

1996

No2

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Lioness



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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960- No 206184

Founded in 1919

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Cover Photographs

Front Cover

"Guns n' Roses!"

(Photo by: Joseph Bright)

Back Cover

The Hibernian Window

surrounded by Corps Standards,
St. Andrews Church, Worthy Down

(Photo by: Joseph Bright)



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The New GENERAL SECRETARY – FIONA WHITE

Fiona White will be joining us as the **General Secretary** of the Association in September. Fiona, née Macfarlane, served for a number of years in the WRAC and held a variety of administrative appointments both in the UK and in Germany. Her previous experience in organising and chairing many service committees overseas, setting up and running a private nursery school, together with teaching English as a foreign language will stand her in good stead for the challenges of her role.

In her spare time Fiona enjoys tennis, swimming and reading. She is married to a serving Army officer and has four children.

EDITORIAL

Many of you will be asking why have the membership fees risen so sharply. At the AGM in April the Council proposed that the annual fees be raised to £4.00, but a counter proposal from the floor followed by a vote in favour was for £5.00.

Most of you will be aware that Lioness is heavily subsidised by the Association Fund. At present the shortfall is £14,000 per year. Obviously this situation could not be sustained much longer. Until 1992 we derived most of our income from those serving members who contributed 'One Days Pay' each year to the Association Fund. Unfortunately, now that the Corps has been disbanded we have no income other than your membership fees.

From January 1997 when the new membership fees are due, £4.00 of your money will go directly to Lioness in order to guarantee you two quality magazines each year. Included in this sum is the high cost of postage, currently £1.20 per person per year. The remaining £1.00 of your annual fee will go towards the many administrative costs involved with a large Association. These include: Printing, Postage, Insurance, Small Grants and Donations, AGM costs etc.

We are aware that many of you have only a very small income. It is not the intention to disadvantage those of you in this field, and we certainly do not want to lose members. Branch Secretaries have been asked to help, and will where possible collect fees on a quarterly or half yearly basis to alleviate the problem of finding the full amount near Christmas! Your Secretary and Area Chairman have been advised to help those with a genuine hardship. "No member should be cast aside or lose the benefits of the Association due to their inability to pay."

All those wonderful spectacular celebrations surrounding VE and VJ Day have rekindled the marvellous spirit of those of you from that era. This has rejuvenated many and encouraged a considerable number of former ATS servicewomen to join the Association for the first time, recruiting is going well in most areas!

Every effort is being made to encourage more former WRAC members to rejoin the Association. To attract those still serving we are enlisting the help of their new Corps (R Signals, RLC and AGC) to promote this cause. It is they who are needed to provide the future of the Association and to carry on the excellent work undertaken at present by the many stalwart ATS members. In order to attract those ex-servicewomen, new recruiting posters (A4 size) are available to Branch Secretaries.



Kelly Holmes – Sportswoman of the Year

Sgt Kelly Holmes AGC(SPS) has been selected by the Variety Club of Great Britain as their Sportswoman of the Year. As Kelly was unable to attend the award ceremony in London on 2 May due to her training in Atlanta for the Olympics, Brig Ward, Comd AGCC received the award from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh on her behalf in the presence of some of Kelly's family, her manager and fellow Army athletes.

Other Variety Club sports personalities award winners included Gavin Hastings, Ruud Gullit and Nigel Mansell.

As many of you know Kelly is already a Commonwealth 1500m Gold Medallist and World double medal holder having taken a silver in the 1500m and bronze in the 800m at the World Championships last year. Unfortunately Kelly did not realise her dream at the Atlanta Olympics due to injury.

Transcript of Brigadier Ward's Acceptance Speech on behalf of Sgt Kelly Holmes at the Variety Club of Great Britain and Outward Bound Trust Sporting Awards

"Your Royal Highness, Chief Barker, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great privilege to accept this award on behalf of Sgt Kelly Holmes . . . I know Kelly will be honoured and delighted . . . and would wish to thank the Variety Club herself, but as you know she is currently over in Atlanta training for the Olympic Games.

Sgt Holmes is a credit to her country, the Army the Adjutant General's Corps and her family . . . her Mum Pamela and Brother Kevin are both here today, and are really chuffed! Kelly's outstanding achievements encourage her fellow athletes, her Army colleagues and most importantly, the nation's youngsters – with whom she has a terrific rapport.

The Army actively encourages its people to be the best and supports those who represent their country at the national and international levels, Kelly much appreciates this support and has risen to the challenge."



No 1 ATS PT School PE Refresher Course – Leicester 1943



Submitted by
Mrs Joyce Barford (née
Shelton) (Cpl Joyce Shelton) -
3rd row from top, extreme right.
Others in the photo include:

LUCY ASHTON	EDDIE POWELL
MAUD BEECHES	MARY MAC
L KELLY	PAT TAYLOR
KATH HOUGHTON	JAY LEEMING
MAUD CUTHBERT	'DON' PARKER
BETHE MONCK	ANNE GRIFFITHS
VIOLET FELLOWS	D BENTLEY
EVELYN REED	'MOONEY'
JOHANNE GUILLERET	ELLA HOUEL
E R MENZIES	MARGARET WREN
BARBARA BEER	CARRIE LUCAS
DULCIE SMITH	DOREEN
KAY KIRK	

Tributes

COLONEL ROSEMARY DENNE MBE

Colonel Denne enlisted in the ATS in May 1946 at the age of eighteen and was commissioned in 1947, having spent a few months as a Training NCO at Guildford while waiting to be old enough to attend the OCTU at Windsor.

Even in those early days her enthusiasm and dedication were apparent and, when on commissioning, she was posted to Ack Ack she was delighted. She never forgot those days and was always devoted to the Royal Artillery.

Rosemary served with great distinction in all appointments which took her around the world - Singapore, Aden, Cyprus, Germany and Northern Ireland covering both Staff and Regimental duties. Her love of the Army and her Corps never wavered and when retirement came, she was elated to be appointed to a retired officer's post in Germany. There her skills in the Quatering Staff world became famous throughout BAOR and she was always a source of information and assistance. Nothing was ever too much trouble for Colonel Denne.

It was at Rheindahlen in 1988 that she suffered the stroke which necessitated invaliding home and total retirement. Her spirit of independence never wavered although she was incapacitated by the stroke and general deterioration of health. Her interest in her great loves, the Army and her Corps, and, through television, history, politics and sport, filled her life.

Always extremely generous, she was a determined person to whom there were no grey areas. Her award of the MBE (Cyprus) and a mention in despatches (Aden) were surely well deserved.

By her life in the Army and her courage in sickness she made a unique mark which will never be forgotten by those who knew her as a loyal officer, colleague and friend.



Col Rosemary Denne on a visit to Guildford, 1988

MAJOR (QM) D JONES

Major Doreen Jones was born in a small mining community in the Rhondda Valley on 22 October 1927. She joined the Women's Land Army after the Second World War and for several years endured but enjoyed the hard-working lifestyle this brought.

In 1951 she enlisted into the WRAC at Plymouth and during the next 20 years served in a variety of units worldwide, including Jamaica, Hong Kong, Gibraltar and Germany. During this time her qualities were recognised and she progressed to become a Warrant Officer. She was RSM of both 29 and 10 Company WRAC and it was from the latter appointment that she was commissioned. Her first posting as an officer was to the WRAC Centre at Guildford as Assistant Quartermaster. She also served as OC WRAC of the Admin

Unit at Worthy Down before becoming Quartermaster of the WRAC College at Camberley, where she spent the majority of her commissioned service. Many will remember her in this appointment which suited her admirably, and which she executed with considerable diligence and resourcefulness. In 1977 she was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in recognition of her unstinting service to the Corps.

On her retirement in October 1982, Doreen returned to her roots in South Wales. An accomplished artist and cook, she was also a keen gardener, and spent many hours in her garden which was her pride and joy. Her interest in all sports was enduring but she particularly loved cricket, horse racing and rugby.

In recent months, Doreen's remarkable courage and good humour in the face of her declining health was an inspiration to all. She will always be remembered for her dedication and loyal service, indomitable will, generosity and consideration for the needs of others, particularly those less fortunate than herself. She was selfless to the end.

MY MEMORY OF COLONEL MDM HUMPHREY ('HUMPH'), CBE

I noted with sadness the tribute to 'Humph'. I have very strong memories of her support as Company Commander to a young Subaltern in Oxford in 1944 when I had a platoon working with the Senior Officers School in Brasenose College (and how those hallowed walls shook at our arrival!). You mention her sense of humour which I remember somewhat ruefully. During my stay in Oxford I had to go into the Radcliffe with a severe skin ailment. Apart from masses of bandages to cover horrible ointments I was perfectly well and the over-worked hospital staff soon involved me in their more mundane duties. One morning I was propped up on my bed bottle feeding a wee mite with infantile eczema when in strode 'Humph'. She stopped in the doorway and said 'Really Howard, I did not realise this is why you were admitted to hospital. Perhaps I should inform your fiancée' (he having been in Cairo since 1942!).

You can imagine the reaction when I finally returned to the Mess! Perhaps it was fortunate I was posted elsewhere on being discharged from hospital. Her words are as clear today as they were then. I was so interested to read of her exceptional career.

F M Burling (née Howard)
Subaltern ATS



↑ Sub Jewell ↑ Sub Harman ↑ Sub Howard

Correspondence

TRAINING FOR DEFENCE AND VICTORY

Mrs Kathleen Griffiths who served in the ATS from 1943-1946 writes: I trained at the ATS Signal School at Craigmillar, Edinburgh. In April 1994 I revisited Craigmillar. In the building now is a plaque bearing the inscription: "CRAIGMILLAR EDINBURGH In these buildings from January 1940 to August 1945 were stationed successively: The Scottish Command Reception Depot, The ATS Junior Officers School, The No 1 ATS Officer Cadet Training Unit, The ATS Signal School. And here women from all parts of Great Britain and the Empire were trained to take their place at home and overseas in the armies of defence and of victory".

Private ANNE RYAN served in the A.T.S. from 1942 to 1946 and would like to know if any of her former comrades remember her from B Troop, 610 M-H Ack-Ack Battery, Canvey Island, Grays, Foulness Island and Imphal Barracks York. Private Ryan (CoCo) is now a member of the Leeds Branch of the WRAC Association. She married in August 1949 to Able Seaman Ernest Smith and they live in West Yorkshire: "Last Sequence", 12 Sunnysdale Road, OSSETT, West Yorkshire, WF5 0QT.



CoCo of 610 M.H. Ack Ack Bty

COMRADESHIP IN ASHFORD



BERYL HICKS (née Matthews) writes: After my initial training at Honiton, Devon in 1945, where I befriended two lovely girls, [one of whom became a cook and the other a driver, I believe], I was posted to Guildford to the old Queen's Own Barracks. Here later on, I was joined by some wonderful girls who served in the ATS during the war in Ack-Ack and Radar. One of them lived in Bromley, Kent - my home town - another came from Scotland, and I remember her telling me she hoped to become an Almoner when she was demobbed.

I was later moved to Ashford, Kent, where we lived in huts in some woods, with those awful coke stoves providing the only heat! But the comradeship was wonderful. This is where the photograph was taken and, although I remember all the faces, the only names I have are Pip (sitting far right), standing immediately behind her (in shirt) Bettie and on her left, myself, with Jackie standing far left. I also particularly remember twins, (ginger) (unfortunately not in photo), who lived either in North Shields or South Shields. We used to correspond and sometimes met, but after a while addresses were lost.

It would be fantastic to hear from anyone who was at these places and perhaps we might even meet next year at the Grand Reunion in Blackpool. 41 Harewood Gardens, Sanderstead, Surrey, CR2 9BU.

SILVER FOR SALE

The Association HQ holds six table spoons with the WRAC badge embossed on the handles. The spoons are of hallmarked silver and authenticated as LONDON 1838. They weigh 14oz and are valued at £90 at current price of silver. Similar sets fetched £110-120 at the auction of HQ Mess silver in 1992.

Sealed bids in excess of 380 are invited and bids will be opened at the Officers' Branch luncheon on 21 September 1996.

Proceeds to WRAC Benevolent Fund.



Hazel from 'G' Coy

HAZEL GORDON (née Michel) 'G' Coy ATS, Hooge Lines, Catterick 1947. Anyone who remembers me, please write. Mrs H Gordon "Hilton House", Shieldaig, Ross & Cromarty, Scotland W54 8XN.

★ ★ ★

50 BUSY YEARS LATER

FRANCIS NUNNALLY (née Huppert) writes: Browsing through the *Lioness*, I pondered on the urgency of former ATS girls to get in touch with lost comrades from World War II days. We have been so busy for the past 50 years! With the War over, many of us lost touch, as we needed to get on with our lives. We married, we worked, bought homes and raised the kids. On a typical day, we got them up, got them fed, dressed and out of the door. We slapped on some make up, swallowed some tea and were on our way to work. At night it was dinner, dishes, homework, bath time and good night stories, with laundry and mending thrown in for good measure.

Now, 50 years later, the workload has lightened and our thoughts stray back in time. Our years in uniform, the friends we made, the tribulations we shared are as fresh in our mind as if it had been yesterday.

But where are they? Although I have been a faithful reader of the *Lioness*, I have never come across letters or stories from ATS girls stationed at Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, East Anglia. They seem to have been stationed in every corner of the Kingdom except there.

Our "home" for four years was Gibraltar Barracks, quarters for the Suffolk Regiment. I hear that most of the Barracks has been razed, with only the "Keep" and one wall still standing. But in my mind I still hear the bugler blowing Reveille at dawn and taps at night. And the Parade Ground, long gone, still echoes with the Drill Sergeant's commands.

Outside of our little military community a World was at War. But while battles, air raids and rationing are half forgotten, the memories of our own lives in the ATS will be with us forever. 7139 Cherokee Road, Richmond, VA 23225, U.S.A.

★ ★ ★

ANOTHER FORGOTTEN ARMY

From Miss DG Hart of Tunbridge Wells.

Summer '95 saw, at long last, the recognition given to the Veterans of the Burma Campaign, the "Forgotten Army" - and quite rightly so - we all knew of the Holocaust, but these men suffered so much at the hands of the Japanese, I don't think their story will ever be fully told.

I wrote to Her Majesty the Queen to thank her, and her family, for their tremendous support, during these momentous days. Her Majesty was most gracious, and thanked me for my letter, because I had also commented on my own experiences during World War II - inasmuch that I and my colleagues were also part of a forgotten Army, namely the ATS. The part we took was essential but not so momentous as the 14th Army.

This then is just a fragment of the untold story of those left behind during and after the evacuation of "Dunkirk", a story that has been overlooked by historians and the like.

Many were unaware that contingents of the BEF troops included survivors of regiments of the field, the Salvation Army, NAAFI civilians and 102 Group ATS, which had initially been sent to France as the advance party, for service with the BEF.

Continued on page 80



Francis Nunnally (Huppert)

OUR STORY

Like so many of the ATS, I volunteered for overseas service at the outbreak of war - I was called up for service 10/10/39 for service with the ATS - many happy days were spent at "A" Company, 102 Group ATS, under the command of Junior Cmdr Mary Tywritt, later to become Dame Mary.

With my new found colleagues, I was deployed to Chatham Dockyard.

Early February the CO sent for me and with great trepidation, I presented myself at her office to be met with smiles and congratulations. I had been chosen to go to France, as a member of a selected squad, to join members of the BEF Armed Forces. Our ultimate destination was Saltdean, Brighton, a hotel that was requisitioned by the War Office, for the purpose of training Army personnel.

During the months of February and March 1940 we went through rigorous training of keep fit, route marches with full pack, gas mask drill - then endless lectures, not forgetting the vaccinations and TAB injections.

One day in early April we set forth on the first leg of what proved to be a long and arduous journey - the first of which was to travel to Newhaven. I then boarded a ship - no one knew exactly where we were going - but rumour had it that Brittany was the final destination. We did eventually get there, but by the longest possible route.

First we sailed into Le Havre, then travelled alternatively by road and rail - those trains were the most uncomfortable I have ever travelled in on all my life; a sentiment voiced by all that made that journey.

Amongst the many places on route where detachments of ATS were "dropped off" were Dieppe, Amiens, Arras, Le Mans, Rouen, Paris and finally Nantes, which in turn proved to be the HQ of 102 Group ATS. A further detachment was sent to St Etienne, a place I was to join, at a later date.

Many of our jobs covered a wide and varied range: cooks, orderlies, clerical administrators, pay clerks, messing officers, hospital services, plus the invaluable ambulance service, carried out with the greatest efficiency by the FANYs (First Aid Nursing Yeomanry). Later in the war a number of selected members of the FANYs were transferred to SOE (Special Operations Executive) and suffered the brutalities of war; some were tortured, shot, poisoned by infection and sent to the gas chamber.

★ ★ ★

TRAVELS IN FRANCE

To continue, after much travelling we arrived in Paris, were given a tour of the city and then continued on to our final destination Chateau Moulin de Prase, Nantes. The beautiful Chateau remains a vivid memory.

Situated in the grounds, Nissan huts had been erected as our homes for the duration of our stay, they were light and airy but not sumptuous - we dined in the Chateau as did the officers, but in separate quarters, also in the Chateau we had a games room, mainly for table tennis. At the very top of the building, was a small room, which was used as a store (issue for the use of)?

After settling in we were then deployed to our various places of work, after a short space of time I was sent out to St Etienne, (a lovely little village, full of old world charm)

- the cookhouse was part field kitchen and part indoors which sounds odd, but was most practicable.

We were received with great delight and surprise by the boys already ensconced in the unit and all soon built up a marvellous rapport and comradeship. Life was very pleasant indeed - we replaced some of the work force, who were sent back to their units, but some were retained; we really did get on extremely well.



Miss D G Hart

After a period of time I was sent back to Nantes, this time to take over the Sgts Mess, in private billets about a couple of miles outside of Nantes. Again I received a very warm welcome and until the fall of Dunkirk, spent many happy days at the Mess.

By June rumours were being whispered of a German advance, when messengers arrived ordering us back to HQ. Everywhere that day in Nantes was mayhem. French and Belgium troops and civilians were scuttling around like frightened rabbits causing eventual road blocks, the fifth columnists were having a field day with their insidious propaganda, and inevitably the French started to show a great eagerness to surrender (a fact that was proved by the infamous surrender by the French at St Valeryen Caux, causing the reluctant but formal surrender of Gen V Fortune CO of the 51 Highland Division, the outcome of which was the internment of some 8,000 British troops on 12 June 1940 but I transgress). On arrival back at the Chateau, we found that orders had been given for all ATS 102 Group to sail on the Lancastria. This order was countermanded and we were all very lucky, the Lancastria

was heavily bombed with the loss of 9,000 people, military and civilians, equal to the combined loss of the Titanic and Lusitania.

Early evening in the Chateau and we were preparing to leave, when suddenly the weather changed and the most violent storm of rain, it was a "God" because all night long, above the storm, could be heard the low rumble of enemy aircraft. We all hurriedly took to the cellars where we stayed until morning, and during all this time, the aircraft could be heard circling time and time again overhead. But fortunately for us, visibility was too bad and eventually they flew off and we had been spared - but all was not over yet.

Orders were again issued: the advance and rear party 102 Group were sent North by a convoy of lorries, eventually reaching the port of St Malo, where we boarded the already heavily overlaid SS Princess Astrid, a small Belgian "packet". Already troops, FANYs and their ambulances were aboard (at least those that could make it), the French at the quay side offered NO HELP whatsoever with loading; it was all done by the women themselves.

We were due to sail at noon, but a signal was received telling us to wait, as girls from outlying units were on their way including the girls of the telephone exchange in Paris. Bilingualists, they were still talking to the Germans until the very last minute. One of our officers, had already made her way back to Paris, to escort the girls to safety. Jemel Garden was awarded the MBE for her heroic effort in bringing the girls back. They arrived about midnight to a warm reunion with the rest of 102 Group.

We sailed early next morning, the sight of mine sweepers criss crossing backwards and forwards was never to be forgotten.

Towards midday (it was very hot) a submarine came up out of the deep - we all thought our last day on earth had come, but again a Divine Power was with us; it was a British Submarine - telling us to return to St Malo to escort the hospital ship back to England. Again we were escorted by the Royal Navy until we reached a safety area, then, as silently as they had come, they slipped away.

