

1997

No1

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

"The Young Ones"

Back Cover

"Wings for Victory Parade"



Member of the Association of Service Newspapers

Contributions for next issue by 14 May 1997

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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.

EDITORIAL

I have now been your General Secretary for nearly six months and it has been a busy time for us all. We have had members present at the Field of Remembrance; Festival of Remembrance where Mrs Vi Rawlins carried the Standard so well; the Cenotaph and Westminster Abbey. Hundreds of members represented the ATS and WRAC at Services throughout the country and abroad.

On a lighter note, we were to be found on the Richard and Judy Show, Kilroy and Gladiators! There have also been reunions, lunches and get-togethers - many of them are featured elsewhere in the Magazine.

Where will 1997 find us all? Hopefully at Blackpool attending the GRAND REUNION. I look forward to meeting everyone at the Norcalympia.

To prove that we are now a wholly female office (not politically correct!) here is a photograph of the entire HQ.



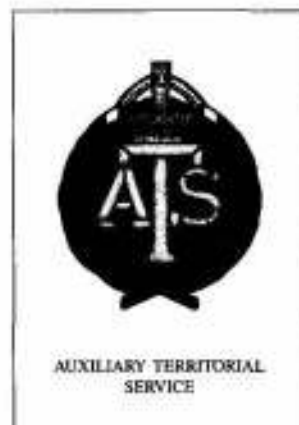
Left is Mrs Alice Mathews who deals with over 1,000 Benevolent cases a year, Centre: Mrs Fiona White, Right: Mrs Rosemary Perry who together look after 7,000 members and all the projects. So, bear with us if your queries are not answered immediately.

See you in BLACKPOOL.

ATS CARD

The ATS Card is for sale at 35p plus a contribution for postage. It can be purchased from:

Mrs A Joss
Duddington
139 Pluscarden
Road
ELGIN
Moray IV30 1SU



This card has many uses, including CONGRATULATIONS, GOOD LUCK, GET WELL, NEW HOME etc.

Remembrance Sunday

R.B.L. FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE – NOV 9th 1996
THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL – LONDON

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Mrs Vi Rawlins (Ex ATS 1942/5) Standard Bearer of Leicester Branch had the honour this year of parading the Leicester Standard on behalf of the W.R.A.C. Association at the R.B.L. Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall.

A call from Mrs Fiona White, Association Secretary to the Leicester Secretary, asked if our Standard Bearer was going to London at the weekend. Luckily yes, she was, along with five other members. When was she going? Again luck was in, she was going on Friday. Was it possible she would agree to parade the Standard on behalf of the Association at the Royal Albert Hall? A call to Vi brought forth the response - did we think she was good enough to do this? A call to our Chairman confirmed that yes, we do think she is good enough and so she agreed. A call to a gentleman gave her instructions for Friday.

After arriving in London just before midday on Friday 8th November, Vi just had time to sort out her room and have a snack before reporting to the Royal Albert Hall for 2.30pm. She then spent the rest of that afternoon in rehearsals arriving back at the Union Jack Club just before dinner.

Saturday morning after a very early breakfast she again made her way to The Royal Albert Hall for 8.30am for a session of rehearsals until lunchtime which was provided by the R.B.L. Then a wait with the other standard bearers in the corridors until the commencement of the first performance, after which tea was provided, then a further wait for the evening Festival which of course is attended by the Queen and members of the Royal Family. Was Vi nervous? Yes, a little at first but everyone was so kind and helpful, it made things much easier for her.

It was a very long day for Vi and a complete change of plan from the weekend she had intended. She enjoyed the weekend immensely and felt very honoured to have been given the opportunity of representing the W.R.A.C. Association. Those of us who were at the Festival or watching television felt very proud seeing the Association represented and more so with it being the Leicester Standard and Vi carried out the task superbly.



REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 1996
The Cenotaph, Whitehall
by Mrs Kathleen J Brownbill (née Coote)

The weather looked promising as my friend, Joyce Faris, and myself, left Christchurch on the 6.22 am train bound for Waterloo. As we approached London, down came the rain! We arrived on the dot of time - 8.58 am, and started walking to Horse Guards Parade where we were to assemble - but, chattering away - as one does! I walked straight into a puddle at least 4" deep in my nice, cosy, cushioned shoes, which became one soggy mess, so that I squelched around for the rest of the day! Crossing Waterloo Bridge, we were buffeted by wind and rain, but once on Horse Guards Parade, we quickly joined our Column 'B'. As we were all mixed in with the holders of the Military Medal, it was decided they would lead the Column and the ATS Dinner Club and WRAC follow directly behind. We met up with various friends - Noëlle Williams from the Dinner Club, and Carole Peters from WRAC, Bournemouth, who was with five of her friends from the Barnsley Association.

At 10.40 am, we marched out into Whitehall and, as always, I marvelled at the vast number of people who, in all weathers, turn out to attend this very solemn occasion. The rain had now stopped and we found ourselves marching forward until we were very close to the Cenotaph and, consequently, able to see quite a lot of the Ceremony, which was deeply moving throughout. I was especially touched by the playing of 'The Last Post'. All was silent apart from the haunting strains of the bugles, and as the last notes sounded, seeming almost mystically to drift out along Whitehall, I felt so deeply for all who had made that final sacrifice and knew, more than at any other time, that this was what we were here for - to remember - and never to forget.

The bands, as usual, played beautifully and, after the laying of wreaths, the Service and Reveille, the Columns began to move off. Our Column followed directly behind the Chelsea Pensioners, and this, coupled with our being led by men and women proudly wearing the Military Medal, made me feel very humble, and very honoured.

'Eyes left' at the Cenotaph, and already, so many red poppies on those white steps marking so much blood spilled that we might live. The sight of those poppies is to me unbelievably sad.

'Eyes front' and one is consciously aware that our Queen and members of the Royal Family are watching and closely participating in this great Service of Remembrance. The crowds clapped as we passed by, and I felt inordinately proud marching upright, just as in the old days, eyes to the front, arms swinging, hopefully in line, and emotionally full.

On our return to Horse Guards Parade, we were honoured to have H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, taking the Salute in this, the Legion's 75th Anniversary Year, together with Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Dalton, KCB, President of the Royal British Legion.

After bidding our friends 'farewell', Joyce, Noëlle and I made our way to the nearby Westminster Arms for a quick drink to warm us and some lunch. It was extremely crowded, with a wonderful atmosphere, and we got into conversation with an American couple from Michigan, who had been quite overawed by all that they saw and heard, and very moved. They shook our hands when they left with a real warmth of feeling and, as is so often the case with our friends from the States, we instinctively knew this feeling was genuine.

We returned home with wonderful memories of the Sunday of Remembrance.

A REPORT OF ARMISTICE DAY FROM A SIGNALLER IN FRANCE 1917-1919

THE FIRST SILENCE

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I like to look back to eight o'clock on the morning of 11th November 1918, because it was then that I tapped out the official message to the armies in the field, which helped to bring peace to a war-weary world.

"Hostilities will cease at 11.00 November 11th aaa. Troops will stand fast at the line reached at that hour which will be reported to Army Headquarters aaa. Defensive precautions will be maintained aaa. There will be no intercourse of any description with the enemy aaa. Further instructions follow."

In the little Signal Office at Boulogne nothing happened at eleven o'clock, nothing except a silence, and an involuntary glance at the clock. Outside, nothing happened. It was the first great silence of armistice. It was as though France had just heaved a vast sigh of relief. It was not until the afternoon that any signs of rejoicing became evident. Then, as I made my way down to the quay side, on the stroke of three, every siren and hooter

was let loose, every church bell clanged out - a deafening roar. But not a sound, not a movement, came from the hundreds of human beings who thronged the streets. The stricken soul of France seemed to have lost even the desire to rejoice.

A deafening noise, the flags of the Blighty boat ran up, and for the first time for four weary years she sailed without an escort. Some of us tried to cheer, but voice failed. Then suddenly through the noise and din, the sobbing of a woman, a few yards away - "Finis-finis-incroyable..."

Almost unconsciously, I found myself in the little military cemetery behind the congested streets of the town, where our men were buried three deep, for land was dear in France, and where the graves had been so beautifully kept by the loving hands of a khaki girl. I could not distinguish the names, for the mist of tears.

As I turned to go from that scene of peace, I stumbled and almost fell over something on the ground, a broken piece of wood, that had sunk so deep that it was scarcely visible. I knelt down to examine it, and it was with difficulty that I was able to decipher the lettering. It was the grave of a German soldier.

Cautiously, afraid of being seen, I stooped and placed some flowers at the foot of the broken cross. Somewhere, a woman was sorrowing.

Extract from
"A Woman at War"

NAAFI JOINS FORCES WITH HIGH STREET NAMES

Naafi is offering its customers in shops and clubs the best from civilian high streets and locals, through partnerships with some of the best known names in the business.

In shops, a cross-section of locations have been selected for trial partnerships with Costcutter, Londis and Spar. The exercise has the full backing of the Ministry of Defence, and is intended to strengthen the retail arm of Naafi's services. The partnerships give each of the stores involved the benefit of support services from one of the three partners.

Air Commodore Allan Vaughan, Naafi's retail and recreational services director, explained: 'Naafi must find a way to combine the expertise and support services of civilian retailers with its own 75-year experience of the Forces.

'As a result of these trials - and after consulting with its customers through surveys - Naafi will establish how best to provide attractive convenience shopping,

stocking more competitively priced goods and employing high standards of customer care.'

A similar exercise is underway in Naafi clubs, as Naafi enlists three major brewers to help find a winning pub formula for its junior ranks clubs. Bass, Scottish Courage and Whitbread have gone into partnership with Naafi in one club each. As with shops, the clubs will continue to be operated by Naafi staff, but the brewers will be offering guidance on specific areas.

Allan Vaughan laid out the objectives of the trial: 'If the customers would feel happy to use the Naafi club as a matter of choice on a regular basis - much as a civilian would use their local - then the experiment will be deemed a success.'

Both the shop and club trials are scheduled for completion in Spring 1997, when the success of the operation will be gaged and the appropriate partnerships 'rolled out' to the other Naafi establishments.

Naafinews

Officers' Lunch

OFFICERS' BRANCH LUNCHEON -

SATURDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 1996

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On a warm and sunny Saturday at Worthy Down, the Officers' Branch of the Association were treated to a memorable day. It was my first outing to such a gathering and I was, I must admit, just a little nervous. However, my fears at knowing no one, and even worse, having no one to talk to, were soon to be ill founded when, before I had even started on my coffee, a voice from the group next to me rang out with "and there she is"! To my complete astonishment, I discovered that the group were being regaled with one of the many "pranks" played on an innocent Assistant Adjutant (me) by a mischievous Adjutant (Liz Robinson)! Up to that point the group obviously felt the tale somewhat anecdotal (if at all true) and my appearance, as if on cue, caused much merriment all round.

That more or less set the tone of the day. From all corners of the ante-room came the sound of laughter and voices intent on finding out what had happened to old friends from service days, making new acquaintances and people saying "Don't I know you from somewhere"!

The jollity was called to order as we were to be treated to a talk from two currently serving officers Lieutenant Colonel Di Davis and Major Helen McMahon. Actually to call it a "talk", was an understatement. It was more of a tableau on the role of Women in the Army from QMAAC times up to the current day. The girls had produced a very clever journey through times we could all associate with. They had combined modern recruiting films (high action with lots of noise), the latest Information Technology in projected graphics showing the structure of commands, the role and scope of employment and promotion open to women in today's Army, together with a fashion show of all the current uniforms and dress apparel. As if this were not enough to whet our appetite, it culminated in a Strip-Tease by Major McMahon's husband - who, in taking off the latest lightweight, Gortex, unisex apparel, showed us all that the well dressed soldier (female as well as male) would be wearing by the end of the century (only three years away).

It was, without doubt, a most entertaining and informative narration through time. Superbly put together by Di and Helen, using all the latest audience information systems currently available. It fuelled the conversation over an excellent lunch provided in the Officers' Mess and was a great success for the organiser Fiona White whose first event it was having just taken over from Bill Jay.

To those who were unable to make the day, or were apprehensive about coming along - you missed a great fun day. See you all at the next one in 1997!

B.A.M.

WOMEN IN THE BRITISH ARMY TODAY

An Officers' Lunch took place in Worthy Down on 21st September 1996. The presentation was given by two serving officers of the AGC (SPS) and RLC on their views of Women in the British Army today. Here is a resume of their presentation.

The Services are currently going through a major period of change. The last five years since the Gulf war have seen members of the British Army, both men and women

deployed world-wide. The Army has assumed a new role of International Peacekeepers, Peacemakers, Policemen and Bearers of Humanitarian Aid.

Today's recruits have difficulties in achieving the standard of physical fitness required in today's Army. The standard for women is only slightly lower than that required of their male counterparts. For entry into the Army a female should have the ability to run one mile in ten minutes. By the end of her recruit training stage she should be able to complete 1.5 miles in 12.30 minutes, undertake a combat fitness test of 6 miles in 2 hours with 22lbs, a rifle and helmet.

After attendance at a Recruit Selection Centre, potential recruits are offered a vacancy in a particular trade and are then allocated a place at one of the five Army Training Regiments which are part of the Army Individual Training Organisation. The training agency was formed in April 1996 and has to ensure that training is of a high quality. Agencies are a major part of the Army now, formed to encourage better value for money and greater accountability in all government departments. The recruit training programme is currently 10 weeks and is increasing to 11-15 weeks to enable personnel to reach an acceptable standard of fitness. Subjects covered include: Skill at Arms, Drill, Field Craft, Physical and Adventure Training, NBC, Map Reading and First Aid.

Within the RLC and AGC females have broadly the same opportunities as the men.

Potential officers still attend the Regular Commissions Board (RCB) at Westbury, but before attempting an actual selection board they now, in addition, attend a Pre RCB briefing also held at Westbury. After Sandhurst the RLC officer will attend a Troop Commander's course and have the opportunity to learn to drive, she will be given a complete overview of the RLC's roles from movements to fuel, to food to ammunition and most importantly learn how to command soldiers. On completion of the course the RLC officer will command a troop of about 30 men and women in the Field Army and may undertake an operational tour. For a second tour she may have the opportunity to be a troop commander in a different function of the Corps, for example, fuel or port, or gain technical qualifications in ammunition, petroleum, food technology or transport. As a Captain, she could be appointed as a Sqn 2IC, Sqn Ops or Regt Ops Offr or indeed an Adjutant.

For the AGC (SPS) officer on commissioning, having completed her detachment commanders course, she would be posted to the Field Army and provide the provision of personnel services to a unit including finance, discipline and administrative support. As a second or third tour officer she would gain more in depth training by attending the Regimental Administrative Officers course.

There are now equal opportunities for male and females for promotion and attendance at Staff College and at the more senior level, women are in command of regular regiments.

An entertaining interlude was provided by the husband of one of the officers, himself a senior RLC officer, who described and demonstrated the latest range of combat clothing, Combat Soldier 95.

They next discussed changing times. Firstly, that of maternity leave. Equal opportunities in the Services has meant that women are able to remain in the Service taking breaks of 14 weeks on full pay, 4 weeks at reduced pay and

then up to a total of 44 weeks away from duty to have a child. There are now a number of married officers who have two children and have successfully returned to full duty. We also have a number of single mothers who are entitled to married quarters. Maternity uniforms are now the order of the day. (See **PDF Compressor Free Version**)

There have been many changes in the Medical Services including the closure of many military hospitals. The focus is now on Tri-Service medical cover. There are now only three military hospitals in the UK and Germany. Most of the unit Medical Officers in the UK are Civilian Medical Practitioners. There are now men in the QAs and the Matron of a field hospital recently deployed to Bosnia was a man.

Bands - whilst we may mourn the passing of the WRAC staff band, musicians are thriving. There are now fewer bands, with regimental bands being replaced by larger divisional bands and all musicians in the Army belong to the Corps of Army Music. Female musicians are currently serving with the AGC, RLC and AAC. Indeed, the RLC Drum Major is female. Spotting the female musicians, however, has become a fine art, as parade dress for all is trousers.

A most interesting and informative presentation. We were grateful to Lieutenant Colonel Di Davis and Major Helen McMahon for their well prepared and eloquent presentation. A special thank you to Major Mike McMahon for demonstrating Combat Soldier 95 with such style, aplomb and good humour.

H. M.

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THE WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB

The second dinner of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club was held at the Stakis Hotel York, on Saturday 19 October 1996. York had been chosen for the venue following a vote conducted earlier. It had been hoped that by choosing a location out of London many of the members living "North of Watford" would attend. Unfortunately, the date clashed with other activities, particularly the AGM of The WRAC Association Scotland.

Notwithstanding, 36 members did attend. It was extremely pleasing to see some new faces. The hotel had provided a small bar in the conservatory for pre-dinner drinks and despite the small number gathered, the noise level belied the fact.

Dinner was served in an exclusive dining room adjacent to the bar, the food was very good and the wine kept flowing. After dinner, which was not short of 'stories', we returned to the bar to continue the business of catching up on news of old friends. There we were joined by certainly one husband who was clearly outnumbered but very welcome.

So I think we can say that we had a successful evening, with the Stakis Hotel doing all that it could to make our stay pleasant. With the central location of the hotel, it was easy itself to do the tourist bit and visit not only the Minster, a glorious place with its memorials to commemorate women who served in WW2, but also the many York attractions, quite apart from the shopping!

The next dinner will be held in London and I have spoken with the Club who looked after us so well for our first dinner - The Army & Navy Club - and they have confirmed that they would like to look after us again. So I have booked a date later in the year - Saturday 1 November.

I shall write to all members with full details after Christmas. Merry Christmas to everyone and a Happy New Year.



Ladies enjoying pre dinner drinks at Stakis Hotel, York

Letters

LETTERS PAGE

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Ladies please use this page to air your views,
good or bad.

Dear Editor

I have hesitated for over a week before writing to you to express my feelings about the appearance of our association at the Cenotaph Remembrance Service on November 10th.

No doubt this feeling arises from adverse comparison with the WRNS and WAAF contingents who have managed to achieve some uniformity of dress. Quite frankly, we looked scruffy. True, many of us wore green, and true, it was a wet day, and rainwear was necessary. But why could we not have managed a green beret apiece?

There was a proposal at the AGM in April for a Green Beret to be worn in marches. If this could have been given official backing by the powers-that-be, more people would have made the effort. A green beret can be bought for under £6.00, and surely, everyone can afford that! Also they are warm and reasonably waterproof, so they are practical too. A recommendation that this is desirable would prompt more people to wear one.

Given that we can march, and that we are now put in one block, it would be nice if we could present a sea of green heads as we come down Whitehall.

I am not alone in feeling rather ashamed of our overall appearance, many other people have commented to me over the past week.

The numbers marching seem to increase each year, despite many of us being over 70, so we will be on show for a few more years. What do other people feel?

Name and address supplied.

Dear Editor

The current edition of 'Lioness' brought me joy and sorrow! Sorrow because I read in the obituary of the passing of Mrs Hardinge-Francis, who as Adjutant at Cordwalles Camberley, passed me as a Driver - knowing I was in trauma at having my final test (which meant all!!!) Mrs Hardinge-Francis, then I think a Junior Commander, put me at ease, being firm but gently kind. I wouldn't have made it with anyone else. Years after, she was my CO when I was posted as a Regular to WRAC/TA at Taunton and was much loved by us all.

Then I read of the death of Peggy Wildgust. We were in several units together and though never close friends, I was always grateful at having intelligent discussions with her.

I couldn't help wondering how many other dear old friends have passed on to that great big Barracks in the sky! It would help considerably if all the married ladies had their maiden names printed. Also there are the old friends such

as Rita Halliwell, Kathy Farey and Janice Grant who have died and were obviously not Association Members, so at 71 I wonder just how many of the old crowd are still with us.

Names continually crop up in my mind such as Babs Gratton, "Straw" Clubrey and "Scottie" Parker-Wade and I wonder what has become of them. We know Patsy Bunn married a Lance Corporal in the Royal Marines who when a Lieutenant Colonel "yomped" his men across the Falklands and who later became a Major General! Living in Plymouth at the time, amongst the Royal Marines, I was able to keep up with Patsy's whereabouts. Sadly now, I no longer hear much news as I live in the Cotswolds. I don't get to re-unions much as I am now disabled after a motor accident and subsequent arthritis.

It takes me two to three days to sift through the 'Lioness'. I do wish we had as much news of the ex-MT as there is of the "Gunner Girls". Maybe this will jog a few into action! And has anyone got a photo of me in Battledress? Sadly my photos were lost in a fire.

Margery Owen
"Tamar",
10 Tyndale Close
North Dibley
Nr Dursley
Glos GL11 6DU

Dear Editor

The contingent of ATS shown in the photograph (back page) were from the ATS OCTU at the Imperial Service College, Windsor. One of the Subalterns leading our contingent is/was Subaltern K Cooper, 'Katey' to those in her section - later to be Senior Commander.

It was a very hot day, and we seemed to be standing for hours, waiting for the parade to assemble. There were French troops, Americans, Scottish, Navy, Air Force, etc; and finally a Service in St Georges Chapel.

King Haakon of Norway, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother), Princess Elizabeth, Princess Margaret, the Mayor and Mayoress of Windsor, watched the march past.

A photographer, standing on steps, behind my Mother, was taking photographs in the crowd. My mother asked him if she could obtain a copy of the photographs he had taken of the ATS OCTU Cadets, I don't know how much he charged, but eventually, the original of this copy arrived in Shropshire where my family lived.

After passing out from OCTU, I served in (M) HAA in England, then Belgium and Germany in BAOR. Looking at this old photograph, I often wonder what happened to all the other members of the ATS contingent, after they left Windsor.

Mrs H D Gray (née Subaltern H D Holt) 2987096
Abbotsgate House
22 Mustow Street
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 1XL

Dear Editor

In response to Alison Ogilvie's "Fall in No 15262", I had a good old rummage round and eventually found my AB 64. The other ranks number was 488. Are there any lower takers?

Major D Lane
15 Vint Crescent
Lexden Road
Colchester
Essex CO3 3QQ

Dear Editor

I had a flash back on reading "Escape to War" by Lorna White (LIONESS No 2 1996). I too foraged for fuel when stationed at CAMBERLEY, living in concrete huts adjacent to a large house off the PORTSMOUTH Road (Dalcross or something like that it was called). It was a very cold winter and the huts were cold and damp. The coal allocated to us was very small but we also had a saw and chopper. We were allowed to obtain wood but it was wet. In turn we infiltrated the cellar of the house where the officers and NCOs lived and, with the aid of a look out, slipped silently down the cellar steps. With a torch we were able to fill the buckets and creep unseen back to the huts. It was a secret mission and I cannot believe that those above the cellar were not aware of the activity below. They never "let on". Frequently at bed time the house would be wet with condensation and in the morning the floor was dry but the wet from the ceiling dropped down on us. Those were the days!

F M Santer

Dear Editor

After you have read my story, I hope you can help. I have been working on this project for a very long time. Recognition for the women who died for freedom, love, and country during World War II.

In 1939 we put away our aprons and covered our typewriters, and said goodbye to our families and did something unheard of before. We joined the Army, Navy and Airforce.

I live in Canada and have done for forty years. I was born in London, England and lived most of my early years in Thorpe Bay, Essex. When I was 16 I put my age up and joined the ATS - the women's branch of the army. My army number was 175650 - this will give you some idea just how many of us decided to go to war.

I was friends with many from all three forces. Many of these women died for their country and they seem to have been forgotten.

At last the Bradford Exchange in Canada, who make collector's plates and memorial plates have decided to make a plate dedicated to the Canadian women of World War II, and it is really lovely.

I am in touch with the Bradford Exchange in Richmond, Surrey and I am hoping for another breakthrough with them. I will be meeting with them in

September. So for the women who died, and the women and their families that still remember, wish me luck, it's for you.

Great news for the girls of the 93rd Searchlight Regt RA. One of the regimental photographs which I have had for 50 years, has been beautifully enlarged, 12 x 16 and is now hanging with other great pictures on the walls of the Union Jack Club, Waterloo, London, England.

If you visit the Club, find it and raise your glasses and remember.

H Jean Crawley (née Cameron) X D Troop DR
6680 - 37 Shelter Bay Road
Mississauga
Ontario
Canada
L5N 2WD

Dear Editor

I was interested to read "ESCAPE to WAR", by Lorna White. My service in the ATS was so like Lorna's. I too did MT Training before Volunteering for service, then on to High Leigh Knutsford for training. Posted to Redscar Camp Ribblesdale Return Stores Group in 1943. In 1944 a posting for Altringham Hall 26 VRD and I was accepted with some of my friends but we were sent to Harlescote Camp as there was an outbreak of dysentery at the Hall.

For three months I worked with Sgt Piper on Issues and then I learnt to drive under the instruction of Cpl Bartlett (Barty). In the photograph I recognised my friend Isa Crozier who sadly passed away. I was demobbed in August 1946 and now live in Worcestershire and am a member of the ATS & WRAC Association Birmingham Branch. I hope to attend the reunion in BLACKPOOL. Would LORNA like to get in touch with me?

Anne Winnett née CARR
4 The Reddings
Sunnys Lane
HOLLYWOOD
Nr Birmingham B47 5JE
Tel 01564822944



Photograph sent by Mrs Anne Winnett née Carr

Dear Editor

I enjoyed reading Lorna White's memories of Attingham Park and seeing the photograph of some of the girls.

I was also there during the spring of 1944 for about one year. I enclose a photograph of our concert party; the entertainment officers, bus drivers and wardrobe helpers are in uniform and the entertainers in costume.

We performed at many army camps and village halls in our area. We also went to local hospitals where the wards were full of wounded men. The men were really amused watching the dancers dodging behind hospital screens with blankets thrown over, trying to change discreetly. Sometimes we were asked to the wards to sing a quiet song or two for the men too ill to attend the main concert. I often wonder what happened to them and the boys at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital and those at St Dunstons, Church Stretton.

Pte Lucy Woodcock, W/231638 (née Williamson)
73 South Oak Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 6AT



Dear Editor

One thing is puzzling me about the contributors to 'Lioness' - what on earth has happened to all my contemporaries? I joined the WRAC in October 1950, and at present I know the whereabouts of just 6 people with whom I served, one of whom is Brigadier Field. I am sure it is not because their submissions are unsuitable for publication, or that HQ editorial staff give precedence to the ATS element. Surely not all of 12 Battalion were discharged under para II, nor did the majority of 4 Independent Coy marry Malayan Police Force officers, or Australian servicemen, so where are they? They cannot still be raising families, or going out to work: are they all dead, apart from we six? I am sure my intake will by now, all be senior citizens, as I was the youngest, and I am!

If our Association is to survive and flourish, it is up to the WRAC element to pump new life into it.

Our service life and conditions may not have been as hazardous as those of our ATS forbears, but we still had a lot of interesting and enjoyable experiences, so come on girls, don't let our 40 plus years as a Corps disappear without trace. The Association bears the name of our Corps. Let us live up to it, and take the WRAC Association into the 21st century with honour.

M D Evans (née Grundy, W/369015)
15 Laburnum Grove
Luton
Bedfordshire LU3 2DW

Dear Editor

OWL BADGE
(Staff College)

In an earlier issue an appeal was made to trace a former ATS who may have an Owl Badge which was worn by personnel at a Staff College. The College in question was at Bagshot Park, Surrey.

The request prompted three people to telephone and one kind person sent a photograph of hers on her uniform. However it seemed unlikely that a badge could be 'borrowed' so that a copy could be made. Very unexpectedly an offer to borrow one came from an ATS member now living in Canada. It is with gratitude and further thanks to Doreen Metcalf that I now have a treasured keepsake again (my own stolen through burglary).

THANK YOU DOREEN!

Gina Shadrack (née Pomroy) Former Subaltern ATS
Arbour Lodge
100 Arbour Lane
Chelmsford, Essex
Tel 01245 251088

Dear Lioness

1996 Lioness No 2 Page 91 Photo of combined OPS Typing Pool. The girl sitting on chair in centre of photo is the same girl standing on the right of this picture taken outside our billet in Sloane St. London, name of Betty Salthouse who lived in the Wirral, Cheshire. I am the L/CPL, name of D E Hargreaves on left side of photo, stationed at Squires Gate Camp, Blackpool, 1944-45. My address is 93, Muirwood Road, Currie, Edinburgh, EH14 5HE. Would love to hear from any old friends.

Mrs D E Galpin



Dear Editor

On reading my copy of *Lioness*, I wondered if you would be interested in hearing about our small group of ATS during the last war. I was in the ATS stationed in a beautiful part of Herefordshire. It was a Bakery unit baking bread for Southern Command Forces and situated in Danesbury Park Welwyn. We were happy enough. It was hard work but we were allowed to work $\frac{1}{2}$ hour at a time then had to have $\frac{1}{2}$ hour rest. We worked eight hour shifts, and a night duty, during which no doors could be opened because of blackout. It was very hot, but we were allowed a cup of milk and an apple each night as extras, which we really looked forward to. Sometimes after a week of night

duty we had a long week-end off, and my friends and I tried to get to London to see some of the shows there, which were put on for the Forces. We usually managed to get a lift there, but quite often spent the nights in the Underground Shelters.

I have enclosed a group photograph of the Army Bakery Personnel who worked there. It would be lovely to hear from anyone who recognised themselves.

Mrs Irene Spedding (née Jordan)
121 Glendale Road
Tollesby
Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS5 YNW



The Dough Punchers from Danesbury Park, Welwyn. 1943

Dear Editor

I read with interest the poem written by Val Attwood published in the last issue of the "*Lioness*" (No 2 - 1996). It aroused many memories for me of Val Attwood, who was in Singapore with me in 1951-1953. I feel it was the same girl, and I'm so sorry to know that she has sadly died.

We had a wonderful leave in the Cameron Highlands in Malaya with Adelaide White, Elaine Anton, Val and myself. I have quite a few photographs of Val and the others. If Val's friend Frances Salter would like to write to me, I would gladly send some to her address; mine is:

Mrs G Hansford (W/181911 WOII G Shreeve)
3 Whinmoor Street
Katoomba NSW 2780
Australia

In the enclosed photograph of the WOs and Sgts Mess 4th Independent Company Singapore, taken in 1952, Val Attwood is fourth from the right on second row. I am third from the left on front row. I was Chief Clerk AGPS FARELF whilst in Singapore.

Nice too to see the photograph of the Parade held on Singapore Corps Day in 1953 in the "*Lioness*". I have several photos of Capt Hodgson (now Brig Field) of the WRAC parading when the Duchess of Kent visited Tanglin Barracks. Also have a copy of a letter sent to Capt Hodgson by the Duchess congratulating the WRAC on their excellent turnout on the parade.

Mrs G Hansford



THANK YOU

The Editor is grateful to the following ladies who so generously gave their time to work for the Association in the office.

Col. A. Smith
Lt. Col. S. Donovan
Lt. Col. V. Trout
Lt Col S. Westlake
Mrs I Corrigan
Mrs E Laurence-Smith
Mr M Mager
Mrs B Mitcheson
Mrs S Newall
Mrs N. Unsworth



Dear Editor

I was interested in the photograph of ATS and WAAF girls in the typewriting pool at Combined Operations HQ I didn't recognise anyone although I was there in 1944, as a messenger with the WRENS, enclosed photograph shows four WRENS and myself on the balcony. I still meet up with 5 of them, the one in shirt sleeves is on the photograph (in uniform this time) with me in Trafalgar Square. I was billeted in a house in Sloane St, until the Germans sent over the Doodle Bugs, then the V1 (or was it V2) and if any of the girls lived near enough to go home, we were allowed to go. One evening on my way home, which was in East Finchley, a Doodle Bug came over. Everybody carried on until the engine cut off. I was by a building opposite to the Whitehall Theatre, and dived into the entrance, when I heard the explosion. I picked myself up, looking around and counted my blessings, that the bomb had not gone off near this building. There were glass windows and mirrors all around. I was sorry to leave Combined Operations HQs but I had volunteered to go abroad.....like No 15262 that's another story.

Mary P Beeston (Mrs) (formerly Allison)
77 Campion House
Heath Town
Wolverhampton WV10 0PX



Dear Editor

In September this year I went to the West India Docks to attend the 75th anniversary and re-dedication service of the British Legion. I was thrilled to see a section of rebuilt army vehicles exactly like the ones I learned to drive on. Sitting in the cab of the 15 cwt Bedford brought back such poignant memories of my test that I thought I would like to share them with you. I am standing beside another vehicle I drove exactly fifty years ago. If anyone recognises the photo of me taken fifty years ago I would love to hear from them.

Jacqueline Wilson (née Knightley)
10 Laburnham Close
Clacton-on-Sea
Essex CO15 2DD



Dear Editor

I do enjoy receiving our Magazine, and it is getting better all the time.

What memories were evoked when I saw the photograph in the last issue of the Corps Day Parade in Singapore, 1953! Out came my album from the two years I was stationed there from January 1956 to December 1957. We were therefore 'Merdeka' - confined to barracks due to the rioting; the courses at Nee Soon; R & R at the Cameron Highlands; that train journey for holidays in Penang.

The Suez crisis closed the canal so instead of a leisurely sea-journey back it took three days by air - and I have never been on a plane since.

What an enjoyable two years it was though and I am still in touch with three friends from those years, Kathy Young (née Sturgess), Tina Gibb (then Edna Hope), and Doreen (née Fisher). I often wonder about others, Pat Crump, Maureen O'nions, Barbara Yeomans, Barbara Hertrich, Maureen, Dorothy (my album does not give surnames). Will there be anyone from that time at the Blackpool re-union?

This photograph was taken at the entrance to No 4 Ind Coy after Corps Day Parade 1957, with three members of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers Band (I am on the right, and Barbara Yeomans 3rd right).

Gladys W Pope (Mrs)
W/389156 née Jones
11 Lynch Close
Mere
Wilts BA12 6EL



MABEL CHAMBERS née ENGLAND
NO: W/219860

Yes, Benny, I can well remember meeting Mrs Churchill and Mrs Roosevelt when they visited Guildford. But more than that I remember the 'famous four' (Benny, Gwen, Eileen and Mabel).

We were telephonists on 602 HMAA Battery and therefore did 24 hour shifts. We were billeted in our own Nissan hut which we named 'Begnoelma'. We did a spell in Northern Ireland in Larne and Belfast and then suddenly we were on a boat train for the long journey to Hayling Island. What a journey! Not even a drink if I remember correctly and the men from 602 HMAA Battery travelling with us were not impressed!

Little did we know what awaited us, that we were to be involved in the 'D-Day Landings'. Do you remember standing in the command post, guns at the ready, watching the Armada of boats leaving for the invasion? We got to know the navy boys very well, often sharing their bottles on the beach! I met my sailor Bill and we have been happily

married for 52 years and have 2 sons and 6 grandchildren.

I went to York in June this year for the Ack-Ack Reunion and had hoped so much to meet someone from '602' but alas no one arrived. It was a wonderful 2 days and I hope you will see it on TV at Christmas. Ten coaches drove through York to the Minster for a service and then we all marched through the City to the applause of inhabitants and tourists alike!

Mabel Chambers
21 Menlove Mansions
Menlove Gardens West
Liverpool L18 2HY
Tel: 0151 737 2916



*Front Row L-R: Gwen, Eileen
Back Row L-R: Benny, Mabel*

50 YEARS FRIENDSHIP

We met at the South Mimms Transit Camp on draft to Germany in June 1946. We were stationed in the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (Koyli) Barracks at Minden then moved to Rhine Army Headquarters Bad Oeynhausen where being ATS Signals we worked on "Calls to Home" of the troops in Germany. Our switchroom was a converted bank. We were promoted together ending up as sergeants. We both left Germany and the ATS/WRAC in June 1949 and this year we celebrated our 50 years Friendship.



