sadly only two attend, the others are in outlying districts.

CHESTER. The Branch has been very active, both on parade and the social side of life. Members attended an enjoyable evening, given by Liverpool Royal Military Police Association at Prescott Road. The highlight of the evening was the Scottish Band.

Our AGM was in November, donations sent to ATS Benevolent Fund, The Royal British Legion and also for the plaque at Great Yarmouth.

The Dinner Dance was a success, supported by Associations plus families and friends. The Chairman presented our Secretary with flowers and a book called "Women Behind the Guns" for the work she does for us all.

Mrs Pam Bowlder carried our Standard on many occasions, including Remembrance Service at Chester Cathedral. The Association's wreath was laid by Mrs Megan Hughes on behalf of the Branch. Ten members attended the parade in Whitehall, the weather was very cold, age is catching up with us? We enjoyed the lunch in Victory Club. Afterwards an entertainment was laid on and we must say well done to the WAAFs. We had a Christmas get together in December at the RAOB Club. The buffet was done by our friend Dot (Stewardess) and our Chairman provided the wine, we all agreed to do the same thing next year.

Three members have been in hospital since the beginning of 1994, sadly Mrs Hilda Philips has had to return, we are all hoping by the time we get our Lioness she will be well on the road to recovery. Flowers and cards have been sent and visits have been made by many members.

The highlight of April was Guildford Reunion service in the Cathedral, brought a tear to many eyes and the commemorative window, well! - we shall never see another like it. Deputy Standard bearer, Mrs K Jones, carried our Branch Standard. Thanks to all at Guildford for a wonderful weekend. The Master Gunner did us proud in his speech at Guildford. Yes we did rough it, but enjoyed the comradeship.



CHESTER BRANCH MEMBERS AT THE AGM
Vera Hamblet, K Jones and Molly Choppin

We are holding a Jumble Sale in May, then looking forward to the WRENS social evening and the Rhyl Branch tea dance in June. Four of us are going to Ack Ack Reunion in August in York.

We send greetings to everyone, and to members who live too far away to join us at our meetings.



CHESTER BRANCH MEMBERS AT RHYL BRANCH
TEA DANCE

COLCHESTER. People are popping up out of the woodwork so our numbers are still increasing and at the time of writing we now have 138 members, not bad eh? We started off in Chris's husband's office with 11 of us and all those 11 are still going strong. We were very happy then and we still are, meeting at the Castle Methodist Church Hall every second Wednesday of the month from 2-4 pm. Don't forget you ladies in other Branches, if you ever find yourself in Colchester contact Vera or myself and you will be assured of a very warm welcome.

Apart from our normal meetings our social calendar is quite full. We had a super fish and chip lunch at Clacton Golf Club in March followed by a smashing 2 hour ride around the countryside, the right time of the year to see the country.

In April came the Grand Reunion at Frimley Green, those of us who attended cannot speak too highly of the wonderful weekend. The hard work in organising the whole thing by those concerned with the planning was greatly appreciated. A lovely surprise to meet up with folk we had not seen for years, no one seems to have altered, except grown older and changed the colour of their hair.

On 11 May, 53 of us went to Great Yarmouth to a very moving ceremony to commemorate the tragic loss of 26 of our comrades and 12 serving soldiers who were killed by enemy action on May 11 1943. What a pity the weather could not have been kinder, it really was bitterly cold. Thanks must be given to Mrs Awbery and her team for laying everything on. The service was most touching and memorable and whoever selected the hymns "Oh Valiant Hearts" and "Thine Be the Glory" could not have made a better choice. Let's hope that many of the holiday makers to Yarmouth throughout the years will stop and read the plaque at the Palm Court Hotel and will feel a sense of pride.

Three members of the Branch who were stationed together in Newmarket during World War II went to the Victory Services Club in London on Saturday June 4th and met up with another 24 ladies who had been with us. Some had been transferred from Felsted to Newmarket. It was a great reunion especially as some of us had actually been employed under great secrecy to do the paperwork for OVERLORD, so that at 7.30 am on 6th June 1944 the locked door was thrown open by the MPs who had been guarding us and we were told "The boys are there, you can now go to your billets" and working days began to get back to normal.

Many members joined their British Legion parades in the villages around Colchester on Sunday 5 June.

On Monday 6th June 1994, 43 of us set off to meet Chelmsford Branch at the Cricketers Arms, Rickling Green Nr Saffron Walden, for a D-Day anniversary lunch. Altogether 76 of us sat down to lunch and the Rev Chris Bishop, Chaplain to Stansted Airport, joined us to say Grace and to give a short talk. This was very impressive and he told us that his mother was in the ATS so he knew what it was all about and thanked us all and all the other veterans and those who did not return, for making him a Child of Freedom. After lunch, we went into Saffron Walden for a look round and came home all very happy that we were able to share our memories one with the other.

If anyone was stationed at Felstead or Newmarket during the last war and would like to join our annual reunions please contact the Secretary Colchester Branch for details. We have met every year since 1946. Two more years to our 50th Anniversary!

CREWE. Our Christmas outing turned out to be quite exciting, a party of us went to see the pantomime at Crewe Theatre starring Bob Carolgees, Lisa Goddard and Peggy Mount, which we all enjoyed. The added bonus was when Michael Aspel appeared at the end of the show to do a "This is your Life" on Bob Carolgees. They recorded the programme there in Crewe Theatre, the audience were invited to stay on which we all did until midnight. We have recently seen the programme broadcast on TV and saw ourselves participating.



*Crewe Branch members at Victory Club November 1993
Edith Francis, Glenys Fitzpatrick, Betty Patton,
Molly Mitchel*

We started the New Year off as usual with our Chairman's Party, and because the Grand Bingo Night last year was such a success we decided to do it again this year. Our efforts were rewarded by another successful evening which will help to boost the funds.

In April four members attended the Grand Reunion in Guildford. Our Standard Bearer, Edith Francis, carried the ATS Standard in the Cathedral and on the march past. It is lovely to have the Commemorative Window in the Cathedral for all time now that we have all become history. It was a marvellous get together, everyone enjoyed the occasion. Our Chairman, Betty Patton, was very proud when Brigadier Field asked members of the 93rd SL Regt to stand up and surprised there were so few of them present. She said "It made our day to be remembered, we have always felt we were the forgotten Regiment".

We held a coffee morning in May at Nantwich, we also joined the local Lions Club there again this year when they held their open air fund raising event, but this year the weather was kind, we had a lovely day and the effort was very rewarding.

Two of our members, Edith Francis and Molly Mitchel, went to Portsmouth for the D-Day Commemoration Services

and Parade. As they both served with the 21st Army Group these events were very nostalgic. They had tickets for the International Drum Head Service at Southampton, also the concert at Portsmouth Guildhall, Beating the Retreat (where they got very wet) and the Drum Head Service and Parade at Southsea. They also visited Southwick House where the final plans for D-Day were made, this concluded a very memorable week. The rest of our members attended a service and march past in Crewe and our Chairman laid a poppy wreath on the War Memorial.

In June a party of us attended a reunion in Rhyl, we were pleased to be invited. It was a lovely day and we enjoyed meeting old friends and making new ones.

We shall be attending the usual civic and service parades and will also manage some social outings too. The next one is in July, we have been invited to the North West Group Reunion at Liverpool so we are looking forward to seeing them shortly.

We are holding a Tenth Anniversary Dance in August and hoping all our friends will join us. Later in October will be our own Group Reunion at Telford his year.

GLASGOW. We continue to meet in Garnethill Community Centre on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 pm, the meetings are very well attended. Our first meeting in 1994 was on January 11th but the speaker for this night let us down, but, not to worry, it gave us a chance to get to know some of the new members. On Monday 10 January, 12 members enjoyed hospitality from the WAAF Association.

Feb 8th our speaker was Mr McCrea, a retired Lighthouse Keeper, who told us of the work and responsibility of keeping the light and making sure that the shipping is in the right road. On March 8th we held our AGM. April 12th Mrs McCorquidale spoke of work with teenage boys in the unit of the Dick Stewart Hostels.

On April 16th ten members went to Guildford for the Thanksgiving Service to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the Comrades Association in the presence of Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Kent, President of the WRAC Association. During the service the Duchess unveiled the stained glass window and plaque. Later she took the salute, the parade being led by the Standard Bearers, the Staff Band of the Adjutant General's Corps played for the March Past, it was a sunny day but the wind was very strong, but like all good servicewomen they battled on and we were proud of them.

In the evening we gathered at Lakeside Country Club Cabaret Suite for dinner. The Army Band was excellent, the comradeship of members was as usual warm and friendly.

May 10th was our social evening, we had a quiz, two members entertained us with recitation and singing solo. Five members of the Branch went to Great Yarmouth on Saturday 7th May, staying in the Beach Hotel, only a very short distance from the site of the bombing. On Sunday we went to the Roman Catholic Cemetery to find the grave of (Glasgow girl) Jane Macaulay, being a very old cemetery it was no easy task as parts were so overgrown but we managed it and a bunch of heather all the way from Glasgow was laid on the grave and photos taken to pass on to Jane's sister now 80plus and still living in Glasgow.

Wednesday 11th May was a dry but windy day as we assembled for a short parade to the site where the plaque was to be unveiled by Lady Mary Soames. It was a splendid turn out with 45 Standard Bearers and ATS from many branches, also relatives of the dead girls. Lady Soames was so gracious asking to meet so many relatives, and having photographs taken with them, it made the long journey down for them that bit more special to know that those brave young girls were not forgotten, even after all these long years. Our thanks for all the hard work that went into arranging such an event on a beautiful commemoration plaque.