On 16 June 1940, 10 days after Dunkirk, we eventually arrived at Southampton. From there we were driven to Aldermaston where we were debriefed, had a hot bath (the first for weeks) a meal then bed.

Next day we were paraded for inspection by the then Controller Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan. She congratulated us on our safe return, as we had been reported missing 48 hours, presumed killed.

After the parade, we were informed that all would be going on disembarkation leave next day.

This little story is only a snippet compared to other colleagues, the other 124 who like me had and have a story to tell. Some have experienced harrowing and tragic events, which are indelibly left in the mind and can never really be erased.

I also have a number of postcards of Nantes and Clussen - all autographed by members of 102 Group, there are far too many names to publish here but I will have them photocopied if required.

My story has only skimmed the surface of life with the BEF, there are many untold events and much more could and should be written, because whatever the future holds for all of us, we and future generations must NOT forget those who made the supreme sacrifice - and for what??

SISTERS AT THE SEASIDE



Mrs Sylvia Prior (née EELES) has sent a picture taken on leave in Torquay of herself and sister, Daphne, who was a Corporal.

★ ★ ★

VVIP RAINGUARD

Mrs Lilian Curyis, formerly Pte Bennett No 218931, bottom right, front row, asks 'Can anybody remember standing in the pouring rain forming a guard of honour for Mrs Churchill and Mrs Roosevelt when they visited QE Bks, Guildford in Oct 1942.



RADAR GIRLS

From Mrs S Price of Coventry. (née Whitehouse)

I am still trying to contact members of 477/M/H/AARA which was formed during September '41 deployed to a gunsite in "Spiders", Binley, Coventry. There I trained as a Radar Command Post Operator - then came the real action - The Coventry Blitz. First hostility July '42 - Pte Richardson awarded BEM.

I joined the Battery in April '43. After three weeks at Glenparva followed by seven weeks at Oswestry I had volunteered, hoping to be a PT Instructor, but the powers that be, decided I should go out as a Radar Girl. I had met up with Clara "Cluck" Wright from Nottingham and we became great friends. I belong to the Coventry Branch ATS which I helped to get going a few years ago and attend our meetings whenever possible (being more or less housebound and with transport problems).

My outings: I recently met up with Dorothy Campbell (née Dot Lynch) from the Stirling Branch whom I hadn't seen since Demob '46. At the Western Reunion I met Mrs Clifford (née Jo Hulland) from Nottingham. I gave her my address and am still hoping to hear from her. I believe she has a daughter in the WRAC, but has moved to Cardiff.

More 477 names - Edna Hoare (now Harrit), Rita Luckman (now Fellows), Blossom?, Doris?, Olwen Crump and Miffy Baird. Jack, my late husband was also in 477 - called up in August '39. He was sent out to repair gas mains etc, when Coventry was blitzed. He then returned to Binley, Coventry where we met. Over the years we were in touch with Dixie "The Cobbler" Bunny - he always put a good bit of leather on our boots and shoes.

When able to get out I have met ladies from Birmingham-Wolverhampton Branch and attended the Western Reunion from fifty years ago. Some of us had to stay on site to take care of the guns and radar equipment in Tillingham, Essex. We drew lots - I had to stay both times. As many as possible were given twenty-four hours leave to celebrate VE Day - then VJ Day.

As you can imagine I was glued to the BBC watching and wishing I could have been at the Services, proud to see so many veterans taking part and have now acquired the "VE 50" video.

Then I was in the British Legion Fun Run, pushed in a wheelchair round Stoneleigh NAC for four miles by my family. Someone must be looking after me, even the weather has been kind during my outings. I was at the VJ Service in Trinity Church, Coventry, being carried up the steps by the vicar and the VE Service in the 'Old Cathedral Ruins' - I saw myself and grandson on the video.

I should love to get in touch with any gunners from 477/M/HAARA.

By the way, I still haven't made the M/AA reunions at York but I did eventually make the PT Instructors Course at Hendon College, March '45. So please ladies, keep up the good work, writing to The Lioness -keeping me in touch.

DID YOU KNOW

Chris Hamilton of the Geritol Follies served for 13 years in the WRAC. During her service she became the British Army fencing champion and spent two years in Germany.

The Geritol Follies will be performing at the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh on 11 and 12 October 96.

DUN ROAMIN!

From Col D Dunn

May I please ask to use the columns of Lioness to express my gratitude to all those who contributed to my farewell gift.

It is very touching to be recognised by so many in the Association and to be rewarded in this way for doing a job which I enjoyed enormously. It will not be possible for me to write individually to thank all those who subscribed and I hope that they will accept my thanks with this letter.

I have to tell you that I have used the money to purchase an advanced state-of-the-art, supersonic, mindboggling, simply wonderful Personal Computer which is my pride and joy. Thank you all for making this possible and my retirement that much more enjoyable.

(See Centrefold photo)

IT'S NEW, IT'S SWEET AND IT RINGS – IT'S ALSO BEING LAUNCHED BY GARY RHODES

The Royal British Legion is launching a new national helpline called "Legionline" supported by Gary Rhodes, the celebrity chef. Sponsored by Tate & Lyle, "Legionline" will provide advice and information to over 16 million people. Rhodes, star of the BBC series "Rhodes around Britain", will cut a telephone cake featuring a poppy and the Legionline telephone number 0345 725 725. The official launch takes place at Legionline's Offices at 3 pm Monday 20 May.

Aimed at the 16 million men and women who form the serving and ex-service community, "Legionline" offers authoritative and expert advice on a range of issues from Pensions and Benefits to Small Business Advice and Training Schemes.

"Legionline" was established in order to respond effectively to the growing number of enquiries received both by The Royal British Legion and other services organisations. It aims to be the first point of contact for all serving and ex-servicemen and women with queries or concerns ranging from qualifying for a pension, purchasing equipment for a disabled family member or obtaining financial assistance. Although many requests are from War Widows, ex-servicemen and women and their dependants, some calls also come from the current serving community and their families.

John Aston, Legionline Co-ordinator said: "People phone us from all over the world, many desperate for help and practical support. One lady needed to track down the family of a British pilot shot down in France, another man currently serving in the forces was having trouble funding a vital piece of equipment he needed to buy for his disabled son. We were able to provide both with the information and contacts they needed."

"Legionline" has been sponsored by Tate & Lyle, the major sugar and sweetener manufacturer. Both Tate & Lyle and The Royal British Legion celebrate their 75th Anniversaries this year and the Company's donation funded the establishment of Legionline and met the first year's administrative costs.

I did wonder whilst writing a report on our 40th ATS Reunion, eventually published in Lioness No 2 1986, how much longer we might be able to continue our annual gatherings. Here we are ten years on and how delighted I am to be able to pen an article on our 50th Anniversary Reunion!

This was an auspicious occasion indeed, celebrated by an attendance of 24 ex-Members of the ATS at the Victory Club in London - the venue for the last 30 years - on 1st June 1996. All but four served together at times between 1941 and 1946 either or both at District HQs in Felsted, Essex and later in Newmarket, Suffolk, and have met annually since demobilisation in 1946. Is this a record?

Initial greetings over as one after another arrived, there was time for an aperitif and first catching up of news in the little private bar. Then gravitating for the usual excellent sit-down Buffet in an adjoining room. Before eating I was able to offer thanks to one friend who gifted the wine with the meal, two others who had commissioned and given each of us a memento of the occasion - cards showing the dates and decorated with pressed real flowers, each of a different design and all beautiful - and to the Club who had generously donated a lovely large iced and decorated cake, slices later to be handed round with a glass of sherry as my offering.

But perhaps my greatest pleasure was to be able to read out the following message:

"I am commanded by the Queen to thank you for your very kind message of loyal greetings sent on behalf of all those attending the fiftieth anniversary reunion of former members of the Auxiliary Territorial Service at the Victory Services Club, London, on 1st June 1996. The Queen received this message with much pleasure and sends her best wishes to all concerned for a most enjoyable and successful event."

A letter received from the Palace in response to the message of loyal greetings sent on behalf of us all, which was received with much delight.

Even as we tucked in to our meal, the noise increased as time went on. Chatter and laughter abounded and I had a sense of wonder as it appeared years dropped away and I could see my friends again as I knew them in uniform.

In spite of contacting over twenty 'non-regulars' whom we'd not seen for many years, none was able to join us mostly because of failing health, difficulty in travelling, family commitments etc. but one brave soul attended for the very first time, was made welcome and thoroughly enjoyed it all!

However, having received replies from almost all of them, I was able to give the gathering a resume of news of so many old colleagues.

As a thank-you for organising the Reunions over the years, the presentation of a card signed by everyone together with a lovely Pen Holder Stand was made and received with a great deal of pleasure.

As we then circulated the sound of voices reminiscing, up-dating news and generally chatting grew to a crescendo, laughter predominating, and only gradually subsided when leave-taking began as the afternoon wore on. The eight or nine who still lingered for a Cafeteria cup of tea and the six who later sat in the bar and finally had a restaurant meal were still talking at 10.30 pm final departure time!

It had been a most successful and enjoyable Reunion and I am sure everyone felt a lifting of spirits and a sense of rejuvenation - at least for a time! Impossible to believe that so many years had passed.

Jean (Gardiner) Brooks
6 Copt Elm Close
Charlton Kings
Cheltenham
GL53 8AD
(01242 519849)

WRAC SENIOR RANKS DINNER CLUB

Whilst attending the AGC Open Day at Worthy Down I happened to mention that it might be nice to have a purely Ex WRAC senior ranks dinner night. The few present, (and sadly there were only a few), thought it a good idea too. It would appear, therefore, that I have more or less talked myself into trying to get this off the ground if enough interest is shown.

First of all apologies to all ATS for your exclusion. But I feel that you are well catered for already within your own luncheon club. I am prepared to organise the inaugural dinner at a venue in/around the Salisbury area (possibly at the DNBCC Winterborne Gunner). Thereafter perhaps someone else would be prepared to take it on in a different location.

At the moment this is only a tentative 'feeler' just to see if the idea is viable. For those who are in favour and would like to attend please complete the tear off slip below and return it to me:

Mrs L A Trattles
Avenue House
24 Tidworth Road
Porton
Salisbury
Wilts
SP4 0NQ

I shall reply to all those who respond (**please enclose a stamped addressed envelope**). I am out of the country 9 September to 4 October so by the time I return those of you who are interested will have replied and I can then judge if it is feasible to carry on. If so, I will then contact you again with a questionnaire re frequency, content etc: Because of this time frame I envisage the first dinner will be sometime in 1997.

From: _____

Address: _____

I am interested in attending an inaugural dinner for Ex WRAC Senior Ranks:

or

I am interested in attending an Ex WRAC dinner but, because of distance involved to Salisbury, would prefer to wait until perhaps it can be held somewhere in my area.

ESCAPE TO WAR!!!!

by Lorna White (née Aston)

After three and a half years in domestic service I felt a change to another type of life would be more worthwhile, so on June 24th 1943 I reported to the Yorks and Lancs Barracks in Pontefract and the next stage of my life began. I took to Army life from the beginning, probably because I was already well used to being ordered about! My time in the GTC had also made me familiar with matters military, so I was able to absorb a lot of information more readily than some of the other recruits. I was also quite competent on the square because of my previous practice and so was spared the wrath of the Drill Sergeant each day. Life was lived at a great rate and little spare time was available. It was usually about 8 pm, when all the chores were done and our kit "bulled" ready for next morning's parade. By that time all you wanted was a bath and bed. We crammed what is nowadays 10 weeks training into 3.5 weeks and our platoon gained top marks at the passing-out parade, thanks to a patient Drill Sergeant whom we all idolised by the end of our training. She delivered many words of wisdom on Army life which saved me much heartache in years to come.

PONTEFRACT – LIQUORICE

My abiding recollection of Pontefract is the sickly smell of liquorice from the nearby factory chimney.

After 48 hours home leave, when my uniform was admired or criticised according to people's tastes (Mum always wished I had joined the WAAF as she felt blue would have suited me better!), I was posted to Ribbleton, near Preston, for a 3 week course to learn my new trade of Technical Storeman. Ribbleton Camp was a male bastion with a wire cage surrounding the ATS billets, known as the "spider", a series of sleeping huts each containing 12 double bunks and an ablution block (containing toilets, cold showers and hand basins), all interconnected by a corridor. Each morning at 6.15 am a male bugler delighted in poking his head through the wire to sound reveille.

The job of a Technical Storeman MT was to maintain vehicles and as a first step to doing this we were faced with an internal combustion engine mounted on a wooden block. We were informed that at the end of 3 weeks we would be expected to take it apart, put it together again and name all the parts and their function in making it go. What's more we achieved all that! It was at Ribbleton that I met Ida, a girl from Leeds, who has remained my friend until the present day.

Notice of our postings were put on the board two days before the end of the course and I was bound for Aqualute Park, home of the Earls of Shrewsbury, near Newport in Shropshire. This was a pity, as all the friends I had made in my short stay were going to Attingham Park, 5 miles outside Shrewsbury on the A5. All was not lost however; the powers that be had a change of heart and I went with the rest of the gang to Attingham, where I remained for three years.

FORAGING FOR FUEL

It was the beginning of September 1943 when we were met at Shrewsbury Station and taken by truck to Harlescott Camp (now the site of the cattle market). Our billets were Nissen huts. In the centre of each was a combustion stove, for which every hut was allowed a small bucket of coke per day in winter (1 October-31 March). Sticks to light the fire

were scrounged or gathered from neighbouring fields. Of course we also raided the coke dump at the dead of night to obtain further supplies of fuel!

I lived in this camp until March 1944 with the same girls - 6 Scots and 6 English - and good friends we all became. Beds had to be barracked daily to ensure beds were properly aired. Certain items of clothing had to be laid on the bed in a regulation pattern and everyone was responsible for keeping their own bedspace clean, in addition to taking it in turns to clean the toilets and ablution block. On one night each week the floors had to be polished, windows cleaned and lights and ledges dusted for Orderly Officer's inspection. Each morning all your clothes had to be laid on the bed clean, pressed and in good repair for inspection. Bear in mind that we only had Army issue clothing in those days, so everyone had identical gear. Reveille was at 6.30 am, breakfast at 7.15, parade at 7.45 and then off in the trucks to work two miles away.

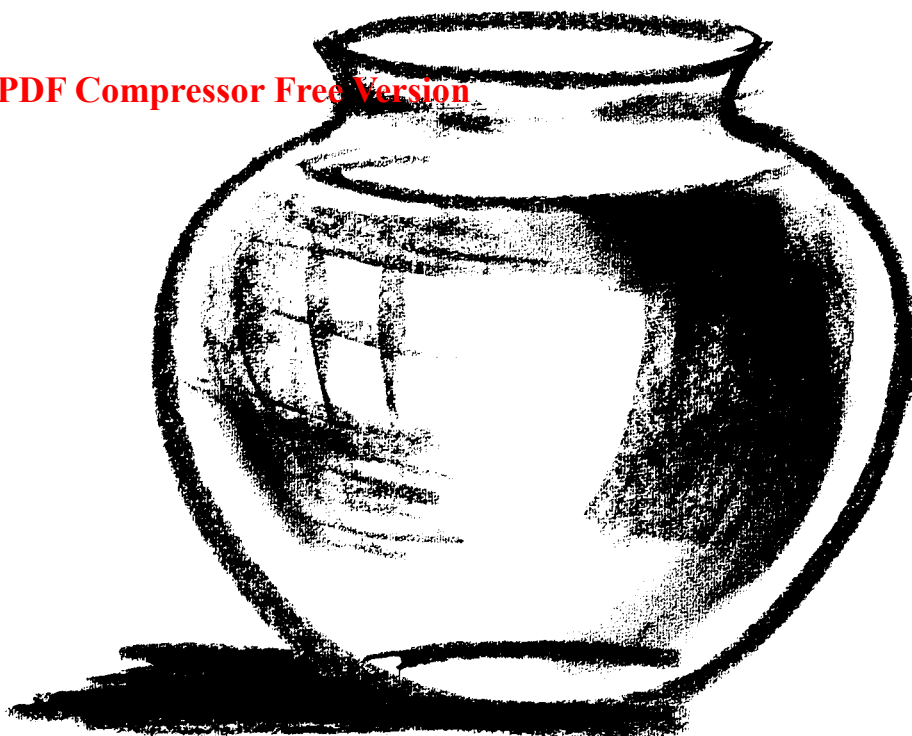
WHAT A SOCIAL LIFE!

On Saturdays, buses were provided to take us into town, where we shopped or walked along the River Severn to the Quarry (a park). Tea was taken in the Salvation Army or Catholic canteen and then we went to the cinema. In the week, if we could afford it - pay was 2 shillings (10p) per day - we sometimes borrowed Army bikes and went to a local country pub for a shandy. Most evenings though, after we had cleaned the room and handwashed and ironed our kit for the next day, there wasn't time to do much more than go to the NAAFI for a drink of tea or cocoa with a bun or toast before going to bed. A couple of nights a week they ran Housey Housey (Bingo) in the NAAFI and if there was a pianist available we had an impromptu sing-song. We also had to do guard duty about once a fortnight, which entailed sitting in the guardroom all night, answering the 'phone and booking people who had leave passes in and out.

CHRISTMAS – TOBLERONE SAUSAGES!

I spent my first Army Christmas in Harlescott Camp. Early morning tea, brought round by the Sergeants (and laced with rum) in good Army tradition, was about 7.30 am on Christmas morning - quite civilised! Breakfast was probably tinned bacon - complete with greaseproof paper - and scrambled egg or tinned "Toblerone" -shaped bangers made, I think, from sawdust. At midday we had the complete Christmas dinner, much more than we needed and far more than most civilians were getting to eat in wartime. During the afternoon we lay on our beds and thought about what our families would be doing or we gossiped and dozed. Come teatime and we were all too full to bother going to the dining hall, so later we decided to pool our resources from the food parcels we had received from home. There was quite a collection of Christmas cake, mince pies, black bun, flap jacks and Eccles cakes. The tea was brewed in a 7lb jam tin, tea, water and condensed milk all being boiled together!

In March 1944 our Company was moved into Attingham Hall, home of Lord Beresford, located on the A5 at Atcham. We already worked at Attingham Park so it made sense to be billeted there, but prior to 1944 the WAAF, who worked at a nearby airfield, lived at the Hall. I worked in the Vehicles Reserve Depot (VRD) and was attached to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC).



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.

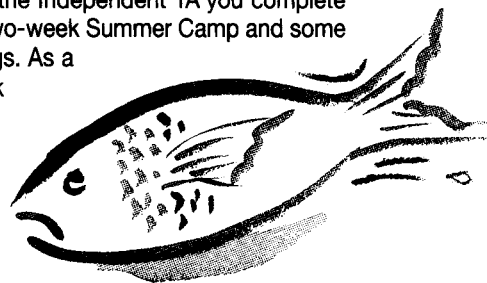
How? Simply by becoming a member of the Volunteer Forces, which make up a third of our Army and represent a significant part of our commitment to peace.

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.

VALET TO THE 10,000

The park housed approximately 10,000 vehicles from little Austin 7s to 10 ton American Macs. These were all parked in long lines of the same type of vehicles and included armoured cars. Our job was to keep all moving parts lubricated, to keep the vehicles clean and free of fallen leaves and to give the wheels a quarter turn every three months to prevent deterioration of the tyres. Wheels and engines were turned by hand, as the batteries were removed from the vehicles when they were parked. We also had to paint, either by hand or spray, vehicles which had been returned from service in all parts of the world. Quite often ex-desert vehicles coloured beige came in and had to be repainted green and black/brown for service in Europe. Our work kept us outdoors in all weathers and waterproof clothing was issued in winter, but it was impossible to work in gloves so our hands were always frozen.