Mrs Ivy Braddock (née Higginson) Mrs Eileen Powles (née Weeks, formerly Allan)

Home Thoughts From Abroad

LETTERS FROM CANADA

MRS DORIS E. MADILL (EX ATS W/48470)

200 DUFFERIN ST. APT 1404

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA M6K 1Z4

First of all, greetings from a Canadian member.

I am always awaiting the arrival of my issue and I generally find several things of interest to me, for example the last 2 issues of the write-up by ex-SSgt Dora Hart, who I did not know, but I knew very well her Junior Commander in France, Miss Rowena Guggisberg.

Her Junior Commander, Miss Guggisberg, in Nantes, France and I were Cubmaster and Adjutant Cubmaster pre-war of the Yateley (Hants) Wolf Cub Pack. A few ladies including Miss Guggisberg had joined the 1st Berks Pltn, ATS travelling to Wokingham weekly in 1938 (wore the Berkshire Flash) from Yateley. I wanted to join but being young she, I remember so vividly, told me that I was too young and I'd be better off staying to run the Cubs. Our last Camp (Guides, Rangers, etc) was in August 1938 when war was so imminent and very soon Miss Guggisberg and the other village ladies were starting their war service and ultimately off to France. Needless to say, I finally did join the ATS, with my first posting to Reading after Aldermaston Training; but who should turn up at Reading with J/C Garden but J/C Guggisberg! Her question to me was "would you like to come into our Platoon?" As astounded as I was I did say "no" as I'd just received news of being posted as a Plotter to RAF Tangmere in Chichester.

I thought you'd be interested in this off-shoot story of ex SSgt Dora Hart's story and I notice another such remembrance in "Nantes Revisited" by Ivy Bracegirdles.

Lots of success to Lioness and to Former Editor at Guildford, Major Dione Parker, I would like to say "where is the CWAC uniform that I sent several years ago?"

MARTHA LONGSTON (NÉE LIDDELL)

295 - 11th AVE, LIVELY, BOX 1461 ONT P37 1N1

I really enjoy receiving the Lioness, it's passed from one ATS to another, then back to me and I keep looking at the photos hoping to see someone I know. Being from Scotland my first place was Dalkeith (Edinburgh) quite an experience, from there to Wales. I was a switchboard operator in the Signal Corps. I couldn't understand them and they couldn't understand me! It was a nightmare, beautiful place (Newtown, Monmouthshire) but we were well treated, from there I was posted to Putney, then to Didcot, where I met my husband who was in the Royal Engineers. Betty Anderson (who lives in Grimsby) and I were good friends. Still are, and I attended one of their meetings, although I'm from Motherwell Scotland. We always enjoy going to Grimsby, we have a good laugh at all the things we got up to, and to this day we say it was the best years of our lives. My husband went over on "D Day" and I and two others were shipped to the Middle East. How I wished that Betty could have been sent too for we were never separated. The other 2 were Marjery Merry from Banbury and Isabel McLauchlan from Glasgow, the photo was taken before we went overseas, hope some of you people recognise yourself, and drop me a line. The ship we sailed in was an American livery liner (FANTASTIC) there was 600 paratroopers and 30 ATS. We didn't look for partners in the dance hall each night. We landed in Ismailia, were there for 2 weeks, then to Cairo, we were stationed in Kasermil Barracks, for about a month, then moved to a posh house opposite with our own servants (rooms were cleaned also buttons and shoes (lovely)). We were taken to work in an Army truck with a machine gun on the back, it was a huge telephone exchange, there was lots to do and see in Cairo, dances

every night and as there was very few ATS there we didn't want for dancing partners! Six of us had dinner with King Farouk; we weren't impressed with him or the food. The pyramids were something to see. We travelled a lot, Christmas in Bethlehem, where we attended a service in the Church of Scotland. Spent a few days in Tel Aviv where we were bunked in with Jewish girls in Service. They didn't understand us, nor we them, we waited at the wailing wall, sat in the dead sea. We visited everywhere, always in Army trucks (what a life). We would have liked to have gone to Britain this year for the celebrations, it was impossible to get a flight. It was marvellous watching it all on TV while it was on, I was walking one morning up to the Post Office, when a lady (I did not even know her) opened her door and shouted to get back home as the Queen was on TV. I did as I was told; I think the whole of Canada was glued to the TV and many a tear was shed. My husband and I both belong to Lively Legion. There's only two left of the servicemen that founded Lively Legion; my husband an Indian soldier. We have a nice Legion, there is always something going on. Also I have been to the ATS reunion in London (Canada) where we did the play (we'll meet again) and we went round all the Legions (and there's lots) and had a great time doing it. Keep up the good work, all the best.



Sudbury Star special

Research support

The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 546 (Lively) recently made a \$1,000 donation to the Northern Cancer Research Foundation. Funds will be used to support cancer research at the Northeastern Ontario Regional Cancer Centre. Making the cheque presentation to Barb Gendron, executive director of the NCRF, are Martha Longston and John Longston of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 546, Lively.

**MRS ELLEN GRAND
TECUMSETH PINES, 194 PINETREE CRES,
TOTTENHAM, ONTARIO L0G - 1W0**

Hello England

I would like to thank you for the copy of the **PDF Compressor Free Version** in the Lioness issue for 1997.

I am really looking forward to the next issue in 1997 and hope that perhaps some of our comrades will recognize any of us. The message:

Greetings, from Canada.

Some of the ATS gals at the 8th reunion London, Ontario Canada, Sept 1996.

A Merry Christmas to you all and keep up the wonderful work.

Sincerely, Ellen Grand



From left to right:

*Connie Dantichen (née Vantithlan), Jean Coulson (née Bull),
Joan Franklin, Ellen Grand (née Pavey). ATS/EFI*

LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

JOYCE SEWARD (NÉE WINTER)

151 MILINA ST, HILLMAN, W. AUSTRALIA 6168

As a rather new member to the pride of 'Lionesses' I was thrilled to read in the first issue of "Lioness" (August last year) received by me, the name of Katie Prior mentioned - wonderful, perhaps there will be others amongst your members whom I will know and remember after all!! Kate was my CSM with my first posting as Company Clerk to Guildford Training Centre. Unfortunately, I lent that magazine to another ex-ATS person, and it walked!!! Then another great thrill - another issue was received containing information about next year's Reunion. Now that was definitely a good enough reason to save and plan for a return trip to UK in 1997, so quickly I sent off the form and £20.

Is it too much to hope that someone will remember me, and I them? Living thousands of kilometres away, and my married life being rather nomadic I lost touch with all those with whom I spent so many wonderful hours of comradeship, when we worked with and beside our male counterparts before the days of such things as 'sexual harassment', 'stress' or 'tension' existed.

Enlisting in February 1949, and reporting to Guildford Training Camp I had such persons as Phoebe (Paddy) McCormack, Doreen Brady, Billy Garfield as instructors. Then to the Drivers & Clerks Training Centre, Wrexham

where I managed to knock over a table supporting two or three typewriters, which had to be 'written off'. Then great disappointment - my first posting back to Guildford. As I lived only 20 miles from there and had also spent my latter school days in that town, it was the last place I wanted to go - but what fun I ended up having, what companionship I found. I started in Company Office (No. 3 Trg Coy - green flashes, I think), then to the Medical Centre, and finally into the Orderly Room. Oh, those Part II Orders, every two weeks when we had between 100-170 recruits each intake, and that horrible messy Gestetner copying machine! I remember the Passing Out Parade, when the Band that had been arranged could not come, so the Bandmaster kindly arranged a replacement. The look of horror and the mess that resulted when it began - "March on the Company", out went our left feet to the pace of the Rifle Brigade!!

Then I was lucky - a posting to 16 Bn MELF - Fayid, but horror of horrors - my brother was posted just up the road from me with the 3rd Regt of Signals. But his presence did come in handy on some occasions if some male made himself a nuisance - "I'll get my brother to sort you out!!" - no one believed me until my brother arrived - we looked so much alike they had to believe me then. Remember playing hockey with Lt Col Monica Bell - that sand was very hard and hot, but couldn't she fly down the field? Then the trip a few of us were lucky to do - we joined the Education Corps for a Training Exercise across the Sinai Desert to St Catherine's Monastery - there were about 12 of us, including Capt Catherall, a Lt Minkin, Clare Mordant, Peg McNeil, the others their names escape me. (I enclose a photo of some of us on that trip.)

On then to East Africa, Nairobi where I worked in Field Records l/c K.A.R. African Records. Here with friends like Nan Kirkwood (to be my bridesmaid - where are you Nan?), Jackie Broadey, Jean Ross (Remember the Creme de Menthe, Jean?) I stayed until I took a local release in 1955, and got married to a member of the Kenya Police in April of that year.

Now, 41 years later - is it really that long ago, seems like yesterday - I live here in W.A., still, luckily with my 'copper', three sons, and four grandchildren later, and I ask - does anyone remember S/Sgt Joyce Winter W/353908, usually referred to as Tubby?????



Lt Minkin in white coat; Capt Catherall with hat on; Clare Mordat - blonde hair; Forgotten next one's name; Then myself next to tailboard

LETTER FROM AMERICA

HARRIET WILSON (NÉE MORETON - 459 MIXED
HEAVY ANTI AIRCRAFT BTY 134 REGT RA 1941-46)
4206 E WONDER LAKE DRIVE
WONDER LAKE, ILLINOIS 60097-8332, USA

PDF Compressor Free Version

My sister and I attended the 51st re-union of ATS girls in London, Ontario, Canada this past September and have enclosed a photo (see below). We had a wonderful time there was about 100 girls and their spouses or friends all served in WWII. I have another lovely photo of my daughter and I, she is carrying The Canadian Flag and I the Union Jack, my late husband and I were presented with our respective Flags by the American Legion of Wonder Lake, and we were allowed to join the American Legion a few years back this was Veterans Day. I am the Historian for the post, and have been for the five years.

Will write a bit about 459 Battery and get it off for the next issue. God Bless all of you.

P.S.

We were in England this past summer and made a trip to Blackpool to visit friends at Fleetwood. At Blackpool we attended church for Burma Star Service Sunday August 18th, 51st Remembrance Day what a turnout. Another Forgotten Army.

Hope you have a good turnout for the 52nd in April sorry I won't be able to make it.

"When you go home, Tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today", this is the Kohima Epitaph and always recited at their meetings.



ATS Reunion
London, Ontario, Canada 1996

ATTENTION! ALL BENEVOLENT FUND KNITTERS

Yes, I mean you; All the Ladies who have kindly provided me with jumpers, cardigans, hats, gloves, scarves etc for the Benevolent Fund throughout this past year. **Congratulations to you all, through your efforts we have been able to send woollens to 70 families in 1996. A huge leap from 43 families in 1995.** I know that I have written to you all, but I thought it would be a good idea to tell all the readers of the Lioness about the wonderful work you do on our behalf throughout the year.

For those that are wondering what this is all about, the Benevolent Fund is very fortunate in having a loyal band of Ladies and Association Branches around the country who knit a variety of children's clothes from baby size up to large 10 year olds. These are then forwarded to me as the Benevolent Fund's representative, for dispersal.

Through the work of the Benevolent Fund, we hear of former members of the Corps who require our help from time to time. In addition to its normal work, the Fund operates a system, whereby families with children aged 10 years and under are sent parcels of excellent hand knitted woollies made by former ATS and WRAC Ladies. Many of the woollens are "made to order", for example, there was a situation earlier in the year when we have several very well built 10 year olds, and nothing suitable to hand – a quick letter to our Ladies and back came unisex jumpers of all colours as well as the ubiquitous school grey – to fit the requirement. For my part, and having spoken on the telephone and by letter to many of "my Knitters", it is a most satisfying way for us to continue feeling part of "the family" which we all joined, and also to feel that we can still help one another. Some of my Ladies, who are part of this huge countrywide Knitting Circle, have told me that they themselves have been helped in the past by the Benevolent Fund and now they very much enjoy being able to help in return. That all the goodies which are sent to our families are welcome is borne out by the number of letters we receive back at Association Headquarters at Worthy Down. It is a joy to be able to give, but it is an even greater joy to know that the gift is most welcome!

If you would like to know more about the work we do, and perhaps join our Knitting Circle, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you.

Mrs Babs Mitcheson
King's Hill Cottage
Netheravon
Wilts SP4 9PL
01980-670285

Reunions

Mrs W A Miles (née Melville) of 5 Thornbridge Road, Reading, Berkshire told us about the meeting on Friday 18 October at The Friendly Hub just outside Loughborough. It was a more low key affair than last year but they had more time to visit old places.

Joyce Riley writes, several ex-ATS from Feltham COD Middlesex, meet twice a year for a reunion at York. We have lunch, shop, and talk about our life, both past and present. The photograph was taken at one of our recent lunches. We would like to say 'hello' to the friends who were with us on our week-end visits to York but who cannot make the trip in one day. Mrs D Murray (ex Sergeant) would love to hear from anyone from Feltham wishing to get in touch or join our reunions.



*Left from front: Mrs D Murray, Mrs D Robinson (Luxford), Mrs B Corey (Favell).
Right from front: Mrs J Riley (Johnson), Miss D Guthrie, Mrs P Fardell (Walker).*

Members of the **OMAGH BRANCH** of the ATS OLD COMRADES Association met at the Silver Birch Hotel for their annual reunion dinner. They were joined by the members of the **ULSTER Branch BELFAST** who travel to be with them every year.

Names on the photograph are from the left: Miss J Darragh, Mrs M K Twist, Mrs F Morgan, Mrs S Irons, Mrs B Hamilton, Miss H Bell and Mrs V R Muldoon. Missing from the photograph are Mrs M Reid, Mrs M Bailie, Mrs C A Steel.



Daphne Brooks writes;

On FRIDAY 30TH JUNE 1995, over 20 ex "Y" operators joined with other ex-service personnel who also served on the Island. The IOM Joint Ex Service Association had organised this **GRAND REUNION** in conjunction with **EVERYMAN HOLIDAYS** and we were able to enjoy up to a week reminiscing together.

We arrived by sea and air and our accommodation was in Hotels and Boarding Houses in Douglas. Saturday 1st July we registered at the **VILLA MARINA**, met the organisers and were issued with tickets for all the various functions. Once that was completed we boarded coaches for a nostalgic tour of Douglas, ending at the **TANK MUSEUM**. In the evening we returned to the Villa Marina for a Civic Reception and welcome by the Mayor and Corporation of Douglas (and Norman Wisdom).

Sunday morning we attended a Church Service at St Georges Church and some of us were able to march after the Service down to the War Memorial on the Sea Front, with the Royal British Legion and Service Personnel for a brief service of remembrance. That evening we were well entertained, (again at the Villa Marina) by the Band of the Royal Marines (Scotland).

Monday we enjoyed a coach tour of the north of the island, visiting **LAXEY, RAMSEY, ANDREAS, BRIDE** and **JURBY**. This was followed on Tuesday with a coach to **CASTLEDOWN, PORT ERIN** etc., and that evening we celebrated 50 years of **PEACE** with a Cabaret of Wartime Memories.

Wednesday, although chilly, was an outstanding day for me, as we left Douglas by coach to attend the Tynwold Ceremony. There was a special ex-service Veterans Contingent and a group of us were very proud to march with this group. The actual Ceremony of Tynwold, the House of Keyes, the IOM Government, was very interesting and colourful and we had excellent grandstand seats. After the ceremony we had a further coach trip to **PEAL** on the western side of the island. Thursday we had completely free to wander and browse as we wished, then in the evening a farewell gathering and "Forties Night" again at the Villa Marina.

It was a very happy week and quite strange to see those "billets" of Palace Camp, the Rutland, Hydro, Inglewood, Excellisor etc., where we spent six months, learning to read morse up to 25 wpm, electricity, magnetism, Q Signals, German procedures and the vagaries of those marvellous HRO receivers. So many happy memories - thanks to all who organised everything.

DAPHNE BROOKS née BOWER "Y" GROUP IOM and KEDLESTON



*21 ATS Signals "Y" Operators July 1995
an Inter Service Reunion on the Isle of Man*

Hilda Crossley née Bryne, attended the "Y" operators trip to the IOM and brought with her this beautifully dressed doll. Hilda had made every item of the uniform including, badges, shoes, gloves, handbag, stockings - yes everything, down to Khaki issue!

PDF Compressor Free Version

Sorry, no orders but well done Hilda.



Over 120 Association members travelled to Swansea on 12th October 1996 for the **Area Reunion**.

The Lord Mayor, Mr D Thomas, accompanied by the Lady Mayoress, gave a short speech of welcome, unfortunately owing to a prior engagement he had to leave at 2.15 pm.

The highlight of the afternoon was a concert by the 'Legionairs', a group of male singers who entertained us with a varied programme of songs in which we needed no encouragement to join in.

Mrs Bates and Miss Llewelyn very efficiently took the draw after which it was time for those who had made the journey by train to take their leave.

Thank you to Swansea Branch for a very enjoyable afternoon.

A donation of £500 has been sent to the Benevolent fund from this reunion.

The 1997 Area Reunion for Group Wales & The West will be at the Priory Hall, Coventry University, Coventry on 27 September 1997. Further details from:

Mrs D Brookes
99 Meadow Road
Coventry, CV6 4GW

"L" Company ATS (Hobart House)

Our Annual Reunion will be held on Wednesday May 7th, 1997 at the Victory Services Club in London. Accommodation can be arranged if wanted. Looking forward to seeing old friends and new.

Details from:

Mrs M Benson
1, Hawksview
Fairmile Park Road
Cobham, Surrey, KT11 2PG
01932 865131

The ATS Dinner Club held its Annual Luncheon on Saturday 5th October 1996 at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham. Members were delighted to welcome their Patron, Brigadier Anne Field, and also their President, Mary, Lady Crofton. Unfortunately the Vice-President, The Lady Strathspey, was not able to attend, but she asked that her greetings and best wishes be offered to members.

This was the first occasion on which the Luncheon had been held outside London but a ballot had indicated that the Midlands would be a more popular venue for this year. Due to an unhappy accident to the Chairman, Lt Col Betty Michell, the chair was taken by the Vice-Chairman, Betty Belfield. Members agreed that the Grand Hotel had provided an excellent lunch with courteous and friendly service.



*Photograph taken at the ATS Dinner Club
Photograph provided by Mrs Daphne Hill*

The London Group will hold its Annual Reunion on Saturday 20 September at the Union Jack Club (opposite Waterloo Station). Details will be sent to Branch Secretaries as soon as possible but anyone interested should contact **EILEEN CARTER** on 0181 864 7378.

THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS UNIT #47 OF
THE CANADIAN CORPS ASSOCIATION 201 NIAGARA
STREET, TORONTO, ONT. M5V 1C9
(50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION)

Greetings and Congratulations to the Unit #47, Canadian Corps Association FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY. Our May 11th 1996 event was a gala affair, the Auditorium was decorated for the occasion. It was cool and wet outside, but the mood was warm and friendly inside. Perusing the many Albums of Unit 47, from the 40's to the 90's, which proved to be a real conversation item. How "young and slim" we were in the days way back when!! Each Unit member received a 50th Anniversary pin and signed the attendance book. Following the afternoon of reminiscing a delicious Roast Beef dinner was served by Ruby Dadswell and her Canadian Corps Catering Staff.

Our First Vice-President, Dorothy Soper read several messages of Congratulations received from our Overseas friends and they are as follows: The Women's Royal Army Corps Association, London Branch; The WRAC Association, Greater London; The Wolverhampton Branch of the WRAC Association; The ATS Dinner Club, and our own Publicity Chairman, Mrs Doris Madill. Vicky Urwin was present to receive her 25 year pin which was presented by President Vera. A Special Life Membership Certificate has been awarded to Doris Madill, our Unit General Secretary for the past 27 years, and at present serving as Publicity Chairman. Doris was unable to be with us at this time to receive this Award, but Babs Armstrong and Jean Edgerton went to her home on June 5th and presented Doris with her Life Membership Certificate, along with a 50th Anniversary souvenir pin. CONGRATULATIONS GO OUT TO DORIS MADILL.

REUNION

VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II - CANADA WIDE. Our next CWAC reunion will be held on Friday/Saturday 26/27 September 1997 at 201 Niagara Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

From: Mrs Doris E Madill
Publicity Chairman
CWAC Unit #47
Canadian Corps Association
200 Dufferin Street, Apt 1404
Toronto
M6K 1Z4
Ontario
Canada

The North East Group Reunion 1997 will be held in Cleethorpes on Saturday 27th September 1997 at The Winter Gardens. Reception at 11.30 am followed by Luncheon Tickets £10.

For further information Phone 01642 556101 or write to:

Mrs G Friday
25 Murton Road
Billingham
Cleveland
TS22 5AZ

On the 7th September, 1996, the **Wimbledon and District Branch** hosted the **London Area Group Reunion** in the Wimbledon Community Centre. All except two of the branches had representatives present and we were delighted to meet them. After a welcome from the Wimbledon Chairman, Marjorie Hindley, the Area Group Chairman, Captain Eileen Carter, presented a report bringing us up to date with the Association news. This was followed by a very amusing lecture given by Mr Robin Shotter, a Pikeman of the Honourable Artillery Company of Pikemen and Musketeers. This was very well received by an audience who roared with laughter from time to time. The vote of thanks was given by Bessie Wright. No sooner was this over than a laden drinks trolley came in closely followed by a really satisfying lunch brought to table by the group of Wimbledon members organised by Beryl Douglas. Before coffee the Loyal Toast was proposed by the Wimbledon President, Iris Smith. The afternoon lecture was given by Mr Richard Milward, historian and writer, and the subject was 'The Spencer Family'. The vote of thanks was given by The President. About 80 tempting prizes awaited the audience and the raffle team dispensed the prizes speedily.

A donation of £150 was forwarded to the Benevolent Fund.

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 at £10 per person per night which includes continental breakfast.

Accommodation is available in either 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



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ODE TO A DRIVER

Up at six wash sparingly then dress
Walk sleepy eyed to the dining mess
Trying to find some thing good to eat
Shuffling to tables on tired feet
Then into the sun, wind or rain
To start another work day again.

The vehicles are marked black and green
Supposed to be camouflaged, are clearly seen
"First parade then", the Sergeants roar
To losing tempers and slamming door
Then its onto the road a long day ahead
Thinking not of work, but a now cold bed.

Out on the road now, camp far behind
Light up a cigarette, no one will mind
Whistling a tune or braving a smile
Eating up the road mile after mile
Headlights blazing during the day
Do we really need to see our way.

Have to stop dry as a bone
Cup of tea love, and a buttered scone
Break soon over, time to hit the road
Must deliver the cargo load
The journey's lonely, no music to play
Talk to yourself "Pardon what did P say".

At last we are there, time to unpack
Oh hurry up there, just gotta get back
Back on the road again, boy oh boy
With thoughts of ice cold beer, what joy
Road lies empty, getting dark and late
But not long before - the old camp gate.

The nights ahead are long with ease
For the Army does its best to please
All too soon, get up at six, to wash and dress
Walk sleepy eyed to the dining mess
A drivers life is full of laughter or sorrow
Cos they never know what will happen tomorrow.

Author: TINY WHITNEY-MAY (EX WRAC DRIVER)

FAREWELL TO THE WRAC

The girls in green
Can be seen
On the Barrack Square.

There is no doubt
As they stride out
They're glad that they are there.

The sea of green
Is a steady stream
As our soldiers march along.

Smooth, in time
Feet and arms aligned
Rhythm, rehearsed and very strong.

Six rows deep
Faces soft and sweet
Are the ladies who march once more.

They are not so young
And they can go wrong
Swinging arms may show the flaw.

Their proudness shines
In every line
Of days when they were young.

They did their bit
With great charm and wit
Their voices raised in song.

Memories flood back
Of being a WRAC
And friendships made back when.

For faces we search
Our hearts give a lurch
When finding a friend we knew then.

I marched along
Within this throng
My heart so full of pride.

The jokes they flew
Of folks they knew
Our smiles were stretched so wide.

The crowds they clapped
The cheers were apt
As our column moved along.

Tears in our eyes
As our spirits flies
Our heart are filled with song.

We are proud to be
As you can see
The ATS and the WRAC.

Author: ELIZABETH ANN DEAKIN



THOUGHTS OF YESTERDAY

There's a lane to a farm with a big old black barn
and the sky is all blue with a sort of pink hue.
White clouds drift along and the breeze sings a song.

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A man in an old coat is chasing a goat, and, there
on the track is a boy with a sack.
Watch, there's a fox running over the hill.
Sit and dream and see it still.

There's a scythe and a spade and a pond where ducks
wade,
a smelly muck lump and a green rusting pump.
Walk in hail and the rains, see puddles and drains,
and into the snow and cold winds that blow.
It's all in the past it could never last, but
still, hear the cry of the hounds and the beating of bounds.

Rest and recall the rooks and their caw, the cows
and the sheep and the little lambs bleat. A small
child's delight with stars shining bright. Then
into the sun to play and to run, and on to sleep
in the wheat away from the heat.

Fall into the hay and pray for it all,
For little Lord Jesus, the stable and stall.
Sit quietly there in your old rocking chair
back to yesterdays past that could never last.

Author: FRANCES M SANTER

A SALUTE TO FREEDOM

Memories of my Army days are very sweet to me,
For it was 50 years ago I met the only man for me.

Looking back I see our life like pages in a book,
So now and then it's nice to turn a page and have a look.

To let the mind wander down memory lane,
And live in hope we shall never face a War again.

The War was frightening in more ways than one,
Always dreading the drone of the Hun.

Never knowing if each day was your last,
With gunfire and Air Raids going full blast.

We were lucky and came through it all,
But to save us a lot had to fall.

We stood to attention, smart on parade,
And deep inside we thanked God and prayed.

Although times were gloomy, the sun often shone through,
We had some good times and enjoyed ourselves too.

My life long partner is still by my side,
We sit by the fire and hold hands with pride.

We fought for our country, you and me,
So today's generation can say they are FREE.

Author: JOYCE LOVEGROVE (née Clark)
Ex ATS and Coldstream Guards

GOODBYE TO THE WRAC

Many times in years gone by we have visited HQ,
But this time it was the saddest time for us "old timers"
and "the new".

For we were losing our identity as a solid "WOMEN'S"
Corps,
Though never will they eliminate our work in times of war.

For we who wore the Khaki in those far off fighting days,
Your invitation to parade received our grateful praise,
And so it was with much ado we lined up six abreast,
All eyes focused on the younger girls so neat and smartly
dressed.

The inspection by the Queen Mum renewed those far off
times,
When, as our Queen she inspected us as we stood in long
straight lines.
Memories forgot, we watched with pride as the young girls
of today,
Obeyed the Commands, so loudly given, and their Parade
got under way.

Then came our turn to play a part in this sad but great
Farewell,
"RIGHT TURN" "BY THE LEFT QUICK MARCH" Orders
we knew so well.
So with heads held high and shoulders back we set forth
on our way,
Each one of us remembering "Barrack Squares" of
yesterday.

Thank you for giving us the chance to put past training to
the test,
For, despite Arthritic hips and joints, we did give of our
best.
Thank you again for inviting us to attend this last farewell,
We appreciated it oh so much, far more than words can
tell.

The food was simply splendid, congratulations to the cook,
To thank all those who worked so hard would almost fill a
book.

But please believe us when we say to all who played a
part,
In giving us such a splendid day, sincere thanks from the
heart.

To the Band who helped us keep in step and got soaked in
the "Retreat",
We extend to you our sincere thanks for your very special
feat,
The fireworks sent up in the rain still proved a grand
display,
Whilst the lighting of the WRAC BADGE bought to close
a well planned day.

All that is left for us to say is "GOOD LUCK" to those who
serve,

May you go forth with courage to the jobs you deserve,
Please remember us with kindness, and, when put to the
test,
Carry on where we left off and give of your very best.

Author: VERA C COLE Ex Corporal ATS

THE UNSUNG HEROINE

A field in the middle of nowhere,
Solid blackness all around,
Girls living under canvas,
Alert to every sound,
Was that my Mum?

A barracks miles away from home,
Guard duty through the night,
Armed with truncheon and a whistle,
To put the enemy to flight!
Was that my Mum?

The drone of German aeroplanes,
Throbbled death as they drew near,
'Searchlights On', the girl cried out,
So brave, yet filled with fear.
Was that my Mum?

Now fifty years have passed since then,
Husband, friends have come and gone,
A new Great Grandchild fills her thoughts,
But the memories linger on.
And Yes - that was - that is - My Mum.

DEDICATED TO BESSIE WALMSLEY
Author: E SCRIVENER

VOLUNTEERS

Many will be shocked to find
When the day of judgement nears
That there's a special place in heaven
set aside for volunteers.

There'll be no more fire piquet
No more barracking your bed
No more drilling on the square
You'll be resting there instead.

With no more queues for dinner
Nor waiting for a bath
And no more mending punctures
You'll be having such a laugh.

No more switchboard duty
Nor P.T. dressed in shorts
No more stones to whitewash
You'll all be drinking shorts.

And no more pressing creases
No more spitting on your shoes
No more shining buttons
You'll be watching TV news.

There'll be no air raid sirens
No more standing by your gun
No more kit inspections
You'll be lying in the sun.

You won't be wearing gas masks
When a warning is declared
In that special place in heaven
These chores you will be spared.

You ask "who'll serve these privileged few
and work for all they're worth"
Why!! all those who reaped the benefits
And never once volunteered on earth.

Author: BRENDA HORNESS (née VARTY B) ATS

FORTY YEARS ON

It scarcely seems like forty years since all of us first met
We'd joined the women's army, a time we can't forget
We came from towns and villages, from Durham
and the Dales
From London and from Lancashire, our sergeant
came from Wales.

The training was quite different from anything we'd done
And marching on the barrack square didn't seem much fun
Our uniforms were very smart, with buttons polished bright
We even had a fur coat to keep us warm at night.

At six weeks we were posted to training on searchlights
And given different jobs to do, including guard at nights
The passing out parade came round and off we went again
To a site near Chalfont, along a lonely lane.

We didn't have electric or water from the mains
A lorry came to fill the tank and we helped clear the drains
We gathered wood to stoke the fires and weeded
all the paths
We had to use a bucket to have our daily baths.

We also dug a great big pit to empty 'Linga Longa'
And sometimes we banged saucepan lids, and often
danced the Conga

We planted twigs and flowers to mark the latest spot
You should have seen the plague of wasps that came
when it was hot.

We drank a lot of cocoa, on dripping toast we fed
And loved potato and leek soup before we went to bed
We made our own amusements and played cards
half the night
We often gathered mushrooms before the morning light.

'Take Post' the order of the day came over loud and clear
Upon our duty R.T. set, the enemy were near
And so we were on duty all day and every night
Quite often we 'homed' damaged planes by putting
up our light.

The twelve of us at Jordans, and most of us are here
Were like one happy family, a thing we hold most dear
We shared our 'cigs', our clothes and cash, and
sometimes boyfriends too
We had our disagreements as all large families do.

But now we're here together in nineteen eighty two
To celebrate the forty years and all that we went through
So come on raise your glasses, and drink a toast with me
To 'JORDANS' and our memories, the best there'll ever be.

Author: G MITCHELL



"CONTENDERS READY - C J WAS!"

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"You could do that" my boyfriend said, and with that I found myself, with thousands of other hopefuls, at a remote leisure centre in Christchurch, Dorset.

And so it began: an 800m run on the treadmill, followed by heaves and a race across the Monkey bars and up a 20ft rope. Then onto a fight with the pugil stick which led me to the toughest test of all - singing Happy Birthday to RHINO in front of a TV camera!!!

After an expenses paid trip to London Weekend Television for a final selection interview I found out that I was in the last 16 and would be going to Birmingham for a very exciting two weeks.

On arriving at Birmingham I was a nervous wreck. Day 1 reminded me of that first day in the Army when you're rushed around to and from Q stores getting kitted out. This was exactly the same but not so well organised!!

The next three days we spent practising on all the games. By now we all knew which games we had for our first show. Mine were ATLASPHERES, SUMO BALL, SUSPENSION BRIDGE, THE WALL and HANG TOUGH, not forgetting THE ELIMINATOR!

We then spent four days getting used to having the TV cameras there. We also became aware of the 'Gladiators' watching us.

Suddenly, the day arrived when the first shows were to be filmed. Most of us who weren't taking part went to watch. The arena which we had come to know as being quiet was suddenly filled with 7000 very noisy people. At this point I was really pleased I wasn't in the first show and felt sorry for those who were.

Eventually the day of my first show arrived. After a quick trip to Makeup and then Wardrobe I was transformed into "Sgt C J, the Pink Contender".

I managed to sneak out into the Arena and see some of my family and friends. The support I had from the camp here at Worthy Down was tremendous.

Then the show began. All the Gladiators were introduced to the crowd first, each contender had a quick interview with either Ulrika Jonsson or John Fashanu and then we climbed into an ATLASPHERE and the first game began. This was supposed to last 1 minute but it seemed to be over really quickly with neither of us scoring any points - good start!!

THE WALL was next and I was looking forward to this as I quite enjoy climbing. However it was really close and the other girl - Ingrid - beat me to the top to get 10 points and I got 5. This didn't worry me though as I knew I would be fast over the Eliminator, plus we had another three games to do and anything can happen. As they say, it isn't over until the fat lady sings!!

Our third game was SUSPENSION BRIDGE and to be honest I was a bit worried about this because I didn't want to be knocked off in about 2 seconds. I was hoping my



CJ with Gladiator Falcon (Photo J Bright)

boxing training with Sgt Mo Morrison RLC would come in handy - and it did, I stayed up for about 27 seconds. When I fell off the crowd did the normal thing by singing 'Another one bites the dust'.

When I came out onto the Arena floor for the different games I was aware of the crowd making an awful lot of noise, especially my supporters shouting, "CJ, CJ, CJ". As soon as the whistle goes for the game to commence the noise seems to fade into the background while you concentrate on what you're going to try to do.

Onto SUMO BALL, this is a new game where you have to try to force the Gladiator off a platform using a big 75Kg Ball. I was against Falcon. I managed to get 5 points as she didn't fall off and neither did I. Ingrid also got 5 points on this game so she was still 5 points ahead.

Our last game was HANG TOUGH which I really enjoy although it is very difficult to score any points. I was against Lightning - one of the best female Gladiators. She caught me quite quickly, I think I gave her a 'dead leg' when we landed on the mat.

Last, as always, the ELIMINATOR, and as Ingrid scored nothing on HANG TOUGH either she was 5 points ahead giving her a 2.5 second head start. I felt confident with this and managed to catch her up on the scramble net which

was very wobbly with both of us on it together. The next thing I remember is going up the Travelator and through the Paper at the end. I couldn't believe I'd got through first and would be into the next round - 3 days later!!

I really enjoyed my 'Gladiator' experience. All the Gladiators are very nice people and genuinely want you to have a good time. Obviously you will always have your favourites and mine are Wolf and Rhino.

I reached the semi-final before I was Eliminated and was asked to go back and be standby for the Ashes the following week. The girl I was standing by for was injured so I was used to do 2 games and the ELIMINATOR. This seemed to finish it all off nicely.

The series went out on the TV in September with the final being shown just before Christmas. Hope you enjoyed watching!!

Sgt Celina White



*Contender Ready - CJ with John Anderson, Referee
Photo J. Bright*

THE SPORTING LADY STARS OF 27 TRANSPORT REGIMENT ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS

BY
Captain F M King RLC

The Royal Logistic Corps currently employs over 10% women and with the exception of one trade, it really can boast being an equal opportunities Corps within the Army.