GRIMSBY. Our members send greetings to all readers. Since our formation we have met on a regular basis on the second Wednesday of each month at local TA Barracks but from July 8th we will be meeting on the second Friday in St Andrews Church Hall, the Vicar of which is our Chaplain. We proudly shared with her pensioners. Her ordination to the priesthood on May 22nd in Lincoln Cathedral.

In January we held our annual dance which was enjoyed by all those who attended, but numbers were down on past years. In February our Quiz Team took second place, but hope to regain their crown in the very near future. In April some of our members attended the Reunion in Guildford.

In May, 20 members and 7 guests travelled to Great Yarmouth for a special service which was held for the unveiling of a commemorative plaque by Lady Soames (youngest daughter of the late Sir Winston Churchill) who herself served in the ATS in the Second World War. At this service 26 ATS girls were remembered.

They were killed by enemy action on May 11th 1943 when their hostel was bombed. Five of these girls were from



GRIMSBY BRANCH MEMBERS - DECEMBER 1993

Grimsby area, 2 lying in rest in Grimsby War Graves with 2 other ex-ATS killed elsewhere in action. The Grimsby Branch acknowledge with thanks the moving service and hospitality they received. Their trip was enhanced by the coach driver who gave service above the call of duty insisting on joining them at the service pushing our wheelchair bound member. A vote of thanks to one too young to have experienced war-time Britain. Also in May our Standard and members attended a Mayor's service at our local parish church.

In June we were represented in D-Day commemorations at St Andrew's Church (Standard present) also at St James's Parish Church and at nearby village war memorial service.

Two of our members have moved away, Renee Willows to Edmonton and Lois Drury to Goole. A new member joined us this month, but sadly one of our members Jenny Soper (nee Topping) died in April. We will miss her at our meetings.

We continue to sail three ships on the sea of life. Friendship, Fellowship and Comradeship. Long may we continue so to do.

HULL. First I must request that it be put on record that the name of our Standard Bearer is Mrs Mirfin - not Muffin - as printed in the last issue of Lioness. (Sorry! Ed).

Five members from our Branch attended the Service in Guildford Cathedral and the Reunion at Frimley. All the work to organise these events so successfully was very much appreciated. After twenty years of being a member of the Association I had quite given up hope of ever meeting anyone with whom I served but this time, thanks to a small announcement in the Lioness, I had a nostalgic happy meeting with one who was with me in the Signals Section at Nottingham House, Weymouth, during the busy time which led up to D Day. I think I should say I was with her as she was a Corporal.

To represent Hull Branch, my husband and I travelled to Great Yarmouth to be present at the unveiling of the plaque in memory of ATS girls who were killed 51 years ago. It was a very impressive day and the turn out of Standards and veterans must have been very rewarding to the ladies of Norfolk & Suffolk Branch who had done such a wonderful job of research and organisation.

The next event here in the North will be the North Eastern September at the York & Ainsty Suite, York Racecourse.

ILFORD. (This item was submitted by Ilford Branch for Lioness No 1/94 but somehow never reached the Editor. Apologies for the lateness. Ed).

With the death of Mrs Madeline Curtis on the 17 October at the age of 96, members of Ilford Branch bid farewell to their longest serving member. Madeline Curtis joined the QMAAC in the First World War and saw service in Rouen and was mentioned in despatches. With the end of the war



The late Mrs M E CURTIS

she joined the small band of ladies who had served in the QMAAC and founded the London and Ilford Branches of the Old Comrades Association who met regularly during the forthcoming years welcoming the ex ATS who became members of the Association at the end of World War II. She organised the meetings of QMAAC members right up until 1985 and she had membership records which proved invaluable as all records of WAAC and QMAAC in the First World War were destroyed by German bombing in the Second World War.

During her long life Madeline Curtis undertook Association as a Member of the Council for London District, and in 1968 became Chairman of London Branch and its President in 1989. Prior to becoming Chairman of London Branch, Madeline Curtis was Secretary of Ilford Branch for a number of years.

Throughout her long life Madeline Curtis was ably supported by her daughter Mary. During her last years when her health declined somewhat her daughter, having taken early retirement, was readily at hand to help care for her mother.

Ilford Branch has always been a very small branch, even though strenuous efforts were made after the end of the Second World War to recruit ex-ATS. Happily during the last few years we have increased our membership. We meet on

the first Saturday afternoon every month for a cup of tea and a chat.

Due to our small numbers and the widespread distances some of our members have to undertake we are not able to offer the varied programmes that some branches manage to achieve. Nevertheless we are a very happy group and the regular attendance of our members is a happy reflection of our regard for each other.

Members of Ilford Branch were delighted to offer our congratulations and best wishes to Dorothy and Charles Thomas on the occasion of their Golden Wedding on the 20 May 1994. Dorothy joined the Association in 1946 and throughout the years she and her husband, with the services of their car readily at hand to collect and deliver members living further afield, have made the many social events we have enjoyed together, very happy occasions. It was with great joy that we at Ilford during the 1950's welcomed the arrival of their two children, Peter and Janet, and in recent years the birth of their two grandchildren, Lyndsey and Matthew. We send to Dorothy and Charlie our best wishes for the coming years.

ISLE OF WIGHT. We have been extremely busy in 1993/94 trying to raise money for the Branch and for our specific charities and thanks go to our members opening their homes for coffee mornings, ploughman's lunches etc. not to mention our famous cream teas, we have been able to contribute as follows:

Dedication of the above seat which is outside St Thomas' Church, Newport. The plaque on the back of the seat commemorates and is our memorial to "All women who served and to those who lost their lives whilst serving in the Auxiliary Territorial Service 1939 to 1945."

It was a brilliant day for Remembrance Sunday last November when several of our members attended and we were all very glad of 'thermals' for it really was bitterly cold.

Last December 6th we held our Christmas lunch at the Farringford Hotel, Freshwater, where we were pleased to welcome members from the Southampton and Portsmouth Branches and also friends of our own members. The Chairman together with other members of the Committee presented a video player to St Vincents Convalescent Home for Ex-Service Men and Women which is being refurbished and they thought that this piece of equipment would be

gratefully accepted. There was a caption and photograph in our Island County Press Newspaper and we hope that this might bring both donations to the Home and new members to our Branch. I should add that the Home is in the outer Ryde area.

Several members were able to attend the Guildford Reunion where our Standard was again proudly flown and reports on the unveiling ceremony of the Commemorative Window were given at a later Branch meeting.

Three members attended the Great Yarmouth Tribute service in May, a very moving ceremony and so justly right that, after all this time, it is now recognised that a lot of girls in all three services lost their lives during this period. Our thanks and admiration go to the members responsible for the organisation of this event and to the hospitality shown to visitors.

We have our Bembridge Street Fair coming up - a stall there raises quite a few pounds to our charities - a lot of hard work for the few but of course followed by a lot of fun.

Our Standard has been regularly flown at various events on the Island and also on the mainland and our thanks must go to our Standard Bearer for her sterling work at these times.

For all Branches in the SOUTH GROUP, 1995 Area Reunion will be held on the Isle of Wight. Will Secretaries of the Group Branches please contact our own Secretary with some idea of numbers expected to attend - due to the location etc. we do need to know before the Secretary's meeting in September - I promise you ladies there will be very little walking to do!!



*Commemorative seat outside St Thomas' Church
Newport, Isle of Wight*

LONDON. As I write the airwaves are buzzing so busily with the events of June 1944 that it is with difficulty that I bring myself forward to the present and the events of 1994. The Branch was well represented at Guildford Cathedral in April for the moving service to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the formation of our Association and the unveiling of the splendid new window which now shows all four badges. The noise at Frimley that evening was rather ear-shattering demonstrating that a very good time was being enjoyed by us all. The members who served in the Ack Ack were very proud of the praise for their efforts given by the Master Gunner in his speech.



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LONDON BRANCH CHRISTMAS DINNER

Barbara Alexander, the late Betty Brown, Mary Curtis (daughter of the late President) and Elsie Sycamore

The Branch was also represented at Great Yarmouth at the dedication of the plaque to commemorate the 26 ATS killed on 11 May 1943. The large turnout of standards and members was a fitting tribute and Norfolk & Suffolk Branch must have been pleased that all their hard work was so rewarded. We were touched that several local people we met shared their reminiscences of that day with us.

A party of thirteen (not at all unlucky!) of us just returned from an enjoyable two days spent with York Branch when we were entertained to a meal and social evening at the RAF Association Club which ended with a sing-song and an energetic Hokey-Cokey! The next day we all went to Eden Camp, once a POW Camp and now turned into an almost living representation of all the activities in war-time Britain. It was a great experience and we thank York members for their warm hospitality which we hope to return in due course.

Our coach trip to Broadlands, on rather a wet May day was also nostalgic as we enjoyed the museum and a film of Lord Mountbatten's very active life and service.

At our monthly meetings we have enjoyed slides of some little-known aspects of London presented by John Hood, a tour guide and Terry Charman from the Imperial War Museum gave us a request programme of war-time songs. Thanks to the generosity of members we had a very successful Bring & Buy sale in May and before we started Miss Vera Falkner was presented with her Certificate of Appreciation.

We had a very enjoyable Christmas Lunch in December at which we made a presentation to Betty Brown, retiring as Treasurer, but sadly as noted in the previous Lioness, Betty died very suddenly on 2 January - a great loss to the Branch. Her death left vacant the office of Vice-President and in February Miss Charlotte Lawrence was elected to the post. On 1 February Elizabeth Wade died after a brave battle against cancer. Known to her war time friends as Leo, Elizabeth was also Treasurer of the ATS Dinner Club for some years and will be greatly missed.