26 VRD 1944

*Lorna White - second left, back row
Officer: Lt Megan Jones*

Sometimes we storewomen were detailed for convoy duties. This entailed riding in the gun turret of an armoured car to direct the driver, who only had a small steel slit, rather than a windscreen, in front of her. We sat on the cast-steel gun-mounting and held on to the rim of the turret buffeted by whatever the elements decided to throw at us - it was a very cold perch indeed. Sometimes we went to another VRD at Camberley, but more often we went to the docks in London, from where the vehicles were shipped directly overseas. On these trips we had to stage overnight as the vehicles only did about 30 mph. We usually stopped in St Albans. The police, having been forewarned of our arrival, sorted out

billets in private houses - some of them with poor quality food, beds, warmth and facilities.

My first visit to the docks was an eye-opener. We proceeded at a snail's pace past heaps of rubble, often still burning, which only the previous day had been someone's home. The roads were littered with hose pipes, ambulances, fire engines and mobile canteens serving tea and buns to the emergency services. This was the heart of the London blitz. We used to catch the 6 pm train home from Paddington to Shrewsbury and while waiting for the train we shared the platforms with Londoners who were climbing into bunks preparing for a night's sleep underground where they would be safe from the air raids.

D-DAY PREPARATIONS

In April 1944, all leave was cancelled and we worked 12 hour shifts, day and night in alternate weeks, while every vehicle on the depot which would move, was prepared to go to war on D-Day. On June 6, 7 and 8 soldiers were queueing to take them away as fast as we made them ready.

Work went on steadily for the next few months until the European war ended in May 1945. It was during this period that I was taught to drive, as all our drivers were busy on convoy duties and we storewomen had to move the vehicles around the Park. I took my test in a 3-ton lorry around the narrow streets of Shrewsbury. Our leisure time was spent in the NAAFI, in the local pub, at the cinema or in the new found pleasure at the American PX Club at the US air base across Attingham's deer park. Yes, there were deer roaming about all through the war and they are probably still there.

VE-DAY JOY RIDER

VE-Day saw me in Bournemouth, staying with one of my friends whose Mum ran an excellent guest house. During the celebrations we got mixed up with a gang of sailors and somehow found ourselves in Weymouth! Eventually one of the matelots "borrowed" a taxi and we made our erratic way back to Bournemouth - leaving the vehicle on the promenade for collection later! (Shades of joy riders).

After VJ Day in August 1945 I was called for draft in the Far East and I went to Bristol for an intensive two weeks of PE, route marching and medical checks. I was issued with a "jungle green" uniform, including a bush hat. Having got psyched up to go, the draft was cancelled and I opted to return to Attingham - about the time that I was offered a choice of postings.

AMALGAMATION

From October 1945 to April 1946 life was very routine and our job concentrated on finding out how many of the vehicles remaining on the Park were in fact roadworthy, despite our lovingly administered maintenance for the last 3 years. It turned out that quite a number refused to budge, so they were eventually towed away to an "unfit" depot. It now became obvious that change was afoot and in May it was made known that our depot was to amalgamate with two others, and to be located in Lincolnshire. Sadly, there ended a mainly happy era during which I had made a lot of good friends and learned an awful lot about people and life in general. By that time I had reached the dizzy heights of Corporal and it turned out that I was due to be the most senior rank being transferred to the new unit and that wasn't saying a lot!

THE LINCOLN BEET

In September 1946 I, with a small squad of Lance Corporals and Privates, set off for the wilds of Lincolnshire - a boring flat county without trees, always shrouded in mist and suffering from cold East winds. At least that's how it seemed to me at the time. We were billeted and worked on a dis-used RAF bomber aerodrome at a place called Bardney outside Lincoln. It's only claim to fame was a sugar beet factory where, at that time of year, processing the beet was in full swing and consequently that air was filled with the sickly smell of refining sugar. Shades of Pontefract and its cakes! It seems odd that my first and last memories of wartime service should be overshadowed by a smell. At the Nags Head in Bardney I celebrated my 21st birthday, drinking the "in" drink of port and lemon. I understand I was taken back to camp by truck, but I knew nothing of that!

DEMOB

While at Bardney I was sent to Nottingham for two weeks on a sergeant's course, which I quite enjoyed, but on my return I was dissatisfied with the conditions under which my squad was working. In my absence they had been given all the rotten, dirty jobs and moved into a miserable hut, so I complained. I was informed by the CO that if I wanted my third stripe I'd better toe the line and keep my mouth shut - so I took the option to leave the ATS on my demob number. This came up quite soon and on December 22 1946 I took the train to Leeds and went to live with my best friend Ida and her family.

NANTES REVISITED

by Ivy Bracegirdle (née Sheppard)

I was most interested to read S/Sgt Terry Hart's letter in the "Lioness" page 94-2/1995, as I too was stationed near Nantes in April/June 1940 and I well remember the wonderful work done by the Cooks and Orderlies - they really were held in greatest regard and made such a difference to the Mess food, as well as the cleanliness of the Mess.

My friend, Stella Rogers (whom I joined up with in 1938) and I were clerks and we tossed up as to who worked in the Company Office and who was Secretary to the CO who, as Terry pointed out, was very adverse to having ATS posted to his Unit. I just cannot remember his name (he was a Lt Colonel) but he made all kinds of Rules and Regulations, one of which was that Volunteers in the ATS were only allowed to associate with Privates in the Army, Corporals with Corporals and so on up the ladder. After a week or two he realised what a good job the Cooks and Orderlies were doing and life became easier for me too! I well remember him being really sad when we had to leave.

One other member of the Contingent was Peggy Taylor who worked in the Chateau with Senior Commander Wagstaff and Junior Commanders GARDEN and GUGGISBERG and the latter came to us each week for Pay Day, as 23 of us were in a Nissen hut at SAINT ETIENNE-DE-MONT-LUC, near Nantes. Later Peggy Taylor was a member of No 1 ATS CLERICAL COY, posted with me and 148 others to Nairobi, Kenya. She married and became Peggy Hill but sadly she died just over a year ago.

Parade-Leader



Mrs White has also sent us this photo of Capt Hodson (now Brig Field) leading the Parade on Singapore Corps Day, April 1953.

TEL-EL-KEBIR, EGYPT, 1945

We were aboard HMS Dunnottar Castle in the Mediterranean sunshine, wondering where in the world our overseas postings would take us. On the quayside, men wearing fezzes and long white robes. The black gliding parcels with eyes? Those were the women. Ha, must be in Egypt!

A long hot train ride through the desert passed like a dream. Men rode donkeys. Women carried water-jugs on their heads. We stopped at a station where a swarm of vendors offered fruit and genuine antiques. Whilst we looked out at the platform, another swarm climbed up from the tracks the other side, and removed what they could of our possessions. This was going to be different!

Tel-El-Kebir Garrison was a vast complex of camps; wooden huts and tents housed 26,000 British soldiers and 100 ATS. The nearest town was Ismailia, 30 miles away along the Sweet Water Canal. Anyone falling into its sweet waters would receive two dozen extra inoculations.

We were housed in a desert camp, 4 to a tent.

My companions were Jean Imrie from Stirling, Jessie Riach from Elgin and Poppy Laurie from Edinburgh, so I became used to being addressed as "quine" or "hen". Another language was used at Company meetings. As we were just a handful of British girls attached to the Palestine (Jewish) Company ATS, the meetings were held in Hebrew. We answered 'ken' (yes) as our names were called, and then just listened in puzzlement to the rest of the proceedings.

In the evenings, mice ran happily around the tent walls, and a spider we called Horace would dance on the sandy floor. Later we discovered he was probably a poisonous tarantula. As for the toilet arrangements - a huge pit many

metres deep and many metres wide, was adorned at intervals with wooden seats, all covered at night with large cockroaches. As we all suffered from Gippy Tummy, a nocturnal visit was a daunting prospect. But the stars outside were beautiful!

At work at Garrison HQ, I was suddenly promoted and put in charge of a typing pool. My 2 i/c was a keen little Anglo-Indian, Cpl Herbert Fernandez from Bombay. The other typists were L/Cpl Lise Giraudeau and her friend Milly, both of Mauritius Coy ATS: a young Egyptian civilian and two German prisoners, Klaus and Erich. (These two were naturally not very keen on helping the British war effort). On the way back to ATS camp, the gentle old German driver would tell me all about his grandchildren before wishing me "Guten Appetit".

One evening, a concert party of German prisoners, all looking like Danny La Rue, put on an excellent musical comedy to entertain the British troops. Their happiness at putting on the show was infectious, and I can still remember the rousing final chorus.

Given the ratio of 260 British soldiers to 1 ATS girl, we had a hectic social life. There were dances in one or other of the camps nearby every night, and the "Excuse Me" dances were murder!

Soon after demob I became a nun, but that had more to do with a subsequent posting to Jerusalem than to memories of life in Tel-El-Kebir.

But that's another story!

DORIS GOSS (Ex ATS)

(Now a member of British Ex-Service Women's Association in Sydney)



Less Shy if necessary!

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

I applied at the very beginning of the war, to enrol with an ATS unit whose HQ was at Watford, Herts - I was then living at Barnet, Herts. The two officers from this Unit - Mrs Jean Knox and Mrs Pratt, the former later becoming Head of the ATS - I do not remember what the ranks were then, came to interview me at my residence and I was then asked to attend at Watford for a medical examination - Mrs Knox and an Army Medical Officer were present. A week or two later I was instructed to travel to Stanstead Mountfitchett where was stationed an AA Regimental Headquarters. There were two other new recruits with me and the only training we received was about ten minutes drilling now and again wearing ATS hats - no uniforms were available. We slept in requisitioned houses which were quite bare and our beds were straw palliasses with Army blankets for cover, no sheets and I don't remember whether we had pillow; probably not. All our gear had to be kept in suitcases and there were four or five girls to each normal sized room. The first day I was there I was given a simple shorthand and typewriting test which I passed and was placed on the pay roll at 14s per week as opposed to those with no trade who received only 10s per week.

After a few weeks I was sent to Bushey, Herts to replace another Volunteer (no Privates then) who objected to the swear words used by the Sgt Major of the AA Battery guarding Fighter Command. There I worked with another Volunteer, Kathleen Chapin, in the Battery Office and, she being quite short and I being tall, we were sometimes known as the "long and the short of it"! Eventually our Battery was sent overseas and I then worked in AA Command HQ offices but later when ATS Provost was about to be formed I applied for this and was on the first ever training course for this 'Wing', as it was

called, at Mychett Barracks, near Aldershot. With Provost, I served at Northampton, Southend, Cambridge but mostly in London until the end of the war. I would have liked to have served overseas but only those with shorter terms of service were sent as it was realised that our demobilization according to service length would interfere with such arrangements.

The friendship of the Service was great and I kept in touch with several friends afterwards. Sadly one or two have died but I still write to a good friend in Wood Green (Pam Green, née Rice) and Barbara Bryant (née Jordan) at Ferntree Gully in Australia (both ex Provost). Living amidst all the bombing we were a lucky section of the ATS not to lose one girl but of course there was much sadness owing to the loss of loved ones.

From Mary Fearon (née Cheason) ex W/23142 ATS, now living in Tasmania, Australia.

★ ★ ★



Mrs Molly Chopper (Chester Branch) at the Service of Remembrance, Blacon War Graves with the Canadian Forces, March 30 1996

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION Hastings Branch

MRS MARJORIE GRINDLEY (née Mullins)

Referring to the picture below, Mrs Grindley joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps early in 1917 having volunteered in 1916.

She was stationed in Aldershot and served first as a Batwoman to Miss Lenegham and then as an Orderly Room Clerk. Her Army Number was 7008 and her rank when discharged was Assistant Forewoman.

In 1918 King George V, Queen Mary and the Princess Royal visited Aldershot to inspect the troops and Marjorie took part in the March Past and her photograph appeared in "The Lady".

She joined Hastings Branch in 1980 but now lives near her relatives in Stokeham, Devon.

When the Hastings Branch Secretary received Mrs Grindley's new address, she recognised it as being in the same road as that of two of her colleagues from Wimbledon Branch - Pearl and Freda - who undertook to keep in touch with Mrs Grindley on behalf of Hastings Branch.

It's a small world - Pearl and the Hastings Branch Secretary were billeted in the same building in Berlin in 1945.



Marjories 100th Birthday

TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING! **By Kathy Kantypowicz (née Woosey)**

Over the course of the last fifteen years or so, the role played by women in HM Forces has changed almost beyond recognition. The opportunities open to them are no longer employed solely in non combatant positions, and the range of careers and opportunities open to them is now considerably wider than ever before. On purely sentimental grounds, I deeply mourn the demise of the WRAC and have one or two serious misgivings about the enormous physical demands imposed on the modern female soldier, but whilst visiting my son - now a serving soldier and at least the third generation of soldiers on both sides of the family - my eyes were opened as to how well the girls of today are rising to the challenge.

Workwise, those of us who served in the late 1960's were unquestionably blessed with an extremely 'cushy number' by comparison to our counterparts of today. No longer restricted to being basically pen pushers and drivers, these girls are doing heavy, dirty and sometimes dangerous work right alongside the men, and with very little deference shown to their gender. Whilst Wednesday afternoon sports were little more than 'fun and games' for us, these young women now have to face a gruelling annual personal fitness test which makes me feel weak at the knees just thinking about it. Their horizons are certainly very significantly wider, and that in itself is a good thing but - dare I confess? - I wouldn't, in a million years, trade my own service life for theirs in this respect!

That being said though, camp life has also changed a good deal in the thirty years since I left, and a tour of the accommodation blocks was an eye opener, too! Hands up those who can remember spending Monday nights doing 'aerobics' on the business end of a manual "bumper"? These things certainly helped us to maintain our own standards of personal fitness, but the days of wall to wall polish has now given way to wall to wall carpet and the bumpers - both of the manual and electric variety - have now been replaced by vacuum cleaners. Long gone, too, are the old metal lockers, now replaced by whitewood furnishings which wouldn't look altogether out of place in an MFI showroom. Bed spaces, too, are larger, but I suspect that this has grown out of sheer necessity since, where we had a small portable radio if we were lucky, most modern soldiers have equipped themselves with a dazzling array of portable tv's, video recorders, home computers and midi-hifi systems. Inevitably, this gives rise to a considerably higher noise level within the blocks, too - a fact upon which I commented to my son. It says much for the resilience of young ears that he looked at me with genuine puzzlement. "Noisy? Get a life, Mum! It's quiet today because most of the blokes are away on a 48". Gone, too, are the uniform pattern bedspreads and bedding blocks. Nowadays, a soldier is allowed to have a duvet and to express his or her individuality by using personal duvet covers, and the motley collection of Bunny Club, Dennis The Menace, jazzy abstracts and Thomas The Tank Engine motifs certainly give rise to entertaining speculation on the respective personalities of their owners! Accommodation blocks don't tend to be single gender any more, incidentally, and although it has rather curtailed such activities as 'streaking' to the showers, this integration seems to be working remarkably well, all things being considered. Surprising, isn't it?

And so to the NAAFI, and what could possibly have changed there I hear you asking. Well, rather a lot, actually.

The old canteen, once the hub of most camps, is now as silent as the proverbial grave, its tables empty and bare. Where once there had stood a counter manned by friendly - well, OK, sometimes dragon-faced - NAAFI girls, there is now a bank of distinctly unfriendly vending machines. Gone are the cheese and pickle sandwiches, the vast pink mugs of indescribable liquid and the ubiquitous fried egg banjos. Now, the room echoes eerily as lone footsteps cross the floor, coins are inserted into a waiting machine and, with a mechanical clatter, a hot dog and a can of Coke are duly delivered. But not for consumption at any of the waiting tables. No. The echoes sound again, and fade as the cursory visitor wends her way back to the block to continue watching "Soldier, Soldier" on her portable tv. Sad. So very, very sad.

The bar, at least, is slightly more lively - thanks to the difficulties of licensing laws, there are no vending machines here thank goodness! A juke box with integral video screen booms out the current taste in popular music and several customers are at the bar, joking with the youthful barmaid. Yes, this is more like the NAAFI I remember, though I doubt if anyone would, nowadays, have the nerve to try sharing one half pint of shandy and two cigarettes between four people on the day before pay day. Indeed, there's no need, for if funds are running low, there's always a flexible friend in the form of a NAAFI credit card - changed days indeed!

Overall, I have to say that I'm entirely glad that I did my service when I did, and though I don't doubt that, in many ways, life in the Forces has changed for the better - I can't help thinking that we had more FUN in those days. My son, of course, scowls in total disbelief. "Come off it, Mum! Bull nights, bedblocks and half a dozen people sharing a single fag because you were all too hard up to buy any more?"

Yes. And weren't they the good old days?

ATS IN 'B' TROOP 513/153 (M) HAA (ROYAL ARTILLERY) NEWCASTLE 1942

Submitted by the family of the late Jean Sunderland - (middle row, 5th from left). Jean served in the ATS for 4 years and sadly died last Dec (95) aged 76 years.



*Others in the photo are:
M Miller, J D Munro, P Lamb, D M Baker,
R Millward, A Bignell, Margo Farrar, L Lanchbury,
P Birkbeck, M Turnbull, F Barker, Kitty Hogan,
E A Hague, J Richards.*

TIMOTHY - A CAIRO STRAY

During 1946 and 1947 I was stationed in Egypt. One evening, on returning to Kasr El Nil Barracks on the banks of the Nile in Cairo, a soldier on guard duty put something into my hand. I almost dropped it in fright as it felt like a mouse, but on closer inspection I saw it was a tiny kitten.

I shared a room with two other girls - Peggy and Margo - who also liked cats, so we decided to adopt it. Feeding was quite a problem as there was no canned cat food in those days, so we had to smuggle out scraps of food from the Mess every meal time. In spite of his meagre diet he grew into a pretty tabby, and we called him Timothy. He was free to come and go during the day, but he was always there waiting to greet us at dinner time. When the Sgt-Major came round on her weekly inspection, Timothy had to be pushed to the back of the wardrobe and hidden under our clothes. We all held our breath in case he miaowed and gave the game away, but he seemed to understand that he had to keep "mum".

At this time there was much trouble in Cairo as, now the War was over, the Egyptians wanted the British OUT. Almost every day there were riots and sometimes bombs were planted in British establishments - whenever we went to the Army cinemas we had to check under the seats for suspicious packages. We girls, who worked at GHQ, were ferried to the office in 3-ton trucks, under guard, and often, due to a curfew, could not get back until things quietened down.

In March 1947, it was decided to evacuate the British troops from Cairo to the Canal Zone. But what to do about Timothy? I could not leave him to fend for himself in the streets of Cairo, nor was it possible to take him with us. After trying unsuccessfully to find another home I took the reluctant decision to have him put to sleep and a local lady took me to the vet to do the deed. In Cairo, where there are so many unwanted cats, he was just another statistic, but I was very sad to have to end the life of a healthy, young animal - and we missed him. Later on I realised I had made the right decision.

On the night of 29 March 1947, the British troops left Cairo ahead of the planned evacuation date, in order to avoid further riots, thus ending 65 years of British occupation. We drove in convoy through the night arriving at Fayid in the Canal Zone, where we were to be temporarily housed in tents, surrounded by vast areas of sand! Had Timothy come here he would probably have run off into the desert and got lost.

We were surprised to see so many handsome, bronzed, blond young men around, who kept staring at us. We discovered they were the remnants of Rommel's Afrika Korps: POWs awaiting repatriation to Germany, and we were the first European women they had seen for years! They served us in the Mess, did the cooking, and all the other various chores around the camp, including sweeping out our tents. They had even formed a band called the 'Desert Canaries' to play for dances. It was very difficult not to talk to them but fraternization was forbidden, although I believe there were a few secret rendezvous kept behind the NAAFI, under cover of darkness!

Finally the modern huts they had been building were ready for us to move into. Although not quite ready as the paintwork had not been completed, so every morning we awoke to the sight of a German POW or two, painting the window sills - those sills seemed to require many coats of paint!

They also made a lot of wooden handicrafts and

souvenirs which they sold for very reasonable prices, as they were saving up to go home. I still have a beautifully carved wooden bowl I bought from one of them.

As we only worked mornings, on account of the heat, we spent most afternoons lazing on the shores of the Bitter Lake, where lidos and gardens had been laid out. They were happy carefree days and I consider myself lucky to have experienced such a wonderful posting.