Many of its servicewomen were formally WRAC, although most were formally permanently employed royal Corps of Transport, Army Catering Corps, Royal Army Ordnance corps and the postal and courier element of the Royal Engineers. 27 Transport Regiment comprises mainly of drivers and over the last few years has emerged as success story in terms of female sport. Victories have included:

- Current Corps, Divisional and Army Basketballs Champions
- Current Corps and Divisional Athletics Champions
- Current District Aggregate League Cross Country Champions
- Current Army Road Relay Champions
- District Netball Champions.

However, it is the success of exceptional individuals within the Regiment in some unusual sports that this article will highlight.

Lance Corporal Karen Williamson - Judo

Lance Corporal Karen Williamson joined the Army in July 1993 as a radio operator in the RLC. On completion of her basic and trade training she joined 27 Transport Regiment in March 1994. Whilst serving with the Regiment she deployed on a UN operational tour to the FRY in June 1995. Additionally she served under NATO in Bosnia and is currently on 3 days Notice To Move, possibly deploying as part of the Joint Rapid Reaction Force to Zaire. Despite these operational tours, Lance Corporal Williamson has managed to maintain the level of skill and fitness required to be the reigning Combined Services Judo Champion - a title she has retained since she joined the Army.

Lance Corporal Williamson started Judo as a sport when she was 10 years old at her local club in Dagenham, Essex and she still maintains links with the club today. During the years she has represented her school, County (Northern Home Counties) and the pinnacle of her success as a junior was at the 1992 National Judo Championships where she became the British Junior Champion. Her success did not end there for even on joining the Army she became a member of Frimley Judo Club and as well as competing on the Army and Combined Services Level, she still enters the national competition. This year, despite an operational tour, Lance Corporal Williamson gave a simply outstanding performance at the National Championships to finish a very creditable fifth.

In addition to Judo, Lance Corporal Williamson has represented the Regiment at Athletics as well as Cross Country and was the 1995 800m RLC Champion. In summary, Lance Corporal Williamson is an outstanding sportswoman that many should aim to aspire to.

Lance Corporal Tracey Sutton - Athletics

Lance Corporal Tracey Sutton joined the WRAC in October 1990 and on completion of her driver training she was posted to 16 Signals Regiment. In 1994 she joined 27 Transport Regiment, having completed her Assistant Instructor Physical Training Part 3 and 2 prior to her arrival.

Lance Corporal Sutton is an all round sportswoman who has represented the Regiment in a number of sports including football, basketball, netball, orienteering and rounders. However, it is her athletic prowess that

deserves the greatest attention. She has represented Worcestershire County at Cross Country as well as running for the Corps, Army and Combined Services at Cross Country, 200m and 400m. The breadth of her ability demonstrates her all round superb fitness.

Additionally in 1992, Lance Corporal Sutton represented Great Britain in the sport of Ski - bobbing in Bavaria at the World Championships! It is a sport she confesses she loves and would like to do again.

Finally, Lance Corporal Sutton has just passed her selection for Army Physical Training Corps and starts her eight month long course in January. Good Luck.



1996 Corps and Divisional Athletics Champions with LT COL J J Little RLC Co 27 Transport Regiment.
L - R Pte Morgan, LCpl Evans, Pte Bowden, LCpl Gardner, LCpl Sutton, LCpl Gosden, Capt King and LCpl Hunt.

Lance Corporal Tracey Gardner - Womens Rugby

Lance Corporal Tracey Gardner joined the Army in June 1992 as a driver. She was posted to 27 Transport Regiment only recently in September of this year. However, she has served in Northern Ireland on OPERATION BANNER from October 1993 to April 1994.

Lance Corporal Gardner started playing rugby in March 1993 when she was persuaded to join Camberley Cocktails, having played a small amount at sixth form. Such has been her success as a winger that she has moved from a Division 3 side to Division 2 - Alton Ladies. Only recently she has been selected to play South of England and anticipates a possible trial for England in the future. She enjoys rugby as it is a means of expressing aggression as well as the ultimate team game in her eyes. Additionally the training sessions are an extremely good form of fitness.

Finally, Lance Corporal Gardner has also represented her Corps at high jump and she is the current Corps and Inter Corps Champion.

Corporal Lisa Claridge - Netball

Corporal Claridge joined the WRAC in 1991 and on completion of her trade training she was posted to 41

Squadron based at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Additionally she was attached to 68 Squadron during this time to serve as a driver during the Gulf War Conflict. She joined 27 Transport Regiment in March 1994.

Corporal Claridge has been playing netball in the position of Goal Attack since she was nine. During the years she has played for her school, town and from 1985 to 1989 her County. From 1986 to 1989 she played for the North of England and in 1986 she was a trialist for the England Squad.

Corporal Claridge has been playing Corps and Army Netball since 1991.

From this article only four of our most outstanding stars have been highlighted, but it would be wrong not to mention briefly a few others. Lance Corporal Evans and Captain Grimes are currently training within the Army Biathlon Squad in Norway and it is no secret that the Great Britain Selectors are monitoring their progress very closely. Private Witham, having played football at school, is a regular member of the Army Football Team that is becoming a formidable side in the Civilian Divisions. Private Morgan, an ex Welsh Junior Cross Country Champion and regular member of the Corps and Army Teams and finally there is yours truly who is a regular member of the Army Cross Country Team as well as the RLC Cross Country and Athletics Team Captain and Manager. Not bad for a small Regiment!



Capt King, LCpl Sutton, LCpl Williamson meeting HRH showing their respective sports

AGA LADIES SECTION 1996 SEASON CAPTAIN'S REPORT

BY

MAJOR S. J. (SUE) LAMBERT

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INTRODUCTION

This has been a difficult but successful season for Army Womens Golf. Two of the Army team have been away on operations and work commitments have meant that the retired element of the Section has held some of the fixtures together. In addition our Secretary left mid-season on voluntary redundancy. This did not stop us enjoying the season with many successes, and in many ways brought many of the inexperienced members into the limelight organising many events to keep the show on the road. We have enjoyed increasing support from the AGA, making many new friends and enlisting new helpers from their ranks. It was also a season of "firsts" - Army Colours (brooches) were presented to those who had represented the Army, and Army Blazers to those who had played for the Inter-Service Team for two years and made a significant contribution to Army Women's Golf.

GOLF EVENTS

The AGALS Championship, held in the summer was well attended. Maj Mary Woolard AGC(SPS) was Army Ladies Champion (having got three days leave from Bosnia to attend), with Maj Sue Lambert as runner up. WO2 Avis Capper took the bronze medal, this was Avis's first appearance and after this spectacular start, she is now a regular member of the team. The Spring and Autumn Meetings had record attendances - in excess of 35 players and were held at Tidworth and Aldershot respectively. The Spring Meeting was won by Helen Emms, playing off 4, and the Autumn Meeting was won by WO1 Brenda Smith who played to 8, off a handicap of 12.

FIXTURES

Our match record this season was much improved. Out of 10 fixtures we won against: Tidworth Ladies, Devon County, 32 Regt RA, Temple Ladies and York Ladies. We halved matches with Aldershot Ladies, our Retired Ladies and the Ladies of Lloyds Bank. We lost only two matches, one against the AGA and the other against Tyliney Ladies.

INTER SERVICES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1996

The 1996 Inter Service Championship was hosted by the AGA and held at Temple Golf Club. The RAF took the Rose Bowl for the second year in succession with the Army as runners up. The Army team put up a good fight, having managed to retrieve two players, and the team coach (WO2 Ian Grey) from Bosnia 24 hours before play began. We beat the RN 9 & 1, were set to give the RAF a run for their money with 2 & 1 lead in morning foursomes, but in a manner not dissimilar to the Solheim Cup, we could not stand up to their experience in depth in the singles.

Players representing the Army Ladies Team were:

Maj S J Lambert	AGC(ETS)	Captain
Maj M Woolard	AGC(SPS)	
Maj K Toal	AGC(SPS)	
WO1 B Smith	RLC	
WO2 S Stonier	Royal Signals	
WO2 L Chivers	RLC	
SSgt D Richards	APTC Reserve	
Cpl J Donald	3 R Irish Reserve	

Next years Inter-Service Championships will be held at Gainsborough (Karsten Ping's) Golf Club, Lincolnshire.

COMBINED SERVICES 1996

The whole Army Team (6 players) were selected for the Combined Service Squad this year, indicating the strength of our team. This is the most Army players ever selected in one year - building on our record of 4 in 1995. The team played Oxford County in Nov 96 and will play Warwickshire in Apr 97.

CONCLUSION

You will see from this report it has been a very busy and successful season for the AGALS, which despite our disappointment at the Inter-Services has seen a marked improvement in many of our players, with many handicaps being broken. We have again walked new turf, scouted for new talent, improved the standard of Army Ladies Golf and hold a lot of fun. Maj Mary Woolard has now been handed the baton as Vice-Captain and can be contacted on Arborfield Mill (725 2290) if you would like any information on how to join Army Ladies Golf.

1997 Fixtures

Spring Meeting	18 Mar	Tidworth
Army Ladies Championships	16 Jun	Aldershot
Autumn Meeting	6 Oct	Aldershot



AGA Ladies Section Army Team
From left to right: Maj K Toal, WO2 S Stonier, WO1 B Smith, SSgt D Richards, Maj M Woolard, WO2 L Chivers, Gnr Grey, Maj S J Lambert, Cpl J Donald

Stories

A BUSY LIFE

MRS MAVIS CLARK (née Cotton)
Interviewed by Imogen Corrigan



Mrs Mavis Clark (née Cotton) 1944

I interviewed Mrs Clark just after she had returned from a strenuous 2 1/2 hours of teaching ballroom dancing at the club that she runs every week in Basingstoke. Her day sounded exhausting, but then she's only in her seventies; I (in my thirties) was the one who felt weak at the knees at the thought of continuously organising dances, programmes, liaising with musicians and halls and then going on to teach both beginner and advanced students.

She has been dancing for 33 years and turned professional with her husband (Rob) in 1978 after considerable competition success. Until his death three years ago, they gave regular demonstrations as well as teaching. She can turn her hand (or should I say, feet) to Old Time, Modern and Sequence dancing - no, that isn't formation dancing as I had thought, but a sequence of steps repeated again and again until the music is over. Mrs Clark demonstrates the steps and then leads her pupils through it.

This is all a far cry from the day in May 1940 when she left her home on the Isle of Wight having rarely been off the island before, and enlisted into the ATS at Portsmouth. She did her recruit training at Aldermaston Court where

she said she adapted well to the communal life, but sometimes longed for privacy. After that she was sent to Bovington to work as a Steward in the Other Ranks', Sergeants' and finally Officers' Messes. Later on, finding herself back on the Isle of Wight at Carisbrooke Castle working in the Stores, she decided to apply to become Provost.

The training for this consisted of about six weeks at Mytchett under the beady eye of a Guards Sergeant Major during which she learned all about military and civilian law, how to work with the Civilian Police, map reading and also self defence - fortunately she never had to use this last skill. She was then sent to HQ Southern Command at Salisbury and was rapidly promoted to Sergeant. Time off for leave was welcome but slightly different for her as she had to have an embarkation card in order to be allowed to travel to the Island.



Mrs Mavis Clark dancing with her husband Rob

By the end of the war she had married Cpl Rob Clark of 2nd Independent Brigade Parachute Regiment RE and was de-mobbed in December 1945 as she was expecting a child. Rob became a police officer in Basingstoke where Mrs Clark has made her home ever since. She worked part time for Marks & Spencers for many years and eventually became Chairman of their Retired Staff Association, a position she held for several years, having also been Secretary.

Her daughter, Judith, works in the Gambia, teaching children with severe learning difficulties but is expected home for good in January as her first grandchild - Mrs Clark's first great grand-child - is due in February 1997.

MRS EILEEN KISBY (Née Boardman)

Interviewed by Imogen Corrigan, October 1996

Mrs Kisby worked in a cinema in 1939 and so was hardly surprised to hear that war had broken out as she'd seen every news reel. She joined up in 1941 having first applied to the WAAF. They told her first of all to have two teeth taken out and then quibbled because she didn't have the full set. She very sensibly decided to go into the ATS instead.

She did her recruit training in Lincolnshire and said it was fairly devastating at first to find herself in a huge barrack room. She was selected to be an orderly and was posted to work with the FANYs at 123 MT Coy RASC, Harpenden. Throughout all her service, she remained with the FANYs, moving to Sevenoaks and Chatham. After about a year she was sent on a 6 week course at Guildford to learn how to become a cook. She remembers making huge trays of steak and onion, casseroles, Canadian strawberry cakes and gooseberry fools. It was hard work but she was able to vary the menus as much as the rations issued allowed. 'I did have an orderly' she told me, 'who used to help wash up and scrub floors and so on. I was on my feet all day but we still managed to go out in the evenings.'

Mrs Kisby was de-mobbed in the summer of 1945 in the rank of Lance Corporal and went back to her old job at first. Later on she married Freddie who stayed with the Royal Hampshire Regiment for 24 years, so she became an army wife and travelled with him around UK and to Germany. Freddie died 3 years ago. Her early energy and stamina stood her in good stead as, at the age of 60, she took up ballet. She said it was difficult at first to get a teacher to take her on but she soon showed her ability and danced in a short ballet at the age of 62. Now that she is 78, Mrs Kisby has had to give up ballet and misses it but fills her time writing stories and poems instead. For many years she was an artist's model and had to be fit to keep her limbs supple enough to bear holding a pose often for hours at a time. She modelled for students at Southampton Art College and for a professional artist.

Mrs Kisby now lives near Tunbridge Wells and has one daughter, Carol.



Mrs Eileen Kisby (née Boardman) with her ballet shoes

HAVE BIKE - WILL TRAVEL MRS BRENDA HORNESS (Née Varty) DESPATCH RIDER

Interviewed by Imogen Corrigan, October 1996

Mrs Brenda Horness was 16 on the day that war broke out and could not have imagined then that she would join the Army and be nearly 23 by the time she was de-mobbed. On leaving school she worked as a cashier/book-keeper but enlisted into the ATS at Middlesbrough when she was 19. She had hoped to become a driver but was delighted when she was selected to be a Despatch Rider during her recruit training at Queen Ethelberger's School, Harrogate. After 4 weeks motor cycle training at Camberley she was posted to 913 Coy, Blundellsands and attached to CRASC. With the aid of a pocket sized 16 page road atlas she began finding her way around, sometimes resorting to navigating by the position of the sun. Town and Unit signs had, of course, been removed and she found herself sometimes studying the blacked-out words or working out from nail holes left in board what the letters were that used to be there. She vividly recalls the winters during which her hands were frozen and her face veil sometimes full of ice when she took it off.

Mrs Horness described to me one day that stands out in her mind: 'I was on my way to Group HQ and was climbing up a mountain side. Just as I reached the top, my throttle cable broke. Looking around, there were no living things except sheep so I thought that if I slid off the outer casing, the wire would wrap around my gloved hand and I could lever it, resting on my thigh. I limped in bottom gear to civilisation and asked some soldiers for a workshop. They directed me and a Fitter soldered it for me so I could carry on to HQ. Later in the day, on the return trip, I ran into a snowstorm on the very same pass of my breakdown. That was a bad day' It wasn't over yet, because when she got back she found the lights had fused in the billet through a girl hanging her pressed uniform on a bare wire in a wall light, mistaking it for a nail in the darkness. An even worse day, in my opinion, would have been the one when she was knocked flying off her motor bike and fractured her skull. Even now she has no memory of what happened. I'm delighted to say that she made a full recovery.



1945 Pte Varty B W/249378 on 350cc Matchless

Travelling around Liverpool after the bombing was not without its hazards for the Despatch Riders who were riding motor bikes which often had threadbare tyres at the best of times. Corporation lorries carrying rubble out to be dumped in the sea left a trail of broken glass and nails which meant there were frequent punctures to repair; sometimes two Don Rs had to set out together to ensure that at least one bike would be able to get through.

The motorbikes she rode were 350 cc Ariels and 350 cc Matchless (see photo) so it came as a surprise to her, 46 years after the war, to find herself performing with the White Helmets on a 750 cc bike whose controls were almost entirely different. Friends from Cleveland Branch got in touch with the team originally arranging for her to ride a bike round the perimeter of the display arena whilst the White Helmets performed. The men were so impressed with her ability that they made her part of the team for the day. I have seen a video clip of her on top of a ladder balanced on a bike, arms outstretched and beaming; not a job for the faint-hearted.

After her de-mob in July 1946 Mrs Horness returned to Loftus to look after her grandmother and widowed father. She married Leslie in June 1948 and had one son, David. Leslie returned to work at British Steel after the war and unfortunately has now died. He was in fact survived by Mrs Horness's father who continued to live with her until his death.

Over the years, Mrs Horness has used her military skills by teaching Juvenile Jazz Bands to march. Twelve years ago she took up sequence dancing. She is much involved in the local community, being the Treasurer of St Leonard's church and on the PCC. She helps to clean the church and is a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator. She is fond of gardening and helps her son with his garden whenever she can. Mrs Horness also shops for the elderly living near her and leads a very active life. Elsewhere in this edition is a poem written by her; a talent she found she had after her husband died and she began to write down her memoirs. In 1984 she saw an advertisement for the Cleveland Branch of the WRAC Association and joined, making many friends through it.



Mrs Brenda Horness (née Varty) today

A NEW MEMBER

By
Barbara Reeves (née Absolon)

When a new friend, seeing a photograph of myself in ATS uniform, asked me why I did not bring to the local branch of the ATS and WRAC, it was the first I knew of the Association, although I had lived in Colchester for over forty years.

'We meet in the hall just across the park from where you live. Once a month. Why don't you come along?'

'Why not?' I said.

I found everyone friendly. When my neighbour asked where I had served and I told her No. 1 War Office Signals she exclaimed, 'So did I.' I did not recognise her, and discovered that she had worked on a different shift and as she was working when I was sleeping and vice versa we had never met, although we were billeted in the same block of flats in Ashley Gardens, shared the same mess room and Company offices. She looked remarkably young, and I hoped she might think the same of me.

Looking around among strange faces I soon noticed some I recognised, not from years ago but from amongst acquaintances in Colchester. I had had no idea that we shared the same wartime memories. I was amazed that the membership was so large - admittedly including more than just the town, but a large area of N.E. Essex. I decided to join and now look forward to the one afternoon a month when we meet and the promise of outings to come.



The Princess Royal inspecting members of the War Office Signals outside the Communication Centre in Whitehall in 1943. Five from the right - Barbara Reeves (Absolon), on her right Olive Evans

Of course, this brought back memories. I wondered where my special friends were now. After de-mob we kept in touch for a while, but with marriage, families and moving house, addresses were mislaid.

OLIVE EVANS, darkhaired Welsh charmer. Did you marry your soldier? **LYNNE**, friend and mentor, who lived in London at the time, as did I. Your son must be nearing fifty, as are my girls. Where are you now?

Do you sometimes remember those years at War Office? When we worked hard and snatched at what ever pleasures came our way; occasional free tickets for a show, dancing at the Palais, waffles and maple syrup at the Stage Door Canteen. Walking back to billets as dawn was breaking on a summer morning, through St James's Park with dew on the grass and the sweet scent of roses. Rollicking home in the dark on winter mornings, arms linked and singing, high with tension and overwork. Fumbling through a pea-souper fog, clinging to the railings and

exchanging pleasantries with the driver of a number eleven bus, off route and crawling along Birdcage Walk.

Of course there were the bad times. The Sunday morning when a buzz-bomb tore through the Guards Chapel while a service was in progress. The night when another, exploding nearby, brought cool down the basement chimney where we were sleeping, an emergency shelter before the dreaded deep shelters at Clapham Common. And the scruffy buff postcard hastily scrawled by a Red Cross helper in an Emergency Field Hospital.

I don't forget, but I prefer to remember good times and the friends, spread throughout the country - indeed the world - sharing memories that will be with us always.

RECOLLECTIONS OF WORLD WAR TWO AND THE ATS

By
Mary Eisy

I was still at school at the onset of World War Two. But after my school had evacuated to Tintagel in Cornwall, I obtained a job in the food Office in St Pancras Town Hall. However life in London became difficult when the air raids started. As my family lived in a flat above our photography business in Finchley Road, Hampstead there was nowhere to put a shelter. We had to use the one in the street, which we shared with people living round about.

We were lucky in that we were staying the night with friends when a bomb fell on the public library opposite, blasting the buildings nearby. As my mother had recently received a letter from a relative in Taunton, Somerset,



Mary Eisy ATS 1942 - 1946

inviting her, my sister and myself (my father had already died and my brother was in the Army) to live with them, we left London. After a short stint working in Taunton Food Office, my sister and I decided to join the ATS in early 1942. She was turned down on account of her health. I, just old enough to join, was accepted.

My life underwent a dramatic change. After three weeks at Honiton Training Centre, I found myself at Melton Mowbray with a group of other girls, all allocated to AA Command as shorthand typists. However, when I was eventually interviewed by the Junior Commander there, I was told that I was to be a cipher clerk and that I would be posted to 32 AA Brigade, near Stamford. 32 AA Brigade was situated in a large old rectory in which Charles Kingsley had once lived as a boy. It was reputedly haunted by a ghost called Button-cap (referred to his nightcap) a miserly old Rector who returned periodically to search for his missing money. Our camp was situated in the surrounding garden. For recreation there was a small WVS canteen in Barnock village and the local Red Lion. The old town of Stamford was about five miles away and Peterborough about fifteen. Our chief diversions were long walks and cycle rides; or sometimes in the evenings, we sat around the fire in our nissen-hut, mending, cleaning buttons and discussing everything under the sun.



Photo taken at Holton Training Camp. Mary Elsey looking left to right 5th place back row

We girls were being trained to replace the men, who were to be sent abroad. Ken, a corporal and the only other cipher clerk, had to show me his job. Secret messages and some not so secret arrived in code, which we had to decipher. Although I believe the duty officer sometimes used to check our results over the phone!!

When Ken was finally posted away and I took over his work full time, I inherited his stripes, so that my advance in the Army was fairly rapid. Although cipher messages weren't very frequent they often arrived in the middle of the night, which meant I had to sit in the haunted room at HQ to decipher them. After a cipher course in Nottingham six months later, I was posted to South Wales District HQ in Abergavenny, a delightful little town surrounded by mountains, on the borders of Wales. Here the cipher office comprised a Captain and two Sergeants.

After another course, this time at Heme Hill, London, I was posted to C 6 Tels at the War Office. There were approximately 60 ATS in my unit, who were divided into three shifts. We were unique in that we all carried the rank of CSM (Company Sergeant Major) or RSM (Regimental Sergeant Major). This rank went with our job; we did no administration. In fact, we were such a motley undisciplined

lot that we were subjected to drill once a week by a proper male Sergeant-Major at Wellington Barracks.

We were billeted in some of the beautiful houses in the Sloane Square area. However, because of the buzz bombs and rockets, cipher ATS who lived in London area were encouraged to leave home. If a bomb had fallen on our group of houses it would have destroyed a number of key staff.

By now my mother and sister had returned to London. I think they found Taunton too quiet. Although flats in Hampstead were then fairly easy to find, one took a chance. Two earlier flats offered to them but turned down, were later demolished by buzz bombs. Their flat was only two bus stops away from our former home. I had left Finchley Road, bombed out; I had returned to Finchley Road, to be under fire again. We became quite used to picking up glass from broken windows, or sweeping up plaster from crashed ceilings.

I felt safest at work. Our four cipher offices were situated in a labyrinth of passage ways deep down below the War Office - it was said you could walk to the War Cabinet Offices - and amongst rumbling pipes and air shafts. Rats lived there too. One sometimes saw them sitting on the pipes along the corridors. There were cats - 'official civil servants' - around to keep them down.

Night shifts lasted sixteen hours and our working conditions were bad. It was noisy - we worked on clattering machines; dirty, airless and as hot as the tropics. Added to this was fatigue, for the pressure of work was extreme. Many of the war's most important messages came and went through our offices.

However, they were too many and too varied for us to make much sense of what was happening in the war. But we were more than just super typists. Letters in messages were often transmitted incorrectly over the radio. Sometimes messages would not start; parts did not make sense, or vital words were missing. One needed to be good with words and have infinite patience.

My best moment came early one morning. It was 4 am and some of us had just descended from bed. If the work was not too excessive, groups were allowed to take four hours sleep during the night shift.

A girl looked up sleepily from the typed message she was sticking down. "It's started. They've landed in Normandy". Although she spoke laconically, our excitement was intense. For the past few months, we had continually been receiving and despatching OVERLORD messages about the movement of troops, vehicles, guns, stories and mysterious things called 'mulberries'. At long last it was happening. The Second front which was to lead to the final defeat of Germany had begun. And we were among the first to know about it.

At home it was on the morning news. It was what we Londoners had waited for for so long. We hoped that it would herald the end of the raids, the war and a return to normal life again.

By
Winnie Miles (née Melville)

I volunteered for the ATS in February 1942 and became Pte Melville (W138178). I reported to Dalkeith Training Centre and then it was up at 6 am, lights out at 10 pm, kitted out with various garments that did not fit and 4 weeks of drilling, inoculations, inspections etc. The few nights we were allowed out we had to be back in barracks by 9 pm, not even time to see the end of a film at the local Picture House (Cinema). The first Saturday we were



14 Squad SOTB Trowbridge, April/Aug 1942
Top Row, L to R: Pat Day, Josie Mercer, Audrey Wright, Flo Cothorn, Hetty Vickers, Amy Sikes, Isabel Grant (Scotty), Maida Hancock, Marjorie Burton, Joy Carr.
Middle Row: Barbara Winfield, Winnie Melville Mabel Banks, Joyce Cothorn, Joanna Singh, Enid Watson, Nancy McMorran, Kay Hiddick, Molly Williams.
Bottom Row: Betty Stockdale, Margaret Livingstone (Topsy), Merris Whitenburgh, Hazel Elvey (Sg IC Squad), Vera Walker, Joan Shore, Hermione Baker.

allowed out, my friends and I took the bus to Edinburgh, had lunch in a cafe where we almost disgraced ourselves by starting to walk out with the cutlery.

Following aptitude tests I was told I could train for any trade I desired, so hopefully I suggested Physical Training or Driving. Oh no, there were no vacancies so I was thus steered into the trade of a Special Operator. After a week or two in Holding Platoon doing odd jobs, I was used as receptionist in the Officers' Mess. A group of us went by rail to Trowbridge (SOTB) in Wiltshire via London and Bristol and at Bristol Railway Station the WVS gave us tea in jam jars as they had run out of cups.

During our training at Trowbridge the bombing of Bristol took place. The bombers passed directly over us and we could see the flames in the sky over Bristol. A few bombs were dropped on our camp but luckily no damage was done although we were ordered into the surrounding fields and spent a cold miserable night. Next day it was discovered we had been in a field with an unexploded bomb, not a pleasant thought. There was also another incident when a German fighter plane flew out of the clouds when the whole camp was on parade. The parade was dismissed with great speed but the pilot must have been surprised as we were, as he vanished back into the clouds.

After approximately 4 months' training in 14 Squad, we passed our exams and were posted to Garats Hey at Woodhouse, near Loughborough. We were then organized into Watches. I personally was on C Watch and went to Quorn, where we lived in several requisitioned houses, the main ones being The Hurst, The Old Bull's Head, Soar House and Rose Cottage. We did 6 hour shifts being taken by truck to Beaumanor where we did our stint as operators and the Intelligence Corps lived.

A few months before D Day, American paratroopers came to do training very near to Quorn. Just before D Day we were kept awake by the sound of convoys continually passing through Quorn which was on the main A6 road. I later found out that these Americans were those who parachuted around St. Mere-Eglise.

When the war ended I signed on for another year and came off ops. I then became ration Cpl (though only a LCpl) at Quorn and eventually moved into HQ in Loughborough as a clerk. However as all my friends were being demobbed I left in June 1946 from York.

Strangely enough I joined the Control Commission for Germany on leaving the ATS and went for a fortnight's training and kitting to Bletchley Park. At the time I did not realise the connection with Beaumanor.

It has taken nearly 50 years before we realised just what we were doing and we never mentioned it to anyone, even wives did not tell their husbands. It is a pity we did not get together after the 30 years, not 50, when we are all getting rather old, although still young in spirit.

LIVING HISTORY

By

Mrs E R Blanchflower, née Elsie Marshall
(Norfolk and Suffolk Branch)

PDF Compressor Free Version

When my granddaughter told me that the subject of the forthcoming history lesson at school was to be the Second World War I was shocked to think that I was now considered to be HISTORY and that the years I had spent in the Forces and which still seem so real to me was, to the young generation, a fleeting moment in time in the country's past. I might, I told myself, be on a par with Cromwell or Napoleon! But my granddaughter asked me to write down my memories, and when I found that she and her classmates were deeply interested in my reminiscences it was then I realised what a good opportunity for them to have a living account of those days and not, as I had done, rely on other dry-as-dust written accounts of long-dead people and events which had dominated history lessons in my schooldays.

So, I wrote down my recollections of my service days. I had enlisted at Martineau Hall in Norwich in July 1941 at the age of 17, and in August was instructed to report to Glen Parva Barracks, Wigston, Leicester. There I and my companions were tested for various jobs on gun-sites to take the place of men who were needed overseas to fight. After one month's training, and all the necessary inoculations, we were sent to Park Hall Camp, Oswestry to form 473(M) HAA Battery, 135 Regiment Royal Artillery. There we met the men who were all to train as gunners, they were mainly in their 30s and 40s and were not fit for front-line fighting and desert warfare. We trained for one month on the Predictor, Heightfinder and Spotter instruments and telephones. Then we were sent to Tycores Firing Camp, Anglesey for firing practice which meant firing at a sleeve being towed by an Anson plane. Didn't we get a rocket if the shell burst too close to the plane! But of course if it hit the sleeve there were jubulations all round. After a month here we were considered good enough to man the numerous AA gun-sites up and down Gt Britain.

Our first site was on Tyne-side where we remained for almost three years. Here we were credited with bringing down 8 enemy planes. The Airforce told us when hostile aircraft were in our area - the alarm bells would ring and those on duty would run like mad to 'take post' - in other words, to man their various instruments. When an enemy aircraft was spotted it was 'all systems go! The heightfinder would shout 'On Target' and give height and range of the plane; the predictor girls would be working like mad on the various dials on the predictor and call out which fuse the gunners had to set on the shells. All this information had to be yelled to the gunners, a few yards away, then all hell was let loose as the men fired all four big guns at the same time.

After about eighteen months as I changed my job and became a GL girl (a gun-layer). This meant guiding the guns by radar. Three of us girls would sit in the radar receiver cabin and two would be in the transmitter cabin some 40 yards away. We would be watching cathode-ray tubes for any sign of enemy aircraft overhead. Our own planes would give out a signal every so many seconds which would show up on our screens as small blips, so if we got latched on to one that was not signalling in this way it was 'all systems go' - again! All our information would travel along cables to the predictor girls and the gunners who would then repeat the former procedure and away the guns would blast until the plane disappeared from our screens.

Some time during 1943 we were posted to a camp at Linwood, near Paisley in Scotland. This was a dummy gun-

site with wooden guns. I think it was to give us all a break but nevertheless we still had to go through the motions every day so as not to forget what our jobs were. In January 1944 we were sent to another camp further into the hills at Bishopton - miles from anywhere. Then came spring and D-Day was being secretly planned. We were moved during the night so that no one knew of any troop movements and arrived in Winchester around noon and boarded Army lorries to take us to a gun-site three miles away. What a shock. We were allocated to tents which were to be our home until autumn. The men were in bell-tents and the ATS slept four to a tent. While here the Princess Royal paid us a visit. It was here also that we witnessed all the Horsa Gliders taking thousand upon thousand air-borne soldiers over to France and Holland - a sight all of us will never never forget.

Next posting was to a gun-site at Totton, just outside Southampton, but in November moved on to a site in London, right in the centre of Lewisham, known as Doodlebug Alley. Here we were firing at rockets.

After two or three months we were then moved to what was to be our last gun-site at No. 2 Polo Ground, Hurlingham. The war came to an end and the artillery batteries were being disbanded. We were asked for volunteers for Ceylon, to be trained as switchboard operators. A friend and myself put our names forward after undergoing medical tests and inoculations we were posted to St Neots for training. We didn't like this job at all and backed out so we were retrained and remustered as technical storewomen at a vehicle reserve depot in Aberford, Leeds. There were thousands of Army vehicles there, half-tracks, Tilly trucks, Jeeps, Troop-carriers and our job was to service them, respray them, rustproof them underneath, etc. It was here that my service days came to an end (sadly) and I was discharged with an exemplary record in April 1946.



473 BTY RA 135 Regt
Mrs Blanchflower (née Elsie Marshall)

By
Mrs Joan Hynson (née Sales)

Mrs Joan Hynson is pictured with her embroidery of the ATS badge which she did in 1946. The photograph doesn't entirely do it justice as it's a beautiful thing mainly done in a raised satin stitch that shows off the richness of the colours. She also has another that she did of the RAF badge as her brother was serving in it. The embroideries originally came from Penelope Patterns.

Mrs Hynson was still at school when war broke out. She was then in a Protected Employment and so didn't manage to get into uniform until February 1945 despite her efforts. She was sent to Dalkeith for basic training and then to Rugby where she was a Clerk in the Heavy Ack Ack Records Office where she was stationed at 1, Hillmorton Road. Perhaps the worst thing there was having to keep huge boilers alight; they were terrifying machines that pumped out so many fumes that you could hardly breathe in the cellars - not something that a Health and Safety Officer would approve of today.

After VE Day, Mrs Hynson was sent to London and was based in Lady Astor's house for a while (which had fantastic bath fittings). After a short time there, she was posted to Wilton where she spent exactly two nights before being moved on again to the Company Office at Larkhill. It was here that they experienced such a bad winter that the girls were sent home, but couldn't reach the railway station and found themselves floundering through deep snow.

It was her job at one time to write to enquiring parents and wives, explaining why their men had not been demobbed as soon as hostilities ceased; a thankless task not least because she had no idea when her own demob date would be. She finally left the Army on 19 March 1947 having thoroughly enjoyed her Service. Since then she has moved numerous times. She has been a publican as well as running catering businesses, and once ran the catering operation at Westbury for the Regular Commissions Board. She is now widowed and has settled in Church Crookham near her daughter.



Mrs Joan Hynson and her Embroidery

RYE MEMORIAL CARE CENTRE FRIENDSHIP TABLECLOTH - CORA WOOLLEY

In 1992 it had been decided that the Rye & Winchelsea Memorial Hospital should be rebuilt, but, the public had to raise something in the region of £1 million. Many ideas came to life, of how to do this. One morning when passing the site, I said to Cecil, my husband, "Do you think I could raise some money with one of my Friendship Tablecloths?", he said "Perhaps". With a lot of thought I purchased a round cloth, rather larger than others I had done, for the R.B.L. Poppy Appeal and the ATS Association and so I began. Firstly I contacted Paul & Linda McCartney and Family, Paul & Linda being Patrons. They were the first to sign their names, together with some members of their Band. My next move was to The Rye Monday Clubs Coffee Morning, and names began to be written on the cloth. I was then busy embroidering these in the chosen colours of those who had signed. I attended several other functions over a period of three years, the biggest being the Open Day of the completed building, which was now called "The Rye Memorial Care Centre". Paul & Linda McCartney and family, as they toured the building stopped for about 15 minutes encouraging people to sign, and on that day with my husband taking the donations we raised £477 in less than two hours. My total was creeping up far beyond my expectations.