MANCHESTER. Some of us attended the Manchester Cenotaph in memory of D-Day on 5 June 94. It was a very moving ceremony for some of us as we stood very humble but very proud feeling that the ATS had in various ways helped with the preparations which finally led to that special D-Day. We paid homage to heroes who did not return. We know their sacrifice made it possible for the freedom we take so much for granted.

In April we attended Guildford Reunion meeting up with old friends and attending the lovely service in the Cathedral and the dinner.

We continue to meet once a month although our number is slowly getting a little depleted. One of our dearest friends, Mabel Chrusciany, passed away after a long illness patiently borne. May she rest in peace, a loyal member.

In May we attended our annual visit to our local show-band. Rochdale Branch ATS joined us in watching quite a wonderful show called "The Longest Day" - the title reveals its content. We are now looking forward to next month to visit Bootle (Liverpool) for the North West Reunion. Later we are off to Portsmouth to see the preparation and museums relating to D-Day. So our diary is quite full.

Some of our friends continue their friendship with the Monte Cassino Veterans Association. In a way this friendship has brought to light one of our ATS friends from another Branch and one of the veterans are thinking of wedding bells. Good luck from us all.

NORFOLK & SUFFOLK. We have been mainly concerned with the arrangements for the plaque ceremony on 11 May at Great Yarmouth and were delighted to meet so many members of other Branches from far and wide. We are all very grateful for their support. A fuller account of the ceremony occurs elsewhere in the magazine. Our other activities have not been curtailed, however and we have continued to welcome new members to meetings. The Great Yarmouth group under Mrs Meg Watson's guidance also continues to grow in number.

It is most unfortunate that the video made of the plaque ceremony does not come up to expectations and certainly does not do justice to the day. We feel that, unless Branches are particularly anxious to purchase a copy, it is really not worthy of the occasion. A gentleman did make an amateur audio-recording, both of the Band concert in the town centre, the Service and Lady Soames' speech after the ceremony. He is willing to make copies and asks £3.50 which covers postage and packing. Please write to Joan Awbery, 66 Park Lane, Norwich NR2 3EF. If any Branches have photographs they think are particularly good, may we have negatives please to make copies for our records. We will, of course, refund postage.

Our Secretary, Mrs Kathleen Berwick, retired in June. Kathleen has done sterling work over the past nine years and we are all very grateful to her. On her day of retirement we presented her with a gift, cut an iced cake and gave our thanks. Kathleen's last and long-to-be remembered official duty was to present Lady Soames with the WRAC & ATS Norfolk & Suffolk badges, as a gesture of thanks to her for honouring us by unveiling the plaque and to welcome her as a member of our Association.

Our new Secretary is Miss Ann Scott. In her service days Ann was with the Control Commission in Austria.

Sadly one of our members, Miss Mary Bryant, died June 9th. She had been a member for many years and attended meetings regularly. Her death was very sudden and occurred when she was doing one of the things she loved best - walking on the beach in North Norfolk.

Four of our members attended the reunion at Guildford.

At our June meeting we had a talk by a lady who is active in the running of the local horse sanctuary, nationally known, where some 1700 horses and donkeys which have been rescued are now enjoying life to the full. It is heartening that such kindness and care are given so freely to those animals who have suffered so much at the hands of uncaring humans. We were told that an American visitor was so impressed with the set-up there she has now started her own sanctuary in the States, with the same aims.

We are looking forward to our outing to Southwold and Lowestoft on July 7th.

Mr Valentine Grimble, who originally researched the Great Yarmouth bombing incident, has offered to provide the names of all ATS who died in war-time and are buried in cemeteries in the old counties of Britain should Branches so desire. He has already passed on a list of those buried in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Mr Grimble has listed the names of all those ATS killed with no known grave who are commemorated on the Brookwood Memorial. Please get in touch with Joan Awbery.

Finally, our most grateful thanks to all Branches who so generously made donations towards the Great Yarmouth plaque, and those who supported us with their presence on the day of commemoration. Such a wonderful demonstration reassured families that those young girls are remembered with much affection and admiration, and that they themselves have the sympathy of so many of their sisters' war time comrades.

PLYMOUTH. Our Branch has had a busy six months, and numbers have increased to fifty-one Annual and twenty eight Life members. Meetings continue to be happy occasions, with members coming into the Royal Fleet Club, Devonport from both sides of the Tamar. Our July meeting is at Truro, courtesy of the Royal British Legion there and our Cornish members are putting on a buffet lunch for us. We shall enjoy meeting folk who cannot get to Plymouth every month.

We welcome four new members and one returned member who have swelled our numbers. Everyone has supported our raffles and competitions, and in April we held a "shower" where many items changed hands, and 20 went into the funds.

In May thirteen members made their way to Great Yarmouth to attend the unveiling of the plaque, commemorating the death by enemy action in 1943, of 26 ATS girls. The ceremony was immensely moving and poignant. Despite feeling the sadness of the occasion we were happy to be there in support of the relatives of these young girls. The girls came from all over the UK and so did we. Our thanks to Mrs Awbery, Mrs Watson and all members of the Norfolk and Suffolk Branch for their hard work, and for their courteous and warm welcome to us all.

In June Plymouth became immersed in D-Day ceremonies. As one of the main ports of embarkation for the Normandy invasion, there was a service of commemoration at Saltash Passage with American veterans attending. Our Standard was paraded with pride at the service in Higher St Budeaux Church, and again at the Normandy Veterans service in St Andrews Church. It was also carried at the D-Day concert in Plymouth Pavilions, when the bands of the Royal Marines and the Devon & Dorset Regiment played a programme of music symbolic of the momentous events 50 years ago. The service in St Andrews was televised by Westward TV and the cameras focused on many members who attended. In fact, we have been involved in a great number of events between June 1st and the 12th.

We wish all members a happy and successful summer, should you be in Plymouth on the first Monday afternoon in September please join us at the Royal Fleet Club. Finally, our thanks to Lt Col Harvey for representing us at the Guildford Reunion, and bring back a comprehensive report of that busy weekend. Also thanks to our gallant Standard Bearer, especially for the "quick march" down Royal Parade on June 12th - a great effort.



PLYMOUTH BRANCH MEMBERS AT GREAT YARMOUTH

RHYL. We nearly had a disaster on our Christmas Dinner evening, we arrived in a snow shower at the hotel to find we had been double booked, although the Treasurer had written confirmation! After a few heated words we had our money back and hastily went to another hostelry and had an impromptu but happily successful evening. The New Year brought us planning our Jumble sales, coffee mornings, tea afternoons. We do have a monthly "get together" lunch where a few of us meet always somewhere different - enclosed snap of one of our gatherings.

In April, three of our members went to the Grand Reunion at Guildford. it was a very impressive service and dedication in the Cathedral. After the Secretaries' Meeting and AGM, the Dinner at the Lakeside, Frimley was enjoyed by all, rounding off a wonderful day.

In May our treasurer, Yvonne, went to Great Yarmouth the plaque and service to-remember her comrades, the 26 girls killed 51 years ago.



RHYL RANCH

*Alice Williams, Eileen Evans, Doroty Medcalfe,
Eileen Brindley-Mayne, Ruth Liang, Eileen Copeland, Joan
Salisbury-Jones, Yvonne Sampson
Jenny Williams, Phyllis Standing*

The end of May a party of our Branch had a happy day at Star World, Pwelli, guests of one of our members, Sara Henry (nee Hindmarsh), who retired from the WRAC and is now at Star World.

We spent a year organising our June afternoon Tea Dance, again we were favoured with a lovely sunny day.

About 120 of our comrades from far and near attended. During the afternoon our Secretary, Joan (nee Turner), met up with Marjorie (nee Knowles) now Gregory, they had been together at The Firs Camp near Chester in September 1939. Marjorie was in the 11th Cheshire Platoon and Joan in the 10th Cheshires, a Sgt Clerk and a Corporal Cook respectively. We were wondering about many of our friends from those early days especially Miss Woosnam, Sgt Bertha Hinde, Corporal Chris Pugh and a few others. It is lovely to meet old friends and have a chin-wag. That is what reunions are all about.

In June also, two of our members, Yvonne and Phyllis, went to the Victory Club for the afternoon tea arranged by the ATS Dinner Club. Phyllis led the Community singing after tea and a good time was had by all.

We are looking forward to being at Bootle in July for our Group Reunion.

SALISBURY. We ended 1993 with an excellent Christmas lunch at Salisbury College Restaurant, where we welcomed members who cannot always attend our monthly meetings.

So far this year our Secretary Mrs Joan Morgan has arranged most interesting speakers for us which included Col & Mrs Peter Tustan's illustrated talk on life in China in the 1970s; a former Mayor of Salisbury Lady Jo Benson with her fascinating collection of hats, recalling the occasions on which she wore them; retired Sqn Ldr Jim Palmer gave an informative and most amusing insight into the 'World of Intelligence'.

In February we joined Miss Kathy Quinn for a guided tour of our beautiful Cathedral. Miss Quinn is a great authority on the history and the more unusual features to be found there.

Twelve members attended the 75th Anniversary events at Guildford on 16th April and one member will be in commemorations.

If any Association members are visiting or holidaying in our area we would be pleased to welcome them to our meetings held on the 4th Thursday each month.

We were all saddened in January by the sudden death of Miss Dorothy (Dimples) Stevens, a past Chairman and active member of our Branch.