I left the ATS in September 1947, having joined in January 1945. My first posting was to Roehampton with No 9 Chilwell MT Group, RAOC, as a technical clerk. I was therefore in London for VE Day, when the entire unit went AWOL for three days - I remember being hauled up onto a 3-ton truck and going round and round Piccadilly for hours, amid cheering crowds. I believe we all ended up celebrating at the Stage Door Canteen in Leicester Square - happy day!

Muriel Saiter (Ex ATS)
(Greater London Branch)

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*This photograph of members of the ATS and WAAF serving in the Typewriting Pool at Combined Operations Headquarters, Whitehall in 1945 has been sent by Mary Brown (?).*

*Do you recognise anyone in the photo? If so, let us know.*

## RECRUITERS' REPLY

Two of "Toni's Girls" who read Recruiters Remembered by Brenda Hancock in a recent edition of The Lioness were Jose Heron and Joan Plant. Yes, we were indeed saddened to hear of the death of Captain Harrison whom we remember as a super boss! It was her enthusiasm which inspired the formation of a Recruiters pop group which she christened "The Militaires". She saw the group as an aid to recruiting and the gigs at which we played were many and varied. Captain Harrison always came with us on these occasions and latterly, played the organ in the group. How we used to pull her leg when, because of her "French Connection", she mispronounced words or phrases, usually with hilarious results.

A Recruiters Re-union ..... what a good idea! Phone 01296 624197 or 01929 471750.

From Joan Plant.

## CHESTER BRANCH MEET CLEVELAND BRANCH AT BAYEAUX, NORMANDY - JUNE 6 1996

From Standard Bearer Cleveland  
Mrs A Mahony

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I was very proud to accept an invitation to join the Normandy Veterans' Association, Redcar Branch to visit France with them earlier this month. Having received permission and lots of good wishes from my friends in the Cleveland Branch to carry our Standard, I set off on June 3 1996 on my journey.



We arrived at our hotel in Caen on June 4. My first parade on June 5 was at the Durham Light Infantry Cemetery at Chavain which is called Jerusalem. I was very overawed to find I was the only WRAC Standard Bearer present, however thinking of all my friends in Cleveland and our Association I said to myself, "Come on lass, chin up and step out". We then proceeded to a War Cemetery at Tilley where we paid our respects; each member laying a small cross on a grave.

On June 6 I paraded with 80 other Standards at the Normandy War Cemetery. There were over 1,000 people present at the service, mostly Veterans wearing their rows of medals glinting in the sunshine, with pride but also with feelings for their departed friends. I could sense their emotion as I also had a lump in my throat, tears in my eyes, and an ache in my heart; one of those moments in life which I will never forget. Later in the day I marched with the Veterans to witness Prince Michael of Kent unveil a statue of General Montgomery. This was followed by a Veterans' parade with Prince Michael taking the Salute.

On June 7 we went to a Canadian War Cemetery at Brettville, again we paid our respects and laid our little crosses on graves. We then carried on to visit the towns of Falaise and Alencon.

June 8 we went to the town of Conde sur Noirean. We were met by the Mayor and his Deputy who marched with us through the town to the local church. We had a service and a wreath laying ceremony at the Memorial to local people of the Resistance who had given their lives. There were 5 Standards paraded, I was very proud to be asked to be one of them.

We then had lunch with the Mayor and his party. The remaining time of our visit was spent visiting local towns and places of interest refreshing the Veterans' memories of times past. I was very proud indeed and felt greatly honoured to carry our Standard representing WRAC whenever I was asked to do so.



*Left to Right:  
Mrs L Strech (Chester), Mrs A Mahony (Cleveland),  
Mrs M Chopper (Chester)*

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THANKSGIVING SERVICE: 19 AUGUST 1945 by Eva R K Fischer

In 1945 I was stationed in London serving as a Staff Captain at the War Office. At first I was living in the Transit Camp in Gower Street, but after some months I became friendly with Ruth Hastings (now Barough) and we decided to share a flat in Chelsea. Ruth was also a Staff Captain, in a department which dealt with ceremonial. On August 16, we met for lunch and Ruth told me that she was to be an usher at the Thanksgiving Service at St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday, August 19. My immediate reaction was "Oh, you lucky thing!". That evening Ruth told me she had arranged for me to be an usher also.

Sunday August 19 was a beautiful day (it was also my birthday!) and Ruth and I reported to the Cathedral armed with our tickets marked DUTY, and we were instructed to usher in a side aisle. I think I am right in saying that we were the only ATS ushers. There was naturally an enormous crowd outside, and as the West doors were open, we could hear all the cheers for the important personages as they arrived (the loudest cheer of all was for Sir Winston Churchill and yet at the General Election shortly afterwards he was defeated).

I still treasure my copy of the Order of Service. The hymns were Praise my soul, The King of Heaven; And did those feet in ancient times; and Now thank we all our God, and the Lesson was Isaiah Chapter 35. Unfortunately I cannot remember who read the Lesson, but the Sermon was preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury. At the end of the Service all the ushers lined the central aisle which meant that we had a close-up of the Royal Family and all the other important people.

Later that year Ruth and I saw part of the Victory Parade. Coming from Scotland, I had quite a lump in my throat when I heard the massed pipers, and we were both proud of the precision marching of the ATS.

Altogether 1945 was a memorable year for me.

BE SURE YOUR SINS WILL FIND YOU OUT

I was stationed with 900 Coy: RASC AA CMD: (M) TRANSPORT in the sleepy village of Woodmansterne, Surrey and our main task was to keep the Gun Sites south of the river Thames supplied with ammunition. We did not deliver the live ammo - this job was taken on by the men who were stationed away from HQ in three separate platoons; however the female drivers were kept busy with other details. HQ was in a very lovely house called Weston Acres; just typing that name brings back so many memories and a few sad ones.

Quite away from HQ, approached by a very rough road full of pot holes were three detached houses and the first of these was the home for many female drivers, cooks and orderlies. The second house was private and in the third lived Admin Staff and more drivers and in the hut that was in the back garden were the remaining cooks and orderlies. I often wonder how the folk in the second house put up with the ATS and all the comings and goings to say nothing of the loud volume of the radio.

I was in the first house in an upstairs room which had a lovely large window and a wide low windowsill ideal for sitting on to write letters. One early evening I was doing just that when a knock came on the door. "Come in" I called out and in came one of the orderlies with a pad and pen in her hand. Next thing I heard was "Ere Corp, will you write a love letter for me" and placing her pen and pad beside me she sat down on the windowsill. I just looked at her and wanted to laugh but she must have sensed my thoughts because out came "Come on help me, you know how to write proper like". Taking her pad I asked for some details about the man in question and did she want a mushy letter or just a friendly one. Again, "You know Corp", so I made a start with tongue in cheek and got as far as "Dear John" then looked at the girl who was sitting with her head down and the sight that met my eyes took all thoughts of a John out of my mind because I could see that this girl was not alone in my room but had a company of wild life playing leap frog in her hair. Panic stations, she was too close for comfort so, throwing the pen and pad down I ordered her to follow me to the bathroom and to keep quiet. In we went and I locked the door after which I opened up the cupboard which housed the de-licing shampoo. Seeing this she shouted "Oh hell, don't tell me I'm lousy again". That was putting it mildly and telling her to stop shouting I put my trust in her not to tell a soul that I had cleaned her head because it was definitely not my job; we had a medical orderly for that sort of thing. This girl had been cleaned so many times that a threat hung over her should it happen again and I felt sorry for her because it was always on returning from leave that this problem occurred. Well I cleaned the head and made sure she had a bath after which all the evidence was put away and we returned to finish the love letter.

Next morning I went to HQ but at lunch time we who were billeted in the houses had to return for lunch and on going up to my room to collect my irons and mug, there, standing on my covered orange box, was a most beautiful jar of daffodils and tulips; they really were super. Not having a lot of time I went down to lunch and after washing up my eating irons, I returned them to my room and made my way back to HQ. No sooner had I returned when Junior Commander Brown sent for me: What had I done? Why the summons? A gentle tap on her door and I heard her say "Come in". I did just that. "Cole" she said, "I wonder if you can help me, you see I've had a visit from the local police this morning". It appears that a lady in the village had reported that an ATS

girl was seen in her front garden picking flowers. I tried to keep a straight face but apparently not straight enough for out came "Not you, Cole". "No Ma'am, not me". Should I split or should I not. "Well, do you know anything about them?" she asked and looking her full in the face I said, "Yes, they are in my bedroom" - she would have found out sooner or later. Who put them there came next and so, trying not to smile, I told her the story of the love letter and the live stock, then waited to be told off. But I was not. Instead she quietly said "Cole, you are always helping the younger girls and I thank you for it. However you must now go and deal with this private and make sure she realises how serious the charge could be and that she must never do it again". Later on that day I called the girl to my room and said, "What do you know about these flowers?" I got them for you" came her reply, "you were so kind to me and I know you love flowers". "Is that all?" I said "because the Village Bobby has been up to HQ with a complaint from a lady in the village that an ATS girl was seen picking flowers in her garden". "B Hell" she shouted "don't let me go to prison". "So it was you" I remarked to which she replied "I ain't got no money and I did so want to thank you for helping me". Enough was enough and I so wanted to laugh, giving her a strong warning not to do it again, I told her to go. On reaching the door she turned to me and with a wide smile said "She didn't need all those flowers, the garden was packed full and they really do look lovely on your make-shift side-table".

Soon after this incident came the news that we were all to have medicals for overseas postings and the last I saw of that young girl was from the back of a 3-ton lorry shouting out "Goodbye Corp. I'll keep my head clean for you".

I cannot remember her name or even bring her face to mind but she was a good clean worker and deserved a helping hand along the way.

Vera C Cole, Ex W/185675 Cpl.



Laura May – not Forgotten

Submitted by Mrs Agnes Cain (Ex ATS) of Fakenham. Mrs Cain regularly puts flowers on this grave.



A pupil of Fakenham High School laying a posy on the grave of "Laura May Collinson aged 19, Auxiliary Territorial Service. So young - she had so many plans, but this was not one" during VE Day Commemorations.

THE ATS LANDINGS AUGUST 1944

by Eileen Stapleton (née Looker)

Just another slant on the ATS landings in 1944. I read with interest the account in Treadaway, and the photograph on page 73 of the Lioness 1994 No 2.

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I joined the ATS in April 1942 and trained in York. When it was found I could do shorthand and typing I had no choice but to be a clerk although I was asked if I would care to stay and train new recruits. Much as I would have liked to do that, I knew my mother would not be happy after my having struggled for years to master shorthand.

I was posted to St Paul's School, Hammersmith and billeted in Latimer Court, very comfortably. I stayed with 'I' branch throughout the war, working in Edith Road, Storeys Gate and Rotunda and later when we became 21 Army Gp

WENTWORTH

HQ we went to Wentworth Golf Course. As I remember we left Sunningdale at 2 am on 12 August 1944, waiting for hours it seemed, in shuttles at the end of the road to join the convoy to Southampton. I remember the 12 August as it was a certain person's 21st birthday and she was rather fed up about it. We arrived at Southampton somewhere around midday, were given emergency rations in a little box, and dusted down with Keatings. We then boarded a Chinese ship, each of us carrying two kitbags, one on the shoulder, the other by hand. I don't think it was anticipated we should be on the water that long; we had no sleeping accommodation which was unusual though we were always well looked after. There were some Canadian soldiers on board our ship too, whom I understood later were put into the Falaise Gap and few returned.

I have a newspaper cutting of girls being instructed how to use the Mae West Lifebelts, but we did not have any on our ship. I was on deck early next morning in thick fog when there was a lot of shouting and yelling and another ship was coming ahead on into our port-bow - within feet - heaven knows how they averted disaster.

Towards dusk on the 13th we arrived on the Normandy coast. We got into landing craft and saw nothing of the Mulberry Harbour we had been typing about for months. We came off the landing craft on to 'shuttles' and bumped our way across the metal roads into the country lanes and all we saw were the glow worms in the ditches.

We finally arrived at our destination, a field outside Bayeux with tents already erected and complete with beds, blankets and pillows/sheets - there was a lot of hilarity, people falling over guy ropes, and I believe the odd cow - it was about 11.30 pm and we had been travelling 48 hours. We were offered food, (now I know who those girls were, in the picture (issue 1994 No 2) I certainly recognised several faces) but we were all far too tired and sank gratefully into bed.

Most of the offices were in adjacent fields but 'I' branch was nearer the front line so each day I travelled together with 7 or 8 other girls up to our offices and were brought back each night. The offices were all in tents and we had no problem adapting to our new conditions. We had a large marquee in the centre of our field with an ironing board and spent our days off washing, ironing and trying to get a bath.

BATH UNIT

The bath unit came round once a week when one could have a shower, but it was never there on your particular day off, so one of our enterprising girls (Nicky Snead) found an old 'copper' and we took turns in that. After a few days the Pioneers came and dug out the tents about 4" down, lining them with coconut matting. I understood we were just seven miles behind the front line.

The weather was perfect at the beginning and I shall always remember the voice of Vera Lynn coming over the loudspeaker from the M I tent. We were there about six weeks I think. There were rumours about getting wellington boots but I heard the consignment were all left footed, so we didn't get any.

BRUSSELS

We then moved up to Brussels and, as mentioned in Mrs Treadaway's article, moved into Avenue Louise, into a modern block of flats. I can't remember going to work; I think we used the trams as the various branches were scattered, but if we had to work late, we were sent home in the Brigadier's car. There was always military personnel around to 'guard' us - we heard stories of strange things happening even in Brussels.

Sometime in the Spring of 1945, 'I' branch officers and men moved further forward and the girls were sent to various units to wait until it was safer, presumably. I went to Bruges with a girl called Freda and was nicely billeted with a private family. On the 8 May I saw the Procession of the Holy Blood from a very favourable position and I still have the programme - very simple and moving, nothing like it is today. We were called back to Brussels the next day and I have a rather cloudy photograph of all of us girls piling into a truck going off to Germany, when a voice suddenly said 'and where do you think you are going' - The driver and the soldier with the gun at the back explained the circumstances but the ATS officer was adamant, we didn't have permission. We unpacked again, but somehow it was all straightened out and we were off again the next day.

We stayed for a while at a little border town where we were not allowed out without an 'escort' with a gun, then we moved on to Bad Oeynhausen, a lovely Spa in the middle of a park surrounded by the wire fence and again one didn't venture out without an armed 'escort'.

In May of last year I went on a D-Day special to Normandy. I visited five museums and excellent they were too, but then they have all the memorabilia in France, but there was not one single mention of the ATS - nor did I see anything in the Imperial War Museum. In one French museum they had a fine window of five American girls in various uniforms and at Arramanches there is just one WREN, but no ATS, yet the article printed in the QMAAC & ATS Gazette of Sep-Oct 1994 states there were over 400 of us with a further 1000 to follow. I have yet to visit the National Army Museum in Chelsea ... I hope we get a mention.

31 March 1996

A DRIVER TRAINING CENTRE IN EGYPT

by Maj (Retd) Daphne Lance

In 1943 I was posted as Chief Instructor to a remarkable unit in Egypt. **PDF Compressor Free Version** were situated in the desert, just beyond the Pyramids and Mena House. The main part of the Company later ferried new vehicles as far as Tripoli West and Tripoli East as the war proceeded. The girls were mostly Jewesses who had escaped from the horrors of war.

The DTW was a small sub unit consisting of a RASC CSM and about 15 male driver instructors. It was not safe for two women to be on the roads alone. Then we had another ATS Officer and ten NCOs who kept the records and maintained the vehicles, even down to changing engines and gearboxes etc.

Soon after I got there, for political reasons, Palestine refused to supply any more ATS recruits. We were given medically down-graded Gunners and Infantry men to train. There was little to say about these intakes other than they were surprised to be taught mechanics by women. The Gunners were streets ahead of the Infanteers in maintenance.

The only hill in the location on which to practise hand starts was the one going up to the pyramids, and a line of 3 tonners could frequently be seen at the bottom of the hill awaiting their turn.

The Army was hard pressed for drivers and we were then given several hundred Lebanese Arabs straight from their donkey carts to train. There was a high percentage of failures.

One man gave us hope when he said he was a taxi driver in Beirut but it turned out he drove a horse drawn taxi. Another asked for a personal interview with me and complained that his wife had not received her marriage allowance. On looking at his pay book the address read BINT - Bedouin - Tent- Desert, a puzzle for the Pay Master.

I had the 16 tasks translated into Arabic. The Arabs had no idea about the principles of electricity. I used to start up the engine and let them touch a sparking plug. When they received a shock they called it "The Devil". So my lectures went "The devil is made in the dynamo. It is stored in the battery and by completing the circuit can work the starter motor, plugs, lights etc".

We warned the RASC that they were only fit for convoy work and said they must only be used going West. Later we heard they sent them up to Syria and the desert was littered with abandoned vehicles as they struck out to see their relations - complete chaos.

We ended up by training teams of UNRA destined for Greece. They were small teams from the Scouts, Girl Guides, Red Cross, Quakers and the like. Many elderly ladies who had driven for years were dismayed when I failed them on 3 tonners but I could not image them driving on the Greek mountain roads and the men disliked living in a tent and having to shave in cold water.

We closed after the intake was finished - sad - I had great affection for my Staff and worked well as a team. I wonder where they are now, men and women?



THE BARTERED BRIDE

Mary Taylor (née Downs) and her new husband, Fred in 1945. They were married in Neumunster, Germany and, as Mary couldn't get a wedding dress anywhere, she borrowed

one from Hamburg Opera Company's production of The Bartered Bride.

Sadly Fred died in 1983, but Mary is left with 9 children, 22 grandchildren and a great grandchild.

MY GREAT-AUNT IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

My great-aunt joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) which is now the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) in 1942. When she was recruited she went to Halifax, in the North of England, for 3 weeks training and to get her uniform. The girls all had a good laugh at each other when they were given their uniform. Some people who were poor had never worn a uniform in their lives. All the girls had to wear their hair 2 inches above their collar, no more and no less and in a certain style. Her pay in 1942 was 11 shillings and 8 pence which is about 65p a week.

When she finished her first 3 weeks she stayed on with 11 others to do a course to be shown how to become a Non Commissioned Officer (NCO). She stayed in the North of England and had to look after 15 others. Each room was very basic and all the girls slept in bunk beds.

She went to Yorkshire to become an officer and then finished her course. There she became a sub-lieutenant. There was a big push to get people to go to Sherwood Forest. She was there on VE Day. She enjoyed the life in the Army very much and decided to make it her career.

What frightened her the most were the bombs. They had to practice their routines for when the air-raid sirens went off. They had to organise people into the air-raid shelters and away from houses and shops. What she liked the most was that everyone worked together and helped each other through the bad times.

Auntie Eileen became a Lance Corporal and then a Corporal and right up through the ranks to become a Brigadier in charge of the WRAC.

By Susan Campbell aged 11

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S CORPS DAY 1996

"Why should we be interested in AGC Corps Day ? " - "Where is Worthy Down ?". These were two questions overheard when I attended the AGM in London. I have to admit that I was somewhat disappointed to hear these comments as there are still a considerable number of former members of the WRAC who are serving in the Adjutant General's Corps and Worthy Down the home of the new Corps and the location of the HQ of the WRAC Association. For those who are unsure - Worthy Down is three miles north of Winchester. One of the aims of AGC Corps Day is to provide a focus for members of the antecedent corps allowing them to renew old acquaintances and to foster ties with the AGC. The aim was achieved, with 150 members of the Association attending Corps Day 96 and from the letters that have been received everyone enjoyed their day out. Hopefully after two years when the WRAC Association marquee has been very well supported, we have now established AGC Corps Day as something to note in the diaries as a "good day out".

Despite careful planning, the organisers were very conscious that the success of the day was, to a large degree, out of their control. The key was the need for good weather and prayers were answered as the 15 June was an idyllic summer's day. One of the welcome changes for Corps Day 1996 was the provision of a huge white marquee which ran the full length of the arena and provided dedicated facilities for each association. A new innovation for Corps Day 1996 was the decision that the event should be open to the General Public in the afternoon in recognition of the fact that the new Corps had received recently the Freedom of the City of Winchester.