The Great Day was when Princess Margaret came to open the Centre on 23rd November 1995. My husband and I were invited and I was given a table, in the day room, on which to display the cloth, which by now was nearly full of names. On her tour of the building H.R.H. Princess Margaret came into the room, and Gordon Cambell, Manager, presented me to her, and she showed great interest in the cloth, and much to everyone's pleasure she signed her name in the centre under the Centre Emblem, which was the Rye Crest. This was a great day for me.

I have counted the names on the cloth from my record book and there are approximately 516 names and about 10 Associations. I finally finished the cloth at the end of 1995, with the outstanding total of £1,484.

At the moment the cloth is in the process of being framed and will hang in the main entrance hall of the Care Centre.

I never thought my effort would be so popular and of so much interest. I have had many relaxing hours embroidering all those names of those who so generously gave. As a finishing note, one little lad about 5 years called Garath signed his name unaided, and put his hand in his pocket and gave me 2p. I was very proud of that little lad.



Mrs Woolley and her Friendship Tablecloth

DOING OUR BIT!

By
Sheila Tooley, (née Weller) ex ATS
Colchester Branch - ATS Association

Many articles and stories have been written since the last war about the ATS girls who served on gun sites and without decrying them in any way - they did a marvellous job - there were many others of us who did more mundane jobs about whom you never read. For instance there were the cooks who worked long and unsociable hours to feed us and the clerks and storekeepers.

I was a stenographer in the Orderly Room of the Scots Guards at Pirbright (Surrey) which involved many weary hours of shorthand and typing training programmes, confidential reports and mountains of correspondence. Often this meant working well into the evening to get things finished. Another of my duties was to man the switchboard when the operator was away or at lunch - a job which the girls also did admirably. None of this was very exciting work but was nevertheless an important part of the war effort. The clerks also had to go on PT runs early each morning and on occasions went over the Camp obstacle course which was shown in the David Niven film 'The Way Ahead'. Being dressed in our little shorts and tops this naturally resulted in much cat-calling from any watching Guardsmen.

In camp there was much friendly rivalry between the cooks and clerks since the cooks had to get up at a very early hour and we did not have to be in our offices until 0830. There was no malice in this however and when for instance a special late meal had been prepared for the Guards Officers we would be woken up about midnight with fancy 'goodies' and a cup of tea - a great treat for us! Another episode involved my friend and I when we had been to a Camp Dance and came in after lights out. Creeping through the Barrack room in the dark holding our shoes in our hands we found that our beds had completely disappeared! The cooks had taken them all to pieces and hidden them. You can imagine the commotion that caused but we all saw the funny side of things eventually. As well as doing our particular jobs we all had to take part in other tasks involving the ATS around the Camp. For instance I remember we represented our Camp in a drill competition at Wellington Barracks (London). After being painstakingly trained by our Guards Drill Sergeant, we arrived at the barracks from Pirbright in an Army truck all geared up to do our best. The Princess Royal was to take the salute but unfortunately as we passed the saluting base our ATS Sergeant gave us the order 'Eyes Left' instead of 'Eyes Right'. A gasp went up from the onlookers but we all obeyed the order going cross-eyed trying to look at the Princess as we marched past with our heads facing the wrong direction! This mistake and the fact that we were doing Guards Drill lost us the competition but we were considered the smartest contingent and the fact that we had obeyed the order given reflected a high standard of discipline. Consequently we came second which somewhat eased our disappointment.

Although we all worked hard at our jobs and felt we were doing our bit for our Country we also had a lot of fun and a great sense of comradeship and many like myself made life-long friends.

DESERT CONVOY DRIVING

By
Major (Retd) Daphne Lance

513 MT Coy: was situated on a stretch of Desert adjoining an Ordnance Vehicle Depot: 10 kms past Mena House on the Alexandria Road.

The Company consisted of a few British Officers and NCOs, the rest were mainly Jewesses from Palestine and the lucky ones who had escaped from Europe. We had a few Greeks, one Abyssinian and a fine looking Yemenite who did a wonderful camel dance and looked magnificent carrying the Standard. There were also a few Arabs.

We were housed in large wooden store huts and had to use mosquito nets in the winter to keep the rats off our faces.

All water had to be brought up by cart for the ablutions and the cook houses. We had bucket latrines in the quarters and a long line of deep trench latrines outside with a few open holes for the Arabs who squatted.

Just after 'V' Day the ATS Inspector visited ATS Units in Cairo. When she came out to us she had not realised we had no water laid on and when we came to the Arab loos she said "How nice foot baths for the Girls"!

The girls moved the vehicles about the Ordnance Depot and delivered checked vehicles on a daily run, on a flat boring road to Alexandria. I once heard a girl say "I hope you break down by the dead camel"! After a long hard days work they would study for exams they had missed out on.

As the battle progressed we delivered vehicles farther up the desert and finally to Tripoli West where they were shipped to Sicily. We also delivered them across the Sinai desert to Haifa and once or twice to Tripoli East, ferrying old vehicles for Russia. We delivered fifty to one hundred vehicles and the run to Tripoli West took twelve days.

Some nights we were provided with tented accommodation or the floor of a NAAFI. Other nights we pulled into staging areas which had been cleared of mines. Our vehicles were filled with stores so we slept on the sand. All male convoys were fully armed but we were allotted one male fitter who was woken by the ATS guard if there was trouble and he would let off a few rounds. Friendly Arabs appeared during the day and we would swap our dried used tea leaves for eggs.

We carried enough tinned food for the journey but could exchange biscuits for bread at NAAFI's. We carried enough petrol and water until we got to a supply point. The water ration was one bottle a day in that heat! I used to clean my teeth and swallow it. We cleaned our cutlery and bodies with sand.

Cooking consisted of digging a hole in the sand, filling a large dixie with tinned food and lighting petrol underneath it. Extra time had to be allowed to negotiate passes such as "Hell Fire Pass". The Convoy might be halted for sand storms and once by a locust swarm which blacked out everything and painfully hitting drivers in open vehicles.

Sometimes I had men tacked onto the Convoy who had previously broken down. I ran them all at the back. Every two hours there was a stop of 20 minutes. We couldn't go off the road to relieve ourselves because of the mines so the command was "Ladies to the front, gentlemen to the rear widdle"! The first night was staged outside Alexandria in hutted accommodation, the second at Matrou in a staging area having scaled "Hell Fire Pass" which had been crudely repaired by the Sappers. We stopped at El AlAmain with the acres of graves. Another staging area the next night but Tobruk gave us tented accommodation. The harbour was full of wrecks. A lovely run to Derna - a beautiful green oasis. Benghazi was always hospitable. Marble Arch area a great white edifice standing all alone. Sirte with unexploded mines sticking out of the roads, civilization at Miserata and then Tripoli.

The desert was ever changing, hard sand, soft sand, yellow, pink, and greens the occasional mirage.

Hard work and happy days!

THE MILITARY MOTHER

An Interview with Captain Gale Scanlon RMP

By

Inogen Corrigan
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In 1990 the rules in the Army changed so that married women could stay in the Army after they had had a child. For many years prior to that they were discharged, but were always entitled to apply to rejoin (assuming that they were medically fit, that they could guarantee 24 hour child care 7 days a week and that there was a vacancy for them). Very few people can be unaware that there have been court cases recently brought by women who are claiming that their dismissal on pregnancy was unfair.

I have been talking to Captain Gale Scanlon who is currently working at the AG Corps Recruiting & Liaison Branch at Worthy Down. She has a baby daughter, Saoirse (pronounced Seersha), who was born on 8 January 1996. Capt Scanlon has continued with her service.

Capt Scanlon comes from Omagh and joined the OTC whilst at university studying Theatrical Production and Direction. She joined the UDR and was one of the first "Greenfinches" to do the long Officer Training course at Sandhurst, being commissioned in August 1988. She was first posted to 4 UDR Enniskillen but in March 1991 was selected for a UK tour at Guildford where she was first the 2IC of HQ & H Coy and later an Instructor in the Warrant Officers & NCOs Training Wing (working for me, in fact). She married Sean on 5 October 1991 only 4 days after her transfer to the WRAC was approved. On the disbandment of the WRAC, she transferred again to the RMP and was posted to London District as Operations Officer and Coy 2IC and finally to her present appointment. Her husband has left the Army and is now a social worker in Southern Ireland.

Having now got 4 cap badges to her credit, Capt Scanlon applied to extend her Short Service Commission by one year but decided to leave the Army in January 1997 to be with her husband. This decision was made long before she discovered that Saoirse was on the way. Here are some questions I put to Capt Scanlon in her office in last October.

When you first joined the Army, you would have had to have left if you became pregnant. What did you think about that?

When I look back now I can think of plenty of girls whom I had to counsel about pregnancy. It never occurred to me that it was unfair that they had to leave. At the time I thought that was perfectly reasonable; you joined the Army knowing the rules and if you took the Queen's Shilling you had to abide by them. I played the party line and I used to explain to the girls what the rules were although I was very sympathetic to them. I always told them that they could apply to re-enlist.

By the time you discovered you were pregnant yourself, the rules had changed. What made you decide to serve on?

I had a tremendous boost of confidence from other women who had done this and I also had a very supportive boss. The system overall doesn't go out of its way to help, but within the RMP they were very helpful. I took the minimum maternity leave of 14 weeks and I was able to go back to the same job as they had held the vacancy for me. Saoirse was almost exactly 3 months old when I returned to work.

How easy was it to be pregnant whilst in the Army?

I think that in this job I was fairly protected. I had been in the appointment for a while and had built up a good working relationship and had been able to show my own ability. This wasn't detracted from at all whilst I was

pregnant. The main problem was that there was no maternity uniform then and I did find that became an issue; if you have no uniform you have no immediate credibility amongst those who don't know you.

How easy was it to go back to work?

It was hard in that I had to leave my husband behind. I have to say that it was not as difficult as I thought it would be. The main reason for that is that I have an excellent live-in nanny. Some of my colleagues have not had that good fortune and it's made all the difference. Of course there have been times when the nanny has been ill and once or twice I've had to bring Saoirse to the office. Luckily there is a room here where she can sleep; one of the comments has been that she's been less trouble than all the numerous dogs around the place, but that's another story!

In which ways do you think this was easier/harder than for a civilian mother?

Obviously it depends on the job you do. As everyone knows, in the Army you can be posted anywhere. If you take maternity leave, a vacancy as an officer or as a servicewoman is held open for you but it may not be in the same appointment or even in the same Unit. About 3 weeks before you are due to report for duty, you have to confirm in writing that you are going to return to work as you still have an option. Postings are not allocated until this letter is received so right up until the last minute you don't know where you will be, or anything about the demands of the job. Then you have to start arranging child care et cetera. You have very little control at this point. I was lucky because I was able to return to the same job and I always knew that.

If you were staying in the Army, do you feel that your postings would be restricted now?

If I could take my nanny with me wherever I went that wouldn't be a problem so, no.



Capt Gale Scanlon and Baby Saoirse

If you were suddenly posted to Bosnia or similar, what would you do?

That would cause problems. I'd have to send Saoirse and all my kit to Ireland and my husband would have her for a while. That said, I wouldn't consider leaving the Army. Tours like Bosnia are part of army life and very much the luck of the draw. You can't ask for special treatment just because you're a mother but at the same time one would hope that one wasn't being penalised.

Would it help if there were crèches on Camp?

Yes. I think we have a lot to learn from other armies, particularly the Norwegians, Swedes et cetera who've been allowing women to serve with children a lot longer than we have. I do think that if there was a crèche on a base like this that was available to both military and civilian women, they'd make a fortune out of it and it would certainly make life a lot easier. There are a lot of women here who are juggling work with quite unsatisfactory child care.

How sympathetic are your colleagues to your situation?

Very mixed. Here, in this environment, people are sympathetic but then we're all much of an age and there's another girl here in the same situation. I'm very conscious that I don't want to make a big issue of it.

Have you had any adverse comments?

A few - mostly from the older men and, perhaps, bachelor types. Some of them have been completely horrified at my turning up at a dinner in a maternity evening dress with my medal on it. And I think a few of the older female officers have found it a bit bizarre. It's all still very new.

Do you feel you are still as committed to your work as you used to be?

Yes, but your priorities change and you get a different perspective on life. I have been told that I've mellowed but I don't know if that's true. At the end of the day something's got to give. It's almost impossible to give 100% both to your job and to your child but you can only try. I don't feel that my standards have slipped in any way.

Do you colleagues believe you're as committed to your work?

Yes, I think so.

Has the Army as a whole tried to help you?

Well, they don't go out of their way. I think they've been backed into a corner and have to make it work, but they don't go out of their way to make life easy. No deliberate obstacles have been put in my way.

Would you say it's been easier for you as an officer than it would be for a servicewoman?

Yes. You're in a better position to argue your case and you have more control.

Did your husband agree to your staying on?

Oh yes. He has left it entirely up to me and he's happy with my decision. He's been very understanding and has had to do a lot of listening at the other end of the 'phone.

Who do you find you've had to rely on the most for support?

Myself.

Has any form of mutual support group formed amongst serving mothers?

Absolutely, and it's very important to me.

How do you cope with work if you've been up all night or the baby's ill?

My baby's now 9 months old and she still gets me up several times in the night. There have been some mornings when I must admit that I do not know how I've got to work. Don't underestimate it; it is difficult. I have never experienced tiredness like it before - it's worse than anything you can imagine.

Do you feel your child is disadvantaged through your service?

I certainly feel that she knows the nanny a lot better than she does me and that can be quite upsetting. If she isn't well, I feel guilty and also there are stages of her life that I know nothing about. I find myself having to ask the nanny the most basic questions about her development. I only see isolated pictures of her. I'll be honest - there have been one or two times when it's been quite a relief to walk out of the door and go to work.

What about the soldiers? Are they disadvantaged by your double commitment?

No.

Do you contribute as much to the Army's social life now?

I do everything that is reasonably expected of me and sometimes that means my nanny just has to stagger on.

Knowing what you know now, would you advise other girls to stay on if they were pregnant?

That depends on three things: their own strengths and weaknesses, their child care facilities and what job they're doing. I'd say good luck to them.

'THE GENTLE SEX'

Did anyone see the film shown on Channel 4 on 9 October 1996 called 'The Gentle Sex'?

Originally made as a propaganda film, it used actresses for the main roles but featured serving ATS in the background. If anyone recognised colleagues or were in it themselves, do please get in touch with the Corps HQ. And, yes, we have been told what a dreadfully inaccurate film it was. Were there any other films made at the time?

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WARTIME MEMORIES

By

Winifred Lee (née Barton)
488(M)-Hy AA BTY, 142 Regt RA

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Suddenly, in 1944, everything changed. The invasion of Europe had started and we were buoyant with hope that the war would soon be over and we should soon be going home. We were soon to be proved wrong.

In the middle of July, while at Fillongley, we awoke one morning to find that our guns had been removed. Nobody seemed to know where they had been taken to, or if they did they were not telling us! It was very strange to see empty gun-pits. That strangeness was not to last long for me and another pal of mine. Olive and I were called to battery office, told to pack all our kit, including blankets, as we should be off next day; we were to be lent to another battery.

Early next morning we picked up our travel warrants and found that we were to go to St. Leonards in Sussex. Travel was pretty slow and it was tea-time before we arrived after travelling via London with all our kit. By this time our kit-bags which had a draw string at one end, such as the men used, had been changed. Now they were still the same shape but they opened at the side and had two handles. They were definitely easier to carry about but they didn't hold as much, so we usually carried an attache case as well. Add this to blankets tied up in a groundsheet and we were pretty well overloaded.



Mrs Winifred Lee
488 (M) - Hy AA BTY RA

We alighted from the train at St. Leonards. There was an almighty explosion and all the unprotected window glass shattered. We weren't frightened, we were amazed. Both Olive and I had been near to falling bombs this seemed different. We also thought that now that the invasion had started the bombing was over. News was very tight during wartime and people in one part of the country seldom knew what was happening elsewhere, and certainly in the Midlands we did not know what was happening on the south coast.

A jeep was waiting for us in the station yard and we piled in. The driver took the sea road to Hastings and when he pointed out a mixed battery on the promenade we thought we had arrived, but that was not to be our destination. He turned inland and once clear of the town he pulled into a very overgrown drive and stopped before a large house. The driver was not in the least communicative so we took our kit and went in the front door. The place was virtually empty and when we at last found a lone sergeant, he said we were staying there for the night and we would be taken to our gun-site in the morning. First things first, we found the kitchen and felt that we were lucky to get a meal. It was always amazing how we just took things as they came; up to a point we questioned but we usually knew when it was a waste of time. We wandered out into the grounds in the evening and discovered that the place we were in had been a boarding school, although the children must have been evacuated at the outbreak of the war. There was an old swimming pool with weeds in the bottom and saplings growing from cracks in the sides. There was evidence of large vehicles, maybe tanks, being parked under the overgrown trees. One could also see that a lot of troops had been billeted there, in the grounds as well as the house. We realised the place must have been used in the invasion preparations and wondered where the men were now. Everywhere looked very sad with the ruined gardens, empty huts in the grounds and not a soldier in sight.

During the night we heard more explosions and gun fire and a strange engine noise that we couldn't place, but we didn't really worry. Next morning six more girls joined us and off we went once again, down into Hastings, turning left and up on to the top of Fairlight, the highest hill for miles.

What a sight met our eyes. When we reached the highest point we could see right round the coast to Dungeness and beyond. What did we see? Anti-aircraft guns - there seemed to be hundreds of them, all pointing out to sea. Now we knew where our guns had gone to, and we were soon to learn why.

We could hear and see the RAF fighters out to sea but had no idea what their target was. Then we heard the strange engine noise and saw our first Doodlebug - the V.1 rocket. We heard the nearest guns firing and then we realised that all along the coast the guns were firing as other flying bombs came over. Many were exploded and any that managed to get through the barrage were taken on by the fighter planes waiting inland.

The truck pulled up on the edge of a field and there was the battery that we were to join. An all male battery! The eight 3.7in. guns were just standing on metal mats in the field. There were no gun-pits. There was no protection whatsoever. The command post was just a bit of grass where the instruments stood although there was a shed for the telephonists. The men were billeted under canvas. To say that we were surprised was the very least of it. No ATS in sight, not a female officer or Sergeant to tell us what to do.

We were told we were there to take over from the men whenever possible, on any job that we could do. The guns had been in action for nearly twenty-four hours a day and the men were worn out with constant firing;

anything we could do would give them a chance to rest. No manning details were ever posted, we just took over as we could. The battery had new American predictors that the gunners were not familiar with and nor were we although we had the hand-book. Army manuals were very well written and provided one followed them absolutely, there was no problem. But where were we to be billeted?

This problem was soon solved. A compound had been prepared for us. This consisted of a marquee for sleeping in with four bunk beds, a bell tent to eat in, a bell tent to wash in and another with a bucket (Army, for the use of) for our loo. The compound was surrounded with five-foot high sacking and there we were, suddenly in the middle of the war.

First we had to get organised. One of the male officers asked who was in charge - we had no idea. It was decided that as I had the smallest army number, which meant that I had served the longest, I was to be Senior Private and in charge. This didn't mean a thing in reality as we all turned to and did whatever we could. We had to fetch our meals from the cookhouse (tent); two girls would go down and the food was put in dixies with the tea either in a bucket or a big metal jug. The milk was always a tin of Carnation with two holes punched in the top. The cook who served us was not a very nice fellow - he always made some sort of lewd remark, with a couple of swear words thrown in for good measure, when we went for our food. Being Senior Private (ha-ha), I thought I had better do something about this as nobody liked going down to the cookhouse and we didn't fancy missing our meals. When the swear words came I told him I would empty the tin of milk over him if he spoke to me like that again - of course he did, and so I did. Then he picked up a large jug of milk that he had just mixed and poured that over me! We couldn't stop laughing. I looked like a drowned rat, but we were the best of friends after that and we had no more trouble. It always paid to be friends with the cooks and we often found little goodies in the dixies. Trying to clean myself up in cold water in a bucket in a tent was the worst part of the affair.

Sleeping arrangements were difficult. Who wants to sleep on a top bunk in a tent when guns are firing all round and shrapnel is falling? I had a bottom bunk but I think some of the girls slept on the ground. We would put pillows over our heads to muffle the noise and our tin hats on top of them. It's a wonder we didn't smother ourselves but sleep was just about impossible with the fearful noise that was going on. We never wore our service dresses (skirts) the whole time we were there, even when we went out of camp, which was very seldom. When there was a lull in the firing it was a real break for us as we had no fatigues to do. We usually sat in our compound or had a quick look round the area. Between the site and the cliffs there were empty bungalows some of which were officers' quarters, but most were just empty. I suppose the owners had been made to move and their furniture put in store; the gardens had gone wild and were beautiful. None of the bungalows was locked and it was strange to wander round and wonder where the owners were. I bet the owners were wondering about their homes as well.

It was a most lovely summer, the sun shone every day and the skies were blue. To look out over the sea and see the fighter planes chasing the flying bombs, (sometimes they tried to tip them over with their wings,) to see the puffs of smoke from the shells and to see the great explosions of the bombs was the most fantastic sight imaginable. We could hardly believe that we were caught up in such action.

Flying bombs, V.1. rockets, doodlebugs or whatever people chose to call them, were given an army code name, Diver. I suppose this stemmed from the fact that when the engine cut out the flying bomb would dive to the ground and

explode. Away from camp we always felt safe as long as we could hear the engine; it was when the engine stopped that everyone rushed for cover. They were most unpredictable things and we never knew where they would land. But back to camp. As soon as a bomb was spotted the cry went up, 'Diver' and all instruments and guns were then trained in its direction. At night the Diver could be followed by the flame streaking from its rear (this was extinguished when the engine stopped). We had complete freedom to fire 10,000 yards out to sea and up to 6,000 feet high and the RAF dealt beyond these ranges. The best thing about this firing arrangement was that a lot of the bombs were brought down harmlessly in the sea and those that did get through were then dealt with by the planes over the open countryside before they reached London. Every time a flying bomb did reach London people wanted to know what the fighters and anti-aircraft units were doing; they had no idea what was going on at the coast. The people in charge of the war did not want the Germans to know how effective, or otherwise, the bombing was and reporting was kept to a minimum. One memorable day we shot down 68 of the 96 flying-bombs that had been launched; only 4 reached Greater London. Altogether over 1550 flying bombs were shot down by Ack Ack on the south coast.

General Sir Frederick Pile applied to Winston Churchill for a special medal to be awarded to those taking part in this exercise. He also said he thought it 'needed greater courage to stand on a gun-site and fire at a directly approaching flying bomb with the knowledge that if you hit it you will bring it down either on to, or near, your own site, than to fly an aircraft at a suitable distance behind the bomb and shoot it down'. Minor pilots were decorated for this work and even the ground crews received 'mentions'. The General was unlucky - there was no special medal and no Mentions in Dispatches for the whole of AA command.

MY TEENAGE YEARS

By
Alma G Stride (née Finning)

1940 to 1945

The day I decided to join the Services, I was out shopping with my mother. A Recruiting Office was on our route to the bus. At the time I was 16 and _ years old and had always been a bit of an adventuress. I'd had what they like to call, a one day release from school (not work) to attend Art college, which was in Silver Street, just off Victoria Street, in Grimsby, but the threat of war or peace in early 1938/1939 created a few people to react by joining the Territorial Army Units etc. It was decided that pupils over the age of 16 could stay and finish their courses, and under 16 years we had to leave after 2 years of instruction, which was there and then.

I had various jobs from Whatmough Biscuit Factory at Great Coates, and when I left they were starting to make war biscuits - very hard - for the troops. I always liked to create items of clothing from remnants etc., and made myself a forage cap with military influence, quite the fashion at that time. The girls at the biscuit factory decided that they would like one too. So I made about a dozen and charged them nine pence each - pre decimal of course!

Back to the town - where the Recruiting Office was just around the corner from Victoria Street, into the Old Market Place (not there anymore). In I go and came away with two forms, one for the WAAF and one for the ATS and in my usual flamboyant way, said, after sending both forms away, "whichever comes back first, I'll join". So my fate was sealed.



February 1945 Age 21 Years Alma Finning

HULL

The ATS invitation came first and a command to attend Hull Health Centre for a medical. I went on my own but don't remember a great deal about the visit apart from being asked to stand on one leg then the other! I had time to look around the shops before catching the ferry back to Barton On Humber, then on to Grimsby. The date of this I remember not at all, all I do know is that I was called to attend Neville Cross Training Centre in Durham about the middle of November 1940, about 56 years ago practically to the day I write this.

NEVILLE CROSS DURHAM

I remember arriving at 10.00 pm and was ushered into a very large dining room in darkness all but for a light in the Kitchen and a table that I sat at. I had a meal of Cottage Pie, and the taste still lingers, very good it was. I had been travelling most of the day on my own. The idea that I was to train as a cook came from a friend of my mother's very good training for looking after a family when you get married! Remember, women were not thought to be serious contenders in the career and professional field before World War II, there always being the exception I am sure.

HUDDERSFIELD

I do not recall having any catering training prior to my posting to Huddersfield - The Royal Corps of Signals. On arriving at my billet, which was a requisitioned house outside of the town, I found this to have bare boards, iron beds, damp mattresses and blankets and no pillow cases or sheets. Whilst staying in this billet my mother arrived to see what state I was in. She stayed the night in a spare bed, little did I know this was not done and when an Officer spoke to me the next morning about this, I was a little put out! But nothing more was said.

My first day in the Cookhouse began and I was on the first floor of a cotton mill, with high ceilings, rooms partitioned off for stores etc., and a dining room, but most

vividly in my memory, on my first day, 6 wash boilers along an outside wall and me with a long wooden spoon given the job of stirring the porridge in these containers, making sure they did not burn the troops' breakfasts. In 1940 I did my first Christmas duty in the cookhouse and every Christmas thereafter until demob in 1945.

One day we had a fire drill - remember we were on the first floor of a cotton mill, the ceilings were very high, one staircase of concrete and a brass or copper rod from the top of the building to the bottom. A smoke bomb was placed on the stairs and we all had to shin down the pipe. Guess who was the only casualty? Me! I had my sleeves rolled up as for work and so grasped the pipe with my hands and slid down receiving a blister on the fleshy parts of my thumbs. We assembled on a derelict site near to the mill, we also had a gas experience during my time in Huddersfield. In a building, we entered, took our gas masks off then replaced them before leaving. I remember one evening being invited to a seance along with some of the girls and we sat on a bench at the back of a room in a private house. My only recollection of the event was of a woman moaning and swaying.

PONTEFRACT

I must have been at Huddersfield for such a short time before being posted to Pontefract Barracks, an ATS Training Barracks, in 1941 into the other ranks cookhouse. The large iron stoves were all heated with coal and we took it in turns to be up in the morning at 4.00am, walking to the Guard Room, which was a walk across the Parade Ground - unheard of in daytime, to collect the keys, to walk back to the cookhouse and start all the fires ready for other cooks to come on duty to start the breakfasts. Sometimes this walk took place in deep snow and we needed snow shoes. We wore famous Lancashire Clogs to work in.

I progressed to the Officers' Mess on occasions, then to the Sergeants' Mess, and eventually NCO's Mess, on one of the shifts cooking for the recruits. We had - I believe - two cookhouses for this.

We enjoyed dances in what I believe was the Drill Hall inside the barracks. We even had a fancy dress dance and many girls sent away for their costumes. I was loaned a period costume identical to another girl - I can only remember her last name, which was Barraclough. Bevan Miners came to our dances, and a good time was had by one and all.

In my early days at Pontefract I remember that we used to sing Italian songs whilst leaning over a very large metal sink, rubbing by hand, pounds and pounds of margarine to make pastry.

We had our own male Guards and Band so were protected and paraded in style. I remember Jean Knox coming to inspect us and on one of the few occasions I was on the parade, she spoke to me. The Sergeant cook was a Mrs Townsend, in the other ranks cookhouse, and she befriended me and I visited her home in Pontefract and became friendly with her daughter who joined the Land Army. But, so sad, I do not remember her name, and they were so kind to me.

When I became an NCO, I was billeted in a house which was in the barracks, and perhaps might have been married quarters before the war and looked very new. I had a room, which, I shared with another NCO, who left to have a baby.

ELSHAM - ATTACHED TO SHERWOOD FORESTERS

So my time at Pontefract was coming to a close after two years, things were happening which I knew nothing about, and I was posted to Elsham in 1943, the Sherwood Foresters, which was much nearer home, just 25 miles from Grimsby, still very much in the country, and two miles from the A18 for a lift, and 4 miles the other way to Brigg. There was not much going on - Elsham is today a tourist

area with a Craft Centre, Grounds and Lakes. I remember after a while in the Other Ranks Mess, I was installed in the Officers' Mess, which was in the hall itself, and on occasions officers would bring back from leave pheasants which were then hung in a very large larder specially used for all these things etc. I was expected to pluck and prepare a meal with these extra rations, having had no catering training at all and had to learn as I went along. I don't remember to this day whether I made a success of them, and when I was presented with small golf ball-like apples, I cooked them in a shallow dish with whatever sweetener I had, I only learned many years later that I had been given crab apples, which must have been awful, no one even mentioned them to me (I do know what to do with them now as my husband makes very nice crab apple jelly to have with pork or anything else you might think it will go with).

Elsham's nearest other service was the RAF Aerodrome, where Lancasters droned all night on their nightly raids over Europe. We ATS went to many social occasions at the invitation of the RAF, and some romances blossomed - mine didn't as he was married, but this did not stop some love-sick girls and boys, after all there was a war on.

LOUTH

My days at Elsham ended in 1944 and I was posted to Louth 48th SL Regiment, Royal Artillery. This seemed to be a collecting post for very soon we were taken by train to Doncaster for a week then on by trains south to New Romney on the Kent coast. We didn't know this at the time, but it took 14 hours to travel and when we stopped in sidings sometimes, we managed to get a porter to fill a large biscuit tin (they were tin, all shiny like silver) with water. We had haversack rations but nothing to drink. We stopped in a Station and one time right next to a train full of Americans, addresses were exchanged and I often wonder if anyone met up through this?

NEW ROMNEY

We arrived in New Romney late evening where there were trucks to take us to our billets - we found next morning that we ATS were in a very large detached house, a stone's throw away from the sea wall, sand and sea. We could see for miles left and right. This was June 1944. Letters were censored and all leave had been cancelled weeks before. I chose a small room on the ground floor at the side of the house. I had to get up early on some days, can't remember if any other ATS cook was with me, I'd like my memory jogged on this. We had another large detached house next to us which were officers' billets. Most of the small outside adjoining buildings were used as stores, dining rooms, etc. We had a cooking stove which was 'L' shaped with dixies, and the roof covering was made from corrugated iron. We made an Aldershot oven for roasting and baking etc., all this took place in the back garden of the house, just as well it was summer!

My husband and I have been back to Romney and at that time the water tower was still there. The golf course behind all these coastal houses housed the Z Battery Rocket Gun Site, and when they went off you certainly knew it, and this was each time a doodle bug ventured into our area, so for 4 months it was noisy. Coming home one evening with my boyfriend all hell let loose, and the rocket launching site opened up 24 guns. I fell over a sand bag and was quickly pulled up by my boyfriend and ushered into the driveway of my billet. I then went to bed with a steel helmet on my head and a prayer in my heart! Next morning the engine of the doodle bug (or V.1) was just feet away from where I had rushed into the house, and so each day went by, we couldn't

go far as there was no transport and the area was a "no go" zone all along that coast. At that time we had Canadian, American, British etc., defending and attacking, and Normandy had happened and was happening.

In September 1944 - as I recall - we started to be disbanded, 58th SL Regiment, which, when they arrived at New Romney taking over the rocket gun site, Z Battery, was disbanded. I was sent with Vera Ling, with whom I am still in touch, who was a clerk, to Thrapston, and for two whole weeks I enjoyed for the first time in nearly five years, a sense of freedom, being treated as the clerks and others, working nine to five with weekends off, no early morning or late duties - and then the penny dropped and I was posted to Brigstock. Well then I was posted to Brigstock where I worked in the Sergeants' Mess until my demob at Regents Park Barracks in London, this was in August 1945 which saw me at Regents Park Barracks, in uniform, being issued with my discharge papers and hitching a lift from a matador just outside Regents Park Barracks, to Regents Park Underground Station.

YAXLEY, SKEGNESS, THRAPSTON, & BRIGSTOCK, NORTHANTS

After New Romney the ATS personnel of 425 Battery RA, went to Yaxley, near Peterborough. Ironically this militia camp had been the home of 425 Company Royal Engineers in January 1940. When it was first handed over to the War Department from the contractors, I remember utilising 7lb jam tins to cook plum duffs for the troops, whoever they were. At least they had a pudding. My husband tells me, that on one of the searchlight sites in 425 the cook used the leg of his issue long pants to cook "spotted dick" in - necessity being the mother of invention!

The late autumn of 1944 saw the whole 58 SL Battalion moved to Skegness area where we were reunited with the men, much to mine and everyone's delight. We lived in boarding houses and small hotels throughout the town, in fact we took the town over. It soon transpired that his move was to be our break-up point. The main body of the whole Battalion went to the British Liberation Army in Europe as Garrison Troops. The tradesmen to various technical units, and we girls scattered to the four winds. I did manage to grab one tradesman all to myself before they were posted. We became engaged in a sea front promenade shelter having bought the ring in Skegness High Street. We were married in the following March 1945 and after 52 years we are still together. We have two sons and one daughter, plus seven grand-children and all being well, soon to be great grand-parents.

I hope that this may arouse some memories of anyone who was in the same areas as myself. I would love to hear from you if this is the case, or perhaps, I am going to the reunion in Blackpool next year, who knows - we may truly "meet again".

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1944 - THE BATH

By
Vera Wilks, (née Bund), Coventry

Most of our ATS Company had been moved from Wiltshire down to the outskirts of Portsmouth. The group was split into four and occupied adjacent houses in the long tree-lined avenue, but much further along the road was a large Victorian house and so far there were only eight of us living there.

Surrounded by immaculate modern bungalows, "Fairfields" stood tall and stately, perhaps a little tired, looking shabby by comparison, but inside it was quite pleasant and well looked after. It had the typical big square black and white tiled hall with a lovely wide oak staircase. There was a spacious Victorian kitchen, dining-room and recreation area and right by the entrance was the CO's office.

Two floors above had several bedrooms, and up another narrower stairway, along with a lot of nooks and crannies, was my bedroom and various storerooms. I shared with another Corporal who happened to be away on marriage leave. She had met this tall good-looking American only six months ago when we were stationed near Salisbury. He came from Texas and judging by the photograph he looked even more fetching in a stetson than in his Lieutenant's Army cap! Such a whirlwind romance it was. I wonder where she is now?

I was twenty six and had been married nearly a year and this particular evening I was sitting in my room writing a letter to my husband in North Africa. There was a knock on the door and in came "Little Betty". She was small and dainty and not very robust. She looked pale and miserable, said she felt a cold coming on and would I change places with her on the bath roster so she could go straight to bed? No problem there - I enjoyed a bath any time, so with a promise to report to the MO in the morning, off she went.

The bathroom was in the attic! Of course in a house of that size there must have been a proper bathroom somewhere but the attic had obviously been adapted specially for our use. Fortunately it was quite near to my bedroom - up a few steps from my landing was a kind of balcony and there was the bathroom door. Inside on the right, there were four wash-basins and three toilets, in the centre was a great galvanised tank and on the far left-hand side was a Victorian bath with sturdy iron legs standing on a big square of linoleum. There was an ancient Windsor chair and a five foot tall old-fashioned screen in a metal frame which could be moved quite easily on funny little wheels and gave adequate privacy for an all-female household. The rest of the large floor-space was bare boarded.