SOMERSET. Since our last report, we have had our monthly meetings and the following functions. On 24th March, about 37 members and husbands enjoyed a luncheon at the Somerset County Cricket Ground at Taunton. On 3rd May about 30 of us together with husbands, toured the Hinckley Point Nuclear Power Station. This was most interesting and instructive. On 28th May we took a stall at North Curry Fayre. Future outings to take place are a visit to Hestercombe Gardens (the Headquarters of the Somerset Fire Brigade) and a Car Boot Sale.

Our Secretary attended the Secretaries' Meeting and the Grand Reunion at Guildford during the weekend 15th and 16th April. At that Grand Reunion, our Secretary was delighted to meet so many members of our Association from various parts of the country. There was one particular lady who now exhibited paintings at the Preston Guildhall. Speaking of Preston, there is a saying in Lancashire "once every Preston Guild". This means every twenty years!!

At the Secretaries' Meeting, our Secretary was very thrilled to meet the Secretary of the London, Ontario Branch - Edith Latham - who distributed Maple Leaf badges to a few ladies from her adopted country (she originally hailed from Yorkshire). Our Secretary spent some of her childhood near London, Ontario, in Tilbury. Also at the Secretaries' Meeting, there was a lady in a wheelchair who organised a small Branch from her home in Westcliff-on-Sea. She is indeed a brave lady to attempt the visit to the Reunion. Our Treasurer "Billie" Wannell celebrated her Golden Wedding anniversary in January last. We congratulate her warmly. Apparently "Billie" met her husband-to-be when they were both serving in the Army.

Another of our members, Dorothy Warren, is off to New Zealand and Australia. We all wish her a safe journey and a happy holiday. Our Secretary also attended the High Tea arranged by the ATS Dinner Club at the Victory Services Club on 9th June 1994. At the function, again our Secretary was delighted to meet many more people. Amongst them was a Constance Mark (nee McDonald) who served from 1943 to 1953 and who came from Kingston, Jamaica and who was employed as a Secretary at the British Military Hospital in Kingston. Constance had attended the Grand Reunion. There was a contingent from Kennington, the Secretary of which being a Mrs G Stewart. Also in the group were two ladies, Ida Neve and Florrie Rider (nee May) who had served together in the Army Post Office. They have been close friends for 52 years and are looking out for other members of the ATS. Special mention must be made of Winnie Arnold, from Kennington, who has been a member for 40 years and who is now 83 years of age.

SOUTHAMPTON. We are still maintaining a good average attendance at our monthly meetings with a varied programme which to date for this year has included Bingo!, a talk on safety in the home, a slide show on monuments and memorials of Southampton, our Annual Dinner in April and an American Supper, plus a most interesting explanatory talk on semi-precious stones with a display of jewelry at reasonable prices made by the speaker, to which were invited members of the WRENS and WAAFs Association.

Sadly in April we lost a very long standing member who had not been able to attend meetings for the last few years due to ill health, Miss Beatrice Victoria Furber, better known as Trixie. She had spent 24 years in the regular Army and had reached the rank of Staff Sergeant. It was pleasing to see the British Legion Standard at her funeral.

Also in April six members attended the service at Guildford Cathedral and four went along to the AGM and dinner in the evening - a most memorable day.

In May we were very happy to be again invited to the Birthday Lunch of Isle of Wight Branch, the hotel itself being situated right on the sea front at Sandown, and as usual the weather did a special perk up job for us to give us another very happy day out.

Our meeting in May saw us on the move again to our new venue at the Ex-Servicemen's Club in Southampton, for after having met for only five months at the YWCA we were informed of a 60% increase in the room hire charge which of course the Branch could not stand. Fortunately, the new venue is still quite handy to the majority.

Recently, of course, D-Day commemorative events have been very much to the fore for us all, but with so many events eventually being held it meant that we did not attend these in great numbers, a few going along to several events ie a Garden Party at Southwick House, Portsmouth, Beating the Retreat at Portsmouth, both in very wet weather, and a commemorative service and parade in Eastleigh in excellent weather.

We were very proud to have our Standard paraded at two of these events, firstly at "Hampshire Remembers D-Day" at the Royal Victoria Country Park, Netley, carried by one of our members who had had very little training, but who did an excellent job and was honoured to be inspected by the Duke of Edinburgh. The sun shone especially on this day.

Secondly, our Standard bearer paraded our Standard in Southampton Docks at a commemorative service and lining-up along the waters edge to see boats off full of veterans sailing to Portsmouth for the special flotilla en route to the Normandy beaches. These boats included the Black Prince and the QE2. On this occasion the Standard Bearers, Band etc. went home very proud but soaking wet.

We now look forward to a trip to Corps Day at Worthy Down and a coach trip to Bath.

STAFFORD. A year has gone by since our last report in the Lioness and during this time we have been pleased to welcome three new members to this Branch. Unfortunately, two of them live out of Stafford so we have not met yet, but they are kept up to date by our bi-monthly newsletter. The third member, who does live in Stafford, is very keen and a regular attender. His new members bring our total to 84.

We continue to meet on the second Tuesday of each month at The Royal British Legion Club and our average attendance is 14. During the year we have had speakers on Home Security, The Royal National Lifeboat Institute and Aromatherapy. We celebrated our 29th Birthday with a meal at a local public house and in June we went out to a country public house for a meal and a get-together.

Last September a few of us attended the Battle of Britain Service in St Mary's Collegiate Church, Stafford which was televised on ITV and seen throughout the country. Our members were seen several times on the screen.

Four of our Branch members attended the Wales & West Area Reunion at Wrexham last September and had a wonderful day. We are now looking forward to this year's Reunion at Telford in October. The Chairman and Secretary also attended the Grant Reunion in Guildford and Frimley in April and would like to congratulate the organisers on giving us such a memorable weekend.

STIRLING. Twenty members of the WRAC Association were invited to join with the Normandy Veterans Association on a parade at Stirling Castle on 26 June 1994 in commemoration of the D-Day Landings. The parade marched to a service in the Church of the Holy Rude followed by a wreath laying ceremony at the War Memorial. On dispersal the Regimental Associations were entertained to a Civic Reception and lunch given by Stirling District Council.

Some of the members of the Branch are photographed outside Stirling Castle prior to joining the parade. Jean Higgle and Ann White in the centre of the group had just received invitations to the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 19 July 94.



Stirling Branch

STOCKPORT. We decided to hold our Christmas dinner in January this year, it was well attended as usual. Our AGM gave us a new Treasurer. The previous one Nary Gregory, has moved further north. On behalf of the Branch the Chairman presented Mary with a money voucher.

Nine members travelled to Guildford for the 75th Anniversary of the Corps, what a moving ceremony it was in the Cathedral. We are lucky to have as our President Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Kent, we had a real thrill at seeing her. The Branch sends a big thank you to all who helped organise the weekend, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

Rhyl Branch has invited us once again to their Tea Dance in June. Before that we hope to go to Beverley in Yorkshire in May, the Army Transport Museum there has a special

section on the ATS.

Last, but not least, this Summer we trust we will meet many old friends at the North West Area Reunion at Bootle in July. All ex-ATS and WRAC will be made very welcome at our monthly meetings, the second Tuesday in the month.

WIMBLEDON. The Wimbledon branch now numbers 99 members. About a quarter attend meetings and we would be very happy to see more members regularly each month.

Last December we held a super Christmas Party when 29 members attended. This proved a jovial occasion with an excellent buffet providing a festive board for all.

Meetings are not held in January but in February we were entertained by our Treasurer, Betty Syrett, who had recently returned from South Africa. Her account of her travels was fascinating. In March we held a very successful Arts and Crafts afternoon. There was a stunning display of embroideries, drawings, collages and knitting. Mick Moorshead described how she created her embroidery and Marjorie Hindly described what it was like to be a dress designer using one of her designs, a wedding dress, as an example.

The April meeting is always a fund raising Bring & Buy enabling us to donate to charities. Several members attended the Grand Reunion in Guildford and Frimley and we were particularly proud to be able to donate £100 to the Commemorative Window in the Cathedral. At the AGM, we were delighted to see our Secretary, Bessie Wright TD, receive the Certificate of Appreciation from Brigadier Field. Bessie received her Territorial Decoration in 1960 and joined the Wimbledon Branch in 1967.

In May we had an informative talk by a health care sister who advised us on how to keep healthy as we grow older.

We send good wishes to all those members we no longer see due to ill health or distance and wish them well.

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Mick Moorshead suddenly at home on 18th May. Mick served in the ATS from 1942 to 1946 and in the TA from 1951 to 1960. She joined the Wimbledon Branch in 1952 as a Life Member and was currently its Vice Chairman. Mick was an immensely popular member of the Branch with a great sense of duty overlaid with a real sense of fun which endeared her to all who knew her. Our lives will be saddened by her loss.

YORK. The last few months have been quite eventful and very interesting. Several of us went to the 75th Anniversary celebrations at Guildford and thoroughly enjoyed a memorable weekend. The organisation was superb and congratulations must go to the Committee. The service in the Cathedral was most impressive and our own window is something of which we can all be very proud.

Two members represented the branch at the unveiling of the plaque in Great Yarmouth to commemorate the deaths of 26 of our colleagues killed in an air raid more than 50 years ago. Far more than the estimated numbers attended and as 12 soldiers were killed in the same raid representatives and standards from the surrounding districts of the Royal British Legion were also present. It was a very impressive and moving occasion a well worth the journey.