The day started with a Drumhead Service led by the AGC Band resplendent in their new scarlet tunics and navy trousers. The Band has recently returned from detachments in Cyprus and the USA and careful study revealed that the Band still retains a strong female contingent. On parade for the service were the Colours of the Duke of Yorks Royal Military School escorted by two ensigns who were a brother and a sister. The QMAAC, ATS and WRAC Association Standards were all on parade borne by Mrs Houghton of the Southampton Branch, Mrs Thomas from Birmingham and Mrs Trowbridge from the Isle of Wight.

The Service over, it was time for some serious catching up on news. A buffet lunch was supplied for those who had ordered tickets while other members chose to bring their own picnics. There was time to study the display boards, which had been used in Hyde Park last year, and to purchase items from the Association Stall.

The afternoon flew by, there was no shortage of things to see or do. Many chose to enjoy the ringside location and spent the afternoon watching the events in the arena. The three and a half hour programme included a wide variety of activities - Displays by the AGC Band, the Pipes and Drums of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Army Cadet Force, a replica of the historic Fokker Tri-plane flown by the legendary Red Baron, the Edwardian Gymnastics display team comprising potential instructors in the Army Physical Training Corps, a parachute drop and an It's a Knock Out competition involving the students currently attending courses at Worthy Down. Last but by certainly no means least - back by popular demand for the second year - a skilful, humorous display of working sheep dogs conducted using both sheep and ducks who quickly captured the hearts of young and old. Another comment overheard at tea time - this time from a gentleman who clearly served in one of the other antecedent corps "Have you noticed - there have been women taking part in all the arena displays? These women are getting in everywhere". Few people failed to be impressed by the two AGC Servicewomen who parachuted into the arena from 10,000

feet, one of them sporting the largest AGC flag that has ever been seen at Worthy Down.

Corps Day 96 included a large craft fayre and a variety of static displays showing the work of the branches of the AGC, fun activities, charity stalls and a variety of sales outlets. The organisers capitalised on the fact that England were due to play Scotland in the European Soccer Championships by providing a large screen TV in the Beer Tent. The place was packed out and progress could be followed by the cheers emanating from the marquee. During the afternoon a few members found the time to stroll up the road to inspect the Memorial Rose Garden where the blooms were at their best. After tea, which was served in the AGC Association marquee, the AGC Band closed the day with an excellent marching display in the main arena. It was then time for a parting of ways - Next gathering Blackpool 97 ?

Corps Day 96 has been deemed to have been a great success with over 3500 people attending. A similar event is to be held next year - Make a note in your diary now - AGC Corps Day 1997 will be held on Saturday 14 June 1997. All members of the Association will be most welcome. Further details will be published in the next edition of the Lioness.

FALL IN NO. 15262

In response to Jean Robins' photograph being published, her friend Alison Ogilvie (now living in Canada) writes:

I never realised that there had been so many girls in the ATS, some number over 300,000. My number was 15262, but then I did join before the war.

Whilst on holiday on the Isle of Wight, my mother sent the letter on to me. I had met a Welsh Guard while on the holiday, whom I think was a Reservist, and he said to me, "Ignore it, finish your holiday, they will come after you if there is a war" but I couldn't get up to London quick enough and got the next train.

I was met by a "2 Pipper" at Waterloo Station, and taken direct to Wormwood Scrubs Prison. I was put on the Switchboard and told my billet was in Highlever Road, which was in Kensington, and told to go home and get my uniform.

At that time I lived in Enfield, so it was quite a trip. The house was empty, as all were on holiday. I donned my uniform cap at the "Beattie" angle, and off I went, but I had never been issued with shoes, having small feet, so I took a pair of my eldest sister's golf shoes, which were too big.

I left the house, the shoes stuffed with news paper at the toes, and when I saw a bus coming, I ran. The conductor waited when he saw this apparition coming, as you know there were not many ATS walking around in London in those early days.

Running so fast in shoes that were too big, I fell flat on my face, big holes in knees and quite shaken up, but the conductor was very kind and helped me. When I had sat down and paid my fare, he went up to the driver, who was looking around, and said to him "The fall of the British Army" and the driver turned around and in a very loud voice said "Thank Gawd, we've got a Navy". Of course everyone was laughing, but kindly so, but I did feel a fool.

I finally got to the billets in Kensington, found the house, which was very grand and the lady opened the door. When she saw me her face fell, although she knew I was coming, but she wasn't very happy. Her husband was in the dining room and had a bottle of Scotch and a syphon of soda beside him. He was very nice and offered me a drink, but I said "no thank you" and went up to bed and cried myself to sleep. After a while his wife was very nice! I shall never forget it all. Walking in the blackout trying to find the prison, but perhaps that is another story!



*Our Association Stall
at Corps Day
L to R: Andrea Hurst,
Jean Trowbridge,
Sylvia Musgrave and
Joanna Slegt*

Photo: Joseph Bright



*ATS & WRAC Kneelers
- from Guildford
now installed in
St Andrews Church
at Worthy Down*

Photo: Joseph Bright



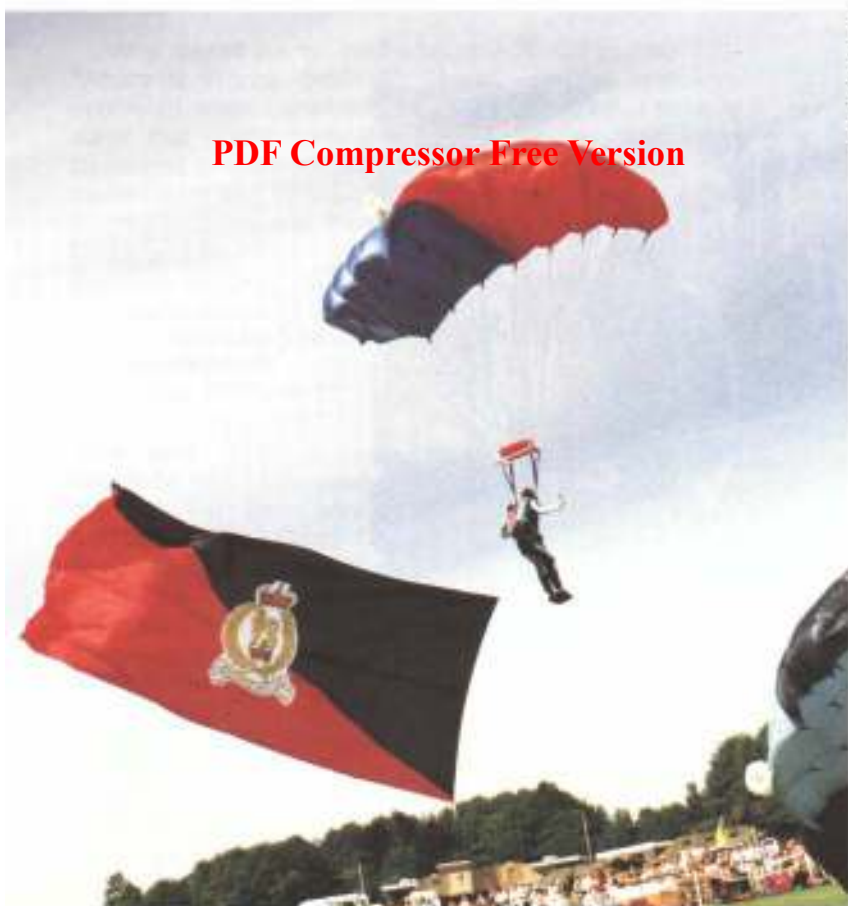
Photo: Joseph Bright

*Capt Sally Rigden
Platoon Commander -
Freedom Parade Winchester*



Photo: Joseph Bright

CONGRATULATIONS
*WO11 Brenda Prater, formerly WRAC TA, on being awarded
the Certificate of the Lord Lieutenant of Greater London.*



Debbie drops in on Corps Day



David Dunn being "che"



*The High Flyer
Cpl Debbie Ingle AGC(SPS)*



*'IN DISCU
Pat Gibson with C
The Editor will donate a Christmas presen*



Brig Field at the AGM

Photo: Vicky Banner



The Colonel Commandant General Sir Jeremy MacKenzie
discussing tactics with Sgt Louise Horton
Winchester Freedom Parade



at the AGM
Cooke and Bowles
the best caption – deadline 1 November 1996

Photo: Eddie Payne



Mrs Patricia Norris – Mayor of Winchester
leads the Colonel Commandant and RSM Pendlebury
on review at Freedom Parade



Ladies in Waiting – for Lunch – at the AGM



Ladies in Contentment – had Lunch – at Corps Day

Reunions

GUNNERS' CORNER

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Battery Linking
Mrs Sylvia (Sue) Crook
14 The Larches
Horsell Vale
Woking
GU21 4RE

I have had many comments from within my 'Linking' contacts who had requested a follow up. Thank you.

Sue Crook

Mrs Elinor Pollard (née Parr-Dudley) phoned me before I had received my copy. Strangely, I had been holding her married name and address for 18 months on the York Reunion list - but without maiden name/battery number. This is 488 for anyone else interested.

Mrs Sally Douglas from 534 Bty - immediately recognised the USA lady.

Mrs Beryl Hoadley (née Bambi Banbridge) contacted me for her address. Within 48 hours they were conversing on the phone. I also received letters of gratitude from Beryl and her son who lives in Lincolnshire. **Again thanks to you and Lioness.**

Through signatures on my husband's OCTU cap band I have 'linked' him to 577 Bty (prior to our meeting). One signatory was **Oldwin Claydon (née Bunny Ketteringham)** with whom I am already in touch. We will be meeting at the York Reunion in August. Where are all the others from 577? From Jim and **Mary Baldwin (née Harkins)** who live in Ontario I have a full battery list of 577 personnel. Jim and Mary were over here last year. They may be remembered by the fact that they applied to Court for permission to marry in July '43 as Mary was then only 18 years old. Her mother had refused to allow it, the Chairman of the Bench gave them his blessing.

Does anyone remember **Mrs Flora Bright (née Parlett)** of 515/545/454 Btys at Purdown, Bristol?

Flora was a Heightfinder No 1 - Site PT instructor - Captain - netball. Present address - 40 Beadon Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 2DL.

Also **Mrs Alice Betts (née Luke)** (B Troop - 664 Bty, Cosheton, Pembroke.) Present address- 11 Cowell Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex, SM1 2BY.

ATS AND WRAC HANDPAINTED WALL PLAQUES

These are available from Cavalier Supplies,
PO Box No2, Gilberdyke, BROUGH,
EAST YORKSHIRE HU15 2TN
or telephone 01430 441315 or 01459 115560.

Branch Secretaries may obtain a discount
for bulk purchases and the Benevolent Fund
could receive some commission.

ROYAL MILITARY POLICE ASSOCIATION

WEST YORKSHIRE BRANCH

2 Mountfield Road
Waterloo
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
WD5 8QY
Tel: 0484 427921

I am operating a "Link-Up" scheme for all ex-Military Police and ATS/WRAC Provost, the object of which is to put old comrades back in touch and possibly create their own small reunions up and down the country.

I have received a large number of replies from ex-Military Policemen, this being mainly due to my scheme brought to their notice through the military police "Journal". However, ex-ATS/WRAC Provost members I find are not aware of my scheme, as only about six have contacted me. Perhaps you could kindly bring this to the attention of your members.

Interested parties should write to the above address. I did receive full details from L/Cpl Eva Hardwick (née Barry) who in 1944 was at Guildford ATS Depot C Coy. Afterwards she went to Durham for MP training and, in 1946 was doing war crimes duties in Hamburg with 101 Pro Coy. Only yesterday someone sent me some photos showing two of the other girls, Eva is really pleased.

Yours sincerely

Derek W Dyson (Chairman)

INFORMATION WANTED

What Did You Do In The War, Aunty?

With VE and VJ Day celebrations last year and, more recently, the 80th anniversary of the Somme, we've been hearing a lot of soldiers' tales. I have recently left the army myself, having been the third generation of women serving in my family and I would like to redress the balance a little by publishing the experiences of women who gave war-time service - any war or military operation will do! I have yet to decide whether this will be a serious military history book, a collection of anecdotes or any other clearly defined angle, and I should add that the book may not be published for several years. Flicking through correspondence sent to The Lioness, it is clear that many of you have fascinating stories to tell and I would be grateful if you would contact me. Any information you have, whether of daring exploits, amusing incidents or just plain facts as to how you lived and what your expectations were on joining would be gratefully received. All correspondence will be acknowledged.

Major (Retd) Imogen Corrigan
52 Wakefords Park,
Church Crookham,
Fleet,
Hants GU13 0EY



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Val Attwood's poem - 122 RASC (CMT)

Miss Frances Salter has sent this poem written by her wartime friend, Val Attwood who has now sadly died.

And after parade at eight-thirty
You have to fill your can up.
Then after pushing half a mile
The thing decides to start up.

When for dinner you've returned
Tired and awfully hungry
Alas, find stew's all you get -
It makes you blinking angry

After a nice day driving
Through snows and thunder storm
You find the rec room crowded
So you get into bed for a warm.

Alas you overslept yourself
And, arriving down to tea,
Find half a slice of bread left
And marg the size of a pea

When you've devoured this hearty tea
You head for the nearest canteen
Then after a pound of biscuits
Start thinking what might have been.

At last you're dressed up for a date
With polished buttons and shoes
And you are free until eleven:
This is the life we would choose.

You've thought of a date this evening
How you'd be fixed alright.
Then, someone gently reminds you
"It's CB dear tonight."

Ah well, as a life we can take it
Even though it's like doing time,
And when the last shot is fired
We'll hang out the flags on the line.
And V Day's announced to the world
With all so happy and free
We'll turn and head for the barracks
For this night is our CB!!

INTAKE DAY (circa 1955)

The barriers are lifted, the coach passes through
Into the camp; too late to rue.
Too late for turning, the barriers come down
In for the shilling, in for the crown.

QM Stores, an Aladdin's cave
Girlish giggles quelled by stern gaze
Caps, shirts, collars and ties
Repetitive question 'What's your size?'

As the kit mounts to a staggering pile
The barrack block seems more than a mile.
High heels totter along the road
No Genie here to lighten the load.

Now to the Cookhouse, utensils in hand
Strident sounds from the military band.
Noise at the hot-plate, too loud to bear
Especially the bark of 'Move along there!'

Twelve beds iron, twelve lockers metal
Barrack room smelling of very strong Dettol.
Twelve bodies chatting, writing or sleeping
One or two silently weeping.

First night from home, first taste of fear
Away from comfort and things held dear.
Stove in the centre; blackened face
Alien reminder of own fire-place.

The bold and shy; the strong and weak
Modesty versus the braggart streak.
The short and tall; the fat and thin
Twelve assorted from the recruiting tin.

New shoes lie at the foot of each bed
Eager to make their very first tread.
New uniforms hang, virgins still
No need for them to go on the pill!

The corridor trembles as footsteps pound
Why has everything such a loud sound?
Diminutive figure but commanding shout
'Settle down ladies - Lights out!'

Twelve sleeping heads lie in the dark
Unwritten pages awaiting a mark.
Tomorrow they learn to drill and to fight
Let innocence linger just one more night.

Author: GLADYS HUDSON (ex WRAC Band & Clerk)





Auxiliary Territorial Service?
What's that, I hear people say.

They were the Lady Soldiers
In the War of yesterday.

In uniforms just like the men
They served our country too.

On ack-ack guns and searchlights
And drove the lorries thro'.

The air-raids and the bombs they braved
Like the soldiers, their lives they gave.

So on that day in November
We wear our poppies with pride.
We give thanks, and remember
Our gallant girls who died.

Written by:
Mrs Joyce O'Doughty
Wrexham Branch

To celebrate the end of War
We held parties by the score.
Butties, cakes and gallons of pop
Friends, neighbours and our local cop.
We danced and sang into the night
Bonfires burning, oh! what a sight.
Gone was the black-out and the sirens too
Gone were the things that made us blue.
Peace has come at last, we sang
The peel of bells, how clear they rang.
Now fifty years on, we do it again
With dancing and parties, forgetting the pain.
Our gallant men and women too
Who wore Khaki, light and Navy Blue.
They gave their all, so dear the price
Remember them as you rejoice.
As the parties get under way
Thank them all, for your VJ Day.

Written by:
Mrs Joyce O'Doughty
Wrexham Branch



NAAFI TEA SALES FLYING HIGH

The sale of Naafi tea is rocketing skywards . . . literally. The famous brew can now be enjoyed by the jet set as cabin crew serve the traditional cuppa to passengers on Airtours International flights.

Orders of traditional blend are delivered to Airtours International catering centres at Gatwick, Manchester, Bristol, Cardiff, Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds/Bradford, and East Midlands airports. From these locations the brew is then stacked on board 20 aeroplanes making long, medium and short haul flights worldwide.

Ian Whalley, Naafi's commodity team manager beverages, alcohol and tobacco explained: 'The Naafi Tea Company won the contract as a result of its reasonable price and good, consistent quality.

And, more importantly, Airtours International found that the tea leaves used in the Naafi brew do not lose their quality or taste when tested under flight conditions.'

To make a good cup of tea, the leaves must be covered by boiling water and left a few minutes to brew. Under normal conditions water boils at 100° C. At altitude, however, it reaches boiling point at a lower temperature. Steve Cooper, Naafi's tea factory manager said: 'Tea needs boiling water at 100°C – if it is infused at a lower temperature the flavour is impaired. As a result, Airtours International needed a strong tea that was of a good enough quality to rise above this physics equation hurdle.' It is estimated that one million 3 pint sachets will be used by Airtours passengers per year.

Julie Irving, Airtours International's catering manager said: 'The brew has been a big hit with passengers, whatever their nationality. It is a good quality and strong tasting tea which produces a great cuppa wherever you are in the world . . .'

Naafinews

Branch Reports

ACCRINGTON. The Branch membership remains much the same, a few members decided to leave the association but we have had five new members and we all welcome them to the Branch.

We were saddened by the sudden death of Jessie Price. Jessie had not been a member of the Branch for long but she will be greatly missed by those of us who were privileged to know her.

Our Branch secretary was honoured by the Royal British Legion for 35 years service to the Poppy Appeal.

We are making a return visit to the "Sabden Treacle Mines" as we all enjoyed ourselves the last time we were there, we have invited some non members who are friends of the Branch to join us.

We are again hoping for a successful sale at the Padiham charity market in August. This is our main fund raising event of the year.

AYLESBURY. Since our last report great and far reaching things have happened, Aylesbury has given birth to two healthy off springs!! Their names are Luton and Hemel Hempstead Dacorum, mother and children are doing well. Seriously, it was a sensible and practical move to make, also in keeping with H.Q. thinking I believe. These days with a membership of mainly ATS and the difficulties of public transport, what better than to have a really, local Branch of the association which is within easy reach of ones home. As the founder of Aylesbury Branch, the one that brought them out of the woodwork and got them altogether, I wish them every success for the future and publicly thank them all for the contributions they made while members of Aylesbury Branch. A warm welcome will always be extended to each and every one if they can at any time join us at our meetings.

We have 10 members who are going to the A.G. Corps Day at Worthy Down on June 15; luckily we can fit them all into 2 cars. I'm pleased to say we have a party going to the Group Reunion at Wimbledon and look forward to meeting those who made the journey to Aylesbury last year, when we hosted the event. We are planning to attend the WRAC Association Grand Reunion 1997 at Blackpool in conjunction with our off springs, when we shall all share one coach for transport.

We have enjoyed various activities at our monthly meetings which continue to be quite well attended. February saw our efforts to design a Valentine card. I don't think Classic Cards etc., have too much to fear from us! In March we enjoyed a very entertaining talk by one of our members JEAN EASTROPE Ex. Cpl P.T.I who still has most of her uniform. It was used last year in a local V.E exhibition. April, we had to draw our own face. I can assure you it does not do anything for your morale standing in front of a mirror for hours plus you get everything the wrong way round. In May we had an excellent scheme. Everyone was asked to put aside one penny per day for the whole month at the previous meeting. The result was a total of £7.00 collected. This money will be used for Welfare purposes and one of our founder members who now resides in a nursing home was very thrilled to receive a pot plant to brighten her room from the proceeds. The remainder was handed to the Welfare Officer for future get well cards etc.