Around 2230 hours when ablutions would be mainly over and there would be less traffic in the bathroom, I undressed completely, put on my Army raincoat and clutching my sponge-bag and towel I made my way up into the attic. Tacked onto the inside of the door was a notice in bold black paint which said **"DO NOT BOLT THIS DOOR WHEN USING THE BATH. OTHERS MAY NEED TO USE THE TOILETS!"** I obeyed of course.

The water was not exactly hot, in fact it was barely warm but we were young and tough in those days and didn't expect luxury. Absolute bliss! I sang as I scrubbed.

However, on the principle of a "job worth doing is worth doing well", I stood up and lathered myself all over with some lovely scented soap, a precious Christmas gift. So precious that it was never used for ordinary daily washing but only for baths! Back down under the water for a final rinse, utterly content with the world I sighed a satisfied sigh and happened to glance along the top of the screen

and there appeared, in the poor light, to be a large black round object that surely was not there when I started!! A rapid double-take confirmed that it was a MAN'S HEAD!! with a thatch of dark untidy hair - his chin was resting comfortably on top of the rail and he had a sloppy leering grin on his face!!

It couldn't possibly be the beauty of the song that had brought him up from the street below, or that he had the idea that there was some kind of free musical shindig going on. Anyway the sound of my pitiful concert would not have reached all that way, but there he was, as large as life, all six foot of him! I can tell you it was not a happy situation to be in and my first impulse was to panic, followed by a swift realisation that it would not be wise. **JUST KEEP CALM!!** I thought.

My scowl didn't seem to alarm him so I said something stupid like "What the heck do you want?" in a gasping squeak that was supposed to sound threatening. "Threatening?" up to my neck in cold water and scared to death, who was I kidding? He hadn't the courtesy to reply and I didn't want to know the answer anyway.

Really there were only two options for me - stay submerged and freeze hoping he would get bored and clear off, or get out on the offensive. I didn't fancy either but decided on the latter and skated a perfect half-somersault on the wet soapy linoleum. I'm sure he enjoyed the performance for an arm came round the screen and a hand gripped my shoulder. That did it!! I let out a terrified screech! Panic reigned! But the terror suddenly turned to anger and I was lashing out furiously with all the vigour of a demented dervish.

The frenzied attack from a naked mad woman may have unnerved him for he tried to grab my wrists but his shoe got caught in the wheel and he went over backwards with the screen on top of him and by some miracle I managed to stop myself from following on top of the heap! (And what a gem of a cartoon that would have made!). Whether the crash winded him or his courage deserted him I shall never know, but he picked himself up, took to his heels and fled - **UNBOLTING** the door and down three flights of stairs.

Flinging on my khaki raincoat I belted down after him and apart from a few gentle snores and a snuffle or two there was no other sound or movement in the house - I could have been murdered and nobody cared! But it was unreasonable to be peeved about that - it was not their fault that their bedrooms were so far from the attic!

By the time I reached the hall the swing doors were still swinging and his departing footsteps echoed down the avenue as he sped away.

After a restless night I was first down in the morning and just about to go into the dining room for breakfast when the CO arrived and went straight into her office. I followed her and we sat discussing the incident for some time and eventually she got up and walked about, thinking aloud. She couldn't keep the door locked she said and she couldn't expect NCOs to patrol in the hallway every evening. She said "of course the Police should be informed, but I shall not involve them - you know how people think and talk. Word would get around and in no time at all this house would have a bad name - for absolutely no reason. I must insist, Corporal, that you tell no-one about this, after all, nobody else seems to have been aware of him and there was no damage done". (She didn't know about the great black bruise on my thigh where I fell against the bath!!)

"We must keep this quiet" she said and she was absolutely right, I could see that. Then came the final bit of advice which seemed to ring a distant bell "Put it right out of your mind" she said **"YOU MUST JUST TRY TO FORGET THAT IT HAPPENED!!"**

I wonder if I ever will!!

THE JOYS OF JOINING THE ATS

By
Vera C Cole, Colchester

140842 was the date on which I joined the ATS and Glen Parva Barracks was to be my Basic Training Camp. To my mother's amazement I had passed my medical as A1. Now I was a volunteer and a couple of years older than the average conscript but only in years because body wise I still looked like an under-developed teenager. Bras and corsets having not as yet been included in my daily apparel. This did not worry me then, now 54 years on it's a different picture, very different.

From a friend of my brothers already in the ATS, one whom I would have to salute should our paths ever cross, I gained a few handy tips re: getting my uniform into shape and this included the use of a razor blade and khaki cotton.

Having received my instructions re: travel I bid fond farewell to my mother and made my way to Colchester main line station. With the help of a few passing strangers I crossed over London to the station for Leicester and after a long journey I arrived in front of the gates of Glen Parva Barracks. I was approached by an ATS Corporal - minus smile - and told to join the queue already inside a building which looked like a tower. It was a round building and the stairs were spiral with a lift shaft down the centre. The noise was a bit much but at last I reached a room and can only describe it as organised chaos. A long counter with nervous recruits one side and very loud ATS personnel the other. Having been tossed a kit bag - Soldiers for the use of - it started, bra size, girdle size, necks, waists, etc and with little or no time to answer, these items came whizzing across the counter and being stuffed into the kit bag in sheer bewilderment. They did spare a few seconds to make sure the hat fitted but not so the shoes, size 5½ and hey presto I was the proud owner of 2 pairs of new shoes.

Then came a shock because we heard "You will put on one skirt, one pair of stockings and shoes, don't bother with the laces". My heart sank, how was I going to keep those stockings up and carry a very full kit bag. "Get a move on" oh how those girls could shout. I set off down the winding stairs until I reached terra firma and came face to face with yet another ATS Corporal. Looking at me she gave a sigh of despair and proceeded to measure the hem of my skirt to the ground, 16½ inches (I think) that was OK and pointing to some huts away to her left she said "No. 4 hut No. 4 Intake", I had a feeling she would rather have pointed me to the main gates, perhaps she thought I always walked about holding my stockings up. Obeying her orders, I started off, wishing that I had three hands to cope with the situation I was in when I suddenly heard a Band strike up and turning I could see a host of ATS girls marching to the music so, forgetting all about Hut No. 4 and grabbing my stockings with one hand and the kitbag with the other I headed for the music. Norah Battey had nothing on me that precise moment. With mouth wide open I stood gaping at the scene in front of me, then a gentle voice said "Can I help you" and from me "No ones telling them what to do". Her reply "you will be doing that in a few weeks time". I'm sure if the saying "you must be joking" had been in use at that time I would have used it. Then I was asked "what hut are you in" and without turning my head I replied "No. 4 Hut No. 4 Intake" I heard her call out to the Sergeant who, relieving me of my kit bag and taking me by the arm, I was led away to No. 4 hut. The main reason for my predicament was the fact I had no stockings on and therefore no garters, fancy or otherwise, and definitely no suspenders.

Bunk beds by the dozen, just enough room to walk up and down, but found one at the end of the hut and deposited

my kit bag on the floor I sat down to relax for a few minutes. Hardly had I had time to look round when I heard "back into your own clothes and line up outside". To hear was to obey and then to our horror we were told we were off to another medical just to make sure we were A1. On entering the centre we heard the order "strip down to your pants" and be quick about it. Picture the scene, 50 or so girls who had not had time to get acquainted and here we were almost a nudist camp, it sure broke the ice and opened up the flood gates because so many girls were having a good weep. As I had nothing to boast about I joined the queue for vaccination, and then it dawned on me, all the medics were men no wonder so many girls were trying to hide their blushes and everything else as well.

We were weighed, hearts, lungs etc. given the once over, measured and turning to go it was "this way please" a dentist chair, oh no, this was a bit too much. I must admit whenever I found myself in a dentist chair this scene came to mind and a smirk would come over my face. Back to the nudist camp, what else awaited us we wondered. Listen for your names to be called out as A1 then get dressed, we all passed and could not get dressed quickly enough. After all this ordeal we were taken to the mess for a meal then it was back to the huts to sort ourselves out. Having tried on my tunic I realized that I would look very odd if the belt was not moved down 1 inch so ignoring the order "do not deface your uniforms" I sat and with the razor blade, carefully removed the belt and replaced it lower down. The din in the hut was a bit much and one girl, whose mother had joined up with her, gave a lovely rendering of "Because God Made you Mine", that turned a few taps on again but all this left me un-observed with needle and cotton. All done and very neat at that I proceeded to treat my hat in order to make it look a little less like a chefs hat. All duly flattened I laid it on a damp cloth and put my shoe brushes inside. Skirt folded as advised, shoes clean, I got ready for bed. I looked down the hut and we were all in issue pyjamas, looked like a load of convicts minus the arrows. Lights out came and each of us tried to sleep. Not for long I'm afraid because I had a nightmare and dreamt I was falling down the lift shaft in the tower building and, of course, fell out of the bunk bed letting out a piercing scream. Was I glad it was the bottom bunk. I crept back into bed and endeavoured to sleep once I had got over the shock. Meal times came as a bit of a shock at first but I enjoyed the food despite the fact that at breakfast time sausage, bacon or whatever was plonked on one side of the plate and a blob of jam or marmalade on the other, we all became expert jugglers. Lunch main course OK but one had to wash the plate, wave it about to dry and then queue for pudding. Sounds OK but standing beside a swill bin was one very stiff Sergeant and if you had left anything she told you in no uncertain terms. We soon learnt to take a bag with us so that all plates were clean. Rookies we might be but we were learning fast.

Being confined to barracks because of very sore arms, we were instructed in the art of barracking beds, told who to salute and who not, when to stand up and when not too etc. etc.

Hoping that all shocks were now behind us and that we could regain our modesty we felt more at ease but not for long. PT was the order given and we marched off to a field and told, "STRIP DOWN TO YOUR PANTS AND BRAS". Pants she called them, my passion killers reached from my knees to above my bra, I'm sure they thought I would grow into them one day. All this caused yet another flood of tears from the girls whilst the fellows in the camp thought their luck had changed and almost scaled the fence. PT kit had not as yet been regular issue, it could not come quickly enough.

The last shock, Oh No, for Bath Parade had yet to be coped with. Lining up outside the hut, minus our caps, towels etc. safely tucked under the right arm off we marched all with visions of getting into a warm bath. How wrong could we be because we were halted outside a rather long narrow building. I waited until the shower room came and I just stood there in blank amazement, nude bodies dashing backwards and forwards. "Get a move on girl" rang in my ears so I proceeded down the centre looking for an empty booth. Another nudist camp I thought and a very wet one at that and it was with some effort to keep my uniform dry that I joined the leaping bodies across the duck boards. Having never seen a shower before it took a few minutes to suss it out but time being of the essence I got cracking and dived back across the duck boards to endeavour to dry myself. Another shock over and that was the last, and I recall writing to my sister, who was in the Land Army, telling her that I think I've joined a Nudist Camp.

My stay at Glen Parva was much enjoyed and I was given the opportunity to stay on as a Drill Instructor by the Officer who had rescued me on my very first day, but I wanted to be a driver and off I went to Cordwallis in Camberley, but I shall always be, and have always been, very grateful to that Officer for having faith in me at a time when I needed it most.

Miss V C Cole ex W/185675 Corporal
Hut No. 4 Intake No. 4 Glen Parva Barracks



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PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL THE "MONTY" STATUE APPEAL

It is with great pride that the City of Portsmouth announces the launch of an appeal to raise sufficient funds to commission a larger than life size statue of the Great Field Marshall and a World War II Soldier in the field uniform of the day. It is highly appropriate that this should be a joint appeal for "Monty" was always the soldiers General. Their well-being, training, health and fitness was always on his mind. None would be asked to undertake tasks for which they were not trained. His Armies were unquestionably the fittest armies of the day.

It is fitting that the City of Portsmouth should lead the Nation's Appeal, for the statues, for it was very much in the front, of both the World offensive and defensive action, before becoming the centre of the launch for the great landings and Breakout from Normandie.

It is right that this symbol of a World War II Soldier should be left for future generations as a fitting tribute to the young men who gave their youth or lives for our freedom. It is most appropriate that the statues of "Monty" and the young soldier should be placed together at the D-Day Museum, in the City, that saw many of them depart these shores.

"Monty" was a man associated with much and many. He was a man for all men. It is therefore hoped that both individuals and organisations would wish to contribute to the appeal. Your donation, no matter the size, will contribute to the history which we leave to those who follow.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

I/we would like to enclose my/our donation of
to the "Monty" Statue Appeal.

I/we are interested in giving assistance in other
fundraising activities or Flag Days. YES/NO

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Telephone No. (Day)
Address
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Post Code:

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO:

c/o The "Monty" Statue Appeal
Colonel W H F (Bill) Stevens, OBE
Chief Administrative Officer
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2AL
(01705) 834462 or 834067 - Fax: (01705) 834685



*Salisbury Branch WRAC Association
The Chapter House - October 1996*



*Stockport Branch with hosts Shropshire Branch,
at BOD Donnington*



*ATS Members and Husbands
Holiday at Sinah Warren - May 1996*



*Crewe Branch
At Market Stall October 19th
Left to Right: Joan Berry, Molly Mitchel, Betty Patton,
Queenie Moores, Edith Francis*



*Aldershot Branch Curry Lunch - Summer 1996
Right to Left: Branch Chairman, Gill Sale with
Lt. Col. Joyce Edwards, Gwenda Easton (née Burtbridge)
and Peter Easton, beside the Easton's plant stall which raised
£50 for the Benevolent Fund*



*Some of the Fife & Tayside Branch
Raising money for charity*

Where are you now?

Mrs Eddie Harding (née Powell) of 'Glanmorfa', 10 Heol Rowen, Fairbourne, Gwynedd, LL38 2AG (photographed here - 1941) would like to hear from any ex-ATS friends who knew her whilst serving in 164 OCTU, Portsmouth, especially Joyce Barford.



Mrs Gweneth Stock (née Quick) would like to hear from any ex-ATS, Royal Corps of Signals, stationed at Badminton House, Bristol. Pictured here at the wedding of Cpl Kay Crooke to Sgt Les Scull in 1944, Mrs Stock (4th from left) corresponds with Muriel Sambell (6th from left) who lives in Devon, as do Kay and Les. Please contact: Mrs G C Stock, 2 Claremont Avenue, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK11 1HH.



Mrs L Burke (née Anson) would like to get in touch with any members of 513 BTY girls. She is in the Leeds Branch of the Association and is in contact with Emily Newbold, Helen Pfeffer (née Dobson), Nora Syweryk (née Jokes). Her address is: Mrs L Burke, 9a Snowden Way, Bramley, Leeds, LS13 2TN.

Ena M Mercy of 1 Lark Street, Bingley, West Yorks, BD16 4LF would like to make contact with anyone from the Band 1964-1967. Where are Linda Gray, Anne Robins and Judy Moorhen? She would like to be put in touch with any WRAC members in the Leeds Branch or any other West Yorks Branches.

Lance Bombardier, 1st RHA, Oswestry, 1944, is searching for his ex-girlfriend, **Daphne Pearce**, who was in the ATS at COD Donnington, Shropshire in 1944. Daphne was from Hornsea, London. Please write to: Mr Vic Jackson, 48 Attwood Terrace, Dawley, Telford, Shropshire, TF4 2HH.

Mrs Nancy Tipton would like to hear from anyone in 'G' Coy ATS Hooze Lines on this photograph - especially **Barbara Stockdale (née Atkinson)**. Please contact her at 91 Dawley Road, Wellington, Salop, TF1 2HT.



Mrs Mirian Hartley (née Crabtree) also known for a short time as Pte Scragg, is trying to find anyone who was at Coombe Abbey, Coventry - Connie Young, Edith Haynes, Edna, Morag. Did anyone serve at Theobald's Park, Waltham Cross after July 1943. Greta Jenkins, Jean Usher, Mary Siving, Liz and Bobbie Nelson, Alice (paper doll) Morgan, Francis Luscombe, Mabs Wright. Contact: 'Halcyon', 7 Queen's Drive, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 1DA.

Mrs Kathy Kantypowicz (née Woosey) wants to hear from any WRAC/RAPC from the late 1960s. Ros Pumpfrey, Beccy Authors, Karla Krinks, Mary Tustain. She has a photograph taken by EA Sollars of 8 Milverton Road, Winchester in December 1967. Her address is: 27 Orchard Lane, Woodnewton Village, nr Peterborough, Northants, PE8 5EE.

Mr J Raymond (Johnnie) who served with the Command Pay Office Hounslow in 1952 and also in Singapore wants to contact any WRAC who may remember him. Tel: 01302 884417.

Elaine Farrand would like to trace any members of 6 Platoon, 2 Coy, WRAC Centre, Guildford on or around 28 November 1966. Do you recognise yourself here - Janet Spilsbury (Rotherham), Barbara Finnigan (Nottingham), Pauline Eadie (Glasgow), Chris Thresh (Hull), Pauline Anderson (Salford), Maureen Noon (Perth), Norma Carty (Manchester) and Sue Dash. Contact Elaine Farrand MBE, 15 Toseland Way, Lower Earley, Reading, Berks, RG6 7YA, or Terry Houlgrave at 12 Windsor Avenue, Failsworth, Manchester, M35 9LW.



Mrs Daphne Brooks (née Bower) would like to contact Isabel from Scotland who was a trainee Y wireless operator on the Isle of Man late in 1943/early 1944. She had a short spell in the military hospital at Otham Head. Please contact Daphne on 01708 76955.



Joan Fountain, please get in touch with **Mrs D Brookes**, 99 Meadow Road, Nunts Park, Coventry, CV6 4GW.

Mrs Joan Frampton (née Jex) would like to hear from anyone who served with 'C' Coy ATS, 'F' Block, Parson's Barracks, Aldershot. Contact her at 68 Alan Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 8EY.

Are You Trying to trace ex-ATS Friends in Canada?

To enable people to be located it is essential to give maiden name, married name, service number and corps dates, etc. To clearly identify, as far as possible, those sought and the seeker. Write clearly and concisely. Send to: Loise McKie, Secretary Canadian Corps Assoc, CWAC # 47, 201 Niagara Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1C6.

George Hayes writes telling us he was:

Born in the East End of London, I was seven years old when the war started. Towards the end of 1941 my younger sister and I were evacuated to a place in Norfolk called Burgh Castle, this is four and a half miles from Great Yarmouth. My sister and I stayed there until early Spring 1945, this was without doubt the most unhappy and miserable time of my life, being away from my dear old Mum and Dad and family.

In early 1944 a military camp appeared on farm land just opposite the house where we were billeted, I believe it was Artillery. To our delight, a company or two of ATS girls were also on the camp and they were most kind to us, we had the sadness of being parted from our loved ones in common.

In particular there was a girl called Joan Fountain who looked after us, she would give us her sweet ration and food from the cookhouse. Joan would write to our mum and dad to let them know how we were. There was also an ATS girl called Jerry and she would give me the most colourful American badges. Just as the camp appeared so it disappeared over night, I now know that it was D Day and the camp was a holding station for our troops and ATS girls ready for the invasion.

In the hope that you still have a little interest in this letter and to stop me waffling on I wonder if there is the remotest chance that, Joan Fountain would be a member of your Association. How I would love to thank that lady for all the happiness she gave to us, and not least her sweet rations.

I went on to become a senior NCO in the Grenadier Guards, my thoughts are always with Joan and it would be a joy to hear from her again.

Forgive me if I bore you but it might just be that someone may know of Joan in your Association and it would give me great pleasure to return her sweet ration.

God bless and kindest regards, love to all those smashing girls.

George Hayes, Hulme Cottage, 84 Kenneth Road, Thundersley, Essex, SS7 3AN.

The niece of **Senior Commander Majorie Wilson Anderson**, (P/192396) is researching her life. Do any of the following names remember her?

Evelyn Knox (Junior Commander), Caroline Daish Hind (Junior Commander), Captain Eileen McCready Gibson, Private Day, Private Betty Ann Russel, Subaltern Francis E Mayne, Subaltern F G Magee.

Please contact: Mrs Charlotte Christie, 24 Searles Close, Parkgate Road, Battersea, SW11 4RG.

Mrs Joyce Corbyn (was Freestone) (née Shears) of 4 Annandale Road, Greenwich, London, SE10 0DA, would like to hear from any of the following:

Capt Somerville, Sub Lt Wooderson De Lash, Sgt Quigley, Evelyn Humphries, Betty Knight, Agnes White, Billie Brummer, Edna Rogers, Dot Woods, Lil Whalen, Gloria Cisuelo, Peggy Whittle, Phyllis Cook, Maj Brooke-Fletcher, Capt Beardsley, Bmdr Sid Klein, Gnr Bidney, Gnr Ball and Gnr Danziger.

Here is a photograph taken in 1958 at the Training Centre in Guildford of 'B' Company (Yellow Flashes). **Mrs Verna Jennings (née Johnston)** would like to hear from anyone in this photograph. Contact address: 7 Darlington Street, Bathwick, Bath, BA2 4EA.



Photograph sent in by Mrs Ann Nichols, 20 Cambrian Crescent, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, NR32 3HW showing Searchlight Battery HQ, Kenbury House, Kenford, Devon, 1942:

Seated: Sgt Anne Mavor
On her left: Sgt Aurelia Rogers
On her right: Pte (Ruby) Ann Larkins (Mrs Ann Nichols)
Centre back: Pte Pat Swallow
L and R: Unknown



Here is a photograph sent by **Miss Helen Kittermaster** of 'Hobdens', Stoke Road, North Curry, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 6HN showing some members of 'A' Troop, 513(M) HAA Battery. It was taken in 1944 on the gun site of Cardross, Dunbartonshire. In the picture are:

Back Row (L-R): Dizzie Oldham, Helen Kittermaster, Mary Pye
Middle Row: Eddie Reycroft, Mary Fury, Frankie Twelvetree, Vicky Morris
Front Row: ?, Biddy Colligan

Situated on the banks of the River Clyde, with direct access to the beach, it must have been one of the most attractive gun sites in the country. We all enjoyed our time there and, on our days off in the nearby town of Helensburgh and in Glasgow, which we were forbidden to visit on Saturdays as it was thought to be too rough for young ladies!! I would love to hear from any of the girls in the photo, or anyone else in the Troop who remembers me (with married names, please!) Perhaps some of us will be able to meet up at the ATS(M) HAA Reunion in York if one is to be held again in 1997.



Ivor Worth of 68 Roman Pavement, Monk's Tower Estate, Lincoln, LN2 5RD would like to hear from any of the following:

Mr Ted Sayers, 29 Sidney Boyd Court, West End Lane, Hampstead, London, NW6
Mr Roy Round, 284 West Quinton Lane, West Quinton, Birmingham 32
Mr P Dudman, 38 Elm Avenue, West Worthing, Surrey.
Mr Sid Bolton, c/o 56 Albatross Avenue, Strood, Kent, ME2 2XP
Mr Roy Norton, 5 Daniel Folo, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL12 7JU
W/40805 Pte Terry Soughton and Pte Joyce Vagus of 8 Ind Coy WRAC, Bicester, Oxon, also CSM Buirsan and Sgt Judd.

Mrs Mary Irene Griffiths (née Baston) of 81 Percy Road, Wrexham, North Wales would like to hear from any of the following who were together in Antwerp in 1945 on General Duties:

Sgt Akroyd Ada Convery
Sally Simpson Jessie Brown

Cheryl Booth commissioned 1966? Originally from Nottingham, then lived in the Redbridge area of Southampton, attended Bittern Grammar School. It is thought she married a Welsh Guardsman called Jones. **Gill Southwell (née Green)** would like to get in touch with her as they were at school together.

Mrs Lilian Cross would like to hear from **Mrs Gladys Walker**. She was one of 3 sisters serving in the ATS. Mrs Cross was with her in 1943/45 stationed at St Asaph near Rhyl. Contact: 117 Tilstock Crescent, Sutton Farm, Shrewsbury, SY2 6HQ.

E Ann DEAKIN

WRAC Other Ranks Register

I am compiling a Register of ex-WRAC and to date 60 ladies have contacted me. Everyone is interested in finding friends from their army days and would love the opportunity to meet again.

PDF Compressor Free Version

Ashton Susan	Gildea Ann	McGregory Ina
Baker Margaret	Griffiths Anita	McKetney Margaret
Baxter Earl	Griffiths Betty	O'Neill Lillian
Bewers/Bewis Sonia	Grinnel Rita	Parsons Helen
Billington Sheila	Haines Jackie	Pepper Jean
Black Betty	Harper Lorraine	Phipps Jean
Blundel Marianne	Hewso Christine	Pierce Pat
Bowyer Doris	Hope Edna	Porter Chris
Broadbent Sandra	Horton Sheila	Powell-Price ?
Clynch Esther	Hubble Kit	Price Chris
Coles Madge	Jacobs Hilda	Primrose Grace
Collier Penny	Jenkins Dee	Riddock Marina
Collinson Ann	King Margaret	Ross Brenda
Compton/Crompton Alice	King Paula	Saunders Barbara
Crew Margaret	Lake Pam	Smart Beryl
Dailey/Daley Liz	Lee Anne	Sutherland Jean
Darroock Jean	Loftus Eileen	Thompson Anne
Denman Gwen	Martland Pim	Thompson Val
Dutton Jackie	Matthews Pam	Tobin Pat
Fisher Doreen	Merrick Diane	Wallace Pat
France Pat	MacAlees- twins	Wallet Val
Gartland Susanne	McCormack Shena	Ward Cynthia

Late Entries

Watt Jean	Callaghan Cathy
Webb Betty	Dick Nessie
Widnall Monica	Dobbins Phylliss
Wilkinson Jenny	Kernaghan Cathy
Williamson Margaret	Rose Cindy
Wright Jean	Teesdale Dot
	Turner Maxine

Do you know any of these names? Would you like to get in touch again? Would you like to be included on the WRAC Register? Write to: Ann Deakin (née Butler), "Cobblestones", 2 Chesham Road, Stafford, ST16 2JP. Telephone: 01785 249992. Please send a stamped addressed envelope so I can reply.

AGC CORPS DAY 1997

The Annual Corps Day of the Adjutant General's Corps is to be celebrated at Worthy Down near Winchester on Saturday 14th June 1997. The festivities will commence at 11.30 with a Drumhead Service. There will be stalls, static displays and competitions in the Arena. The day will close with a Band Performance by the AG Corps band.

Lunch and tea will be available at an inclusive price of £8.00.

If you wish to attend please complete the proforma below and send with your remittance.



To: HQ WRAC Association, AGC Centre,
Worthy Down, Winchester, SO21 2RG

From:
.....
.....
.....Post Code

I/we wish to attend the AG Corps Day on Saturday 14 June 1997 and enclose my cheque/postal order (made out to WRAC Association) for £8.00 per person.

I would be prepared to carry our Branch Standard or the Association Standard. (It would involve a 10.00am start for rehearsals)

I/we will travel by rail/branch coach/car.
Details of my car are: Make: Colour:.....Reg No.....

Norfolk & Suffolk Branch

Here is a detailed list of Members in the Norfolk & Suffolk Branch. Do you recognise anyone from your Army days? Is this an idea for other Branches to copy?

Name	Name during Service	Dates	Unit and where served
Mrs Mary Aldous	Duval	1946-49	Glen Parva, RAOC Greenford Woolwich Dockyard, Bicester R. Signals 21 Army Gp BAOR Minden, Hanover, Bad Oeynhausen, 1st Iserlohn
Mrs Joan Awbery	Stittle	1942-46	E. Command Sub-Area & Kinema Section, Cambridge 3 Fwd Legal Aid, BAOR Brussels & Bad Salzufen
Mrs Kathleen Bales	Boyce		REME, Aldershot
Mrs Mabel Bell		1941-45	621 (M) HAA Bty, S. Wales
Mrs Kathleen Berwick	Kerrison	1939-45	Inf Trg Centre, Britannia Bks, Norwich, E. Command, Luton
Mrs Wendy Bilham			RASC/CSD Norwich, RASC HQ Colchester. Camp Comdt WO, London, Admin Trg, Guildford, Ord Bicester, Mill COI Science, Shrivenham, Tank Corps Bovington, ATS/WRAC Coy Germany, Transit Camp Hook of Holland, 301 Bn MT Colchester, WRAC (TA)
Mrs Elsie Blanchflower	Marshall	1941-46	473 (M) HAA Bty 135 Regt Sunderland, Paisley, Winchester, London
Mrs Trudy Bond	Padley	1944-46	RE Batwoman, Yorks, Bomb Disposal, London Bridge Bldg Unit
Mrs Ivy Bound			Catering & QMNS
Mrs Olive Brown	Thomas	1941-44	513 (M) HAA Bty Wallsend-on-Tyne & Blythe, Northumberland
Mrs Muriel Bullock	Russell		6AA Chatham
Mrs Vera Caddy	Nicholson	1942-45	205 (M) AA Trg Regt, 538 HAA Bty Portsmouth, 551 HAA, 617 HAA Bty, Southampton
Mrs Agnes Cain	Vertigan/Cain	1941-45	5th Surrey Regt att'd 2nd LAA. CSD Depot Deepcut. Bty Office & Catering Corps Office
Mrs Betty Chadwick	Lark	1944-47	Western Command HQ, No 1 WO Signals No 1 (M) HAA Regt AA, Command HQ
Mrs Irene Chapman	Cork	1942-46	REME Kent, Oswestry
Mrs Beryl Clark	Palmer	1944-47 1940-50	Dalkeith, St Dunstan's College, Catford. Medical Corps, Belgium. Mil Hospital, Hamburg. Catterick Signals School, Southern Cmd Salisbury, Hong Kong
Mrs Jacqueline Cormack	Dixon	1944-47	MT Trg Camberley, Shrewsbury, London (Cal Market) Ord Coy Veldon, Austria BTA Krumpendorf, Klagenfurt att'd 31 Gen Hosp Ambulance driver Taxi Service RASC
Mrs Beryl Couper	Grimes	1942-45	T/D Signals HQ Catterick Camp
Mrs Elsie Debbage	Phillips		469 (M) HAA 132 Regt London Div
Mrs Edna Dodds	Clark/Marsh		WOSB D Coy, London Dist
Mrs Ivy Duly	Masters	1942-46	Kingstonhill Sigs School, Brompton Rd, GOR
Mrs Edith Ellett	Stringer		QM Catterick, R School Sigs

Name	Name during Service	Dates	Unit and where served
Mrs Georgina Green	Bailey		E. Surrey Regt, Kingston-upon-Thames
Mrs Joyce Hale	Lilley/Bott		591 HAA Bty Bude, Windsor, Datchet
Mrs Joyce Hardy	Rudd		AAOD att'd REME
Mrs Nora Hawkins	Jones		RA Lancaster, Blackdown, Doncaster
Mrs Patricia Hindry	Lynch	1942-46	Northampton (Predictor) 522 (M) HAA Bty Oswestry, Weybourne, Liverpool, Southampton, Anglesey, Cardiff, Whitby, Windsor Park, Portsmouth
Mrs Ann Hyams	Foster	1942-46	REME, Hill Mill, London, BAOR, R. Signals
Mrs Audrey Juby	Ann Brand	1943-47	REME, Workshop Cupid's Green. REME HQ AA Cmd Brompton Rd. WO REME Duncannon Street
Mrs Grace Juby	Callum	1942-46	HQ Glen Parva, Leicester. Regt. R. Signals, Brussels, Bad Oeynhausen, Germany
Mrs Mary Kett			No 1 ATS Trg Camp, Northampton
Mrs Beryl Laffin	Webster	1946-48	Glen Parva Barracks, Leicester, Budbrook Barracks, Warwick, New Barracks, Lincoln
Mrs Ivy Martin	Cossey		21 Army Gp HQ 2nd Echelon, Brussels
Mrs Olive Main	Bushell	1941-44	6 Gloucester Clerical Co, Salisbury RA HQ Wymondham 'C' Coy Devon & Cornwall
Mrs May Mallett	Cutmore	1942-46	Pontefract, Yorks. Reigate, Surrey. Britannia Barracks, Norwich
Mrs Amy Maund	Kemp		173 Provost Coy 632 (M) HAA Bty, N. Ireland
Mrs Ann Nichols	Larkins	1940-50 1950-52	Ocean Hotel, Saltdean Searchlight Bty HQ Kenford, Devon. REME Charminster B COY 46 AA Bde Group WRAC TA
Mrs Pearl Nobel	Kirby		493 (M) HAA Bty
Mrs Elsie Parker	Axten	1942-46	No 1 ATS 'Y' Wings, Quorn
Mrs Mona Perkins	Kirby		542 (M) HAA Bty
Mrs Musa Pinnock	Dowe	1942-46	RASC Dunstable, Harpenden, Welwyn, Bedford
Mrs Gladys Read	Stannard		CSD Thetford
Mrs Maud Rogers	Wallington	1942-46	Northampton, Oswestry, Weybourne, Whitby, 515 HAA Bristol, 10 Resettlement Unit
Mrs Louisa Rutherford	Sandell	-1947	RASC A Coy Home Counties
Mrs Marjorie Sacre		1944-47	920 Coy RASC (W/O) Chelsea, Velden, Austria BTA Krumpendorff, Klagenfurt. Att'd 31 Gen Hosp Ambulance Driver Taxi Service RASC
Miss Anne Scott			Allied Commission to Austria
Mrs Joan Shreeve	Chapman	1939-45	Britannia & Nelson Barracks, Norwich
Miss Vera Smith			483 (M) HAA Bty
Mrs Eileen Soanes	Clarke		569 (M) Bty. REME
Mrs Marjorie Spears	Stevenson	1943-45	HQ Coy Hyderabad Barracks, Colchester

Name	Name during Service	Dates	Unit and where served
Mrs Betty Sullivan	McDonald	1942-46 1949-52	Inf Record Office, Warwick WRAC Belfast, London (War Office), Malaya, Special Branch Office
Mrs Nancy Symonds	Germany		Royal Suffolk Regt, Bury St Edmunds
Miss Kate Todd		1939-45	HAA Spurn Point. Romsey, Hants
Miss Audrey Told		1940-49 1960-66	RAOC Weedon. 8 Trg Centre, Glen Parva No 19 TC Fenham Bks, Leicester. Sub Dist Bournemouth. Tel-el-Kebir, Middle East. Didcot, OCTU Windsor. Colchester TA Colchester
Mrs Joyce Topp	Syder		541 (M) HAA Bty 158 Regt RA
Mrs Alma Topping	Flowers		ATC Clerks School, Golders Green
Mrs Lilian Varley			584 (M) HAA Bty 178 Regt RA
Mrs Ida Ward		1940-45	Pickersgill, Surrey. Irish Guard, Lingfield Bks. R. Norfolks, Britannia Bks Norwich
Mrs Joan Ward	Symonds		503 Bty (M) HAA 29 S/L Regt
Mrs Margaret Watson	Howell		422 (M) HAA Bty HQ SEAC
Mrs Margery Wells		1942-46	606 (M) HAA Bty 179 Regt Newhaven, Eastbourne, Dymchurch
Mrs Gladys White	Stevens	1939-45	3 Surrey Coy ATS, Crayston, A Coy ATS. 8 SE Platoon Blackdown and A Coy S/D Aldershot Stores
Mrs Doreen Walker	Wardlaw	-1945	Driver Trg N. Wales, Kent att'd RASC R. Signals Egypt , Palestine
Mrs Winnie Wigg	Armitage	1941-46	481 (M) HAA Bty, Durham, Merseyside, Kent London, Belgium, Germany
Mrs Irene Wilkinson		1942-45	WOSB Watford

QUESTIONNAIRE

You, the reader, are the mainstay of the Lioness and your contributions, whether for Gold Weddings, Branch News, Where Are You Now, Poets Corner or other articles are always very welcome. We want to see if we are getting the magazine right and if it contains the sort of material you want to read. It would be appreciated if you could answer the questionnaire below and add any other remarks. This is your chance to comment on the content of the Lioness and your views would be much appreciated.