On 1st and 2nd June we had the great pleasure of entertaining 13 members of the London Branch. They travelled on a morning train, had the afternoon free in York. In the evening we had a buffet supper in the RAFA Club where we have our monthly meetings. This was a huge success and was enjoyed by everyone. The London girls were given overnight accommodation by our members which enabled us to have an outing to Eden Camp the following day. This was a German POW camp which has been converted into a modern history museum. We all wallowed in nostalgia for a few hours, had lunch together and then journeyed back to York station to say goodbye to our friends. Sometime in the near future we are hoping to repeat the process.

Our next big event is the North East Area Reunion on Saturday 10th September. Details were in the last issue of the Lioness and we are hoping to see many of you here again.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs Hilda Campbell (née Grover) of 3009, 139 Street, Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, V3W 6P9 would like to hear from anyone who served in the Aldershot Military Switchboard in 1951-1952. She enclosed a photo taken at an RE Dance.



*Aldershot Switchboard Operators 1951-1952
Hilda Campbell is third from the right*

Mrs Phyllis Beardsmore (née Pearce) of Elizabeth House, 59 Heron Street, Rugeley Staffs WS15 2DZ Tel: 0889-584180 is looking to make contact with anyone who was in No 1 Section, A Troop 495 (Mixed) Heavy Anti Aircraft Battery of 143 Regiment. She will be attending the Reunion in York.



Private Phyllis Pearce now Mrs Beardsmore

Mr G Phythian of 2 Shaftesbury Place, Scotforth, Lancaster LA1 4PZ is writing a history of Ripley Hospital, Lancaster. He would like to hear from any ATS who did their training there.

Former Captain June Tappin WRAC does not appear to have joined the Association but any member who may be in touch with her is asked to tell her to contact Mr Tom Boardman on 061 794 9132. They served in Malaya in 1954.

Madge D Evans (née Grundy) of 2 Markham Crescent, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU5 4SS has contacted Brigadier Field to remind her of her time with 4 Independent Company at GHQ Far East Land Forces in Singapore. She sent an up to date photo of herself and Lance Corporal Bartlett.



*Private M D Grundy (now Mrs Evans),
Lance Corporal M Bartlett*

Miss Pam Froom of Croft Corner, West End Road, Mortimer Common, Reading RG7 3TE is still interested in any stories from those who were at the ATS Training Centre at Aldermaston.

Mrs E L Harding would like to trace on behalf of Margaret Home (née Apps) anyone who served with 12 Independent Company WRAC in Canterbury between 1949 and 1953. They should write to 312 Lindridge Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 7HY.

Anyone who served in Catterick in Hooze/Gaza Lines with 20 Independent Coy or 8 Signal Regt will no doubt remember the Cook Sgt! Sgt Jessie McKenzie BEM, who retired from the WRAC in 1964, and lived in a flat in Catterick until 1993 but has now moved into a Home at High Hall, Bainbridge, Leyburn DL8 3EL. She talks of old times in Catterick and has mentioned the following names (with apologies for the spelling of some names!) Jackie Faulds, Babs Hertrich, Sheila Botham, Iris Williams, Jane Strachan, Gwen Higdon. I'm sure she would be delighted to see any of them if they are in the Leyburn area.

The Forces Connect Association of 57 Norwich Close, Lichfield, Staffs WS13 7SJ have written on behalf of Robert L Conroy of the United States Air Force who wishes to trace Pte Audrey Lewis living at Newbury and working in Reading at the time that they met.



**SUZANNE OF THE FREE FRENCH ON BICYCLE
WITH MEMBERS OF ATS (CHESHIRE REGT)**

*Joan Garwood, Margaret Cateill, Mona Shimmiad,
K Pearson, Marjorie Diamond
(Names taken from signatures on reverse and not guaranteed)*



FIVE MEMBERS OF ATS (CHESHIRE REGT)

"Dorothy" do you recognise yourself? If you do please telephone Doris Mann (née Sapper) to whom you gave this photo on 0206-870034.



"DOROTHY"

Mrs Joyce Hall of Moray House, St Boswells, Melrose, Roxburghshire, Scotland TD6 OAP has sent two pictures of the ATS Sergeants' Mess members at COD Old Dalby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire in the Spring of 1944. She recalls all leave being cancelled prior to D-Day and watching the waves of bombers, mainly United States, leaving bases in Leicestershire. She would like to hear from any Old Dalbians.



ATS Sergeants' Mess Old Dalby 1944
RSM Terry White in front row



Sergeants' Mess Members Old Dalby
L to R: Back Row Sgt Joyce Laws,
Sgt Margaret Stuart, Sgt June Stone
Front Row: Sgt Doris Shirley, Sgt Winifred Gilbert, Sgt
Dulcie Brittain

Mrs Doris Shettle (née Chandler) was interested in the article on "A Refugee from Hitler" by Frances Nunnally (née Huppert) and had her own memories of Eva Winkler Raphael who was also a refugee from Austria. Does anyone else remember her? Mrs Shettle who lives at 44 Church Road, Selsey, West Sussex PO20 0LS will be interested in Frances Nunnally's diaries on page 77. Mrs Shettle is on the left of the front row of the picture of office staff of CE SMO at Oxford. Eva was a dental orderly at Oxford.



CE SMO Staff Oxford 1942

Mrs Gwen Beelaert (née Rose) of Box 441, Russell, Manitoba, Canada ROJ IWO would like to hear from anyone who knew her in the Intelligence Branch of the Headquarters in Reigate, Surrey or Clacton Essex. She has sent this photo of herself wearing a Royal Sussex Regiment badge.



Gwen Rose (now Beelaert) in 1944



No 2 Perth Platoon WRAC (TA)

Major Isabel Gordon has lent us the above photograph of No 2 Perth Platoon WRAC (TA) at Folkestone in 1958.

Mrs Nadin, the Bolton Branch Secretary tells me that the picture on page 47 of Lioness No 1/94 with the group at No 7 ATS Training Centre was taken in June 1942 and Betty Read (now Collin) is second from the right in the third row. However Mrs Brenda P Beeston of 18 Canon Appleton Court, Canterbury CT1 3TD tells me that Daphne Boyling of 14 Cobham Close, Canterbury says it was 1944 and she is in it!

W/93708 Sergeant H M (Mick) Walter has sent the Vice President a photo of the Kings Birthday Parade in Salisbury 1950. Sergeant Walter is the right marker of No 1 Platoon of 9 Independent Company and Signal Troop WRAC.

Does anyone remember Private Kathleen Joyce Copp (always called Joyce) from Bideford in Devon who was stationed in Bicester in 1945. If you do remember her please write to H Whitmarsh, Lewisville, Gloucester Road, Staverton, Cheltenham GL51 0SU.

Mrs Irene Quarrie (née Hand) is trying to trace CSM Boxall of the 1st Aldershot Platoon stationed at Heysham 1941-43. Mrs Quarrie (known as Handy during her service) lives at 5 Thatchers Croft, Copmanthorpe, York YO2 3YD. Tel 0904 702210.



King's Birthday Parade, Salisbury 1950

Mrs Mary Griffiths of Tryfan, 11 The Retreat, Little Chalfont, Amersham, Bucks HP6 6SS would like to hear from anyone who recognises themselves at Glen Parva Barracks in Leicester in 1944.



No 8 Training Centre, Glen Parva Barracks, Leicester 1944
Back Row: Margaret, Gladys, Sybil, Stella, Evelyn
Front Row: Mary, Vi, Winnie



**No 8 Training Centre, Glen Parva Barracks
 Leicester 1944**

Does anyone recognise anyone else?

Mrs Betty Cullum (née Anderson) of 1 Hawthorn Way, Bassingham, Lincoln, LN5 9NR writes "In June 1944 I, together with 39 ATS girls boarded the ship 'Orontes' on route for Italy so we thought, but eventually ended up in North Africa. We stayed there for several months and then were posted to Italy where as 602 Company, 3rd Mediterranean Group, we were billeted in the Hospital there and worked in the Allied Forces Headquarters in the Palace at Caserta. I have been wading through all my back copies of Lioness, but haven't seen any mention from anyone who served there and am anxious to trace any members of the Sergeants' Mess. After the end of hostilities I stayed there until I was posted to Villach in Austria where I ran the hotel as a transit stop for personnel and foreign born wives. I eventually returned to Blighty and was posted to ATS OCTU in Windsor but I got married and went to live in Canada with my husband. I returned home several years later but by this time had lost contact with the many friends I made".

Miss Elizabeth Douglas of 3 Ashill Court, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR2 HX is trying to contact W/133640 Corporal Nancy Clay of 'J' Platoon, ATS, GS Company 2 Sub Depot, 557 Base Ordnance Depot, CMF who had visited Miss Douglas's brother's grave at Salerno.

Miss D A Parkinson (née Draper) is trying to obtain a copy of a photograph taken at the Sergeants Mess, Chilwell, when Princess Mary, Princess Royal visited there in 1944. If you have a copy please write to her at 16 Netherby Rise, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 8SE..

Mrs G Isabelle Smith of The Conifers, Brookside Gardens, Yockleton, Shrewsbury SY5 9PT wishes to trace Eve Wood (née Haskell) believed to have moved from Bournemouth to Gosport. They were together at Mayfield House, London Road, Shrewsbury in the Pay Office.