Our secretary is in the process of organising another visit to Hook Norton, where we were so regally entertained by the Rev. ACREMAN and the village ladies last year. The Rev. Acreman is the son of PAM ACREMAN, one of our loyal members.

BAND BRANCH REUNION. On Saturday 20 March we held a very successful Reunion at the Victory Services Club in London. About seventy ex and serving members attended and Brigadier Anne Field came as our guest of honour. It was due to her encouragement that we were finally able to form our Branch, and we are grateful to the Association for giving us such a generous grant.

We were pleased to have representatives from all the years of the existence of the Band, but we have lost touch with many others. It is hoped that they can be contacted through the Lioness where notice of future Reunions will be published.

Finally Gill Sale has kindly agreed to be our Branch Secretary and can be contacted at 21 Park Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3PU.



Band Branch First Reunion

SHORT BREAKS IN THE GEORGIAN CITY OF BATH

The Secretary of the Bath Group is offering accommodation in her own home for any members who would like to make private arrangements for short breaks in the City of Bath at £10 per person per night which includes continental breakfast.

Accommodation is available in either a twin bedded room with en-suite facilities or in a single room equipped with wash hand basin and with bathroom and toilet facilities adjacent. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in each room. Please note - This is a non smoking home.

The house is situated in a quiet location but within ten minutes walk of the city centre, shops and railway and coach stations. Space is also available for off street parking.

The price per person is based on continental breakfast but full English breakfast can also be supplied on request at a £1.50 supplement. Arrangements could also be made for the provision of an evening meal at a supplement of £3.50 per person.

For full details of availability please contact the Bath Area Group Secretary: - Mrs S H Musgrave, 7 Horseshoe Walk, Bath, BA2 6DE or telephone 01225 339904.

BATH. This year our Branch celebrates the 50th anniversary of its formation, and several events are taking place to celebrate this. The Southern Group Reunion was also hosted by the Bath Branch when we were honoured by the presence of our Vice/President Brigadier Anne Field CB., C.B.E. The Mayor of Bath, Mrs Freney M.B.E. the Bath M.P. Mr Don Foster, our Group Chairman Lt Col Valerie Trout, and The Head Mistress of the Royal School Bath whose pupils provided entertainment. The Royal School was founded for daughters of Officers of the British Army, although in the present day this includes all three Services.

During the past fifty years the Branch has met twice a month without a break, and continues to do so on the first and third Monday of each month. The membership is now 87 and the area is quite large with quite a few from the Bristol region, so that members travel a distance to be present.

In July we now have an Annual Coffee Morning at the Grand Atlantic Hotel so that members from that area of Weston-s-Mare can meet up, as it is too far for them to travel to Bath for meetings. This makes a pleasant day out for the Bath members. We also went to the Corps Day at Worthy Down, an event we now look forward to. Coffee Mornings, Picnic Suppers, and Tea Parties are part of our programme, and enable us to meet veterans from other Service organisations.

Some members are now saving hard to be present at the Grand Reunion in Blackpool next year.



Bath Branch - South Group Reunion



SILVER PLATED ATS BADGES

ASSOCIATION HQ now holds a stock of the silver plated replicas of the ATS badge which was issued to volunteers in 1938-39 before uniforms were available. The cost is £2.75 each including packing and postage.

Branches may order in bulk and a 5% discount is allowed for orders over 10 badges.

BRADFORD. Our meetings are held on the second Monday of each month, and are very well attended.

We had our usual Christmas dinner in the Pine Room in the University of Bradford. It was very good and enjoyed by all. At the January meeting we had a Faith tea and exchanged Christmas gifts.

Sadly we lost one of our members in February. Mabel Bannister was a good and loyal member for a number of years until her health began to fail. She was also a stalwart of the Royal British Legion.

In March we visited the Pine Room once again, this time to celebrate the 80th birthday of our secretary, Ivy Weston B.E.M; we also invited a surprise guest, Col. Cook of Northern Area. Olive Rhodes made a birthday cake and her daughter Susan iced it, many thanks to them. Ivy was presented with an A.T.S. clock by the branch and received lots of cards, flowers and chocolates. We all had an enjoyable, memorable day.

In May money was collected for the N.E. Reunion which this year is to be held in October at Marton hall, Cleveland. The coach is booked and members from the Leeds branch will be joining us.

Undercliffe Cricket Club have once again given us the use of their clubhouse for one day in July. This had become an annual event with a morning meeting, pie and peas lunch, followed by a bring and buy sale and afternoon tea. Ivy Wheelhouse organises this event and we have included the Dunkirk Veterans Association this year and it is eagerly looked forward to with bumper crowds expected.



Ivy Weston BEM 80th Birthday Party

In appreciation the branch will present a new cricket ball to the Club and everyone will be invited to a cricket match.

The Dunkirk Veterans have invited us to join them in a service at York Minster on Sunday 14 July to commemorate the evacuation of Dunkirk. This will be followed by a reception at the York Minster Hall. The WRACA held their reunion at this hall some years ago, after the meeting at Imphal Barracks.

CANTERBURY. After the celebrations in 1995 - VE day, VJ day and various 50th Anniversaries - the first half of the year has been fairly quiet.

We are now firmly entrenched in our new venue and are very comfortable there. We have an attendance of approx 30 members at each meeting.

Our Xmas lunch in December was marred firstly by the weather, which happened to be the first snowfall of the winter, and then the meal itself, which was not up to standard. We hope to arrange something better for 1996.

We have had some very interesting speakers which have included an 'off the cuff' talk by Maria Power who told us something of her 15 years in the WRAC, which everyone enjoyed. The Normandy Veterans Assn sent two representatives to give us an illustrated talk on their experiences of D Day. At the May meeting, we had 'Liz' of the Samaritans who brought along a video, showing aspects of the work done by them. After the talk there were lots of questions on this very worthwhile service, which is available to everyone. We have also had a Fish and Chip lunch followed by a quiz arranged by Mavis Middleton, just to keep our brains in trim!

A group of members plus our Standard attended a commemoration service of the Italy Star Association Veterans in May. We are also taking the Standard to the 75th Anniversary Service of the Royal British Legion at Sandhurst on June 2nd. The WAAFs and WRNS have invited us to their annual parties and there is to be a coffee morning at the Secretary's home to raise funds for our new Standard.

Later in the year some of us are going to the Royal Tournament, and joining with the local branch of the WAAF for a day out to Eastbourne in August. Then in October we are planning a visit to the Brogdale Fruit Farms Trials at Faversham, Kent.

In September plans are going ahead for a joint Dedication Service with the BUFFs Assn of our new Standards at a church in Canterbury.

At our last meeting we were pleased to welcome two more ex WRAC. Mrs Helen Lloyd is already a Life Member of the Association and she brought along another prospective member. We hope to go from strength to strength with ex-WRAC. **WE NEED YOU!!!**

CARDIFF/NEWPORT. We held a highly successful bring and buy sale in April followed by a tea party. This event raised £92 for branch funds as well as being a pleasant social occasion for our members. A further social event was a coach visit to Bath in May which included a conducted tour of the American Museum. This proved very interesting covering emigration to America and early colonisation with many exhibits of domestic life and furnishings on the other side of the Atlantic.

The branch continues to organise a varied programme of events with further coach visits to places of interest planned for the summer/autumn period.

CHESTER. Our branch continues to meet the second Monday in the month at "The Stafford Hotel" at 1.30 pm. The A.G.M. went well and all our present serving officers were re-elected.

Donations have been sent to the H.Q. Royal British Legion.

Two wreaths have been laid for 1995, one at Chester by Ms E Bayliss-Blomley and the other at the Cenotaph in Whitehall by Mrs M Choppin in remembrance of the A.T.S. girls who were killed in the war over 50 years ago.

Mrs L Strech attended the service in Westminster Abbey and described this as very moving indeed.

The Christmas lunch was held in "The Stafford Hotel" and was attended by 22 members. Excellent. Guess who won the free raffle? Yes! The Secretary/Treasurer to avid cries of "fix".

First meeting of the year was held in January - but we decided to ignore February, very clever of us with the snow storms - will we ever forget them?

Sadly Pam our Standard bearer has had to retire owing to continued ill-health, she has carried the Standard for the last 10 years in the wind, rain and cold - also at St Paul's Cathedral. We are proud of you, Pam, and you will be sadly missed - hope to see you at the meetings.

We welcome our new Standard bearer Mrs Molly Choppin, who has already been on parade at a special Halle Orchestra Concert in Chester Cathedral in aid of S.S.A.F.A. and also at a Service of Remembrance for the Canadian Air Force members who paid the supreme sacrifice to defend freedom which was held in Blaenau Cemetery for the Commonwealth in Chester. Several members also attended. Mrs Kath Jones (Deputy Standard bearer) carried our Standard at a special Dedication Ceremony of The Brigade of Guards Association New Standard at St Thomas's Church, Chester - again there were several members of our branch in attendance.

We are looking forward to the 1997 Reunion at the Norbreck Hotel in Blackpool. Thirteen of our branch members are travelling with our special friends from the Rhyl Branch.

We are looking forward to our day out in September attending "Rhyl's" special get together.

Although we have on our books over 57 members there are too many we do not see - we do wish to encourage them to come to our meetings.



Chester Branch Members

From Left to Right:

*Mrs V Hamblett Sec/Treasurer, Mrs K Jones Vice-Chairman,
Mrs M Choppin Standard Bearer*

ENTRIES FOR LIONESS

Entries for Lioness are welcome but the following points should be noted when submitted items

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1. Entries should be typed whenever possible (Modern scanning machines can copy direct without the need for re-typing/typesetting)
2. Branch Notes, Obituaries, Golden Weddings etc should copy the format from earlier Lioness editions as far as possible. (This saves re-editing)
3. Send original photographs. (Although no absolute guarantee can be given we do make every effort to safeguard and return photographs. While modern reprographic techniques are very good the fact remains that every time a picture is copied the quality goes down)
4. Put captions to photographs (remember the 5 'W'S Who, What, Where, When and Why). Indicate the position of people in the photograph eg, Left to Right, Seated/Standing, position in row from right or left looking at the picture or in relation to another recognizable person.
5. Include maiden names or names at the time of the event as that is how you will be remembered.
6. Please enclose self-addressed envelopes for return of photographs.



COLCHESTER

Our Branch is still going strong - meeting once a month with an attendance of around 60. We now have 148 members although we do not have the pleasure of seeing all of them regularly as some find it difficult to get to Colchester for meetings. However we manage to keep in touch with them all.

At our first meeting of the year we were delighted to welcome the Lady Mayor of Colchester who enthralled us with a history of her chain of office. She told us she would never forget the wonderful VE/VJ party in the Mayor's Parlour last year when we were invited as honoured guests. (Neither will we!). Also in January we were to learn of the retirement of Colonel Dunn as magazine editor and we wish him well and welcome his successor Major Jay.

During our March meeting we were asked for stories about 'What I did in the ATS' and why we volunteered. When these were subsequently read out I think we were all amazed. Did we really do all those things? We have been asked to contribute towards the cost of a VE/VJ plaque which is to be sited in the gardens of Colchester Castle.

Our ATS insignia is to be inscribed upon it and all the names of the sponsors recorded for posterity. A good idea we thought and one well worth supporting.

We enjoyed a Ploughmans Lunch at Clacton Golf Club in April and afterwards had a mystery tour, making a nice Spring break. Several of our members attended the AGM on 20th April and as usual enjoyed the meeting. Speaking to an officer there, our Secretary wondered whether all we did and went through was worth it. She was told that because of the action of women at that time the gates were opened for women today to enjoy greater freedom to do all those things that they aspired to. I think that we all agree. Also at the AGM it was mentioned that our annual sub may go up to £5 - mainly to cover the cost of Lioness. Most of us feel that this is not an exorbitant amount to pay - we so look forward to reading our magazine. Talking of Lioness, one of our members Joan Loy saw in the last edition a note from Roma O'Flaherty (née Halsey) asking any former ATS Band members to contact her. After writing Joan found that Roma was the sister of a friend, Rosemary Halsey, that she worked with in Footscray (Kent). She is very thrilled to have made contact again after a gap of 50 years.

An outing has been arranged during May when we are planning to visit the lovely Suffolk coastal town of Southwold. On the 10th May we have been invited to join the WAAF's meeting in Holland-on-Sea for an afternoon's entertainment and several of our members have promised to attend for an enjoyable 'get together'.

In June one of our members- Beryl Newell - has a 'special' birthday. She has hired the Great Bentley village hall for a coffee morning and has invited all Colchester members to come along and join her. I am sure this will be a very happy occasion for us all.

Another trip has been organised for 19th July when we plan to visit Long Melford and have lunch at the delightful old Swan Hotel. This promises to be a most enjoyable day. We are looking forward to enjoying some warmer weather for our Summer programme and would like to close by wishing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth a very happy 70th birthday celebration in June. I'm sure we all remember her wearing her ATS uniform so proudly - as we all did. She was truly 'one of us'.



WILLS

You are asked to consider when making or revising your Will to leave a bequest to the
Corps Benevolent Funds.

For example words such as "I bequeath the sum of £XXXXX to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Funds, presently at Worthy Down or their successors.

I wish my legacy to be used to relieve the current needs of those eligible to receive help from the said funds".

CREWE. We all enjoyed our Christmas outing to Crewe Theatre to see the Pantomime starring Sonia and Wayne Sleep and other TV favourites.

After the Christmas break we held our January meeting as a social evening at our Chairmans home. On January 25 several of us had a visit from the Aylesbury Branch to sample the Haggis, Neaps and Tatties. It was a very good evening, the food was great and so was the entertainment.

In February we started planning our fund raising for the year, Betty and Edith went to a Knitting and Craft Exhibition in Manchester looking for new ideas.

On March 16 our Chairman Betty Patton went to Birmingham for the first Reunion of the 93rd S/L Regt which she enjoyed. They are hoping it will be an annual event from now on, next year it is to be at Nottingham.

April 20 our secretary and chairman went to London for the A.G.M. They joined in with the rest of the members of the Association attending in wishing Lieutenant Colonel D Dunn Best Wishes for the Future, and also to welcome Major K C Jay as the new General Secretary.

In May we tried something different, we were offered a Charity stall in Crewe Market, so we held a cake and bric a brac stall which did very well. Later in May we held a Dance at the Crosville Club Crewe, these dances are always successful.

June 1 we held our annual Coffee Morning in neighbouring Nantwich which we always find very rewarding.

On June 16 several members will be attending the new Mayors Church Service and Parade at Nantwich.

Now the holiday season is upon us our fund raising comes to a halt for the time being but we are hoping to fit some social outings in during the summer.



Four friends meet again at the AGM

*Left to Right:
Edith Francis - Edna Crouch
Betty Patton - Doreen Greenway*

SILVER PLATED ATS BADGES

ASSOCIATION HQ now holds a stock of the silver plated replicas of the ATS badge which was issued to volunteers in 1938-39 before uniforms were available. The cost is £2.75 each including packing and postage.

Branches may order in bulk and a 5% discount is allowed for orders over 10 badges.

DACORUM. This newly formed branch held it's first meeting on the 2 April 1996 in the Scout Hall, Hemel Hempstead, where the need for a branch locally was evident as 28 girls were on parade. These included 19 new members, 4 from London and 5 former members of the Aylesbury Branch, who, with advancing years and family commitments, found it increasingly difficult to get to Aylesbury.

In May there were 4 more recruits and June brought 1 more, so it would appear that the word is being spread - and what a happy atmosphere, as after the meeting there is tea and biscuits with a chat, a quiz, a speaker, a raffle or a Bring and Buy.

In August, Freddie Weatherly is organising a trip to St Albans Abbey and all are looking forward to that. Also, names are already coming forward for a good representation at the Annual Conference in Blackpool

EDINBURGH.



Edinburgh Branch Christmas Lunch

SHOPPING LIST

The Association Badge is available for sale from the WRAC Association HQ These cost £2.50 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
Block 10
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Winchester
SO21 2RG



WRAC Association Badge

New Items

Association Key Fob - £1.80
Association Lapel Badge - £1.50

GLASGOW. We opened our 1995/96 session with a bring and buy sale which raised £85.00 for Erskine Hospital for Ex-Service personnel.

At our October meeting our speaker was Rev E Campbell, a lady who became a Church of Scotland Minister in her 50s who spoke of her life before and during her ministry.

The Scottish A.G.M and Re-union was held in Aberdeen and 30 of our members attended and had a very enjoyable day.

We paraded in George Square for the Remembrance Service where a Wreath was laid at the Cenotaph and afterwards the Lord Provost and Council Members hosted a Buffet Lunch for all who were there.

We had a slide show and talk from Mr Morrison who, with other Market Gardeners, created the famous Van Gogh Sunflower painting in a field using various flowers and plants.

Our Christmas Lunch was excellent and we were entertained by a group who sang all the war time songs for us to join in.

Our 1996 session began with two members from the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice staff who told of their work for the patients and families.

Our February speaker told us of how a chance meeting with two American visitors to Edinburgh led to her having breakfast with Mr and Mrs George Bush, the President of the U.S.A.

The Association of WRNS and WAAFS joined with us for a slide show of a tour of HongKong by a young couple who were delighted by the welcome they received from the people.

The last meeting was held in May. We had a General Knowledge Quiz and all members passed with flying colours.



HASTINGS. Unfortunately - due to the dreadful weather - our first social meeting of 1996 which was to have been a Beetle Drive, had to be cancelled. However, in April we had a most enjoyable 16th Birthday Party. The Branch voted for something different so we had a 'Fish and Chips' lunch in the Old Town Anglers' Club followed by tea and Birthday Cake at the R.B.L. 42 Members attended and 5 of the 8 ladies who were present at our inaugural meeting at the local R.A.F.A. Club 16 years ago are still active members.

Three of our members attended the Parade, Rededication of Service and Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the R.B.L. which took place at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, on 2nd June 1996. Our Chairman, Eileen Kent (Née Boswell), Pauline Cook (Née Lorimer) and Peggy Rancom (Née Leitch) represented the Branch and were most impressed with the arrangements and had a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable day. The Hastings R.B.L. will be holding their 75th Birthday Parade in September when there will be a Parade through the town attended by more of our members.

Two items of interest are covered separately - our First World War Member (Mrs Grindley) has reached her century and Mrs Cora Woolley has excelled herself with a friendship tablecloth in aid of the new Rye and Winchelsea Memorial Hospital. Her collection of embroidered signatures raised £1,484. Our congratulations to both of these ladies.

LEEDS. Most of our members were busy in November with the British Legion Poppy Appeal and with Remembrance Day Parades. In December we had our best ever Christmas Lunch, so many members were able to be there it was quite a squeeze to sit everyone down.

Owing to really bad weather only the hardiest managed to get to the February meeting so the A.G.M. was postponed until March. At the A.G.M. Emily Newbold (ex. 513 Mixed Hy. A.A. Bty.) accepted the job as Secretary and May Conley took over as Treasurer so now the Branch is once more running smoothly.

After the talk about the Royal Artillery Association given to us at Nantwich, all those eligible to join have done so and some are already attending the Leeds Branch meetings where they have been made very welcome. Together with these members we attended a Beating Retreat by the Waterloo Band from Catterick, held in the Arena of the newly opened Royal Armouries Museum. Certainly a night to remember.

Some members attended the Dunkirk Veterans Service and Parade in Leeds; some visited the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington together with members of 8th. Army Veterans Association and some will be heading for the Combined Services Re-union in Bridlington.

We hope to be a party of 20 at the Mixed Hy. A.A. Re-union in York and a party of 8 at Nantwich. We are travelling with Bradford Branch to Northern Area Re-union at Marton which should be a bright spot in the usual dreary month of October. Plans are well in hand for 15 members to attend the Grand Re-union in Blackpool next April.

We extend our best wishes to our new General Secretary and hope he will enjoy working with us.

A sad note on which to end, in May our oldest member Edna Moss died, she would have been 90 in July and we were planning a party. Members attended the Memorial Service and we have sent a donation to the Benevolent Fund in her memory.