Please return the form to:
The Lioness, HQ WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester, Hants SO21 2RG

Photographs: the number of illustrations in the Lioness is: about right/ not enough/ too many*
Articles written by the Lioness reporter: like/don't like*
If you answered 'like' to the above, would you be willing to be interviewed yourself for an article? yes/no/maybe
If you are willing to be interviewed, please state your name and address:

.....
.....

Articles on women in the army today: should be one per issue/no need for any/would like more*
Spotlight on Branches: include several per month/have one per issue/don't like*
Suggestions for subjects for further articles:

.....
.....

Please add any further comments:

.....
.....
.....

* Delete as applicable

Gunners Corner

MR R A HORNE

Because you are all Ladies of the very highest calibre, no matter what job you did, be it office, cook, driver, searchlights, or gun control, you gave it your all, often in appalling and hazardous conditions, and while under fire you were second to none, and an example to us all, from Hellfire Corner to Bomb Alley, with many paying the extreme sacrifice with their lives.

Now over 50 years on you are attending your 4th and sadly your last grand reunion at York, where I hope you will all have a very enjoyable time with friends old and new from the past.

All veterans of the years gone by, but still young in heart, you can return home with yet another glorious memory, thanks to Major Robertson and his staff at York Garrison, not forgetting Vee Robinson and the ladies who started it all and Sue Crook.

So in closing I lift my glass in salute, and toast "THE LADY GUNNERS" God Bless each and every one of you. It was indeed my privilege and honour to have served with you, and I should know I married one of you.

If anyone from 'B' Troop, 630 Battery is out there I would like to hear from you, ring Ron Horne on 0181-504-7524 or write to me at 27 Copford Close, Woodford Bridge, Essex IG8 8EH.

FOUR FRIENDS IN LAKE DISTRICT

Thanks to the Lioness, four friends from hut four 524(M) HAA Bty met in Wales in July for a weekend get together.

Doris Noden, Edit Owens, Marion Bevan, Madge France. Memories came flooding back, our sides ached with laughter with our reminiscences.

One friend was unable to come at the last minute, due to family illness.

In the photograph from left to right, army day names were, Doris Binns, Edit Viner, Marion Rowley, Madge France. Unable to attend, Betty Wilson.



"Ladies of the Royal Artillery Mixed AA Batteries from all over the country joined in this nostalgic reunion. Vee Robinson the very hard-working organiser of the event had the surprise of her life when TV celebrity Noel Edmonds appeared to offer help to get her book published this year. He then announced another arrival and many thought "God help us it's going to be Mr Blobby" but 'no' it was Gloria Hunniford who arrived with the Morecambe Big Band on an enormous lorry. Noel then let us in on the secret - we were being televised for the Noel Edmonds Xmas Day Show - something really special to look forward to.

This, together with the wonderful service at York Minster on the Sunday and the added pleasure of meeting up with all our old friends made the weekend an unforgettable one. Here's to our reunion in 1997."

Joyce Wright (née Wallace - 435(M) HAA Battery RA)



Back Row: Kay Anderson (née Karney) 435 (M&D) HAA Bty RA; Alison Hill (née Edgeley) 435 (M&D) HAA Bty RA; Daphne Baldwin 435 & 457 HAA Bty RA; Marjorie Huggett (née Matthews) 469 (M) HAA Bty RA; Margaret Stringer (née Mitchell) 469 (M) HAA Bty RA; Kneeling: Joyce Wright (née Wallace) 435 (M&D) HAA Bty RA; Beryl Bourne 469 HAA Bty RA

REUNION

93rd Searchlight Regt - Saturday 15th March 1997 in Nottingham

Cost : £45.00 - Dinner 15th March and B/B and Lunch on 16th March, all inclusive

A deposit of £15.00 is needed prior to ensure accommodation.

The name of the organiser is:

Mrs B LAPHAM (née OLDHAM)

31 Barnfield Road East

Davenport

STOCKPORT

SK3 8TT

Tel: 0161-483-3498

YORK REUNION

It hardly seems possible that a year has passed since I wrote a report on the 1995 Ack Ack Reunion at York, but here I am again to tell those who don't know about these 'get togethers' that it was a wonderful experience. It's been for hundreds of 'Lady Gunners' to renew old friendships and make lots more new ones, and to remind those who have been what happened this year at Imphal Barracks.

If you remember, in August 1995 we didn't know we were again to be 'blessed' with a 3rd reunion at York, but thanks to Major(Retd) David Robertson and his super staff, we learned in November that this was to be so - 3rd and 4th August 1996!!

When we entered the Barracks at 4pm on Saturday 3rd and were given our 'Programme of Events' we did wonder 'how famous was the gentleman, scheduled to entertain us?' Never before had we seen such an elaborately decorated stage on one of these occasions! We WERE to learn that, excellent as he was - our entertainer for the evening, Major(Retd) George Horne - was not THE STAR!! Suddenly - Noel Edmonds appeared - then an enormous lorry with a prize-winning dance band on board, and last but not least - Gloria Hunniford!! Apparently, the daughter of an ex-Ack Ack 'girl', learning from her Mum what a wonderful time we 'old' ladies have at York, had contacted Noel to suggest that if he wanted a subject for one of his future TV 'specials' he should look no further than the York Reunion of Ack Ack Ladies.



Ack Ack Ladies
L/R Win Richardson 510 Bty, Sue Crook 606 Bty, Beryl Holder 514 Bty, Vee Robinson 536 Bty, Jenny Eardley 560 BTD (From Canada) Belle Stark 510 Bty (From Australia)

Once again we don't know whether we'll be at York again in 1997 but there is an Ack Ack Holiday planned for 6th to 9th June at Holme Lacy House Hotel, near Hereford and four days later quite a number of Ack Ackers will be at Bridlington for the Combined Ex-Service' Reunion - 13th to 15th June.

Here's to another "HAPPY ACK ACK YEAR"
Beryl Holder.



*Cecil Ward carries the Standard
Betty Holder & Beryl Stark*



*A delighted V Robinson met the daughter of her late friend
Podge - found by the BBC Researchers*

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301 BTY 93RD SEARCHLIGHT REGT

301 Bty 93rd S/Light Regt - 6th September 1997 - Union Jack Club Waterloo

Information can be obtained from:

Miss Peggy LAMB OBE

36 Belvedere Court

Upper Richmond Road

PUTNEY

London SW15 6BY

Tel: 0181-788-9151

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Once again I was privileged to attend the Ack Ack Reunion in York.

Five members of my Bty were there, Dot Banton (Heath) Ellesmere Port, Joan Oates (Thompson) Barnsley, Alice Stallard (Winstanley) Manchester, Beryl Charles (Mallard) Ilkeston, and her sister Enid Cox (Mallard) Cromer. All of 665(M) HAA Bty.

Stories of life on gun sites on the Wirral and "D Day" spent on a site in Pembrokeshire were related.

HQ site at Sandy Haven was a POW camp, they were moved up the road to a better camp and (M) HAA Btys moved in.

There was no running water, this was brought in by tanker twice a day (sometimes) if there was hot water in the outside stoves, there was no cold - it was easier to wash in the stream. Rats performing a nightly clog dance between the lining of the nissen huts, eventually these were stripped to catch the rats and revealed lots of missing underwear from the ATS huts and loads of old socks from the gunners - RATS PERKS?



Photograph of the Master Gunner, General Sir Martin Farndale KCB

Learning to swim (in case of invasion)? undressing on the beach behind an old ship's boiler just to hear the sniggers of the Welsh farm hands looking down on us from above.

The Master Gunner in his address really made us feel proud of having served with the gunners on mixed Ack Ack, wearing the bow and arrow flash, RA grenade and white lanyard with pride.

RAA Assns represented by their standards and the Lancashire Artillery (Volunteer) Band made the "Sunset" ceremony a fitting conclusion to a memorable weekend.

Mrs Enid Cox
Royal British Legion
Halsey House
Cromer



Members of HAA Bty RA

Thelma Walton Guest, Beryl Charles (Mallard), Dot Banton (Heath), Alice Stallard (Winstanley), Joan Oates (Thompson), Enid Cox Mallard

From Sue Crook of Battery Linking:

"May I express my thanks to all who have written to me recently and those I met for the first time at the Ack Ack reunions either in 1993 or 1996 at York, for their overwhelming support and gratitude for my efforts.

Please forgive any delay in answering your letters - I am currently having to deal with form filling, concerning structural problems within my home. I will endeavour to keep you up to date with any new 'links'. With 1,400 or so names in my files I am sure you will realise the enormity of the exercise!

LINKING MUST CONTINUE. Please keep me informed of new names, with MAIDEN NAMES AND BATTERY NUMBERS. THANK YOU."

MEDAL SERVICES

Please note the HOME COUNTIES MEDAL SERVICES has moved to the following address:

53 Bodiam Crescent
Hampden Park
Eastbourne
E. Sussex BN22 9HQ

Telephone: 01323 506012

Branch News

New Branches

Is there anyone willing to start a new Branch. There is a membership of some 26 former ATS living in Suffolk unable to get to meetings in Norwich. Colchester and Chelmsford Branches also have Suffolk members. Perhaps someone could start a separate Suffolk Branch.

Aldershot

We have had an interesting programme of talks this year, together with two purely social events - the first a "Curry Lunch" (profits from which have been sent to the Benevolent Fund) and the second our Annual Dinner, attended by 44 members and their guests.

Some of our members are now not very mobile and we owe a special debt of gratitude to those stalwarts who bring them to meetings and take them out on other occasions - this is really what comradeship is about.

Our chairman, Gill Sale, will be standing down this month and is being replaced by Gwenda Easton (née Burbridge) whose husband Peter, late Education Corps, is a tower of strength not only in general support but also by providing literally hundreds of plants for sale at our fund-raising activities. Our Secretary, Brenda Killick has been replaced by Alison Schofield (née Senior).

Two of our members have died recently and their executors have been kind enough to send us photographs of them when they were serving. The only one that could be reproduced is of Adeline Davies (née Ransom) when she was stationed in France as a member of the WAAC in 1917/18. One member of our branch is the daughter of a member of the WAAC and some of our readers may well recognise their parents amongst the group. The National Army Museum has kindly provided Mrs Davies' daughter with a copy of the tape which she made a year before her death and selections from the transcript which has only just arrived, will form the basis of a future article. Interestingly both these members had successfully followed other careers after leaving the service; Ruth as a House Matron at Beneden School and Adeline as an accountant - yet another example of the value of a military training!

Some of our members are ex-Royal Signals so some of us joined their Aldershot Branch on an outing on the Watercress Line (a railway run by volunteer enthusiasts between Alton and Alresford). Jane Knight was brave enough to climb up into the engine driver's cab, where she was "snapped" by an ex-signaller - fulfilment of a childhood dream?



Adeline Davies (née Ransom) is in the front row, 3rd from the left



Jane Knight of the Aldershot Branch during an outing with the Royal Signals Branch

We have an interesting programme planned for next year, starting with a talk by a working antiques dealer on March 18th and we also welcome guests from other branches to our venue at the Church of Scotland Hall, Queen's Avenue, Aldershot, starting at 7.30pm (sorry, 1930 hours!)

Ashby de la Zouch

Last month was our AGM and we all left feeling very happy about the last year. We have managed, thanks in no small measure to our excellent Treasurer, Mora, to accumulate a healthy bank balance. We gave to the ATS Benevolent Fund, the WRAC Association, the Princess Royal Fund and to the local Sue Ryder Hospice, where a late member (Celia) spent her last few weeks.

Our programme was varied and interesting, thanks to our hard working Secretary, Gwen. Bingo and Beetle drives occasionally, a quiz devised by our Chairman, Doreen, pub lunches in the summer, together with local visits produced a balance to suit all. A visit to Melbourne Hall was greatly enjoyed and their famous gardens added to an excellent afternoon out. The local "nick" was interesting in an entirely different way, with plenty of action while the visit was on and a determination NEVER to lapse into a life of crime, after seeing the cells!

By the time this is published we will have enjoyed our Christmas lunch together and will be making our final arrangements for Blackpool. Ten of us will be there, looking forward to meeting old friends and making new ones - from other branches.

See you there!

Aylesbury

Our monthly meetings are still well supported by members who are able to attend. Travelling to meetings is a problem and some members are unable to overcome this. However, they still wish to continue their membership of the Branch, and through the media of the Branch Reports in *Lioness* we keep in touch. Sick and housebound members are visited when we are made aware of their situation if this is practically possible.

A most enjoyable time was spent at the AG Corps Day, Worthy Down, in June. The Branch was represented at the Dedication of the newly formed Aylesbury Branch of the Normandy Veterans Association. Our Chairman, Alma Stride, discovered she went to the same school as the NVA National Standard Bearers wife in Grimsby some good years ago!

We enjoyed ourselves at the Group Meetings hosted by Wimbledon Branch, but thanks to 'Chiltern Railways' the return journey home was horrendous. The Branch manned the RBL Women's Section Poppy Appeal Stand in Friars Square, Aylesbury for an afternoon, where they were allowed to advertise their own Association and our Remembrance Wreaths with ATS Centre, were also displayed. The wreath was laid at Aylesbury War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday by Mary Astill.

At our AGM in November a Vice Chairman and Treasurer were elected, much to the Chairman/Secretary's relief!

On 7th December our Branch meeting was followed by our Christmas party. This was enjoyed by all and each member contributed something to the festivities. It was felt by all present that now we are fewer members, we get to know each other more intimately. So small is beautiful - we look forward to our Christmas lunch on 18th December at the Oxford Road College, Aylesbury, continuing our Christmas celebrations, and with a new Entertainments Officer we have a full and happy programme to look forward to with more events planned in 1997.

We now look forward to another successful and happy year in sharing each others comradeship.



*Members attending the AG Corps Day, Worthy Down.
Saturday 15th June 1996.*

Left to Right: Olga Harding, Sylvia Clay, Doris Atley, Alma Stride, Beryl Pepper, Mary Astill.

The photograph was taken by Barbara Hurman. A most enjoyable day was had by all. Thanks to the organisers

Birmingham

Our Branch is still going strong, we have 117 members but we sadly lost three of our members at the beginning of the year.

January we moved back to the Base in Gough Street. February we had no meeting as the weather was very bad. In March we had a speaker from Sainsbury's about home economics. April we had a buffet as we did not manage to get a Christmas meal. We also had a tombola based on an Eastern theme. May was our special meeting

as it was our 8th birthday of the Branch. In June some of our members attended the ATS tea at the Victory Club, also members went to the Adjutant General's Corps Day at Worthy Down. I was quite thrilled when I got my *Lioness* that there was a photograph of my sister who had come from South Africa, with one of our Branch members and myself. In July, we had a speaker telling us about his life as a young lad working for Mason's the Grocers. In August we had a Bring & Buy. For September we had a speaker telling us how the dogs help the invalids. They are quite different from guide dogs and it was very interesting.

We have also been to Pebble Mill and watched how they produce the programmes and we have been to Wolverhampton Theatre twice.

October was a great time as well as we hosted the ATS Luncheon Club. We did well as there was another reunion on the same day.

I must mention one of our members - Iris Tobing - who has been in the Association for 15 years and was awarded the Certificate of Merit. Well done, Iris. We are all looking forward to next year as we are going to have a teacher to show us Line Dancing.

Thank you Birmingham for all your support.

THE SOMME JANUARY - DECEMBER 1916

Somewhere in France: The Collected Letters of Lewis Windemere Nott is a provocative account of the Great War through letters. Beautiful, lyrical and moving - the letters are introspective and give us a rare glimpse into one man's experience of war. Capturing excitement, romance, horror and loneliness of war, it is a moving collection.

In 1916 Lewis Nott, Captain, 15th Battalion of The Royal Scots, wrote over 130 letters to his beloved wife, Doris, from the trenches on the Somme, and *Somewhere in France* is the astonishing collection of one man's experience of the Great War. Through his father's letters, maps and photographs, David Nott has crafted an intimate portrait of his father's years on the front, somewhere in France.

Somewhere in France by David Nott is published by HarperPerennial, An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers on 31st October, priced £9.99. For a review copy or further information please call Caroline Stanger on 0181-307 4545 or write to her at 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, Hammersmith, London W6 8JB.

1996 has not proved a very good year for the Branch. This is due to the fact that our Secretary had a nasty accident resulting in a broken shoulder which affects balance when walking and considerable pain and being unable to carry on a normal routine. However! a visit was made to the Lancashire Fusiliers Regimental Museum; this was very interesting, and the Curator gave a historical resume of the Regiment - they won six Victoria Crosses at Gallipoli in World War I.

The Secretary and Treasurer attended the AGM when Vera (our Treasurer) received her Certificate of Appreciation from Brigadier Field.

Several members attended the North West Area Reunion at Chester in July. During the year we have lost two members. Mrs Kathleen Winstanley of the WAIMNS who we co-opted into the Branch at the request of her husband. Kathleen was suffering from a terminal illness; she attended our VJ Day Parade in a wheelchair wearing her several Campaign Medals - 7 in all. Kathleen died in August.

Dorothy Schofield, founder member of the Branch left us to go to live in Nottingham. Dorothy is not in the best of health and has gone to live near her daughter, although she is keeping her Branch membership up. We presented her with a floral display and a framed photograph of our members. We wish Dorothy and her husband Jack every happiness in their new home.

We made our Annual visit to the Mayor's Parlour in October, and we were made very welcome by the Mayor and Mayoress (see Photograph). Vera and Joan are showing off their certificates.

We took part in the VE Day and VJ Day Parades and the Remembrance Parade on 10th November when Lucy Ainsworth laid the ATS Wreath.

The Branch Annual Dinner was held in October at the local Technical College Restaurant. We enjoyed an excellent meal which was prepared and served by the College Students.

Our Christmas Dinner will be held on 19th December at the Local Dickensian Coaching House. This venue lends itself to the Christmas atmosphere.

Bolton Branch send all good wishes to all the Staff at Worthy Down and to all Association Members. A Happy and Healthy 1997.



Bolton Branch - (by permission of Bolton Evening News)

We have 74 members, and around 25 regular attenders, at our monthly meetings, held at the Cadogan Hotel, Poole Road, Bournemouth. Some travel 10 to 15 miles to be present. This is on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, from 2-4pm. The room is very comfortable and, being near the town centre, is easy to reach from every direction. The £1 charge for tea or coffee and a biscuit, takes care of the room service. The management do not charge for the room itself - How lucky we are. It's their way of saying THANK YOU for what we did all those years ago!

Our Branch had three speakers early in the year: March - an illustrated talk about Featherston Hall before the fire in 1989; April - it was about Real Ghosts, though we did not see one. May - was all about Lawrence of Arabia. Then we decided to cut down on the costs of a speaker and talk among ourselves and now we have Doreen Snell as Social Secretary. She has been very busy compiling a full programme of speakers for next year. Our Branch will be delighted to receive any visiting members from other groups. When you arrive, please make yourselves known to us and we will do our best to make you very welcome.

Death has robbed us of 4 more members, and one ex-member this year: Mrs G E Austin, who was a life member; Mrs Audrey Bulman (née Addis). We only heard of her via the "Lioness"; Mrs Peggy Higgins (née Herbert) died in March; Miss D Y Barker died in January, Miss Doris Ada Palmer aged 99 died 29th August. She was an ex-member of this Branch. Letters of sympathy were sent to the families, and it had made us only too aware of the necessity of keeping in touch with the sick and needy, so we are asking those who live nearest to do the visiting.

Thank you, Bath, for being such great hosts on the 19th May, even though you were difficult to find. Perhaps we were looking for Balloons, certainly some direction signs. We must say that even the correct entrance to Worthy Down was not that easy to find either. Maybe it is our age. Again, what a fab day we had on 24th July. Bournemouth Branch had its annual visit by coach to the Bere Regis British Legion. Our coach driver was tops. He took us to see Lawrence of Arabia's grave, and the lovely etched glass windows of the Little Moreton Church nearby. Then, all the way home he played his tapes of war-time songs, for us to sing and remember. Vivienne Parsons, our Chairman, was away on holiday for 3 months, so, by way of compensation on her return, we were shown her first ever camcorder film of her travels, up the West Coast of America to Canada, on steam trains.



*Front Row: Sylvia Roberts
Rear: L-R Connie Deakin, Betty Monmen, Nina Pitt*

Four of our members went to the Mixed Heavy Ack Ack Re-union in York the first week-end in August. The BBC was there, complete with band playing on an open truck, plus Gloria Hunniford and Noel Edmonds. That was a bonus indeed. The resulting programme, will be broadcast on Christmas Day, following the Queen's Speech. I do think that we ladies of the war are being recognised at last. One of our ladies has been awarded a pension for her great deafness, caused by gun-fire during the war, and now wishes she had known about this pension earlier in her life. Freda Brown hosted a pre-Christmas coffee morning at her home, which was attended by 14 members.

Canterbury

At the time of going to press we have been at our new venue for a year; we are all happy there. It is a Dominican Priory, a very ancient building with lots of character and atmosphere. We consider ourselves very fortunate to be able to meet there.

Another busy year for the Branch. Our monthly meetings have been well attended with an average of 32 members. We have had a varied selection of speakers, including representatives of the NVA who talked about "D Day + Plus", "Liz" from the Samaritans and a lady who spoke about her life as a child living in China under Japanese occupation. We had a team of ladies who entertained us with singing and monologues, four of whom were over 80 years old, and we were able to join in the singing of the well loved songs. One of our members, Maria Power, told us about her 15 years experience in the WRAC. This was very popular with the rest of the members and Maria has promised to speak at a later date. During the past year fund raising activities have been concentrated on raising money to purchase our new Standard. These have included a Coffee Morning which raised over £600. Mavis Middleton is still making and selling her apple pies! At monthly meetings members have been very generous with articles for Raffles and Bring & Buy Sales, etc., and we have received many donations. Thanks to everybody for their help.

The new Standard was dedicated in September at a joint service with the Queen's Own Buffs Royal Regiment.

Our original Standard was carried at several parades and services during the year including the TA Association St Barbara's Day Service at Woolwich Barracks, and the RBL 75th Parade at the Military Academy at Sandhurst. Also in September five of our members joined other service



Canterbury Branch - Dedication of New Standard
L-R: Mercy Jordon (Bottle), Maria Power (Wells),
Bella Mapham (née Hoile)

organisations on a visit to the War Cemeteries on the Somme. The Lord Mayor of Canterbury came with us to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Canterbury assisting two villages devastated by World War I - Les Boeufs and Morval. Canterbury citizens helped by supplying fruit trees and a new water system to both villages and the link has never been broken. After a memorial service at both villages, we were entertained to a champagne and caviar buffet. The following day we visited many war cemeteries, including the Thiepval Memorial, an enormous cenotaph, where a moving service took place and wreaths were laid.

As usual, we have included many gastronomic events in our programme. These have included a Christmas lunch, Fish & Chip lunch, our annual party for the WAAFs and WRNS and have accepted several invitations from local Service Organisations.

We now have a new Branch Secretary, Mrs Maria Power. Will members please note her address is No 3, Pembroke Avenue and amend your copy of the 1997 programme. Best wishes to all members of the Association. We are looking forward to the Grand Reunion at Blackpool in April. 14 of our members hope to be there. See you all then.

Cardiff & Newport

Here in South East Wales, our branch with some sixty members is flourishing and continues to organise a busy and interesting programme of events. The spirit of friendship and comradeship experienced during our time in the ATS or the WRAC lives on. Branch fund-raising through bring-and-buy afternoons is a popular and successful part of our regular activities.

Summertime outings included a visit to Cardiff Bay, on our doorstep, to partake of that northern experience - Harry Ramsden's. This type of fish and chip treat is still a novelty for us South Walian's since Harry Ramsden's is new here but, we gather, business is phenomenal and already rivals trade in any branch in the country. All our members thoroughly enjoyed the meal and the setting in Cardiff's redeveloped dockland. Another enjoyable day out farther afield was a visit we made at the end of July to Windsor and Eton.

Our members gave good support to our sister branch based in Swansea on the occasion of the Wales and Western 1996 Re-union held on 12th October. The organisers are to be congratulated on a highly enjoyable and successful day.

Several members attended the British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in November and marched past The Cenotaph the following morning. The final branch event of 1996 was the Christmas Dinner held at the United Services Mess, Wharton Street, Cardiff on 10th December.



Cardiff Branch at the Swansea Re-union

December - After a very exciting and full 1995, with our VE and VJ Parades, and rounding the year off with our Christmas Dinner at which Lady Kemball was our Guest of Honour.

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January - Started us off with a speaker from 'The Wood Green Animal Shelter'. It was very interesting and a fair number of members were there with a lot of questions.

Our Secretary attended the Ceremony of the First Planting of the Trees for the Memorial Avenue of Trees. A £100 had been collected from our members to have a tree planted for our Association.

February - Came in cold, wet and snowy. Our meeting had to be cancelled as many members who live in villages had challenges getting into town.

March - We were entertained by the 'Wacky Arts' Drama Group, consisting of eight of our members performing a short play which takes part in a doctor's waiting room. It was quite hilarious. Mrs Muggins (our Secretary) dragging her little girl 'Gertie', who was complaining of stomach ache, in to see the doctor. The lurid tales being discussed by the women in the waiting room and the sight of the various tools being taken into the surgery was enough to scare everyone!!

April - We held our Annual Fair.

May - No meeting was held as so many of our members were on holiday at The Warners Camp.

June - After a lovely cup of tea and the minutes being read the meeting continued with a quiz.

July - Was our anniversary outing to Felixstowe. The weather was wonderful. We had a stroll along the beach and some of the more daring went for a paddle. Joyce (our Chairman) even managed to get her knickers wet in the process!! Her skirt being held high remained dry! - Some people are still children at heart, we never grow up do we?!!

August - Lady Kemball informed us that the WRAC/ATS Association had been awarded £200,000 from the National Lottery which was great news for everyone.

Joyce organised a unique word game which had all of us putting on our thinking caps.

Some members attended the AA re-union and they really enjoyed themselves. Emily had a show, a collection of photographs including one of Joyce (5ft 2in) standing next to an Army Sgt (6ft 7in)!!! Joy Williams was interviewed by the BBC.

September - We had notices that our secretary was limping a little, she informed us that along with other things she had met a gentleman, namely, 'Arthur Ritis'! - It's one she wishes she had not met. We then played a game called 'Category' most confusing until we got into it and grasped the general idea.

October - Congratulations to Josie Moore for being awarded a Poppy Workers Badge for untiring work over 25 years with The Royal British Legion. We also sat and did chair exercises organised by Pat Wilson.

December - Ian Hook from the Chelmsford Museum showed slides featuring The Essex Regiment.

We shall be rounding off the year with our Christmas Dinner next month and Lady Kemball will once again be attending.

Greetings to all our friends, we sincerely hope members everywhere enjoy their Association Meetings, outings and re-unions as much as we do here in Cleveland. We have had a great year increasing our membership almost every month which we hope will continue in 1997. We had our annual coffee morning in April which enabled us to make a donation to our Benevolent Fund. In July we had our Branch party inviting friends to join us. In August we went off on our yearly coach outing and we had a lovely day in the Lake District.

Last Xmas our entertainment group was invited to provide entertainment for 200 pensioners at the centre where we hold our Branch meetings. The group call themselves "The Fabulous Forties". I am not sure if it is meant to be a tribute to their ATS activities at that time in history, or reference to the fact it's been a long time since any one of them was forty. It was with great pleasure our Branch hosted the Northern Area Re-union and our "Fabulous Forties" entertained 288 members for an hour. From reports received it was enjoyed by many who attended. We are available for Blackpool in April 1997! Talking of the National Re-union, 38 of our members will be attending. We hope to meet many friends there. Must mention our Standard Bearer, Mrs Ann Mahony, she is our pride and joy. We were very proud of her visit to France in June, (as reported in October Lioness). Many of our members have celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversaries in the last year, and we send our good wishes to all who are looking forward to their celebration of this happy day in the coming year. Keep happy and enjoy your meetings.

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

ALLOW 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY

Colchester

We have had many happy afternoons at our meetings during the year which have all been well attended.

In May we visited Southwold, a lovely little east coast seaside town. Unfortunately it poured with rain throughout the day but this did not dampen our spirits. We had a most enjoyable lunch almost on the beach at Dunwich and then went on a sightseeing tour of the town.

During June we had a trip to Norwich including a cruise on the river. This was a very pleasant excursion and the sun shone throughout the day. This month we also celebrated Beryl Newell's 70th birthday with a special do in Great Bentley village hall. This was a very happy morning and Beryl did us proud with coffee and lots of eats. In addition the raffle and sale of local produce raised £55 for our Benevolent Fund. Many thanks Beryl!

We visited Long Melford in July and spent some time looking round this most interesting old town. The Swan Hotel accommodated us very well for lunch.

At our July meeting we were most interested to have a talk from Jean Crawley, a Canadian member of our organisation. She mentioned the idea of using ATS Memorial plaques in Canada to promote public interest in our work during the last war and we thought it might be an idea for us in this country.

In August we had a most enjoyable picnic lunch in the lovely garden of Mrs Ricketts at Langham near Colchester. She had even laid on a band for us which played all the old tunes while the wine flowed freely. A very big thank you to Mrs Ricketts for such magnificent hospitality. She and her husband are to join us as our special guests at our annual Christmas lunch on 6th December at Clacton Golf Club. The oldest member of our Branch - Mrs Jessie Cook, who now resides in a nursing home in Clacton - celebrated her 90th birthday on 23rd August. A group of members took her some flowers and a cake on her birthday and she was thrilled to think that we had remembered her.

November 10th brings us to Remembrance Day once more and contingents from Clacton and Colchester are attending services at their respective Memorials to lay wreaths on behalf of the ATS.

We are having a little celebration during January at our monthly meeting as it is the 100th anniversary of the inauguration of our monthly newsletter. This represents a 'century' of hard work and effort on the part of our tireless Secretary Vera Cole. Well done Vera!

Coventry

After the last two years celebrations of D Day, VE Day and VJ Day, 1996 has been a little less hectic in the Coventry Branch. We still meet on the second Friday of the month at the Royal Warwicks Club. I am afraid distance and disabilities prevent some members from joining us but our numbers are still increasing.

Our first time celebrations of St George's Day was great fun with all ladies dressed in red and white, and the afternoon social was enjoyed by all who attended.

May brought our annual invitation to the Birmingham Branch birthday celebrations where again we enjoyed their hospitality and fellowship. Many thanks Birmingham. In May too, five of our ladies took part in a sponsored fun run and we raised £180 for the British Legion.

In June eleven of us spent a splendid day at the Royal Star and Garter Home at Richmond. It was wonderful to see the care and support our disabled ex-Service comrades receive.

Our outing in June took us to the Black Country Museum. We did pick the wettest day of the year, though, but our ride on the tram and our visit to the tiny cinema, plus our visit to school, where we recited the two and three times table, the alphabet backwards, did some writing with chalk and slate, and also got threatened with the cane, let us relive our childhood, and to appreciate how hard the lives of our parents and grandparents must have been.

The ATS Dinner Club in Birmingham was enjoyed and one of our ladies met again a friend she had not seen for fifty years.

On November 11th most of us will be parading at Bedworth, a ceremony that means a lot to us, in Coventry. This year a million poppy petals will be dropped from a Dakota, on to the Servicemen and Women at the Cenotaph.

We look forward to our eighth birthday party in December, and our Christmas shopping excursion to Lichfield. Our Christmas Dinner will be a return visit to 'Turners Carousel' and this should wind up our year, which after all hasn't been as uneventful as I thought.

Crewe

This year Crewe Branch has been plagued by illness. Several of our usual work force have been ill and as we have only a small band of workers in the first place this has made fund raising rather difficult. In spite of this we managed to send £300 to the Benevolent Fund this year.

After a summer break we held a dance in September at the Crosville Club, Crewe. Then later on September 28th we attended the Golden Wedding Party of our Chairman, Betty Patton, at the Crewe Arms Hotel, Crewe. We had a lovely evening. The Best Man who travelled from Ireland and Bridesmaid Christine Urquhart travelled from Scotland and the two had not met for 50 years. Christine was in the ATS with Betty. We wish Betty and Stanley continued Good Health and Happiness in the future.

We held our Branch AGM on October 3rd all the officers were returned and unopposed. On October 12th a party of us travelled down to Swansea for the Wales and West Group Re-union, where we had a happy time meeting up with friends and enjoying the splendid entertainment.

Because the charity stall we held earlier in May was so successful, we decided to hold another charity stall in Crewe Market on October 19th which was just as profitable.

This year five of us travelled down to London for the Cenotaph Parade in November. It was a lovely day on the Saturday so we went to see the Lord Mayors Show which we enjoyed but Sunday was very disappointing, it being very wet and very cold. However in spite of this there was a good turn out of ladies for the parade.

On November 28th a party of us had a Christmas day out at Stapley Water Gardens near Nantwich starting with morning coffee, then later a full Christmas lunch, in the late afternoon we had tea and mince pies.

We held a charity stall on November 30th at a Christmas Fair in Nantwich Civic Hall which was very successful.

To finish the year off we are all going to see the Pantomime at Crewe Theatre in December. Then we are having a welcome break until February when we will meet to make plans for next year.

Dacorum

This Branch continues to flourish. We meet at the Scout Hall, Queensway, Hemel Hempstead at 2pm on the first Tuesday of every month. Not only do we have members from the Dacorum Area but also from Clapham and Watford. We have had a varied programme, quizzes, a talk and slide show on Kenya by a member's husband, PT by an Extend Instructor and an outing to St Albans Abbey which was enjoyed by all. In September we had our AGM when the Officers and Committee were re-elected en-bloc plus two more Committee members, so we now feel we are well established.

We were represented at the Cenotaph in Whitehall and also at the local Parade and Service on Remembrance Sunday in November.

Our meeting in December was a Christmas Social Meeting and we were entertained by the "Top Hat" group. Our guests were Eileen Carter (London Group Chairman) and Madge Evans (Luton Branch Chairman) and a good time was had by all. Thank you ladies for all the wonderful food you provided.

We are now looking forward to 1997. In January we have a Puppy Walker (and puppy) from the Guide Dogs for the Blind coming to talk to us. February an informal meeting and Quiz. March a talk by the Dacorum Council Woodlands Officer and an outing to Luton Hoo in April.

Five members of the Branch are attending the Grand Re-union at Blackpool and not only are we looking forward to the Re-union but also to a weekend together at the "Seaside" and hopefully to meet long lost friends of yesteryear. I'm sure we shall enjoy ourselves.

We extend a welcome to any Ex-ATS or WRAC in the area to come and join us at our meetings.

Dumfries

Here is a photograph of ex-Sgt Annabella Gibson who sadly died aged 87 on 23rd February. She was for many years the main spring of the Branch and a founder member.

Annabella was very well known in Dumfries and took part in Operatics, Dramatics and sang in the Church Choir for over sixty years, taught in the Sunday School and belonged to many other activities. She was President of the Scottish Country Dance Society in Dumfries and went to Paris with them just after the War to give a display. She had a great personality and a gift for carrying others along with her enthusiasm - she is sadly missed.

This year has been a busy one, 45 members have loyally attended lunches, tea-parties, beetle drives and outings. Next April we celebrate our 50th anniversary and intend to have a party with a cake. Not only do we have ex-ATS, ex-WRAC members, but encompass ex-WAAF, ex-WRNS and ex-Land Army so are in effect an Old Comrades Association, and help each other where we can. One of our members works hard all the year to raise funds for our special charities by selling books and any other items that come her way from other members and we have raffles at some events.