Due to a couple of proof reading errors I am repeating a request from New Zealand. Another cry from the 1950s and New Zealand, Mrs Pauline O'Connell (née Yeo) who was at Beaconsfield 1953-1956 with Capt Jean Simmonds wants to hear from Cpl Peggy Laziewicz, LCpl Margaret Quinn (now Lee), LGpl Ethel Henry (Camp), Pte Jeanette Nicholl, Charmaine Coleman nickname Bimbo, Anne Faulkner (Southern Ireland), Joyce Gosnell, Shirley de la Haye (Channel Islands) (married name Sutcliffe), Peggy Mooring (married name not known), June Wilson (married name not known), as well as her Training NCOs at Guildford, Cpl Betty Mason, LCpl Rae Allen and Pte Elizabeth McBride. Mrs O'Connell lives at 3 Cumbræe Place, Aramotto, Wanganui, North Island, New Zealand.

Miss F M Santer of The Hobbit Hole, 74 Walkern Road, Bennington Herts SG2 7LS Telephone Bennington 618, has sent this photograph of No 1 Platoon C Company 7 Training Centre. She had put a notice in Lioness No 1/93 and heard from Joan Connor (née Taylor). They are now seeking news of friends from 122 Company RASC(CMT) at Haywards Heath. These were Joan Leek, Moira Brady, Ethel Coppin, Sergeant Mickey Legett and their officers Miss Nina North and Miss Hayes.



No 1 Platoon, C Company, Guildford
Sgt Edna Wilkinson, Cpl Joan Furborough,
Cpl Sammarco, (little) Audrey Kingsbury, E P Every, Joan
Wenham, Fairey Charles, ? Argentina,
Hazel (Nora) Lovelock, A Ba-Miles (Frenchie)
Doris Morgan, J Forestier Walker, Sylvia Mays,
Grace Freeman, Muriel Berry and F M Santer

Sue Crook followed her request for Terry Desmond on page 36 of Lioness No 1/94 with a photo of Terry with a US Serviceman.



Terry Desmond

Mrs Sylvia Lofstedt (née Parkhouse) was a Cypher Sergeant at Bristol and is anxious to trace an old friend Joan (Jackie) Strachey. She married an American named Heinecke and when he died she may have taken her children to Australia. The address for any news is 22 Saxon Road, Winchester, Hants SO23 7DJ.

PDF Compressor Free Version

Mrs D Lammas (née Smith) and Mrs D Harradine (née Simpson) of the 180 (M) HAA Regt (RHQ) would be very pleased to hear from anyone. Write to the following addresses: 46 Church Road, Tadburch, Norwich or 51A Newstead Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth.

The whole page photo at page 84 of Lioness No 2/93 is still causing controversy. It was clearly marked by Army Public Relations as February 1940. It is thought to be at a Butlins Camp/Hotel and someone thought that they recognised the late Myrtle MacLagan as the Orderly Officer. Mrs Kathleen Quincy tells me that she is in the photo and thinks that it was taken in the Sandhurst block at RAOC Chilwell in 1941. The other choice is the Ocean Hotel at Saltdean.

Major Percival is trying very hard to locate Lt Mickey Owen ATS stationed at No 5 BOD Donnington in 1943. If you have any information which might help please contact Major Percival's helper Capt (Retd) F E Mottram at the Lookout, Blakeney, Nr Holt, Norfolk NR25 7NF.

Miss Betty Hankins of 2 Trevoise Road, Treliske, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3QW has written to correct the caption on the photograph of a Salute the Soldier Parade by the 1/3 Devon Company ATS. It was NOT in Redruth she tells me but in Boscawen Street in Truro. She knows because she watched the parade and later joined the ATS and served at Glen Parva in Leicester.

Mrs Pip Brimson of 12 York Road, Northampton NN1 5QG Tel 0604 32762 is writing a history on "Buckingham at War" and wants to include a chapter of memories of those were billeted there while serving at Bletchley Park. Send her your memories.

Another Guildford Group, this time from Mrs J G Hill of 22 Lindores Road, Holyport, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 2LU is of No 2 Platoon A Company in May 1944. Mrs Hill (Ginger) is second from the right in second row from the back. She subsequently went as a cook at Ruabon in North Wales, Warminster and Shrivenham.



No 2 Platoon A Company - Guildford

Mrs Peggy Lucas would like to hear from anyone who remembers her from 505(M) HAA Battery in 1942. Write c/o Mrs Meg Watson, 31 Mariners Close, Gorleston, Norfolk NR31 6TU.

Miss Lottie Learmouth MBE TD who now lives at 1B Calderstones Court, Cromptons Lane, Liverpool L18 3ET has sent me an extract from a book cover saying that Dame Barbara Cartland had received a Certificate of Merit from Eastern Command for obtaining 1000 secondhand gowns for the ATS, WAAF and WRENS as a pool of wedding dresses for service brides. Ever the romantic!

A Lioness success! Mrs E Ralph (née Potter) the Secretary of the Westcliff-on-Sea branch asked in Lioness No 2/93 for news of friends who were with her at RMCS Shrivenham 1951-1953. This photo shows her success.



Reunion of members who were at RMNCS Shrivenham 41 years ago
Carrie Brown (née McInn), Ellen Ralph (née Potter), Beryl Gleed (née Ginger)

A Canadian member who attended the Grand Reunion in April has sent a photograph of herself on her motor cycle with Rose Eagle. She was Helen Crawley (née Jean Cameron) and was with D Troop, 301 Battery of the famous 93rd Searchlight Regiment at Welwyn Garden City. Anyone who remembers her should write to 6680 Shelter Bay Road, Unit 37, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada L5N 2W4. In particular she would like to hear from Edith Girvan.



Peggy Lucas

Mrs Iris Fenn (née Clemmens) of Hill Farm Cottage, Kennford, Exeter EX6 7YJ would like to hear from anyone who was with 158 CMT Company RASC at St Margarets, Dorking.



Driver Iris Clemmens (now Mrs Fenn) with Betty Jones, Noreen Ball and Joan Burke at Dorking

Mrs Gladys A White (née Stevens) of No 6 Flat, The Old Grammer, Old Grammer Lane, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 1PU has sent in this photograph of her sister Nancy's wedding to Ronald Buckfield RN at Mitcham in Surrey in 1944. Mrs White is to the right of the bridesmaid and others include Ptes Lily Clarke and Dot Starbuck. Mrs White would love to hear from anyone in Blackdown with the 3rd Surrey Company ATS and later 8th South East Platoon 1939-45.



Wedding of Nancy Stevens to Ronald Buckfield St Peter & Paul Parish Church, Mitcham 1944

Mrs Brenda P Beeston of 18 Cannon Appleton Court, St Midreds Place, Wincheap, Canterbury CT1 3TD Tel: 0227 57931 wants to hear from anyone who was on the Operational Staff at Broadland, Newport, Isle of Wight.



Broadlands, Newport, Isle of Wight Operations Room Staff



Cooks of 7 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment Tonfanau Camp, Towyn, North Wales 25 April 1941

*Back Row: Margaretta ?, M McIntyre, Marge ?, Mary Shaw, Nellie Angus
Front Row: Sgt Barnsley, Betty (Micky) Jones, Edna ? and ? (Bolton Branch)*



*ATS Company of Ordnance Dept, Weedon August 1944
Senior Commander Colvin (later DWRAC) is in centre and Mrs Cope (then Junior Commander Fair) is on her right.*

GUNNERS CORNER

I have received several raps across the knuckles for failing to include Sue Crook's address on the same page as her request for more help with her Battery Linking Project. I am happy to give the project a higher profile and have grouped the requests for gunner comrades in one place in LIONESS.

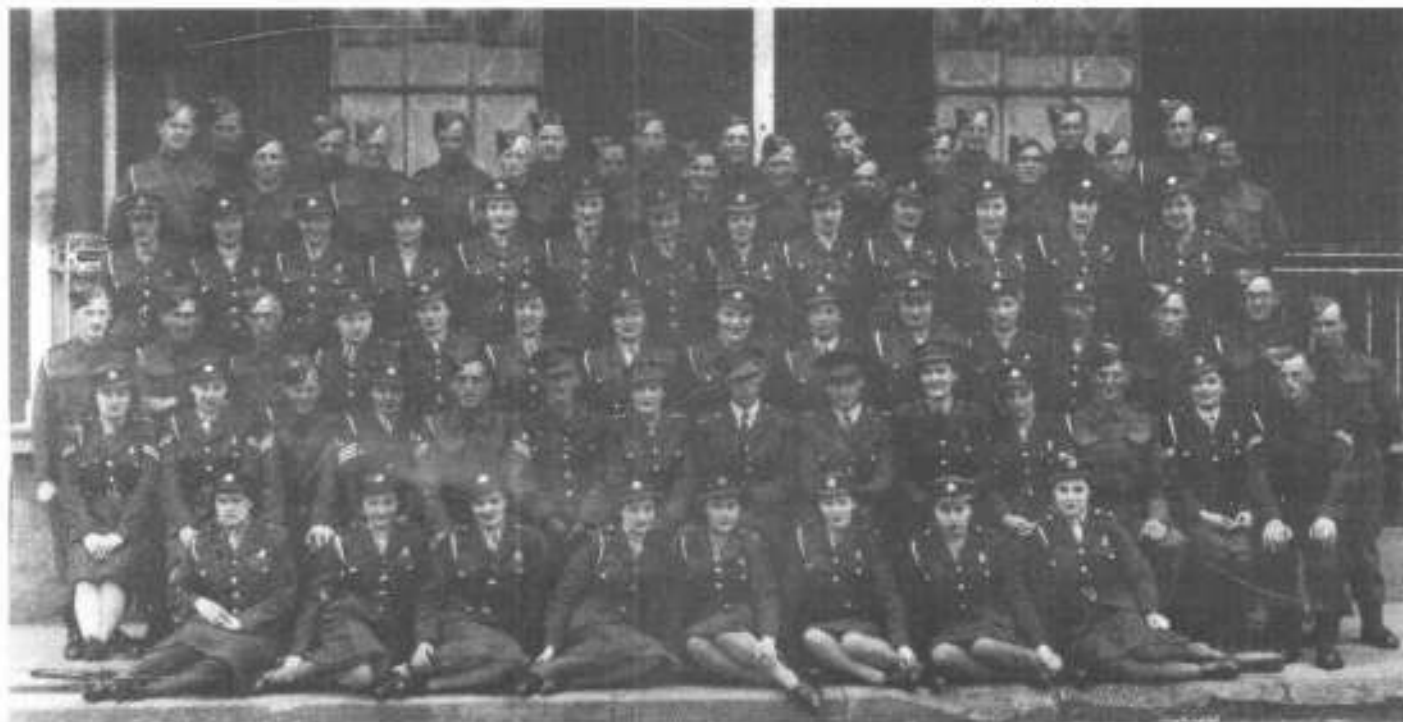
Mrs Sylvia (Sue) Crook of 14 The Larches, Horsell Vale, Woking GU21 4RE who was with 606 Battery would like to hear from anyone who served with Anti Aircraft Batteries. Please give name, maiden name, address and battery number. To date she has 750 names from 180 batteries.