LONDON. At our final meeting at The Royal British Legion Club, Kennington we enjoyed Mrs Hannaford's amusing talk about her tour of India with ENSA. Hot and at many times uncomfortable, they played "Gaslight" in the most unlikely places, and it was interesting to learn that in charge of the party was Geoffrey Kendal who later returned to India with his family to become the 'Shakespeare Wallah'. March saw our return to meeting at the Union Jack Club which has proved popular and increased our attendance. Our speaker then was Alan E BRYETT who gave us a very graphic account of 'The Great Escape from STALAG LUFT. 111' since as a young RAF Officer he was one of those who having helped to dispose of the sand from the tunnel was in it when the exit was discovered and so, as it turned out, was saved as those who had got out were almost all, shot. Our April speaker was the curator of the Florence Nightingale Museum with many interesting slides of the Crimea.

I should not have boasted that the sun always shines on us when we have a day out because I proved a false prophet when we had a coach and river trip to Mapledurham House in May. The rain was relentless and it was cold as well but we 'upped' umbrellas and made the best of it. The cream tea was especially welcome under the circumstances.

Our congratulations to one of our WRAC/TAVR members WO2 Brenda Prater, who was awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for her sterling work in Hyde Park at the VE celebrations.

LUTON. "To the WRAC Association on January 13th 1996 at 11am, yet another offspring - Luton Branch".

The inaugural meeting attracted some 18 members, and our numbers are now up to 27. Some of us were members of other branches initially, namely London and Aylesbury, who for various reasons could not attend their parent branch, but a high proportion have not before been part of the Association. We have all 'jelled' together into a happy crowd, and hope to go from strength to strength. We meet in the Luton Working Mens' Club, Unit 19., Arndale Centre, Luton, on the third Saturday of each month at 11am, and we extend a warm welcome to anyone in our area, especially WRAC, to come and join us.



MANCHESTER. After all the excitement of 1995, we expected 1996 to be a little quieter. The first month or two indeed was so, taking into account the dark nights and bad weather. Unfortunately this keeps our attendance very small but the faithful few manage it somehow. We are hoping to remedy this by having afternoon meetings in the winter months so let us hope we have better attendance. The stalwart few still manage to keep the flag flying by accepting invitations from different sources ie British Legion and other associations. Summer time is different however, we have accepted an invitation in July from Chester Branch followed by an invitation from Rhyl Branch for September.

In April we went to a meeting with the Southport Branch, this was to help celebrate their 10th Anniversary. Several delegates from other Branches were also there, so we met quite a few old friends. We met the Lord Mayor at Southport who duly expressed his thanks and a beautiful buffet was provided which we all enjoyed. To finish off the day a cabaret was provided which was really excellent, going back to the 1940s. We all joined in lustily with the songs (some of our words were different but we won't go into that, will we?).

Our latest venue was a trip to "Holiday Inn" for afternoon tea. I have mentioned in previous write-ups of having a member who actually joined the association in 1948. We decided that Joan Horsefall was due for a little recognition. We mustered up about 14 to 16 members and friends and presented her with a scroll of honour and a carriage clock. She was absolutely delighted. As the conversations continued we found out that another of our members joined in 1953, so you see 'old soldiers never die' so to speak.

In August some of our members who served in Ack-Ack have once again been invited to York. "We'll meet again" is the theme. Last year 1995 the Garrison thought that would be our last year for a get together, however here we go again in 1996.

Last, but not least, we turn to 1997 for our Big Venue at Blackpool, plans are being made so we can all look forward to that very special date with renewed excitement.

SILVER FOR SALE

The Association HQ holds six table spoons with the WRAC badge embossed on the handles.

The spoons are of hallmarked silver and authenticated as LONDON 1838. They weigh 14oz and are valued at £90 at current price of silver. Similar sets fetched £110-120 at the auction of HQ Mess silver in 1992.

Sealed bids in excess of 380 are invited and bids will be opened at the Officers' Branch luncheon on 21 September 1996.

Proceeds to WRAC Benevolent Fund.



Joan holding her gifts and arrangement of flowers

MEDWAY. Due to the bad weather some of the members were unable to attend the Christmas Lunch, as always a first rate meal.

This year we are sorry to report the loss of two members; they were Rennie Berry and Barbara Knaggs.

Our first fund raising was a wet day, it didn't bring the crowds that we hoped for.

We met up with other branches at Sandhurst for the Seventy Fifth Anniversary of the Legion, by the time we marched off it was hot. Of course we were at the back, usual place, but they always keep the best till last.

We also joined the Royal Navy the following week. Who said the Navy could march? What a shambles, but they did put on a good evening after the service.

The Sittingbourne Group now have eleven members, thanks to Ann Owens using her home so that those out of the district can keep in touch.

They met up for lunch and were rewarded with a magnum of champagne for what they did in the war - at last they realise that there were women in the war.

There will be fourteen members at the Cenotaph in November, and four members will be attending the ACK ACK reunion in York.

Booking for the Blackpool Reunion has been done by our members and we are saving up hard for the event.

The Branch had a change of officers. Helen Dodd is now Chairwoman, Janet Cameron is Secretary and Dot Higgins remains as Treasurer (she can add up better than us - well, we think so).



We will continue fund raising throughout the year.

We are getting a few new members due to the many posters that we put out, the green uniform has raised some interest in the Medway Towns.

We were pleased that Helen Dodd received a Certificate of Appreciation for what she has contributed to the WRAC Association and to the Medway Branch.

I would like to thank, through the Lioness, the members that are unable to attend the meetings but do send donations.

NEWCASTLE. Our Branch meetings are held every third Thursday afternoon of the month in the Companions Club, Leazes Lane, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Our membership is increasing and we are looking forward to a week-end together in July at Corton Village near Lowestoft, and then our North East Re-union in Cleveland.

We have been for a meal to the Rainbow Rooms, Newcastle.

Given a donation to the Companions Club, their Committee has always helped us, and we have good members who always provide a sales table to help our funds.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK.



Norfolk and Suffolk AGM

PLYMOUTH. This year our Branch "Came of Age" (in the modern sense) having been formed in 1978. Looking back over 18 years of Lioness reports our activities seem to be as numerous and as varied as they were when the Branch was young.

Our first trip of the year was one tinged with sadness. Joyce Donovan, a steadfast member of the Branch who so sadly passed away last year, had, characteristically, left the Branch a donation specifically for members to "have a jolly time" on her. As Joyce had been brought up on Dartmoor members decided that a fitting event would be a Devonshire Cream Tea at one of the most scenically placed hotels on the Moor. Tea was preceded by a visit to the Dartmoor Visitors Centre at Princetown where members learnt all about the flora, fauna and legendary ghouls of the area and the trip ended with a tour across the

Moor to Bovey Tracey on what seemed to be the only sunny day in a very miserable Spring.

The Branch was represented at the AGM in London by our Vice-Chairman, who, according to all reports, had a thoroughly enjoyable time meeting old friends and making new acquaintances.

The merry month of May saw 16 members of the Branch travelling to the picturesque river-side town of Topsham for the SW Area Reunion. Our vice-Chairman was to the fore again driving the Mini-bus up to Exeter ably assisted by her colleagues in the "backseats". It was a day full of interest and good comradeship and we must congratulate Exeter Branch on their venue, organization and splendid Raffle.

The President and Secretary were honoured to be invited to a Church service commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Plymouth Branch of the Association of Wrens in June. Just for once this "teenage" WRAC Branch acknowledged the "maturity" (for want of a better word) of our sister Wrens!

We extend, as usual, an open invitation to all readers who are holidaying, visiting or just passing through the Plymouth area on the first Monday of the month. We would love to see any Association "grockle" in the region!! Branch Secretary is Glynis Harvey (01752 - 336293) who will give details of the meeting and will, if at all possible, arrange transport.

RICHMONDSHIRE. Although we are a small Branch, we still meet regularly at Catterick Garrison Memorial Church Hall. So far this year we have had a talk on Bee-keeping, a talk and demonstration of Reflexology, and a visit to Bedale Museum. We are looking forward to our next visit, to the best ice-cream maker in North Yorkshire, Brymor Icecream at High Jerveaulx. After a tour round the factory we will then sample the end products! Then, before the August holiday break, we plan to visit Thorp Perrow Arboretum, which has so many rare trees from all over the world.

We are very sorry to report the death of our oldest member, Jessie McKenzie BEM at the age of 92. She was a founder member of the Branch and regularly attended our monthly meetings until she became ill last year. Her photograph appeared in the 1994 (No 1) issue of The Lioness when her 90th birthday was mentioned. We shall all miss her cheerful presence.

* * * *

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CREDIT TERMS FOR H.M. FORCES

RHYL. We have very good attendance and interesting jolly meetings. Our number is steadily increasing, one of our new life members lives in a remote part of Cork, Eire, so looks forward to the Lioness and the odd note; the visit of the Postman is the highlight of her week. We tend to take this for granted. We would like the busy town. We have lunch out once a month in one of the many venues Rhyll has to offer, the odd Jumble Sale and are now preparing for our Summer Coffee Morning. Also on our Agenda is our September 5th Social Afternoon to be held in Rhyll Town Hall.

Did anyone know the person or the family of the person whose gravestone is pictured? She is buried in our (Rhyll) local cemetery and the inscription on the A.T.S. War Stone reads W/3466 L/CPL I.S. WILSON. DIED 20th JANUARY 1943. AGE 33. One of our girls goes regularly to tend the grave.



Grave in Rhyll Cemetery

* * * * *

The other picture is of our member Miss Dorothy Medcalf, she celebrated her 90th Birthday on April 11th 1996. She is a very active member and gave an all day Buffet for her many friends and colleagues.

We are now looking forward to a busy summer with Parades and outing.



Miss Dorothy Medcalf

SALISBURY. Our January meeting was well attended when Suzanne Gordon, Chairman, gave an illustrated talk on her 'adventure' through the channel tunnel and on into France. We have enjoyed a Faith Lunch meeting when the winners of the picture competition were Frances Green and Anna Lort.

In April many members attended the parade and reception in Winchester when the Adjutant General's Corps received the Freedom of the City. We had mixed feelings seeing women carrying arms!

Our Standard was carried by Gladys Pope at a concert in Salisbury City Hall to raise funds for the Star and Garter homes.

At our May meeting Squadron Leader Ken Trice gave an interesting talk on the history and present day work of S.S.A.F.A.

We all enjoyed the Area Reunion at Bath, despite the weather! The meal was excellent and those new potatoes irresistible. Thank you Bath Branch.

Once again Brigadier Meechie and Lt Col Trout are hosting our June meeting - a lunch in their beautiful garden.

Our membership continues to grow and we would enjoy meeting any other members on holiday in our area.



Salisbury Branch Members (Spot the Cuckoo) at the Bath Reunion

SHROPSHIRE. 1995 was quite a busy year for us.

In May we attended VE Parade at Bridgnorth, with Lucy Bowyer proudly Parading our Standard, there were a Total of 62 ASSN and RBL Standards. It was a hot day, hundreds lined the streets to cheer. Joan Purcell and Daisy Parsons rode majestically. **PDF Compressor Free Version** Lucy has Paraded our Standard 88 Times.

We were invited to Evening Celebrations in Shrewsbury, by their Borough Council, a Memorable and Nostalgic Event.

In AUGUST VJ Events for us included Parades with RBL, a Service, also placing Flowers for Remembrance on Soldiers graves. Later attending a Musical Evening at Wellington Civic Centre.

Having had our AGM, Terri Goff is Chairman, Chris Grigg - Vice Chairman, Lucy Bowyer - Treasurer, Beryl Lane - Secretary, Irene Hall - Social Secretary. Chris Grigg has recently had the Honour of being chosen as Chairman of Dawley Parish Council.

We enjoy numerous Outings arranged by Irene, and let our hair down at Terri's Brilliant Barbecues!

Our Meeting Date has been altered to the 4th Monday Night of the month, at 7.30pm, at St Johns House, Wellington.

We have around 50 Members but unfortunately not all can attend Meetings, due to illness and transport difficulties.

We thoroughly enjoyed our day at Hereford, Wales and West Area Reunion, in spite of waiting for a Broken Down Coach at the onset, to pick us up in the Telford area.

Nancy Tipton's Long Lost ATS Friend, Hazel Gordon, came from the Scottish Highlands to join us, their first Meeting for 50 years.

November saw us on Parade. After the Service in the Garrison Church the Brigadier commended us on our marching skills.

In the evening some of us went to the "Ceremony of Light", at Oakengates Theatre, whereas other members made their usual journey to the Cenotaph, London.

One cold Saturday morning, Lucy Bowyer braved the elements to help the Poppy Appeal.

In December, Dawley Senior Citizens enjoyed the Xmas Tea we put on for them, hoping we will repeat the same this year. Later in the month, we had our Branch Xmas Party.

Our Rummage and Attic Sales, continue to help Branch and ASSN Funds.

For our Xmas Dinner, in January, we dined at Historic "Drapers Hall" Shrewsbury, had an Excellent Meal, a very enjoyable evening, setting us up for the year ahead.



WRAC Assn Shropshire Branch at Hereford - September 1995

SOMERSET. Our branch continues to flourish, holding monthly meetings at the Royal British Legion Club in Taunton. During the year we have increased our membership which now stands at 67 and our raffles, bring and buy, skittle evening and social gathering at a local Hotel all help to raise our funds in addition to binding our comradeship. Several of our ladies together with husbands attended the South West Reunion hosted by Exeter Branch. We all had a wonderful time. Thank you, Exeter.

Our Secretary attended the Secretaries Meeting in London, for the first time, and had the opportunity of meeting many ladies who previously had been only names from far-flung destinations.



Somerset Branch at the North Curry Fayre

SOUTHPORT. At our monthly meeting in March 1995 Maud said "It's our 10th Anniversary next year, what are we going to do about it?"

From then onwards ideas and suggestions were discussed, thrown out, and discussed again until finally we arrived at a date of April 18th 1996 and a party was unanimously agreed upon.

It seemed ambitious for our small group, but gradually it began to take shape!

The Royal British Legion were excellent. They provided their large upstairs room free of charge and gave us every assistance they could. A big raffle was run with each member providing a prize; a caterer did excellent 'plated' buffet food, a birthday cake was made by our secretary, and entertainment was provided by our Chairman's sister who runs a local concert party.

They set the scene beautifully with songs and items from the 1940 era, and this was greatly enjoyed by all.

We invited the Mayor and Mayoress, representatives from the 11 Branches in our Area as well as the local WAAFS and WRENS.

The day was cold and wet and when we were climbing up the stairs at the Legion with vases, flowers, tablecloths, wine, glasses, cake etc., we wondered what we were doing all this for at our age - (we are all ex ATS girls!), but once we got going the true esprit de corps took over, and as a team we pulled together and made a great day of it.

The party was a huge success and enjoyed by all who attended. The photographs shows Southport Branch members at the party.

Our Branch is slowly growing in membership, 2 ex ATS ladies have joined us since the party and we have an attendance of approx 17 at each meeting.

We are looking forward to the Area Reunion in Chester and we all enjoy the pleasure and comradeship of meeting together on a regular basis.



Southport & District Branch 10th Birthday Party

STAFFORD. Since moving our meetings from Tuesday evenings to the second Thursday afternoon of each month, we seem to have acquired a new lease of life as in the last 6 months we have gained 4 new members making 7 in the last year. These bring our membership to 6 Life Members, 35 Annual Members and 1 Associate Member.

Now that we have a larger room for our meetings, although if we have many more new members we shall have to move again, we have been able to have speakers once more. To date we have had a local poetess reading some of her poems both serious and humorous, an MBE recipient describing her visit to Buckingham Palace, a county Emergency Planning Officer giving us an insight into his duties and a Quiz prepared by one of our members. Last month the Secretary gave her experiences of wartime evacuation of school children having arrived in Stafford in 1940 as one of them.

We had our usual Christmas lunch at a Restaurant just outside Stafford and in April we celebrated our 31st 'Birthday' with a lunch at a local Public House which was well attended. In May we held a Coffee Morning at the home of the Secretary which proved to be successful.

We are enjoying our meetings once again and are sorry so many of our members are unable to join us because they live out of town. However, we do keep in touch with an occasional 'newsletter' so that they know they are not forgotten.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT. Since the last report Swansea and District Branch has continued to have happy and interesting monthly meetings. Sickness and bad weather resulted in the cancellation of the January meeting whilst in February only 11 members were able to attend because of the intense cold and very heavy rain. We are most fortunate to have received permission for the continued use of Swansea Guildhall for meetings.

At our March meeting we celebrated our Patron Saint David, with Welsh cakes and scones and entertained the Lord Mayor, Cllr Grenville Phillips, who talked about his year in office. A group photograph was taken with the Lord Mayor and a copy was distributed to each member at the April meeting at which a warm welcome was extended to our Area Secretary, Mrs Edith Frances.

Before the meeting Mrs Frances had been taken to the John Chard V.C. House, the local T.A. Centre, where the Wales and West Re-union will take place on Saturday 12th October and was able to see the excellent facilities available to us. Addressing the meeting Mrs Frances emphasised the importance of a successful re-union. John Chard V.C. House was completely rebuilt and opened some three years ago; it is situated in the centre of the city. A Buffet Lunch will be provided by the Chef of the resident R.E. Regiment; entertainment will be by the Swansea British Legion Singers; and the usual stalls will be available. The Re-union will close with the drawing of the Grand Raffle when many prizes will be on offer. If you have never been to a re-union this is the one for you! Do come and meet old friends and make new ones - all for £6 a head.

We are sad to report the loss of two of our most faithful members Mrs Rose Davies and Mrs Sadia Phelps; they will be greatly missed by us all.



Swansea & District St. David's Day Celebrations

WILMSLOW. At first I thought there was not much to write a column about but, on second thoughts decided to have a go.

In December of last year we met at our favourite hotel in Handforth for a very enjoyable Christmas lunch.

On behalf of the Branch, in April, our Secretary, Lillian Edwards delivered a birthday card to Her Majesty The Queen at Buckingham Palace, in respect of her 70th birthday. We were thrilled to receive a gracious acknowledgement from her Private Secretary.

Also in April, four members were invited by the Southport Branch to attend their 10th Anniversary Party.

Southport, you did them proud. The welcome plus food and entertainment was first class.

The second anniversary of our Branch is in July, so, we are to combine the meeting with a lunch, yes, once again at our favourite hotel.

Sorry to go on about the venue, but the hotel staff go out of their way to cater for the likes and dislikes of a group of Senior Citizens.

We are looking forward to attending the Rhyl "Social Afternoon" in September.

Several members will attend the Service at The Cenotaph in November, we look forward to meeting old friends during that day.

WIMBLEDON. The Christmas party on December 13th was its usual cheerful self. Captain Carter was our guest as in previous years. Sadly the Chairman could not be present owing to a funeral but the Vice Chairman, Beryl Douglas, expertly took over.

On the bleak day of February, with the rain streaming relentlessly down we were transported to the beautiful fiords and mountains of Norway. Our Treasurer, Betty Syrett, delighted us with her vivid descriptions of the scenic beauties she loves to explore all depicted in her collection of slides.

In March the Chairman, Marjorie Hindley, returned to her profession to talk about the history of art and costume from 1870 to 1939. There were lots of prints, drawings and photographs to demonstrate the period.

Due to sickness a rather disappointing number - 22 - attended the Bring and Buy in April but members were generous and were spurred on by Frankie Fox who auctioned the remainder of goods.

At the AGM at the Victory Services Club in London we were pleased to see Betty Syrett awarded her Certificate of Appreciation. Six members attended the meeting. The tickets for the Reunion on the 7th September were passed to the various branches.

In May, 22 members enjoyed an interesting and informative talk about the Council for National Parks. Mrs V Anand, the speaker, showed us fine collections of slides of the many beautiful regions of our country and how important the work of the Council is in endeavouring to preserve them for posterity.

A committee meeting was held at the Chairman's home on the 26th April when the arrangements for the London Area Group Reunion were discussed. The meeting was followed by lunch.

WINCANTON AND BLACKMORE VALE. We had our Christmas Lunch at Holbrook House Hotel, near Wincanton, and managed to hold all the Meetings during the Winter, except for one Committee Meeting, cancelled due to snow.