The result of that has been donations to the Erskine Hospital, the Association Benevolent Fund and some for our own Funds.

Fife & Tayside

The branch hosted the Scottish AGM in October at the Quality Station Hotel in Perth. With members arriving by rail, coach and car from all over Scotland, it was a busy day! Committee members wore Black Watch tartan rosettes, made by the Chairman, Colonel The Lady Martha Bruce OBE TD, so that the visitors could easily distinguish them if they had questions.

The arrangements kicked off with coffee, tea and biscuits before the business part of the morning began. After the AGM, the company was played in to lunch by a Black Watch piper, followed by background music from the Regimental Band of 3rd (Volunteer) Battalion The Black Watch. Mind you, the buzz of conversation gave the delightful melodies stiff opposition!

During the afternoon, a local minister entertained everyone for an hour with songs and stories. Meanwhile, two raffles, a bring-and-buy stall and - an innovation - a "good as new" clothes stall did brisk business, with a respectable sum being raised for Association funds.

Another innovation was the memorabilia table which proved very popular. Indeed, it reunited two ladies who hadn't seen each other for more years than they cared to remember!

As everyone set off for home at the end of the afternoon, the Fife and Tayside members were weary but elated that the day had gone so well.



Sgt Annabella Gibson

As the Lady who does the writing for the Grimsby Branch is seriously ill, I have been asked to take over from her, so this is our full years report as I was too late for the last one.

We had our last Annual Dance in January this year. Most of us are getting on a bit now and find it a bit much to cope with the catering arrangements etc., so we have decided that this one should be our last. The ATS Choir which has always been part of the evenings entertainment will no doubt be abandoned, nevertheless it was a popular evening and enjoyed by all who attended.

In March we had a days outing to Millstones Restaurant just outside Harrogate on the Skipton Road. We arrived at 12.30pm in time for a most enjoyable lunch. Then we had afternoon entertainment of Cabaret, Dancing and Bingo. We left there at 4.30pm, stopping for tea and "liquid refreshments" at the Green Tree Inn, Broughton.

Also later in March twelve of us went on holiday together for five days at Ashley Court Hotel in Torquay. During our stay we had a very interesting cruise down the River Dart from Dartmouth. The next day we went on another cruise round Plymouth Harbour and the Dockyard at Devonport, where we saw several ships and submarines from the Royal Navy. What a great time we had!

At the end of March there was a special parade arranged in Cleethorpes by the Royal Naval Association on the occasion of the demise of "Humbly Grove". Three of our ladies attended and they were presented with a Cleethorpes Council Plaque by the Mayor for our association at the reception held after the parade; this has now pride of place in our Chaplains Church.

In April we received a letter from Chris Pincock, who usually writes our goings and comings for the Lioness, to tell us that she was no longer able to do this. She has been diagnosed as having lung cancer, this on top of losing her dear husband John earlier this year. We thank her very sincerely for all the writing she has done in the past and our love and good wishes go to her in the hard times ahead.

Our latest outing was to Sandringham in July when we also visited the African Violet Centre. The weather was perfect and a good time was had by all.

The Summer Fare was held in August which helps our effort for the Benevolent Fund and Princess Mary's Fund.

At our July meeting we had the pleasure of the company of the members of the Hull branch, with whom we spent a lovely afternoon. We had quite a large raffle and our members provided an excellent buffet for them, which was enjoyed by all.

Best wishes and a Merry Xmas and a very happy New Year to all Branches.



Grimsby Branch outing to Sandringham

We have a thriving branch here, which meets once a month, when we have excellent speakers, sometimes with slides or demonstrations, very good discussions and a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

The highlight of this year was the erecting and dedication of a memorial seat near the Cenotaph in the town centre, to our late Secretary/Treasurer of many years, Miss Monica Bradley. Helped by other Branches in the North-East, we were able, through the Borough Council, to purchase the seat and were very fortunate to be allocated such an appropriate position. Two brass plaques on the back of the seat given particulars of Monica's service in the ATS and the years of work she gave to the Association both locally and in the NE Division as Secretary/Treasurer. The ceremony, which took place on August 25th 1996, was well attended, as we were joined by Col Cooke, our NE Chairman, and members of other Branches in the area. We then joined the Royal British Legion in nearby St Peter's Church for a service to mark the 75th anniversary of their founding.

A good contingent always attends the NE Re-union, held this year near Middlesbrough. Cleveland Branch gave us a day to remember, with a very good lunch followed by a hilarious 'revue', staged and acted by members of their Branch. This was followed by a most enjoyable sing-song, which ended with "We'll meet again", of course.



Harrogate Branch:
Dedication of memorial seat to the late Monica Bradley

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.

Hastings

As this is written another year is coming to its close and the comradeship and help provided by our Branches becomes more appreciated as we get older. Hastings Branch now has a membership of 73 with a regular attendance of about 50%.

During 1996 we took part in the usual parades and functions organised by the Joint Council of Ex-Service Associations and other Ex-Service Associations in the town. We were pleased to be invited to support the RBL in Battle on the occasion of the 2 minute silence on the 11th Day of the 11th Month at 11.00am. With other organisations we paraded our Standard in front of the Abbey and it was most impressive to see this old town come to a complete stop with complete silence.

Our own activities have included monthly meetings, our monthly luncheon club, a strawberry tea, our summer outing, a Christmas Lunch and next week (18th December) our annual Christmas Party will be held at the RBL Hall.

The strawberry tea was held in the garden of Joan Lovell, our Vice-Chairman, and was a great success. Not only lovely company and lovely food but the various activities held raised just £100 for our funds. Our thanks to Joan.

The summer outing was nearly a disaster as the coach company ceased trading and at short notice it was not easy to replace them in the middle of the summer. However, we were eventually successful and members and their friends had an excellent day at the Star and Garter Home for disabled Ex-Service personnel in Richmond. On the outward journey we stopped at Chartwell for coffee and arrived in Richmond in time for a buffet lunch after which we were shown round the establishment and saw the facilities provided for our Ex-Service colleagues. One of our younger members Sue Dash, was so impressed by the facilities provided she is determined to try and raise money each year to send to the home. We wish Sue every success.

Our Luncheon Club meets each month at the Harrow Inn on the outskirts of Hastings but our annual Christmas Lunch was held at Churchills Hotel and thoroughly enjoyed by the 26 members who attended.

Now for the Commercial! After Christmas one of our members, Mrs May Jackson (née Waters) is starting a Branch in Bexhill. We wish her every success and hope that any member reading this who has ATS/WRAC friends in the Bexhill/Cooden area will publicise the new Branch. May's telephone number is 01424 844870.

It is a little late to wish you a Happy New Year but we do hope 1997 is a healthy and contented year for you all.

Hereford

The Branch members continue to meet on the last Wednesday of each month at 2.30pm in the RBL Hall, Belmont Road. We average around fifteen attending, and the Secretary keeps in touch by letter or telephone at least twice a year, with all members. In addition we have now proposed to issue a Newsletter in February and September. This will be prepared and printed by Miss Joyce Nicholls and Mrs Sue Walton, two of our many ex-WRAC - **THE YOUNGER SET!!**

Sadly, in January 1996 we heard of the death of a member, Mrs Sally Waterhouse-Brown, whilst she was staying with her son in Berkshire. We sent a donation in Sally's memory to the ATS Benevolent Fund.

In April two of our ex-WRAC members moved from the area, Mrs Billy Cordner who is now living in Evesham, and Mrs Debbie Casey who is now in Cyprus! They are both staying with our branch and before they left, presented us with a new jug kettle, which we use at our meetings. We all went out to "The Bay Horse" Restaurant for a farewell lunch, and coupled it with a celebration for Ena and Dorothy on their 80th birthdays.

We have sent donations this year to the RBL Poppy appeal, BLESMA and SSAFA, as well as £400 to the Benevolent Fund. Our two market stalls were successful and many members continue to send donations; we are

most grateful for their support.

We did not attend the AGM last April, as so many of us were on holiday, but eight are booked for the Blackpool re-union. Thirteen of us were at the area re-union in Swansea though last October, and we enjoyed the gathering very much, especially the male voice choir. Thank you Swansea! We won several prizes in their raffle and had sold 100 books of tickets for them.

Mrs Phyl Bates and Mrs Win Birt were at the Ack Ack Re-union in York last August, and we are looking forward to the TV programme after the Queen's Speech on Christmas Day, as scenes from York are to be included.

Mrs Eva Burton, once again represented us at the Civic Service on Remembrance Sunday and laid a Poppy wreath at the War Memorial on our behalf, Mrs Rosemary Jones also attended and others attended services elsewhere in the area.

Our Christmas lunch will be held at the Wye Inn on December 10th, and we always look forward and enjoy that very much, and hold a raffle for funds. We wish all Branch members who are not too well, a speedy recovery.

Hull

Here in Hull we have had an interesting time but much quieter than last year.

In April we visited Hedon Town Hall when a local historian gave a very good talk about the Mayoral silver which they had on display for us to see. We were told the history of the various pieces which had been presented to the town by previous Mayors and Members of Parliament. Some of the silver is very old. Hedon is an interesting little town with a history going back to 1200 AD. In those days when it was bigger and more influential than Hull, it was also a Port on the River Humber. Now Hedon is far from the river due to tidal changes.

In May the Secretary and Chairman attended the Eighth Army Founders Day service at a local church. Our Standard carried by Mrs D Mirfin was one of the twenty other Standards present. It was a most inspiring service conducted by the 8th Army Association local Chaplain Rev J Leeman who had only just recovered from a heart attack. At this service the new Standard of the 1st Army was dedicated and a new Chapel opened by the 8th Army and the Italy Star Association was dedicated and blessed in honour of St Martin and St George.

In July we were able to visit Grimsby Branch because a new bus service is in operation which provides a good easy journey. (Grimsby is not as close to Hull as many people imagine.) Time was spent in Grimsby looking around the new shopping precinct and the market. Grimsby members gave us a very entertaining afternoon, with lots to eat and time soon passed with a raffle and Bingo. We hope to entertain Grimsby members in Hull early next year.

In October the North East Area broke new ground in hosting their Re-union at Marton, near Middlesbrough (the birthplace of Captain Cook, the explorer) not our Colonel Cook's father! This was a great success. An excellent meal followed by entertainment from the Cleveland 40's and what an accomplished troupe they are. They sang much loved songs of fifty years ago which must have brought out many goosepimples. Will today's noisy songs bring out any pimples in fifty years time?

Our North East Secretary, Mrs Friday, turned out to be a precocious young evacuee who kept all well amused with her stories. Our thanks must go to Mrs Friday and to Colonel Cook our area Chairman. Much work must have gone into organising this event.

November of course is Remembrance Time and some of our members have supported the work of the Poppy Appeal and attended the Veterans' Parade on Sunday the 10th November. Mrs J Norris laid our wreath on the Cenotaph.

We were all very pleased to see Mrs Dorothy Mirfin, carrying our Standard, taking pride of place on the front page of our local newspaper.

Ilford

We continue happily at our monthly meetings at Toc H in Ilford.

In July we were delighted to welcome Eileen Carter for her annual visit to Ilford and would like to thank her for coming to see us as she does.

In September one of our former members, Mrs Florence Palmer, celebrated her 100th birthday. Mrs Palmer served in the QMAAC in the First World War. Cousins from America journeyed to be with her on this wonderful occasion and joined with her family and friends at the buffet held at her bungalow in Burnham on Crouch.

Mrs Palmer is quite a character, although handicapped with arthritis, and living alone, she used to obtain a lift to do her weekly shopping in Burnham by riding on her milkman's float or on the local baker's van. The return journey was taken in a more dignified manner by private taxi.

Unhappily we have no further news of Madge Hardy who last year entered a nursing home.

Our small group are now elderly most of us being in our 70's and one or two in their 80's. Unhappily some of our members are unable to be with us because of their inability to travel.

We had our annual Christmas party at our last meeting on Saturday 7th December. Plenty to eat as usual and an enjoyable afternoon was spent by us all - a good start to the festive season.

Isle of Wight

Having hosted the 1995 South Group Area Re-union which, I may add, was most successful according to the other Branch letters received and for which we are very grateful.

1996 has proved quite 'restful' (joke!) We welcomed Southampton members to our Xmas Lunch December 1995 and in 1996 they again attended (with Portsmouth members) our Branch Birthday Party.

We have been most successful in our fund raising this year and have been able to donate £200.00 to the IOW MRI Scanner Appeal (this amount being raised solely from coffee mornings, cream teas, lunches at members homes and NOT attended by the general public). Further to this we have donated £200.00 to the RBL Poppy Appeal and



Isle of Wight Branch

£200.00 to the Star & Garter Home for Disabled Ex-servicemen and women. Most of this was raised at our annual Bembridge Street Fair Stall where the general public attended and were most generous in their support. We did have a LARGE notice to the effect that all monies collected would be going to the above Appeals (in accordance with the new Charity Commissioners Rules!)

Our Standard Bearer and two Escorts have been very busy again the last year attending many and varied Parades including Corps Day at Worthy Down. We have lost two of our very valuable members Esme Swash and Mabel Swift their presence being sadly missed at our meetings.

We are now preparing for our Xmas Lunch in December and by the time this is published it will of course be almost forgotten, and those members of the Branch who will be attending the Re-union at Blackpool in April will probably be having a 'kit inspection' (remember those, girls!) in readiness.

If any of our Association members visit the Island at all we would be pleased to hear from you. We meet the first Monday of each month at the RBL Club Newport where a welcome awaits you!

Leeds

We continue to have our regular monthly meetings where we catch up with the latest news. Two new members have joined us during the year and anyone else interested would be made most welcome.

The highlights of the year were the Royal British Legion 75th Anniversary Service in Westminster Abbey which 3 of our members were privileged to attend, and the Women's Section Service in St Paul's at which we were represented by Elizabeth Bustard one of our stalwarts.

The Mixed Heavy AA Re-union weekend in York was the usual success made even more colourful by the unexpected arrival of Noel Edmonds and Gloria Hunniford. We are not sure how we shall take the shock of seeing ourselves on television at Christmas!!

Those who went to Nantwich thoroughly enjoyed the holiday, plenty of friendship without regulation, the Band and singing on Sunday Lunchtime was the tops.

Members have taken part in many of the activities arranged by other organisations, Dunkirk Veterans Royal Artillery Association and 1st and 8th Army Veterans. The visit to Eden Camp could have turned into a disaster as the coach broke down but the staff rallied to the cause, as is usual with Services people, opened up the cafe and supplied food and hot drinks.

We all enjoyed the Northern Area ATS Re-union at Marton sharing transport with Bradford Branch. The entertainment by members was truly amazing, were they spotted by the talent scouts?

All members were involved in collecting for the Poppy Appeal and attended their own local Remembrance Services and Parades. The year came to a happy ending with our usual Christmas Party but unfortunately we seem to have more than our usual number of sick members. We wish them all better health in 1997 which will get a rousing start at Blackpool in April.

We extend a warm welcome to our new and, we hope, permanent Secretary, Mrs Fiona White. Shall we see her at Blackpool??

Towards the end of 1995 we changed our venue and time for meetings from evening to afternoon and this has met with favour from our members. We hope to attract more members and possibly all our usual evening meetings during the dark nights.

We have gained 9 new members this year but sadly lost Miss Violet Watkinson ('Wattie') who celebrated her 80th birthday just before her death.

We held our Christmas party in December 1995 joining with our friends of the WAAF Association and had an enjoyable afternoon.

1996 started quietly. We held our usual January Nibble and Natter followed in February with a Bring and Buy which raised £43 for our funds. In March we were given a talk supported by slides by the NSPP. Very enlightening.

May saw some of our members at Melton Mowbray visiting the Defence Animal Centre. We were taken on a conducted tour and shown different aspects of the training and work carried out. The tour ended with a display by the trainers and their dogs including 'sniffer' dogs. We ended the afternoon with tea, sandwiches and cakes provided by our Friends of the Ladies Section, Royal British Legion of Melton. It was a most enjoyable afternoon.

In July we had a talk and beautiful display of Faberge Eggs. They were superb. There was no meeting in August as so many people go on holiday but in September 50 members spent a very enjoyable day in London, first visiting the Imperial War Museum then Buckingham Palace. It was a day worth waiting for and to remember. October brought us once more to our Harvest Auction which is becoming a regular event and this year raised £46.00.

Our Standard has been paraded 12 times during 1996 and some of our members also act as escort to the Standard or take part in the various parades. This year our Standard Bearer, Mrs Vi Rawlins, had the honour of parading the Leicester Standard on behalf of the Association at the Royal Albert Hall. We are all very proud of Vi and the way she carries out her duties.

We have now had our November AGM and our Chairman, Miss White, informed members it was our 42nd. Our Christmas party takes place in December with members providing the food etc., and so on to our programme for 1997.

Our thanks go to those of our members who cannot manage to get to our meetings but who generously send prizes for raffles and extra money for our Branch funds. It is greatly appreciated and to you all we send our good wishes.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The photograph on page 91 on Lioness 2/96 of Combined Operations Typing Pool was sent in by WO1 Henry Brown and not Mary Brown as stated.

We have now a membership of 330, having had 36 new members during the year, and our average attendance at meetings is 65. It is so good that so many of the new members are able to attend, travelling considerable distances because we cover a large area of the home counties. It is sometimes easier to get to London than to nearer destinations across country.

As well as a good contingent of members at the Field of Remembrance and the parade to the Cenotaph, four members went with the British Torch of Remembrance on their annual pilgrimage to Belgium. This commences with the lighting of British and Belgian torches at a ceremony in Westminster Abbey on Friday 8 November before travelling to Ostende on Saturday, en route the party laid wreaths at Dover and Ostende. On Sunday wreaths were laid at Bredene War Cemetery where twelve men were washed ashore from Dunkirk in 1940 are buried, before going to Brussels to take part in ceremonies at the Belgian Resistance Memorial, followed by a March to the Town Hall with Belgian comrades. Monday 11 November was the occasion of The King's Parade to pay homage to the Eternal Flame at the memorial to the Soldat Inconnu and in the evening they took part in the Torch Procession where torches from all over Belgium and from many places around the world are paraded. For the next two days the party visited Waterloo and then the Ypres area. They laid wreaths at several of the cemeteries and also at the grave of Sergeant Reeves, who died serving in the rearguard action at Dunkirk in 1940 which kept the enemy at bay for a while, thus enabling many more men to be evacuated from the beaches. The day ended with the party present at the sounding of The Last Post at the Menin Gate, a ceremony which is still kept up at 2000 hours each evening, by the Ypres Fire Brigade using silver bugles presented to them by the Royal British Legion. Two members from Liverpool were also in the party. A very moving journey for everyone.

We had a very enjoyable trip to Knebworth House in September and also a successful Area Re-union hosted by Wimbledon Branch and we thank them for all their hard work which made it such an enjoyable day. Next year's London Area Re-union will be held in the Gascoigne Room at the Union Jack Club on 20 September 1997. Time goes so quickly that it will soon be upon us - make a note of the date!



*London Branch
L-R Margaret Brant, Marie Eyre, Mary Santer
with Belgian Police Escort at Bredene War Cemetery*

Luton

Although still a very young Branch, Luton is going from strength to strength. We have a constant attendance of approximately 20 members each month: there are, of course, more 'on the books' who, for one reason or another are not always able to attend. Diana Lidstone is our very conscientious Welfare Secretary, and visits members when they are ill, and arranges flowers and cards for them. Jeannie James is our excellent Social Secretary, and has arranged some very interesting talks and demonstrations - one of the most enjoyable was given by her husband, who related his experiences whilst commanding a Motor Torpedo Boat, during World War II. We were highly amused by some of his pranks, sorry exploits. Other speakers have included Paul Sussmann from Whipsnade Wild Animal Park, the local organisational team from "Crimestoppers", and a demonstration on how to decorate T-shirts, etc., all very interesting and informative. Forthcoming events include a talk by a representative from the Department of Social Security (to tell us of our entitlements), a talk on Bonsai trees, a Fashion show, and hopefully a talk by an AGC officer, who was formerly in the WRAC, about 'Women in the Army today'. Comparisons should be fun!

Two of our members, Georgina Gregory and Madge Evans attended the Cenotaph parade on Remembrance Sunday, whilst at home Diana Lidstone laid our Branch wreath on Luton War Memorial.

We have arranged a coach and accommodation for the Blackpool Re-union in conjunction with Dacorum and Aylesbury Branches, with whom we maintain close contact. Some of Wimbledon Branch are joining us too.

On December 5th, eighteen members attended our Christmas lunch at the Rivermede Restaurant, Barnfield College, which is staffed by students of the catering branch of Luton University. The meal and service were excellent, and very reasonable. We were pleased to welcome Eileen Carter (London Area Group Chairman) and Alma Stride (Aylesbury Chairman) as our guests.

Our first anniversary is in January 1997, and we look forward to another successful year. Dot Bell, our hard-working Treasurer, and Eleri Pirie, our equally hard-working Secretary both deserve a mention in dispatches too.

Manchester

In the latter half of 1996 we managed to attend a few good activities. A good number visited Chester Branch for the area get-together. This was a superb effort, good food and a wonderful raffle. One or two of us were lucky to win prizes, so it was a very pleasant day all round.

We took another deep breath and then we were off to Rhyl for another get-together. There again we enjoyed a superb buffet, all home-made we understand. We were delighted to be introduced to the Rhyl Town Mayor, Ann Jones, and the Mayoress Helen Sadler. We chatted for some time - they were very interested in our Association. After this excitement a DJ started to play to us quietly, but of course finished the afternoon with the conga, everybody joining in. Two good outings in such a short time - we could get to like it.

We settled down for a while but then managed to get tickets for the Service of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in London. We then decided we would make a weekend of it, so off we jolly well went. Some of us marched for the salute at the Cenotaph on the Sunday although unfortunately it rained. Anyhow it did not dampen anyone's enthusiasm. Fortunately one of our group was stationed in London during the War so we saw things that were off the beaten track so to speak - as she knew the easiest way to get around. Our spare time was spent watching the Lord Mayor's Parade which takes about 2 hours to pass. We then went over to Westminster to see where our Queen Mother had laid her poppy. This place is so amazing it is heart rending. For those who have never seen it, it is a

memory not to be forgotten. There is a plot laid out for every Regiment, ship and airforce plus allies and civilians who gave their lives.

We found our ATS plot and so laid one Royal British Legion cross and poppy on behalf of the Manchester Branch. Amazingly this plot was rapidly being filled up. As we turned to go we looked back and saw a field of crosses and poppies; poignant really.

Sunday evening was time to go, so we walked up on the main streets to see the shops all brightly lit. The lights had just been turned on and we could have spent a week in the toy shops alone. The opening of shops on Sunday allowed us this excitement. However the train and coaches had to be reached, so sadly we had to make our way home.

Settled down at Home in Manchester, very quiet now, so we decided to pass the hand of friendship from our Branch. Because Christmas was looming ahead and nights were drawing in, we would have a Shoppers lunch. We sent our invitations out and friends came from distances. Considering the weather, we had a total of 46 which we were grateful for as now Manchester Branch proper can only muster about 8 of us at our meetings. This is not neglect from our members but as Manchester became Greater Manchester, it was more convenient to start up groups apart, ie Stockport, Bury, Rochdale, Wilmslow, etc., etc. We are all extremely friendly but it is just the geography that has changed.

Back to the Drawing Board so to speak, we had a traditional Christmas lunch, beautifully served and we too raised a few prizes for a raffle. I think guests went away pleased with our effort (I hope so anyhow).

We can now all settle down to our own activities over the holiday period, but a thought struck home, aren't we lucky in the Association to have such faithful friends? After all these years amazing when one thinks about it, you know we keep our flag flying.

Newcastle

We still have very regular, enthusiastic attendances at our monthly meetings. This is notwithstanding the fact that we don't go to the expense of speakers, etc., because the individual and small group friendships which have been formed within our Association are such that the time available (12 noon to 3pm) is hardly sufficient for the social time and business to be dealt with. As much as possible we organise outings such as lately a visit to Newcastle United Football Ground and our holiday to Corton Village Holiday Camp in July was a great success.

In February 1997 we shall again make our annual visit to the Rainbow Rooms in Newcastle for a very good afternoon meal.

We have a small group who are able to entertain us periodically with their talented performances of song and dance and plays, etc., making us self-contained in that department and again saving our finances somewhat.

All our members contribute considerably with purchase of raffle tickets and other fund-raising efforts without any arm-twisting!

There will be a good representation at the Grand Re-union at Blackpool.

We had hoped to be hosts for the 1997 Northern Re-union but on this occasion we lost out to Grimsby. The consensus being that we were "too far north!"

One very sad item we have to report is the death of one of our very respected members, Nora Hope (née Payne). Nora was a remarkable person, who, knowing that she had a terminal illness, made her own funeral arrangements, with the aid of a niece, for the church service and hymns and readings. The service was attended by some of our members and also those from the WRVS where she was also an important member.

We are all pleased that Evelyn our hard working secretary is recovering from her recent illness.

We send our best wishes to those members who have been unable to attend recently due to illness and hope to see them again soon.

Norfolk & Suffolk

An article in a local newspaper about the WRAC Association and the war-time ATS in a local newspaper at the beginning of October brought us eight new members, all of them former ATS. None of them had known of the Association before. They were delighted with their first copies of LIONESS. We now welcome some 40 members to our monthly meetings.

Speakers on very diverse subjects have entertained us. A video and talk on a member's holiday in Guernsey; a highly diverting and humorous account of Norwich and rural Norfolk life in the 'twenties and thirties' (to which we could all relate!) and one of our members told us of her journey to India to see for the first time the grave of her husband killed in the Burma campaign. In spite of the poignancy of the occasion it had been a wonderful visit, organised by the Royal British Legion.

The owner of the Muckleburgh Collection at the old war-time camp at Weybourne came to one of our meetings and gave us a detailed and fascinating account of the huge collection of Army, Navy and RAF memorabilia held there, with a brief history of the camp. This was of great interest to some of our members who had passed through Weybourne Camp during their ATS war-time training.

During the summer we hired a mini-bus to take twenty-five of us to visit Ely and then, in September, fired by the enthusiastic talk by Mr Berry Savoury (owner of the Muckleburgh Collection) a strong contingent of us went to the camp itself. There is an amazing variety of war-time memorabilia, guns, lorries, keeps, predictors, posters, medals, aircraft, boats. If any members are in Norfolk during the summer it is well worth a visit and would be of especial interest to those who passed through Weybourne camp for training in their service days.

On November 11th we joined our Great Yarmouth friends for a short service at the plaque in the forecourt of the Palm Court hotel at Yarmouth in memory of our twenty-six ATS comrades killed there in an air raid in 1943.

Elsewhere in the magazine is a list of some of our Branch members' war-time service in the hope that they may be able to make contact with old friends with whom they served or have lost touch. Our secretary, Mrs Joan Awbery, will be delighted to pass on any requests for contact.

Members are still enthusiastically knitting jumpers and blankets for Oxfam and contributing to our speakers' charities. We are now planning our annual luncheon in January, joining our Great Yarmouth colleagues for their Christmas luncheon, and looking forward to welcoming even more new members in 1997.

Plymouth

1996 has proved to be an energetic and prosperous year for Plymouth Branch. With overall membership of 28 Life and 61 Annual members attendance at our monthly meetings has increased to an average of 28 per meeting which means our fund-raising has been good this year and consequently we have been able to increase our donation to the Benevolent Fund.

On the negative side there have been two "departures". Lenora Hannaford, our Chairman for 11 years, decided to stand down from office. She will be sorely missed for her enthusiasm and leadership but we are sure she will still be a force on the "back benches". We welcome Doreen Greenaway as our new Chairman and wish her well. The Branch will sadly be saying farewell to Isabel Bromley who

served as Vice-Chairman for several years. She is returning to her family home in Ulster and we wish her and her husband Stan all the best for the future.

Branch members have been out and about. A day trip to Weymouth was a great success as the weather was more than kind and the companionship of friends, family and a contingent from the Wrens made the day almost perfect.

In July the Branch, for the first time, had a stall at a Car Boot Sale and raised a princely sum. Besides the fund-raising it also proved to be a highly amusing and very sociable event for all the helpers who gave their time to assist. We hope to repeat the experience next year.

Four members represented the Branch at the Cenotaph in London this year: our new Chairman Doreen Greenaway, Betty Mitchell, Jean Cundy-Borge and Doreen Partridge. How proud they were to be part of that impressive phalanx of ATS/WRAC that seems to grow every year.

As last year a combined Ex-Servicewomen's Carol Service was held, courtesy of the Wrens at St Nicholas Church, HMS Drake. This now annual event brings together the sister organizations of WRNS, WAAF, LAND ARMY and ATS/WRAC when memories can be shared and organizational ideas and problems can be aired. It has proved to be a most beneficial joining of like minds and spirits.

As in previous years (and we have been so delighted to see those members who have taken up our offer) we extend 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 (01752-336203) who will give details of the meeting and will, if at all possible, arrange transport.

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.

(The stock of those badges offered by London Branch in the last Lioness has been exhausted.)

PLEASE ALLOW 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY

Portsmouth

After all the events for VE and VJ Days in 1995, 1996 has been a very quiet year. We started with the AGM in London, 6 members attended.

PDF Compressor Free Version

In May we hired a mini-bus and went to the Area Re-union in Bath. The weather was terrible and it rained all the way there and back. However we received a very warm welcome from the Bath members at the TA Centre. It was a very enjoyable afternoon with music from the young ladies from a local school, lots of time to chat to old friends and a good tea and the bar was open all the afternoon. Thank you Bath for a good re-union and how wise you were to make it an indoor event.

At the beginning of June, a party of us attended the Royal British Legion parade at Sandhurst. It is a very impressive parade and service and Mrs Price, our Standard Bearer, carried our Standard with distinction.

During the summer we have held American tea parties in the gardens of Mrs Lindsey, Mrs Price and Mrs Elmer but we were not so lucky with the weather as last year and rain meant 2 were held indoors. Miss Bray held a coffee morning at the beginning of October. All these social events raise funds for Branch funds and keep our members together.

During the year we have been able to make donations to The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund, WRAC Benevolent Fund and Royal Star & Garter Home. We shall be ending 1996 with the usual Remembrance parades, a lunch in November and a Christmas dinner in December. We are all looking forward to the re-union in Blackpool next year, about 8 members hope to go.



Portsmouth Branch tea party at Fareham

CAPTION WINNER MRS G A IRELAND

The LOUSE - so he promised you that too!!

Thank you Mrs Ireland your prize is on its way
EDITOR

Salisbury

What a pleasant way to end our 1996 meetings - full of roast turkey and wonderful Christmas pudding!! 35 members enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Red Lion, Salisbury, a welcome return to a venue that was used for Branch meetings about 20 years ago.

Our membership is slowly rising and having outgrown our present meeting room we are pleased to be starting 1997 with meetings at Hedley Davis Court (with the kind permission of Housing 21).

At our AGM our Chairman Suzanne Gordon, Secretary Joan Morgan, Treasurer Veronica Dodkins, Vice-Chairman and Press Officer Gladys Pope were all re-elected.

In October we met at the Cathedral and once again we were fortunate to have Miss Kathy Quinn as our guide as we toured the Cloisters and the Chapter House. The bible stories depicted in the carvings all round the Chapter House are quite incredible and Kathy's knowledge of the quirks of those stonemasons was fascinating. If other members are in Salisbury, do find time to have a good look round.

Our Faith Lunch in November was well attended and the table almost groaned under the great variety of tantalising foods to tempt us all.

At least half of our Branch members will be attending the National Re-union in Blackpool. They will be travelling by coach and if anyone in the area would like to join the coach departing Salisbury at 10.00am on Friday 18th April do get in touch with our Secretary on 01722 335896.

A happy and nostalgic New Year to you all.

Somerset

On 28th June 1996 we were saddened to learn of the death of one of our long serving members. Rebecca Elspeth Hardinge-Francis TD, MBE had been in poor health for some considerable time, but even so, she maintained a very cheery outlook which must have belied her illness. The Branch has had its AGM and all the Committee members were again voted in to carry on the duties for another year.

We have had our usual events throughout the year, all geared to raise our funds. These must have been quite good as our Treasurer gave us the news that the funds were in a healthy state and therefore we were able to send a donation to the Benevolent Fund as well as to the Royal British Legion.

Our membership remains stable as we have recruited new members to replace those who have unfortunately left. On two occasions when members of our Branch were in hospital they were able to gain two new members from their wards, although not for our own area.

In August our Chairman held a Bar-B-Que in her garden which was a great success. The food was well cooked and plentiful, high spirits and cameras snapping was the order of the evening. Maybe if we hint strongly enough she may agree to do it again next year!

As a result of wintry weather we were unable to meet from November 1995 until March 1996, as a result of which Christmas 1995 was never celebrated.

Our first gathering in March proved very hectic in bringing news, etc. up-to-date, but managed to get through in time to enjoy a film show on "Around Britain" and a Quiz.

In April, twenty six members enjoyed their usual Annual Dinner at the Kings Court Hotel, a venue at which we have met for such a function for the last twenty five years. This must be some kind of record. On the 11th April several members attended the Freedom of Winchester ceremony bestowed on the Adjutant General's Corps in lovely sunny weather, followed by a service in the Cathedral, then on to a very well organised reception in the City Hall. Then on the 20th April four members attended the AGM at the Victory Club in London.

In May members attended two most enjoyable events: to the Isle of Wight's 10th Birthday Luncheon held at Ryde, and of course the sun shone for us as usual when ever we go over there. Then we had a coach taking us to Bath for the South Group Re-union, this time in very inclement wet weather, but with no difference to our enjoyment at all. A re-union held in nice spacious surroundings with musical entertainment from daughters of Officers from the armed forces. A very nice meal and various speeches, serious and hilarious. We were looked after very well. Many thanks Bath.

At our June meeting we welcomed members from the Wrens and WAAF Associations to our American Supper and enjoyed a return visit to hear Part Two of "20 years on the Queens" by one of our members, Miss Margaret Newcombe. On the 15th June several of us went along to Corps Day at Worthy Down in lovely surroundings in perfect weather conditions, and our member, Jean Houghton, was very proud to parade the Association QMAAC Standard.

Two of our members went to Winchester Cathedral on 7th July to attend the 75th Anniversary of the RBL and happily took part in the parade. Our July meeting was a film show of the Kennet and Avon Canal, and August saw us manning our annual plant and cake stall with our actual meeting being spent at the home of the Secretary. A good attendance and they want to go again! We enjoyed an excellent talk and demonstration on Aromatherapy with some of us discovering feelings we never knew we had! In November two of our members attended the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall, going to the Remembrance Service in Westminster Abbey next day, and staying at the Union Jack Club - to be recommended.

Last March we bid au revoir to two of our long standing members, Winnie Adams and Elsie Grant, who moved to Newton Abbot in Devon to be near relatives, but happily remaining with our Branch.

At the time of going to print we are looking forward to our Christmas party, 1996, hopefully!

Since the last report we have gained two more new members who are both ex-WRAC. Unfortunately one (Catherine Bradbury) lives in the Stoke area so we have not met her as yet, but the other (Josephine Windsor) lives nearer Stafford and joined us at the wreath laying and Remembrance Day Service. Our total membership is now 8 Life Members, 35 Annual Members and 1 Associate Member.

We continue to enjoy our meetings each month and have had various interesting afternoons including flower arranging by one of our members, a quiz, a word game and a talk by a member of the Ambulance Service. As there is so much going on just before Christmas and everyone is busy, we have decided to delay our Christmas lunch until the New Year.