Miss Pauline Garner (was Cracknell) who served in 570 (M) HAA Battery has sent a photo of A Troop at Firing Camp. She tells me that she can recognise Cpl Vera Jones who was killed in the King David Hotel bomb, Junior Commander Nancy Levinson and Subaltern Mc Call. Pauline is naturally trying to find more ex 570 Battery comrades. Write to her at No 6 Ingoldsby Road, Blithfield, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG33 4DT.

Mrs Edna Moore (née Spence) of 39 Oaklands Park, Warmwell, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8SQ has sent an intriguing photo of searchlight girls of 301 Battery in their "teddy bear" winter clothing. She tells me that they were issued in August but that they couldn't resist trying them on.



D Troop, 301 Battery, 93 Searchlight Regiment Royal Artillery Stapleford Site 1943



570 (Mixed) Heavy Anti Aircraft Battery of 172 Regiment Royal Artillery. A Troop at Whitby Firing Camp

Mrs Elsie Blanchflower (née Marshall), whose photograph also appears on page 62 sent in this group photo from the York Reunion in September 1993. She would like to hear from any other 473 Battery members and her address is 156 Drayton Road, Norwich NR3 2EA.



*Members of 473 Battery, 135 Regiment at York Reunion
L to R: Mrs Emmie Wearing (née Rhodes),
Mrs Lilian Childs (née Banks) Mrs Barbara Crossley
(née Heeney), Mrs Elsie Blanchflower (née Marshall)*

Mrs Margaret O'Neill (née Bulbrook) of 15 Grenville Drive, Church Crookham, Hants GU13 0NR wants to make contact with anyone who was with 617 (Mixed) Heavy Anti Aircraft Battery on gun sites in The Wirral, Wallasey, New Brighton on Merseyside and Thorpe Bay in Essex 1942-1945. She has sent a photograph of herself on a Radar Course.



Members of Radar Court at Lytham St Annes

Mrs Barbara Castell (née Jill Squire) of 164 Leicester Road, Groby, Leicester LE6 0DP wishes to hear from anyone who was with 537 Searchlight Battery at Danbury Essex 1942/43. Names which spring to mind are Elaine Pretty (Tredegar), Edna Hocking (Plymouth) and Marjorie Rendall (Somerset).

PDF Compressor Free Version

Mrs Grace Herbert (née Watson) would love to hear from anyone who served with 486 HAA Bty at the Isle of Grain or Borstal during 1943-1945. Her address is Flat 414, The Belgravia, 119 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT4 7AJ.

Margaret (Meg) Muir (née McIvor) of 4 Symington Place, Carronshore, Falkirk FK2 8BB is anxious to replace a firing camp certificate which she has lost. It was issued at Tanfana 7th HAA Practice Camp in 1944 when her team scored the highest points. She served with 608 Battery at at Folkestone, 640 Battery at Lowestoft and 564 Battery at Hoboken in Holland. If any of the team have their certificates Meg would appreciate a copy.

681 Battery at Oswestry is never mentioned says Mrs Linda Strugnell (née Lindo) of 12 Astelle Court, The Crescent, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex CO13 9BT. Can anyone rectify the situation?



Rochdale Branch members at Guildford Cathedral



489 (Mixed) Heavy Anti Aircraft Battery of 150 Regiment Royal Artillery Brickfields, Winterbourne & Bristol 1941

Mr A Steele of 5 Willow Avenue, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2LP tells me that he met his wife of 51 years while serving with 489 (M) HAA Battery in Bristol. She was Private L E Marsh. He has sent this informal picture of some of the battery.

Mrs Joyce Boughton (née Valentine) of 2 Iris Gardens, Broad Robin, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QY would like to trace Theresa Aspicilla or Aspellica (née Young) who once lived at 7 Trafalgar Street, Southwark London. There was a nursing orderly in 546 M.HAA Battery and Joyce would also be pleased to hear from any former comrades.

Mrs A M Ross (née Jack) of Caixa 59, Vista Real Casto Marim, Algarve, Portugal asks if the Mrs Jones (née Jones) of 462 Battery on page 52 of Lioness is the same Pauline Jones who served in Hamburg District 1948-1950. If so please write.

OPERATIONAL GEESE

To: AA Division

1. I am concerned about the growth of grass beneath Mats which is beginning, in the case of sections of netting near to the ground, to grow through the mat. I understand that if the grass is allowed to grow to its full height and density, it might affect the reflection point of the rays at certain points with consequent errors of A/S.
2. The use of a mowing machine is precluded by the height of the mat. Further, owing to the attentions of the Divisional Catering Adviser, I do not think I have any men who can crawl underneath or move on top of the mat with safety to the mat - and themselves.
3. The only suggestion that I can make is the provision of a number of geese to keep the grass under the mat short. These birds, on account of their ancient antipathy to Germans as exemplified in the savings of the Capital at Rome some years ago, might also act as sentries - thus fulfilling a dual purpose role.
4. To prevent their straying and to ensure that they operate as required, it is suggested that three ATS per mat should be added to the establishment of units to act as "Goose-girls".
5. Folds geese, sticks driving geese and tethers geese should also be provided in the correct proportions.
6. Since the geese and the accessories enumerated in para 5 are NIV it is suggested that they should be provided by local purchase. Since these geese are operational geese it is suggested that the cost should be met from the operational grant.
7. May I receive instructions on the matter please?

Sgd W J Eldridge
Commander ?A A Brigade

11 June 1941

Sent in by:
Mrs R Curtis
2A King Edwards Road
Ruislip HA4 7AJ.

Mrs Millie Davies (née Helsby) of 16 Homestead Avenue, St Martins, Oswestry SY11 3DD has sent two battery photographs as well as one of herself. She would like to hear from anyone who was in either 560 Battery and 473 Battery.

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Private Millie Helsby now Mrs Davies

Mrs Jenet Jones (née Saunders) of Ty Capel, Heol Fawr, Nelson, Mid Glamorgan CF46 6NP sent this photograph of herself in uniform with her brother. She tells me that she has been in touch with Miss Margaret Furey who was her officer at 447 Battery and Meg Watson in Great Yarmouth.



Private Jenet Jones (nee Saunders) of 447 Battery with brother



560 Battery, Hounsdown Nr Southampton 1943-44



667 Battery at Helsby Hill, Nr Chester 1943

Mrs J Topp (née Syder) of 17 Clover Way, Bradwell, Norfolk may have had some help from Barbara Cartland. She has sent a copy of her wedding photograph. She was married on site with 541(M) HAA Battery of 158 Regiment on 7th October 1944. She hopes that it might revive memories.

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*Wedding of Sergeant Ricky Topp and
Lance Corporal Joyce Syder
7 October 1944*



*Members of 461 Heavy Anti Aircraft Battery revisit
Neuchaven Fort 50 years after being there on D-Day*

*Mrs Betty Jenkins, Mrs Paddy Irving (née Boyle),
Mrs Kath Morrison, Mrs Joyce Penfold,
Mrs Dorothy Coupland (née Payne) Mrs Joyce Braisby*

KNITTING

As part of it's assistance to former service women the
ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund distributes knitted items
which members have generously donated. If you are a
knitter or have access to woollen items suitable for chil-
dren from birth to 12 years old, please send them to:

ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund
8 Map & Air Chart Depot
Little Street
Grange Road
GUILDFORD
GU2 6RL

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

WOLSONCROFT - THOMAS. On 5 November 1943 whilst
serving with 540 Mixed Heavy Anti Aircraft Battery, Gunner
John Wolsoncroft, Royal Artillery to Private Lily Thomas,
Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 45 Latimer
Road, Forest Gate, London E7.



The Wolsoncrofts on their Wedding Day - November 1943

MACKENZIE - LITER. On 29 March 1944 at Holy Trinity
Church, Paisley Lieutenant K R Mackenzie Royal Artillery to
Subaltern E W (Jenny) Lister Auxiliary Territorial Service.
Present address: 2 Mill Row, Thaxted CM6 2PQ.

SHEPPARD - HACKET. On 29 April 1944 at the Methodist
Church, Barrow-in-Furness Leading Seaman Lesley
Sheppard DSM to Corporal Edna Hacket, Auxiliary
Territorial Service. Present address: 500 Foleshill Road,
Coventry CV6 5HP.