A party of us went to London for the A.G.M. in April, travelling by Berry's Coach Service, which has greatly improved journeys to London from the West Country.

It was a very hot day, but we all enjoyed the day, seeing our Friends from other Branches, and meeting Major Jay, the new General Secretary, for the first time.

Our annual Coffee Morning was the following week, and this year the weather was better, more people came, and we took nearly £325. Well up on last year.

Fourteen of us went down to Topsham in the Community Mini-Bus, driven by one of our Members, for the South-West Area Reunion.

It was a most enjoyable trip, and we do congratulate Exeter Branch for arranging such a good day, with excellent food, a most interesting talk which made us feel that we wanted more time to explore Topsham, and a super Raffle.

We are looking forward to going to Worthy Down on June 15th, always an entertaining day, with so much to see, and we hope that it will be warmer this year!

At the end of June we are going down to Devon again, for our Outing, to Torrington, first to the Dartington Glass Factory, and then to the Rosemore Gardens.

In July we shall be celebrating our seventh Birthday, with a Lunch instead of the usual Tea, in the garden of one of our Members.

We continue to meet in the Memorial Hall, Wincanton, on the fourth Tuesday morning of each month, (except July and December) and Visitors from other Branches are always welcome.

WOLVERHAMPTON. We held our Christmas Lunch and Meeting early in December, and had an enjoyable time together. Since then we have been able to meet each month, and in spite of very bad weather in March, coughs and colds, members being in hospital having worn out knees and hips replaced, or recovering from heart attacks and falling downstairs, attendances have been very good. We have held our Easter Bring and Buy Sale, and have also listened with interest to the account of one member's visits to America.

We usually have an outing in May, and this year we went to Amerton Working Farm near Stafford. It was a very cold day so we did not spend much time outside or looking at the animals. However, after a very good lunch in the Restaurant, we visited the Craft Centre and Garden Centre. We send our best wishes to the members we do not see very often, and to our friends in other Branches.

THE SALISBURY JOURNAL - RECORDS BARBARAS'S AWARD

Exceptional service to the Salisbury Branch of the WRAC Association has earned Mrs Barbara Taunton a top award.

Mrs Taunton, one of the founder members of Salisbury Branch and its President for more than 15 years, was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by the Chairman of South Group, Lt Colonel (Retd) V E Trout, on 27 June 1996 at a lunch in Amesbury.

Mrs Taunton is the third member of Salisbury Branch to receive such a certificate, following those given to Secretary Joan Morgan and Treasurer Veronica Dodkins, both having been recruited to the branch by Mrs Taunton.



WRAC Association Grand Reunion 1997 19 & 20 April 1997 – Blackpool

APPLICATION FORM (PHOTOCOPIES – ACCEPTABLE)

APPLICANT

Surname.....

First names

Address

.....

.....

Association Branch

I wish to apply for the following events:

Grand Reunion Dinner @ £20.00.....YES/NO

Church Service YES/NO

I Enclose a Cheque/Money Order made Payable to
"WRAC ASSOCIATION".

Note: Tickets and Information Sheet will be sent out in
early 1997.

Send to: HQ WRAC ASSOCIATION, BLOCK 10, AGC CENTRE WORTHY DOWN, HANTS SO21 2RG

PROGRAMME

Friday 18 April	2000	Informal Reception hosted by Blackpool Branch at the Royal British Legion Club, Thornton Clevelys.
Saturday 19 April	1130	Secretaries Meeting in the Connaught Suite, Norbreck Hotel.
	1230	Council & Secretaries Buffet Lunch in the Castle Restaurant.
	1430	Annual General Meeting in the Norbreck Room.
	1800	Doors open for Dinner.
	1900	Grand Reunion Dinner in the NORCALYMPIA.
Sunday 20 April	1115	Church Service in Blackpool Parish Church (Saint John The Evangelist).
	1230	March Past to Town Hall and on to Cenotaph.

TRANSPORT

Members are responsible for their own transport to Blackpool and the Norbreck Castle Hotel for the Secretaries Luncheon, Annual General Meeting and Dinner. Buses will however be provided from the Norbreck Castle Hotel for those attending the Church Service.

Blackpool is a well-known seaside resort with seven miles of golden sands – fun fair – markets and the Tower. All accessible by the excellent local transport system.

ACCOMMODATION

Rates for the Norbreck Castle Hotel were quoted on page 36 of Lioness No. 1 of 1996. Should you require alternative accommodation, a copy of where to stay in Blackpool together with other information about the resort can be obtained from:

Blackpool Tourist Office
1 Clifton Street
Blackpool FY1 1LY Telephone: 01253 25212

Further details will be announced in Lioness No. 1 of 1997, due out in February.

THE GRAND REUNION 1997 "SUPER RAFFLE"

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The Executive Committee responsible for co-ordinating the Grand Reunion at Blackpool will be organising a "Super Raffle" in an effort to raise funds for the Association. Branch Secretaries will be sent details later, meanwhile we need your help with prizes. Individuals and Branches can send suitable prizes to HQ or make cash donations which will be put towards larger prizes. You are asked to encourage businesses to donate prizes or vouchers.

We intend to ensure that all Branches will have tickets for sale, thus enabling those members unable to attend the Reunion to participate in the Raffle.

I have already obtained £500.00 worth of prizes, with your help and ingenuity we can make this raffle live up to its name. It is envisaged that there will be monetary prizes, short holidays, plus a great variety of other valuable and useful prizes. One lucky winner will be a VIP for a Day! (As an honoured guest at Corps Day 97) Staff Car with chauffeur, meet other VIPs, top table Lunch in the Association marque and Tea with the Commandant etc. Editor

DON'T MISS - "The Chance of a Lifetime"

It's going to be a very "Grand Reunion". At the time of writing some 700 members have registered to attend. Many have been saving hard for this special occasion and are determined to enjoy themselves in Blackpool. Some of our members will be travelling considerable distances in order to enjoy the true spirit of 'reunion'. From Australia, Canada, USA and Europe they cometh, plus coach loads of members from branches throughout the realm - all roads lead to Blackpool on the 18/19 April 1997.

WILL YOU BE THERE ?

Only 300 tickets remain - please send your application form in as soon as possible. To enable you to 're-unite' with colleagues from the past, we will display details of all those attending, both in alphabetical order and by branch. Admission tickets for the event, final programme and any other relevant information will be sent out in early 1997.

Editor

"Planned for people like us!"

Residents in the FORCES HELP SOCIETY Purpose Built Cottage Homes include a paraplegic, a double amputee, a Multiple Sclerosis sufferer with two young children, an ex-servicewoman wheelchair-bound since a spinal injury while serving. The Society's purpose-built bungalows have been carefully planned to make it easier to live with disability. There are 33 of them in groups in various parts of the country. There are over 140 couples and families on the waiting list for them, many now living in very unsuitable accommodation. So building more bungalows to similar design is an urgent present need and an ongoing project for the Society.

Please help, with donations and legacies, to make life easier for more people with disabilities.



THE FORCES HELP SOCIETY & LORD ROBERTS WORKSHOPS
122 Brompton Road, London SW3 1JE Tel: 0171-589 3243 Registered Charity No. 209753



WHERE ARE YOU NOW?



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BACK: Sheila White, Martha (Mac) Kennedy
FRONT: L-R - Joan Smith, Joan Batterby, Ethel Belshaw.

Mrs Sheila Pacey (née White) would like to contact the other members of this photograph. Taken in Winchester 1945.

Contact: Mrs S Pacey, c/o Mrs R Gambill, 113 North Street, Coventry, CV2 3FQ.

Mrs Beryl White (née WO1 Broadfoot) of Sunningdale, Rushall Lane, Lytchett Matravers, Poole, Dorset, BH16 6AJ (Photographed here) would like to hear from any Ex ATS who know her at the RAOC Depot Chilwell, Notts 1939-1945 and is looking forward to the grand re-union in Blackpool.



Where are you now members of 461 HEAVY (ACK ACK) BTY RA (MIXED), 134th REGIMENT - 34th BDE?

Freda Detemmerman (née Hoy) of 32 Reynolds Drive, Paralowie, South Australia, 5108 would love to know!

Mrs Hannah Tremblay (née Pte Grieve of 137 AA Battery, Wolverhampton) now at 111 Larch Street, # 625, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, P3E 4TS would like to contact:

Pte P Hepton (England)
Pte H Sheridan (Dundee, Scotland)
Sgt Hemsley (Nottingham, England)



Mrs Margaret Hampton formerly LCpl (Jackie) Jackson of 75 Walter Street, Stockton on Tees, TS18 3PP would like to hear from anyone who was in 547 (mixed) H A A Bty, Brig O'Don, Aberdeen.



Are you here or do you remember us. We are L-R:

Alice Sorby, Bubbles, Joan Butterfield, not known, Winnie Waddoups, Kath Richardson, Pat Burrage.



Major (Retd) L H Lockley, RE 45 Beaconsfield Street, ACOMB North Yorkshire, YO2 4NB would like to contact:

Cpl Sylvia South - Surveyor's Clerk
LCpl E Dale (née McGarry) - Driver
Pte Joan Beamish (née Atkinson) - Surveyor's Clerk
Pte Edna Roystone (née Davis) - Telephonist

They served in the same unit C R E Derbyshire.

Ed notes:

The HQ Office is unable to be the Central Post Office, however, if you would like to make contact with fellow members/old comrades through The Lioness please be prepared to include your name, address and preferably telephone number to receive replies.

Weddings

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ADAMS-MYERS. On 4 August 1956 at St Wilfrith's Church, Moorends, Doncaster. Sgt W Adams (RASC) - to Brenda Myers (Ex Cpl WRAC). Present address: Tanglin - 8 Hawks Way, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7UR. They met whilst both were serving in the Army in Singapore Field Records.



PRICE-WESTON. On 22 May 1944 at St Marks Church in the parish of Gabalfa, County of Glamorgan. Sergeant Rees Price, Royal Artillery to Driver Peggy Weston, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 123 Occupation Road, Corby, Northants, NN17 1EG.



GOLDEN WEDDING - McGAVIN-STEAD. On 21 February 1946 in Glasgow. Sapper Robert McGavin, Royal Engineers to Corporal May Stead, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 11 Woodend Court, Mount Vernon, Glasgow, G32 9QZ.



HALL-HAWKER. On 17 August 1946 at Holy Trinity Church, Folkestone, Kent. Able-Seaman Reginald Hall, Royal Navy to Lance Corporal Jean Hawker, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 160 Wear Bay Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 6PE. The Halls cutting their wedding cake, and the Halls today.





GOLDEN WEDDING - EDWARDS-STAIK. On 27 April 1946 in Aberdeen. Alexander Edwards, Ex RAMC to Lilian Staig, Ex ATS of Liverpool. Present address: 18 Cumber Drive, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 6DZ.

And as they are today.



GOLDEN WEDDING - KINGHORN-HELYER. On 20 April 1946 at Norton Parish Church, Norton-on-Tees. Pte Joseph William Kinghorn, The Border Regiment to Corporal Olive Doreen Helyer, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 22 Annan Road, Billingham, Cleveland, TS23 3EY.



GOLDEN WEDDING - TOOLEY-WELLER. On 22 June 1946 at St Edwards Church, Romford, Essex. Lieutenant Peter Tooley, RNVR to Sheila Weller, ATS. Present address: 26 Holland Park, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 6LR.



And today in their garden.

The Kinghorns today.



The Winters today.



GOLDEN WEDDING - PECK-SLADE. On 20 July 1946 at St Stephens Parish Church, Bristol City. Corporal George Peck, Royal Engineers to Iris Joan Slade, formerly Cipher Operator Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 9 Park Road, Northville, Bristol, BS7 0RH.

WALMSLEY-KITSON. On 14 September 1946 at All Saints Church, Bradford, West Yorks. John Walmsley, Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers to Elsie Kitson, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 28 Fairway, Bradford, West Yorks, BD7 4JG. See overleaf.

WINTERS-SCARRATT. On 27 April 1946 at St Judes Church, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. CFN S A Winters REME to Cpl O Scarratt, ATS. Present address: Flat 2c, Oulton Hall, Marine Parade East, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 6JU.



(see over)



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And the Walmsleys today.

FRIMLEY PARK MANOR HOUSE HOME OF THE CADET TRAINING CENTRE by Major (retd) D R M Parker

If you were one of the 181 regular officers or 31 TA officers who attended a course at Frimley Park between 1951 and 1957, you will be interested to know that the splendid white house in which we lived has a long and fascinating history dating back to 666 AD. This history has been painstakingly documented by Gordon Wellard with fascinating illustrations, and is now available to buy from Frimley Park.

Those of us who did our staff training during the war will recall living at Bagshot Park which we shared with Princess Patricia, daughter of the Duke of Connaught for whom Queen Victoria had the house built. New premises were needed near Camberley for the training of regular officers, and Frimley Park became the WRAC Staff College in 1951, closing down when WRAC officers were admitted to the Staff College. Since then the house has been the headquarters of the Cadet Training Centre.

I was privileged to attend a Guest Night in March to launch Gordon Wellard's book. An amusing speech was made by Lt General Christopher Wallace who had spent much of his childhood in the house and whose family history figures in the book. Nothing much seemed to have changed in the intervening 45 years, and I could almost imagine myself back at one of our own Guest Nights when our male guests needed very little persuasion to take the boat out on the lake! In deference to my age (they knew I was a local Lt Colonel in 1951) the Commandant's car and driver fetched me and brought me home. The final touch was being presented with a jar of Frimley Park honey when I said goodbye to the Commandant. We never thought of keeping bees in our day!

If you want to order a copy of the book you should write to The Quartermaster, Cadet Training Centre, Frimley Park, Camberley, Surrey, GU16 5HD enclosing a cheque for £4.30 (£3.75 plus 55p for postage).



SUCH THE VIEWS OF COMMITTEE

I wonder if anyone remembers me (Edith Ashe as I was then)? After I left the Army I married my husband who commanded a Colonial Office force called the HADRAHMI BEDOUIN LEGION. I used to get letters from WRAC Records addressed to me at the HADRAHMI BEDOUIN CAMP, where I imagine they thought I lived in a camel hair tent instead of in a modern house with several servants!

I have lived a very eventful life, blown up on a mine, shot by terrorists etc.

Edith Gray

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

As part of the VE Day commemorations a national memorial is in the process of being created on the banks of the river Trent in Staffordshire which will serve as a permanent and lasting tribute to the regiments and corps and the individuals who served in them, and who took part in those stirring events of World War II. The Association has donated £300 which will provide a suitable tree and a commemorative plaque which will carry the words "Presented by the **Women's Royal Army Corps Association (Incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and the Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades Association).**"

The tree will be planted in the Army Grove adjacent to other trees donated by the constituent Corps of the AGC. In due time the AGC Association intend to commission a suitable seat which will be sited in "our" part of the grove.

OBITUARY

AUSTIN. Mrs G E of Poole on 10 March 1996. ATS

ARCHER. Mrs Pamela A Archer (née Hopkins) of Kempford, Glous on 26 June 1996. WRAC

BAINES. Miss Angela Cornelia of Stroud on 6 January 1996. ATS

BANNISTER. Mrs Mabel of Halifax in February 1996. ATS

BARKER. Miss Denise Yvonne of Wimborne on 18 January 1996. WRAC

BEATTIE. Mrs Rose Beattie of Co Antrim on 3 July 1996. UDR

BERRY. Mrs Irene (née Lloyd) of Rochester on 7 April 1996. ATS

BROWN. Mrs J C I (née Broom) of Colchester in 1995/1996. ATS

BULMAN. Mrs Audrey May of Bournemouth in 1995. ATS

CHAZAL. Mrs Mary (Molly) of London in 1995/1996. ATS

DANIEL. Mrs Margaret Esme of Grimsby in 1996. ATS

DAVIES. Mrs Rose of Swansea in January 1996. ATS

DEWS. Mrs Violet of Bridlington on 26 January 1995. ATS

DOWLINK. Miss Amelia (Tiny) of Gloucester on 28 June 1995. ATS

FAICHNIE. Miss M Faichnie of Glasgow on 9 April 1996. ATS

FENTON. Mrs H I M of Southampton in January 1996. ATS

FRAME. Major J M MBE of Ayrshire on 29 February 1996. WRAC

GODBER. Mrs Rita (née Longhorn) of Scarborough on 18 June 1996. ATS

GARDINER. Mrs Olive of Ilford in April 1996. ATS

GLEED. Mrs Beryl Mavis Gleed (née Salter) of Orkney on 25 July 1996. WRAC

GWYER. Mrs Flora Gwyer of High Wycombe in March 1995. ATS Aylesbury

HANLEY. Miss Dorothy Joyce of Surbiton on 24 January 1996. ATS

HARDINGE-FRANCIS. Rebecca Elspeth MBE TD of Laneport Somerset on 28 June 1996. ATS

HODGSON. Mrs Doreen (née Lightfoot) of Scarborough on 25 March 1996. ATS

HUNTER. Mrs J S (née Hendry) of Stirling in July 1995. ATS

HUTCHINSON. Mrs Irene (née Goleby) of Liverpool on 20 October 1995. ATS

JOHNSON. Mrs P M (née Longlands) of Warminster on 3 April 1996. WRAC

JOHNSON. Mrs Margaret Cecilia of Maida Vale on 29 April 1996. ATS

JONES. Major (QM) Doreen Jones of Swansea on 1 August 1996. WRAC

JONES. Mrs J M (née Mellor) of Leicester on 26 June 1995. ATS

KNAGGS. Miss Barbara of Gillingham in 1996. ATS Medway

LONG. Captain A K (Nancy) of Surrey on 23 March 1996.

MARSDEN. Mrs Jean (née Sunderland) of Bradford on 3 December 1995.

McGUINNESS. Mrs R T of Ashington on 10 August 1995. ATS/WRAC

McKENZIE. Miss Jessie Ann BEM of Kineussie on 27 April 1996. ATS/WRAC Richmondshire

MONAIR. Mrs Blanche Anna Macleod of Fife on 14 March 1996. ATS

MOSS. Miss Edna of Leeds on 11 May 1996. ATS

NANCARROW. Mrs Jane (née Pym) of Deal on 17 March 1996. ATS

NICHOLS. Captain Ruth of Farnham on 19 June 1996. ATS/WRAC Aldershot

NIGHTINGALE. Mrs Jean (née Poggi) of Cambridge on 28 May 1996. ATS Cambridge

O'KELLY de CONJERA. Mrs Kathleen Marjorie (née Meredith) of Isle of Man on 28 June 1996. ATS

PATTULLO. Mrs U M of Edinburgh in 1995. ATS

PERKINS. P P MBE of Edinburgh on 8 January 1996. ATS

PHELPS. Mrs Sadie of Port Talbot in March 1996. WAAF affiliate member for 21 years

PHILLIPS. Mrs Hilda of Chester on 14 June 1996. ATS

RIDDELL. Mrs Vera (née Wood) of Stirling on 12 January 1996. ATS

RIGBY. Miss Agnes Therese of Shrewsbury in January 1996. ATS

RUSSELL. Mrs Mabel Russell of Leeds on 22 July 1996. ATS

SAUNDERS. Mrs Lily May of Grimsby in April 1996. ATS

SNODGRASS. Mrs June Alexandra of Birmingham on 18 January 1996. ATS

SPEAKMAN. Mrs Edity Speakman (née Tomlin) of Grimsby in May 1996. ATS

SPENCE. Mrs J (née Smith) of London on 5 May 1996. ATS

STEVENSON. Mrs Diana (née Serocold) of Oxford on 25 May 1996. ATS

STONES. Mrs Madeline of Eastbourne on 22 April 1996. ATS

SYKES. Miss Betty of Sheffield on 12 March 1996. ATS

WATSON. Mrs Norah Lilian MBE of Darlington in October 1995. ATS

WEBB. Miss Margaret Anne of Reading on 28 April 1996. ATS

WEBSTER. Mrs Joan of Sheffield on 2 May 1996. ATS Sheffield

WILDGUST. Miss Peggy of Amesbury on 11 February 1996. WRAC

WITHAM. Mrs Diana Mary of Cambridge on 26 April 1996. ATS/WRAC