*Leading Seaman Leslie Sheppard DSM
and Corporal Edna Hacket in 1944*

THOMAS - MOYSES. On 20 May 1944 at St Mary's
Church, Dagenham, Essex, Sergeant Charles Thomas,
Royal Air Force to Private Dorothy Moyses, Auxiliary
Territorial Service. Present address: 63 Dart Green, South
Ockenden, Essex RM15 5AF.

TOPP - SYDER. On 7 October 1944 at 158 Battery Site Sergeant Ricky Topp, Parachute Regiment to Lance Corporal Joyce Syder, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address 17 Clover Way, Bradwell, Norfolk NR31 8RH. (Photo on page 124).

HARRADINE - PUTTOCK. On 17 December 1944 at Caversham, near Reading. Leading Aircraftsman Montague Harradine, Royal Air Force to Private Maisie Puttock, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 1 Smock Mill, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 OPG.



The Harradines

SIMPSON - GAWTHORP. On 9 January 1945 at St Andrew's Church, Hull, Sergeant George David Simpson Royal Marine Commando to Private Betty Gawthorp, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 35 Hercules Street, Rockingham, Western Australia 6168.



Sergeant George David Simpson and Private Betty Gawthorp on 9 January 1945

BARRINGTON - WEEKES. On 11 April 1944 at St Peters Church, Newton, Swansea, Sergeant William Barrington, Royal Signals to Private Veronica Weekes, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 81 Mumbles Road, Norton, Swansea SA3 5AA.



The Barringtons on their Wedding Day - Easter Tuesday 1944

The Barringtons on the Orient Express for a Golden Honeymoon



OBITUARY

AKHURST. Mrs M F Akhurst of Walthamstow, London in May 1994. ATS.

ALLUM. Mrs M I Allum of Coventry on 26 February 1994. ATS.

BOOTH. Mrs L M Booth (née Limbert) of Stainforth on 21 February 1994.

BAKER. Mrs E N Baker of Southampton on 20 July 1994. ATS/WRAC.

BARNES. Mrs M M Barnes of Chelmsford on 13 March 1994. ATS.

BOLTON. Mrs Marjorie Bolton of Telford on 2 April 1994. ATS.

BRISLEY. Mrs I I J Brisley (née McDill) of Troqueer, Dumfries on 6 January 1994. ATS

BROWN. Miss Marjorie Brown of Bath on 3 April 1994. ATS.

BRYANT. Miss M E Bryant of Norwich in June 1994. ATS.

CATTON. Mrs Joan Catton (née Thomas) of Manchester in June 1994. ATS.

CHEESEMAN. Mrs H E Cheeseman of Bangor, Co Down in January 1994. ATS.

CHRUSCIANY. Mrs M Chrusciany (née Waring) of Manchester in June 1994. ATS.

COTTON. Mrs Marjorie Cotton (née Harrison) of Stoke-on-Trent on 24 April 1994. ATS

COULSON. Mrs M Coulson (née Richardson) of Hull on 31 December 1993. ATS.

CUFFE-ADAMS. Mrs C A Cuffe-Adams (née Normandale in January 1992. ATS.

DANN. Mrs L M Dann of Chelmsford on 15 December 1993. ATS.

DUNIPACE. Miss M M Dunipace of Glasgow in April 1994. ATS.

DEVLIN. Mrs Joan Devlin (née Bromley) of Newport on 4 June 1994. ATS.

EDDOLLS. Mrs Marguerite Olive Elizabeth Eddolls of Wimbledon on 12 July 1994. ATS.

EDWARDS. Mrs V M Edwards (née Adams) of Saffron Walden on 24 February 1994. ATS.

EMBREY. S/Sgt Eunice Embrey BEM of Shrewsbury on 10 July 1994. ATS/WRAC.

ERRIDGE. Mrs B H Erridge (née Colbourn) of Lewes in October 1993. ATS.

FURBER. Miss B V Furber (Trixie) of Eastleigh in May 1994. ATS/WRAC.

GIBSON. Mrs M E M Gibson (née Pinion) of Horsham in November 1993. ATS.

GILES. Mrs. Jill Giles (W 90) (née Adams) of Southampton on 1 March 1994. ATS.

GILLOTT. Miss M A Gillott of Sheffield on 7 June 1994. ATS

GREEN. Mrs E M Green (née Phipps) of Doncaster on 30 October 1993. WRAC.

GUMBLEY. Mrs E M Gumbley (née Whitworth) of Deal in February 1994. ATS/WRAC.

HAMLYN. Mrs Jessie Hamlyn of Hackenthorpe, Sheffield on 8 April 1994. ATS.

HARROWAY. Miss Eveline M Harroway MBE TD of Grimsby on 12 July 1993. ATS/WRAC(TA)

HASTINGS. Mrs Catherine Hastings (née Watts) of Harpenden on 11 December 1993. ATS.

HILL. Mrs Margaret Hill of Romford on 2 January 1994. ATS.

HOLDOM. Miss B C Holdom of Chelmsford on 8 May 1994. ATS.

HOLMAN. Mrs Jess Holman (née MacPherson) of Hailsham on 3 March 1994. ATS.

HOLT. Mrs I Holt (née Leach) of Harrogate on 24 April 1994. ATS.

HOOPER. Mrs S F Hooper (née Ludwig) of Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead on 5 April 1994. ATS.

JONES. Mrs Doreen L Jones (née Fern) of Rednal, Birmingham on 15 January 1992. ATS.

JONES. Mrs Nancy Jones (née Fuller) of Shanklin, Isle of Wight on 10 July 1994. ATS

KENNARD. Mrs Esther Mary (Mollie) Kennard of Ville au Roi, Guernsey on 9 June 1994. ATS.

KENNEALLY. Mrs Rose Kenneally (née Day) of Dublin on 14 February 1994. ATS.

KEYNTON. Miss K A H Keynton of Bristol on 31 March 1994. ATS/TA

LANGDON. Mrs Irene Langdon of Felixstowe on 16 May 1994. ATS.

LEWIS. Mrs Sarah (Sadie) Lewis of Auckland, New Zealand on 21 November 1993. ATS.

MACLEOD. Mrs E C Macleod (née Bown) of Stansted on 26 January 1994. ATS.

MOORSHEAD. Miss I J Moorshead of Tolworth on 18 May 1994. ATS.

NEWSTEAD. Miss A L Newstead of Wetherby on 7 February 1994. ATS.

OWEN-JONES. Miss D Owen-Jones of Caterham on 27 May 1994. ATS.

PAGE. Miss L V Page of Dover on 11 June 1994. ATS/WRAC.

PARK. Miss P J Park of Norham-on-Tweed in April 1994. ATS.

PAYNTER. Mrs D E Paynter (née Burton, later Claydon) of Swinton on 14 February 1994. ATS.

PICKFORD. Mrs M A Pickford (née Glossop) of Sheffield on 29 November 1993. ATS,

PIKE. Mrs C G Pike (née Rich) of Warlingham in 1994. ATS

PILKINGTON. Mrs F V Pilkington (née Baynes) of Horsham on 3 January 1994. ATS.

POWELL. Mrs Connie Powell (née Simons) of Lancing on 18 December 1993. ATS/WRAC.

REED. Mrs Mary Elizabeth Baker Reed of Middlesbrough on 8 May 1994. ATS.

REID. Mrs B J Reid of Stirling on 11 December 1993. ATS.

RICE. Mrs J S Rice (née Reynolds) of Swindon on 8 June 1993. ATS.

ROBBINS. Mrs Pearl Robbins (née Beavan) of Trowbridge on 23 March 1994. ATS.

ROBERTS. Mrs D D Roberts (née Threadold) of Harrogate on 14 February 1994. WAAC

SAYERS. Miss D M W Sayers of Bath on 17 January 1994. ATS.

SCOTT. Mrs Anne Scott (née Cooke) of Stockport on 24 December 1993. ATS.

SHORNEY. Mrs R Shorney (née Simmonds) of East Grinstead on 26 April 1994. ATS

SMITH. Miss M Smith of Keighley on 1 June 1994. WRAC Band.

STILL. Mrs Elizabeth Still of Southampton in July 1994. ATS.

STODDART. Mrs Mabel Stoddart (née Parker) of Droylsden in November 1993. ATC

TALBOT. Mrs Lilian Talbot of Wednesfield, Wolverhampton on 9 July 1994. WRAC.

WRAC ASSOCIATION

The grouping of branches for administrative purposes is given below:-

WRAC ASSOCIATION NORTHERN IRELAND

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Vice-Chairman:
Secretary:

Branches Group

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TARBET. Mrs F J Tarbet (née Wood) of Huntingdon on 15 December 1993. WRAC.

TAYLOR. Mrs H D Taylor of Birmingham on 11 April 1994. ATS.

WADE. Mrs F E Wade of Sutton on 1 February 1994. ATS.

WEALD. Mrs Lily Weald (née Chilcott) of Ingatestone, Essex in January 1994.

WHITEHOUSE. Miss Phyllis Whitehouse of Northfields, Birmingham in May 1994.

WILLIAMS. Miss I H C Williams of Guildford on 18 Jan 94. ATS/WRAC.

WORTHINGTON. Mrs Sylvia Worthington (née Leonard) of Thrush, Yorkshire on 10 1993. ATS.

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Private Kathleen Gaunt

Killed in Action with 25 of her comrades in the Auxiliary Territorial Service 11 May 1943.