We were sorry nobody from this Branch was able to attend the Area Re-union in Swansea and we are pleased it was a successful meeting.

Three of this Branch attended the Remembrance Day Service and Parade at the Cenotaph in London and several others attended the Service in our local Church.

We are now looking forward to the Grand Re-union in Blackpool in April where we hope to meet old comrades. All in all a happy year!

THE GRAND REUNION 1997 "SUPER RAFFLE"

WIN

***VIP for the day at Worthy Down
Lunch in the Association Marquee
Tea with the Commandant
Collected by Staff Car
Meet other VIPs
Many other amazing prizes***

***Raffle will be drawn after the
AGM***

Shropshire

Firstly I must apologise for inadvertently omitting from our last report, that the Branch hosted the Stockport Branch in September 1995. A tour of BOD Donnington was arranged followed by tea and a sing-song held at Dawley Restroom, an enjoyable day was had by all.

We hold our meetings in St John Ambulance Headquarters, Wellington, every fourth Monday of the month, at 7.30pm with the exception of January and February.

In March we held our first meeting of the year, when the Social Secretary outlined the year's Social Calendar.

In April several of the members attended the AGM at the Victory Club and a warm welcome was extended to Major Jay on his appointment.

In May we soon got into 'Top Gear' on Manoeuvres with a Car Treasure Hunt, the final clue being the Crown Inn in Shrewsbury where we had an excellent meal. Joan Purcell's team won First Prize for obtaining the most points, we all dispersed at about 10.00pm having had a most enjoyable evening.

June found us travelling by an entirely different mode of transport; this time we took to the water, going on a Canal Barge trip. Once on board we helped ourselves to a very tasty buffet and a bar was available for those who wanted something stronger than tea or coffee. No-one fell overboard. June also saw us holding a Rummage Sale, and at the June meeting we held a Bring & Buy sale to help funds.

Several of us managed to attend the Open Day at Worthy Down, and thoroughly enjoyed all events, especially sitting in the sunshine and listening to the AGC Band, resplendent in their new Red and Navy uniforms.

In July we had our AGM, those elected were:

Chairman	Terri Goff
Vice-Chairman	Chris Griff
Secretary	Beryl Lane
Treasurer	Lucy Bowyer
Social Secretary	Irene Hall
Members Rep	Joan Purcell

After the meeting there was a competition for the best 'Garden in a Saucer', again the Winner was Joan Purcell.

We were pleased to welcome an Association Member, namely Norma Robison (née Scholey) from Ripley, Derbyshire, who was visiting one of our members - Nancy Tipton. Norma finished her ATS service at Charlottenburg, Berlin, in 1948. (Does anyone remember her?)

In August we held our Annual Bar-B-Que at the home of Fred and Terri Goff. This is always well attended because of the excellent spread that Terri puts on for us, and not to forget Fred's excellent cooking, the event also gives us a chance to have a 'chin wag'.

For September's meeting we went out for a Basket Meal at the Red Lion, Wellington.

October saw some of us attending our Area Re-union, this year at Swansea.

Some of us went to the ATS Dinner Club Luncheon at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham, a great day, good food, good company, Norma (on another visit) met some of the 'Berlin Belles' from her old unit. We had a Sugarcraft demonstration evening, later in the month.

November saw Lucy Bowyer parading our Standard, when we attended the Remembrance Sunday Parade at the Garrison Church, Donnington, we were then invited to lunch in the Sergeants' Mess.

At the November meeting we are looking forward to a Truffle making demonstration, and hopefully sampling the

goodies.

In December we are winding down until March (due to weather and travel difficulties), but not before we have our Christmas Party, to which we all contribute to the food.

In January we have our Annual Dinner, either in the Telford area, or Shrewsbury.

We are looking forward to the Grand Re-union in Blackpool 1997, with great anticipation.

Swansea & District

The Branch continues to meet monthly at the City Guildhall. The planning and organisation of the Wales and the West Grand Re-union was this year's main objective. July and September meetings were taken up with preparatory work but in August members visited the President's home and were entertained to tea on the lawns in glorious sunshine. Miss Dorothy Llewellyn, Chairman, displayed the Grand Raffle Prizes assembled for the Re-union for the members to see. Mrs Edith Francis, Area Secretary, is writing about the Grand Re-union held on Saturday 12th October elsewhere in this issue, suffice it to say that all went well and those who attended greatly enjoyed the beautifully decorated cake donated by two of our members, Mrs Irene Morgan and Mrs Lorna Atkinson.

The Christmas Luncheon was held at Sketty Hall on November 7th and the final meeting of the year on December 4th was celebrated as a Christmas Party. The Branch AGM will be held on Wednesday 8th January 1997.



*Swansea & District Branch
L-R: Lord Mayor Cllr Des Thomas JP, Lady Mayoress Mrs Natalie Thomas, Mrs Maggie Purkiss, Mrs Veronica Barrington (President), Miss Dorothy Llewellyn (Chairman)*



*Swansea & District Branch
Wales & the West Grand Re-union Cake
donated by Mrs Irene Morgan and Mrs Lorna Atkinson*

Weymouth & Portland

This has been a busy and interesting year for us, with again a slight increase in membership. Some members live quite a distance from Weymouth, and therefore not all can attend our two monthly meetings, but all members get a programme of events sent to them twice a year. In the summer, Miss Joan Biddlecombe, one of our Bridport members, kindly invited us to a tea party in her lovely garden, where we were able to meet and enjoy the company of the members living in that locality.

A party of us went to Winchester when the Freedom of the City was granted to the Adjutant General's Corps. We enjoyed our day there - all the ceremony, the Cathedral Service and the Mayor's reception.

We welcomed Col Lynn Relph to one of our meetings, and she brought us up to date on the role of women in today's Army - a talk which was of great interest to us all. A Librarian came to another meeting and gave us a comprehensive and interesting talk on the Library Services, and we have recently had a fascinating talk on "Cheeses", with the opportunity to purchase some at the end of the meeting. Business is discussed at "Domestic" meetings, and we have the occasional flutter at a Bingo session!

We have tried to think of those people in the war torn zones who lack many of the everyday things that we take for granted, and we have again sent parcels out to them by the organiser of the "Convoy of Hope", who has also been one of our speakers. We hope to hear about his latest visit sometime next year.

The shooting tragedy at Dunblane shocked us all very much, and our condolences were sent in a letter to their Mayor.

Two members attended the annual Mayor-making ceremony at Weymouth Pavilion, and the Mayor's Reception afterwards: we try to send two different members each year, and they always enjoy this occasion - and the buffet supper afterwards!

The Military, and the Royal British Legion Parades were well attended and wreaths were laid at the Weymouth and the Portland Cenotaphs on Remembrance Sunday. This year Mrs T Hawker laid the Weymouth wreath, and our Chairman, Mrs N Trent laid the one at Portland. We feel quite bucked when we take part in these official parades that we can still step out as smartly as in our Service days, in spite of Anno Domini!

Earlier in the year we had a successful coffee morning in Preston Village Hall, and raised £100.50 for the ATS Benevolent Fund, and we hope to have an equally successful fund raising "do" on Weymouth Esplanade next year.

What a pity it was such a wet day for the Re-union at Bath - but the welcome was warm, and we much appreciated being allowed in to the Hall early on arrival. Talks by Brigadier Field and the Bath speakers were full of interest, and we were again lucky enough to come home with some raffle prizes.

Three members have this year celebrated their Golden Weddings - congratulations to Sylvia Baker, Muriel Pearce and Sylvia Prior - AND of course to the lucky husbands!

We pay regular visits to Joan Wratten, who is well cared for and happy in a Nursing Home. Molly Holland is also visited - she has had a lot of trouble following a knee operation, and is now waiting for a further operation but she is always cheerful, and looking on the bright side.

We have just had our Annual Christmas Party, always a happy occasion, and our meetings now close until February - this is our usual practice, in case of possible bad weather.

From then onwards many of us will be looking forward to the Grand Re-union at Blackpool.

Wilmslow

We have had plenty to do and discuss these last few months. On two afternoons several members went along to the BBC studios in Manchester to see different shows.

We have held our Christmas lunch at our usual hotel and spent a very pleasant few hours together.

Fourteen members are booked into a Blackpool hotel for next April, we only need the tickets for the dinner etc., then it will be all systems go.

We are all looking forward to meeting old friends there. One of our members lives in Australia, although only one of us has met her, she sends us each a Christmas present. What a kind friend you are to us, Joan Broadhurst of Roseanna, Melbourne.

The Royal British Legion chose our Branch this year to deliver the wreath at the Cenotaph. One of the members, Gwendolyn Johnson won the draw and carried the wreath.

Eight of us went to London in November. We all enjoyed the programme at the Albert Hall; it was a completely different presentation to other years.

What a wet Sunday it was at the Cenotaph; luckily the rain kept off for the Service itself.

Perhaps next year the ex-ATS, the ex-WRACs and the ex-FANNYs could get together to make a decent column instead of a few here and a few there amongst the men.

On behalf of Wilmslow Branch, may I wish everyone a Happy New Year.

Wimbledon

The June tea party has been an annual event for as long as I can remember and always produces an excellent meal fortified by a few glasses of wine. Everyone seems to enjoy the occasion.

In July we had a small fund raising event in the shape of a Cake competition which was won by Eileen Job with Betty Syrett second.

The weather in August was superb and members and some husbands visited our President's home for a garden party and splendid tea. Their garden is lovely and for the past few years we have been blessed with excellent weather for this occasion.

Our big event this year has been the London Area Group Re-union held in Wimbledon and hosted by this Branch. An account of this occasion is related elsewhere in this magazine. We are delighted that we have donated £150 to the WRAC Benevolent Fund.

The attendance at the October Bring and Buy was disappointing - only 18. Many members were on holiday which no doubt accounted for this.

On Remembrance Sunday the Wimbledon Branch was represented in Whitehall and a wreath was placed on the War Memorial at Wimbledon by Betty Syrett.

At the AGM in November the President was re-appointed. The existing committee was re-elected with the exception of the Vice-Chairman who did not seek re-election. Disappointingly no member volunteered to take her place and the vacancy remains. It is now obvious that if members do not come forward to support the Officers of the Committee that this Branch will not be able to continue after October 1997 - sadly as we have 100 members.

It is with sorrow that we report the deaths of Grace James in October and Joan Everett in November. Both were loyal members of the Branch.

Wolverhampton

Since our last report we have had a speaker who told us about the Rally she and her son had taken part in, driving a 1968 Wolseley from Land's End to John o' Groats. Very interesting and amusing.

However, the highlight of 1996 was our 50th Birthday which we celebrated with a tea-party at our October meeting. One of the members present had been to the very first meeting early in August 1946, and two had joined the Branch before the end of that year. So, with other members we do not see very often, it made a very happy occasion. Our thanks go to all who provided the "eats" and to Mary Beeston for organising the Raffle.

Since then several members enjoyed the Festival of Remembrance in our Civic Hall, and the Branch was officially represented by the Secretary carrying the Standard. A number of us also attended the Drumhead Service and the Civic Remembrance Service on Remembrance Sunday, and on the morning of the 11th November, a Service organised by the Toc-H.

December is the month for our Christmas Lunch in a restaurant in the town, followed by a short meeting in our usual meeting room.

Three years ago we decided that officers would in future only serve for three years, with one retiring each year. At our AGM in November it was the turn of the Secretary to retire, so from 1st January 1997 Mrs Queenie Partridge will hold this office.

We send our very best wishes to the members we do not see very often, and to everyone we know in the Association, and look forward to meeting up with you at the various re-unions we shall be attending during the year.



By courtesy of the "Express & Star"
Miss Mary Davies (Secretary), Mrs Pat Hill (Chairman) and Mrs Eileen Salter (Treasurer) cutting the cake at Wolverhampton Branch 50th Birthday Party

York

Spotlight on York Branch

by Imogen Corrigan

York Branch holds its monthly meetings in the RAFA Club, Aldwork and has 51 members (25 Annual, 42 Life and 2 Associate Members). An average of 20 get to every meeting.

I visited the Secretary/Treasurer of 14 years standing, Mrs Phyllis Linsdell, in October and heard about the many activities run by the Branch. Mrs Linsdell is now retiring from being Secretary and will hand over to Mrs Pat Carpenter.

In past years, Branch members have held an auction in March which have always made very pleasing profits. The last one raised money for the Monica Bradley Memorial (Monica Bradley will be remembered as having been Secretary of Harrogate Branch as well as of North East Area Group). An Eastern Bonnet Parade with a flower theme was also a great success.

Every year the Members try to arrange an outing to tourist resorts in the North East and especially like to be in contact with other Branches when possible. The annual Christmas lunch changes its location, but once was held in the unusual Sidings Restaurant near Shipton. The restaurant is famous for its excellent cooking and is a favourite curiosity for rail enthusiasts as it's set in converted railway carriages.

On Remembrance Sunday, the Branch takes part in the Royal British Legion Parade. As many as possible try to attend the Festival of Remembrance in the Barbican, York which follows the format of the main event in London. The York Branch Committee (listed below) are always keen to welcome new members:

Chairman
Secretary
Treasurer
Committee

Mrs Pamela Nesbitt
Mrs Pat Carpenter
Mrs Phyllis Linsdell
Mrs Cora Calvert
Mrs Eve Gordon
Mrs Betty Hudson
Mrs Flo Palphramand
Mrs Irene Quarrie



York Branch
Front L-R: Betty Hudson, Cora Calvert
Second L-R: Eleanor Herbert, Phyllis Linsdell, Irene Quarrie, Ann Jamieson
Back: Alice Thomas

R. A. SCHOOL OF AIRCRAFT RECOGNITION, WHITE WALTHAM

A history of the village of White Waltham, Berkshire, is being written and the author would like to contact any member of the A. T. S. who attended the RA School of Aircraft Recognition there. Please write, in the first instance, to Mrs Joan Awberry, 66 Park Lane, Norwich NR2 3EF who will, with permission, pass on any information to the author.



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.

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

Birthdays

Mrs Jill BEATTY

80 years - Mrs Jill Beatty (née Gillett) on 30 July 1996. Address: 34 Cook Drive, Milton-of-Culcabock, Inverness IV2 3DA



Mrs Jessie COOK

90 years - Mrs Jessie Cook celebrated her 90th Birthday on 23 August 1996. She resides in a Nursing Home in Clacton. She is the oldest member of the Colchester Branch.



Mrs Ruth KELSO

100 years - Mrs Rebecca Ruth Kelso, QMAAC (née Howard) on 13 November 1996. Address: Buddolph Street, Eraring, 2264 NSW, Australia

Here is a photograph of Mrs Kelso on her Birthday, sent in by her granddaughter Melanie Bramble. "Many thanks for your beautiful big card with poppies - I recall seeing them in the fields in France - and the badge. I had a wonderful birthday, and an afternoon tea with 80 family and friends last weekend. With best wishes, Rebecca R Kelso."



Mrs Margaret OLSEN

100 years - Mrs Margaret Olsen (née Hardman) QMAAC on 3 November 1996. Address: 6101 Murrayville Road, Wilmington, N Carolina 28405.



Weddings

WEDDINGS

DUFFIELD-WHITE. Celia Duffield, a Royal Logistics Corps soldier based at Worthy Down, near Winchester, married Staff Sergeant Reg White at a ceremony in Norfolk in the Autumn. (See Gladiator Report.)



Wedding Day



The Cleggs - 50 Years Ago

ARNOLD-MAYBURY. On 26 November 1946 at the First Presbyterian Church in Loveland, Colorado, U.S.A. Technical/Sergeant Lester Richards-Arnold to Mary (Molly) Maybury, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 7060 East 72nd Place, Commerce City, Colorado 80022, U.S.A.



The Arnolds Today

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

CLEGG-WILSON. On 8 June 1946 at Dirlerton Parish Church, East Lothian. Lieutenant Norman H Clegg, Royal Army Service Corps to Sergeant Jean Wilson, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 8 Summerfield Drive, Baildon, Shipley, West Yorkshire, BD17 5BU.



The Cleggs Today

CAPELIN-WISE. On 22 October 1946 at Mission Hall, Medbourne, Market Harborough, Leics. Sergeant George Capelin, Royal Artillery to Sergeant Betty Wise, Auxilliary Territorial Service. Present address: 17 Westbrook Road, Blackheath, London, SE5 0NS.

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DAVIES-TAYLOR. On 30 March 1946 at St Mary's Church, Carmarthen. Sergeant Gerald Davies, Royal Army Medical Corps to Private Lillian Taylor, Auxilliary Territorial Service. Present address: 2 Ystrad Close, Johnstown, Carmarthen.



50 Years Ago



Wedding Day



Today



Fifty Years On

STRIVENS-TRANTER. On 28 September 1946 at St Paul's Church, Birmingham. John Strivens, Royal Artillery to Daily Tranter, Auxiliary Territorial Service. Present address: 233 Pilgrims Way, Andover, SP10 5HU.

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Happy After 50 Years



Wedding Day

GRINTER-COWPER. On 31st August 1946 at the Congregational Church, Wellington, Somerset. Craftsman Maurice Grinter REME to Private Nancy Cowper, Auxiliary Territorial Service (of Perth, Scotland). Present address: 34 Tonehill, Wellington, Somerset TA21 0AU. They met whilst both serving in Chilwell Ordnance Depot, Nottingham.



Their Splendid Golden Wedding Cake



The Grinters Today

HAAS-HILL. On 5th October 1946 at St Mary's Church, Guildford, Surrey, Peter C Haas ex RE to Evelyn V Hill ex ATS. Present address: 12 Coppice Close, Park Barn, Guildford GU2 6JL.

PATTON-BUCKLEY. On 28th September 1946 at St Mary's Church, Nantwich, Cheshire. Stanley J Patton REME EIGHTH ARMY to Betty I Buckley ATS 93rd S/L Regt. Present Address: 4 Chapelmere Court, Coppenhall, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 4SW.

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Wedding Day



Wedding Day



The Haas Today



About to cut the cake 50 years on

BRISTOW-MALTHOUSE. On 12th October 1946 at St Richards Church, Three Bridges, Sussex. Ronald W Bristow (formerly Sgt RE) to Emily L Malthouse (formerly L/Cpl ATS). Present address: 59 Templeton Park, West Hanningfield, Essex CM2 8LF. They met whilst serving in Bad Nauhausen, BAOR.

PDF Compressor Free Version



Wedding Day



The Bristows Today

GOLDEN YEARS. This poem was written by the 14 year old granddaughter of Mrs Lillian Provost, ex Auxiliary Territorial Service, of 37 Florist Street, Shaw Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, on the occasion of her Golden Wedding on 28 September 1996.

It was on the train from Edgeley
Where for the first time you met
It was a special day to remember and one you will never forget
You both were in the Army, so you didn't see each other too much
But you thought about each other, because you always kept in touch.

Some people had their doubts, but you proved those people wrong
Because soon after you got married and then Michael came along
Everybody loved him, especially both of you
And then a few years later, along came Auntie Sue.

You both were very happy with your family of four
You had everything you needed, but then you had one more
You named that child Elizabeth and you loved her dearly too
And the three of them was loved the same by everyone you knew.

They had all they needed, they never went without
You were the perfect parent of that no-one can doubt
Then as your children grew older and realised how much you cared
And for so many years, with them, how much of yourselves you had shared.

But now Grandma think of Grandad and Grandad think of Grandma too
Because its your 50th Wedding Anniversary
Congratulations both of you

Love forever, Dawn XXXX

RESEARCH INTO ATS

The research is going well but more information is needed. If you are willing to write down your memoirs or be interviewed, please get in touch with:

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

Many thanks to all those individuals and Branch Secretaries who have been so generous with their time.

Obituary

MAJOR (QM) E A HENDERSON

Major 'Pobbie' Henderson was born in Melnick, Aberdeen, Scotland on 25 October 1928. She enlisted in 1945 at the age of 17 years as a driver and completed her driver training course at Gresford, Wrexham, Wales. During the next 35 years she served worldwide, including Aden, where she earned a BEM. She was one of the last members of the WRAC to serve in Singapore, where she assisted with the closedown of the unit.

Pobbie rose quickly through the ranks to RSM and was subsequently commissioned in 1972. Thereafter, she served at Mill Hill, Camberley, Guildford, Catterick, Germany, Wilton and Edinburgh.

At whatever rank, Pobbie was well respected. She was a kindly, approachable person, sometimes "gruff" of voice, but never of manner. She had a genuine concern for all, but particularly for her subordinates. Whatever the pressures, she retained an unflappable exterior and a lively sense of humour.

Pobbie's loyalty to the WRAC was paramount, second only to her love for 'Boots' her Scottish Bearded Sheepdog who accompanied her everywhere. Many who served at the WRAC Centre must remember him, riding royally in the front seat of her Triumph Herald.

Pobbie retired as a Major in 1980, to Wootton Bassett near Swindon where she managed Lydiard Park Mobile Homes. Sadly, she developed ME and more latterly cancer. Although she knew there was no cure for her, she maintained a positive attitude to life and, despite the pain, retained her sense of humour. She died on 20 October 1996. Her funeral was held at the Church of Scotland, Lyneham, on her 68th birthday.

She will be missed and mourned by many.



Major Henderson with 'Boots'

OBITUARY

ALLEN. Ann Elizabeth (née Gamble) of Telford on 5 November 1996. ATS.

ANDERSON. Mrs Janet (née Patterson) of Clackmanonshire. ATS.

AVANN. Constance of St Leonards on Sea in August 1996. ATS.

AYMER. Cicely Eleanor MBE TD on 1 November 1996. ATS.

BADGLEY. Miss Sheilagh Veronica OBE TD of Olney on 24 October 1996. ATS.

BEASLEY. Mrs Marguerite (née Simpson) of Colchester on 27 July 1996. ATS.

BROOMHAL. Betty (née Andrews) of Walsall in December 1996. ATS.

BROWN. Capt (QM) S S on 29 May 1996. WRAC.

COOKE. Mrs Ellen of Leigh, Hampshire. ATS.

DAVIES. Mrs Adeline Marion of Farnborough on 1 September 1996. QMAAC.

DAW. Miss Emma Eve Kathleen of Yeovil on 24 August 1996. WRAC.

EVERITT. Miss Dorothy Joan of Wimbledon in November 1996. ATS.

FELDHEIM. Miss Ruth of Manchester on 8 November 1996. ATS.

GARDENER. Mrs Evelyn (née Morris) of Shrewsbury on 6 August 1996. ATS.

GRIFFITHS. Miss Maisie of Birmingham in December 1996. WRAC.

GRUBB. Mrs Margaret of Bexhill on Sea on 21 November 1996. ATS.

HART. Dora Gwen of Tunbridge Wells on 15 September 1996. ATS.

HENDERSON. Major E A BEM of Wootton Bassett on 20 October 1996. WRAC.

HOPE. Mrs Nora (née Payne) of Newcastle in November 1996. ATS.

HUMPHREYS. Mrs E (née Haydock) of Leftwich on 22 October 1996. ATS.

HUMPHRIES. Mrs Ivy Stella of Bocking, Essex in October 1996. ATS.

JAMES. Mrs Grace Muriel (née Spencer) of London on 13 September 1996. ATS.

KEMP. Mrs Elsie (née Grigglesstone) of Great Yarmouth on 15 August 1996. ATS.

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LINDSAY. Lt Col Jacqueline Ann of Bath on 9 September 1996. WRAC.

MAR & KELLIE. Countess The Lady Pansy Constance of Kirk Wynd Clackmannan on 9 August 1996. ATS.

McCARTNEY. Mrs Marriet (née Storey) of Newcastle on 4 December 1996. ATS.

McCARTEN. Mrs A of Keighley in November 1996. WAAF.

MORGAN. Mrs Carol M (née Fox) of Bromley on 11 December 1995 (late notification). ATS.

MULLIGAN. Mrs Mavis Katherine (née Toms) of Velines, France on 9 September 1996. ATS.

NEWTON. Mrs Edith (née Tait) of Olney in October 1996. ATS.

PECK. Mrs Iris Joan (née Slade) of Northville on 20 September 1996. ATS.

ROGERS. Mrs May (née Haworth) of Bath on 21 September 1996. ATS.

SCOTT. Mrs Catherine (née Monats) of Glasgow in October 1996. ATS.

SINCLAIR. Mrs Winifred Mary (née Cooke) of Little Neston on 22 May 1996. ATS.

SLAVEN. Miss Mary of Dumfries on 18 September 1996. ATS.

SOWERBY. Mrs Joyce of Grimsby on 21 October 1996. ATS.

STANWAY. Miss E J of Crewe on 19 July 1996. ATS.

STATHAM. I of Notts. ATS.

STEWART. Mrs Isobel (née Knight) of Sunderland on 20 June 1996. ATS.

STEBBINGS. Mrs Anne Adelaide of Hastings on 9 October 1996. ATS.

SWIFT. Mabel Sophie of Ryde, Isle of Wight. ATS.

TODD. Mrs Rosalie (née Durrant) of Gorleston on 28 September 1996. ATS.

WINSTANLEY. Mrs Kathleen of Bolton in August. Honorary Member.

**WRAC OTHER RANKS
REGISTER/LUNCHEON CLUB**

Due to popular demand, mainly from the Birmingham and Hereford Branches, I am compiling a Register of ex WRAC who are interested in getting in touch with old friends and/or an OR's Luncheon Club. If you wish to be included in either of these projects would you please complete the proforma and return it to me with a **stamped address envelope**.

Serial No:	Rank:
Surname:	Christian Names:
(whilst serving)	
Nicknames:	Home Town:
Date Enlisted:	Date Demobbed:
Basic Training:	
(which camp)	
Trade Training	
Trade:	
Working Camps:	
(include year)	
Surname now:	Marital Status:
Present Address:	

Post Code:	
Telephone No:	
(please state if ex directory)	
I am interested in the	
OR's Register	Yes/No
I am interested in the	
OR's Luncheon Club	Yes/No
I agree to a subscription	Yes/No

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope and return as soon as possible to:

Mrs Ann Deakin (née Butler)
Cobblestones
No 2 Chesham Road
Beaconside
Stafford
ST16 9JP
Tel: 01785 249992

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the WRAC Association will be held in the Ballroom of the Norbreck Hotel Blackpool at 2.30 pm on Saturday 19th April 1997.

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AGENDA

1. Chairmans Opening remarks.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Confirmation of Minutes of AGM held at the Victory Services Club on 20th April 1996.
4. Business arising from the meeting
5. Report of Council
6. Financial Report
7. Report by Editor of Lioness
8. Reports of Committees:
 - a. ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund.
 - b. Executive Committee.
9. Resolutions
 - a. Election of Vice Presidents of Council.
10. Any other Business.
11. Date of next AGM.

BLACKPOOL 1997

A full programme of events plus tickets will be despatched to all Secretaries to distribute to the various Branch Members at the end of February. If you do not belong to a Branch your package will be sent to your home.

The Following Points may be of help

The Norbreck Hotel rooms will be ready for guests from 3pm on Friday 18 April and Information Desks will be set up for the weekend.

Ladies not staying at the Norbreck must use the Norcalympia entrance.

The AGM will be held in the Ballroom and the Raffle will be drawn after the meeting. Tickets will be on sale in the Foyer during the day. The Ballroom will close after the Raffle has been drawn and will re-open at 6pm with a Cash Bar and Wine Table. The Norcalympia Room will not be open for dinner until 6.30pm. You are asked to assemble in the Ballroom where there will be a Seating Plan, in Branches where possible. Your tickets enable you to have 1 glass of wine free. Wine can be bought in both the dining room (Norcalympia) and the Ballroom.

Please notify Headquarters, by 30 March 1997, if your medical condition requires you to have a special menu.

On Sunday there will be buses available for Church. Please let the Information Desk at the Norbreck know if you need transport to Church. The Church is not available until 11.15. After the service the marchers are asked to meet outside whilst the remainder stay seated. After the March Past buses will be waiting for return journeys.

Should you have any other queries the Information Desks 'manned' by local ladies will be on hand to help.

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 18 APRIL

- 2000 Informal Reception hosted by Blackpool branch of The Royal British Legion Club, Thornton Clevellys.

SATURDAY 19 APRIL

- 1130 Secretaries Meeting in **The Connaught Suite, Norbreck Hotel.**
- 1230 Council and Secretaries Buffet Lunch, **Castle Restaurant.**
- 1430 Annual General Meeting in the Ballroom.
- 1600 Raffle.
- 1800 Doors open in Ballroom.
- 1830 Doors open in **Norcalympia.**
- 1900 GRAND REUNION DINNER in the Norcalympia.

SUNDAY 20 APRIL

- 1115 Church Service in Blackpool Parish Church.
- 1230 March Past the Wintergardens.

DISPERSE.

TRANSPORT FOR THORNTON CLEVELYS

TRANSPORT. For Thorton Clevellys take any bus/tram marked Thornton Clevellys and stop at the Bus Station. RBL Club is opposite.

Members are responsible for their own transport arrangements. Buses will be provided from Norbeck Castle Hotel for those attending Church. Blackpool has an excellent local transport system.

ACCOMMODATION. Where to stay in Blackpool and other accommodation can be obtained from:

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

**AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
(INCORPORATING QUEEN MARY'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS AND AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL
SERVICE COMRADES ASSOCIATION)**

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS AND AUDITORS

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. It is our responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on our audit, on those statements and to report our opinion to you.

BASIS OF OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by trustees in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charity's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

OPINION

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association at 31 October 1996 and of its net movement in funds for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 1993.

Registered Auditor
Chartered Accountants
The Clock House
140 London Road
Guildford
Surrey GU1 1UW

1997

	Notes	General funds	Membership life subscription fund	Lioness life subscription fund	1996	1995
INCOME & EXPENDITURE						
Incoming Resources						
Life subscriptions			1,196	4,783	5,979	-
Annual subscriptions		1,599	-	-	1,599	2,145
Investment income	1	14,258	-	-	14,258	14,086
Lioness publication income	2	7,776	-	-	7,776	8,214
Sale of badges and souvenirs		1,678	-	-	1,678	947
Donations		-	-	-	-	125
1997 Reunion income		16,235	-	-	16,235	-
Less: deferred income		(16,235)	-	-	(16,235)	-
Total incoming resources		25,311	1,196	4,783	31,290	25,517
Resources expended						
Direct charitable expenditure:						
Grants and donations		220	-	-	220	66
Lioness publication costs		20,181	-	-	20,181	21,269
Other expenditure:						
Management and administration	3	8,907	-	-	8,907	8,452
Total resources expended		29,308	-	-	29,308	29,787
NET MOVEMENT IN RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS						
Transfer between funds		(3,997)	1,196	4,783	1,982	(4,270)
NET MOVEMENT IN RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR						
		2,399	(833)	(1,566)	-	-
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES						
Gains/(losses) on investments:						
Unrealised		7,997,	-	-	7,997	10,100
Realised		(599)	-	-	(599)	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR						
	8	5,840	363	3,217	9,420	5,830
Balance brought forward at 1 November 1995		187,049	10,042	16,759	213,580	208,020
Balance carried forward at 31 October 1996		192,889	10,405	19,976	223,270	213,850

BALANCE SHEET
31st October 1996

ACCUMULATED FUNDS	Notes	1996	1995
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments		194,116	195,792
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at bank and in hand	6	46,127	19,103
Stock of badges		2,779	1,541
Association standard		199	199
		49,105	20,843
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	7	19,951	2,785
NET CURRENT ASSETS		29,154	18,058
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		223,270	213,850
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	8	223,270	213,850

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for investments which are stated at market value, and are in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

INVESTMENTS

Investments are stated at market value at the balance sheet date. Realised and unrealised gains and losses on investments are taken to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

STOCKS

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and realisable value.

LIFE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Life subscriptions are accounted for when received and allocated to specific designated funds to be released to general funds on a straight line basis over a period of 20 years.

INVESTMENT INCOME

Investment income is accounted for once the dividend or interest has been declared. All investment income during the year was received gross.

	1996	1995
1. INVESTMENT INCOME		
Dividend income	12,498	12,860
Deposit account interest	1,760	1,226
	14,258	14,086
2. LIONESS PUBLICATION		
Subscriptions	6,476	5,230
Advertising revenues	1,300	1,645
Proportion of life subscriptions	-	1,339
	7,776	8,214
3. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION		
AGM expenses	2,506	2,347
Printing and stationery	1,280	1,673
Postage	522	794
Travel expenses	285	117
Investment management fees	2,247	-
Audit and accountancy	1,300	1,199
Bank charges	-	245
Subscriptions and donations	90	1,463
Sundry expenses	677	614
	8,907	8,452

EMPLOYEES

There were no persons employed by the Association during the year.

No trustee received any remuneration for services to the Association in the current or previous year.

No trustee was reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the Association in the current or previous year.

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5. INVESTMENTS

	Market Value 1996	Cost 1996	Market Value 1995	Cost 1995
M & G Charifund Units (£12,495)	96,255	55,823	90,089	55,823
8% Treasury Loan 2002/06 (£12,193)	12,506	11,587	12,322	11,587
7.75% Treasury Loan 2012/15 (£6,548)	6,601	3,696	6,463	3,696
12.75% Treasury Loan 1995 (£5,991)	-	-	6,379	5,765
8% Treasury Stock 2003 (£38,037)	40,442	37,375	39,737	37,375
12.25% Exchequer Stock 1999 (£10,030)	11,326	10,570	11,640	10,570
14% Treasury Stock 1996 (£3,123)	-	-	3,294	3,544
4.375% Index Linked Stock 2004 (£8,670)	10,237	10,000	15,956	10,000
2% Index Linked Stock 2006 (£8,772)	16,749	15,000	15,956	15,000
	<u>194,116</u>	<u>144,051</u>	<u>195,792</u>	<u>153,360</u>

All investments are managed by Foster & Braithwaite Limited, and are listed on the UK stock exchange.

6. CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

	1996	1995
Current account	8,917	2,691
Deposit account	30,240	16,240
Cash held by investment managers	6,894	26
Cash in hand	76	146
	<u>46,127</u>	<u>19,103</u>

7. CREDITORS

Amounts falling due within one year:

1997 Reunion: Deferred income	16,235	200
Sundry creditors	3,716	2,585
	<u>19,951</u>	<u>2,785</u>

8. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

DESIGNATED FUNDS

	Generallife funds	Membership subscriptions fund	Lioness life subscription fund	TOTAL
1 November 1995	187,049	10,042	16,759	213,850
Net movement for the year	5,840	363	3,217	9,420
31 October 1996	<u>192,889</u>	<u>10,405</u>	<u>19,976</u>	<u>223,270</u>
Analysis of net assets between funds:				
Investments	192,889	1,227	-	194,116
Net current assets	-	9,178	19,976	29,154
for the year	<u>192,889</u>	<u>10,405</u>	<u>19,976</u>	<u>233,270</u>

Unrealised gains on investments included in unrestricted funds at the year end amounted to £50,065 (1995: £42,432).

The Women's Royal Army Corps Association

(Incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades Association)



1917-1918



1918-1921



1938

1949



1949-1992



1919 to Present

WRAC Association

(Incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades Association)

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In 1917 during the First World War women were recruited for service with the Army in a non-nursing capacity for the first time and they saw service overseas winning three Military Medals for gallantry. In 1919 Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC) formed an Old Comrades Association.

In 1942 the Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS) was added to the title and the word 'Old' was dropped! In 1949 when the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) was formed, the Association took on its present title.

There are now 82 Branches of the Association in the United Kingdom. The Association publishes a magazine called LIONESS twice a year which is included in the subscription.

Branches meet monthly as a rule and Groups of branches have an annual reunion. On 19/20 April 1997 there is to be a Grand Reunion in BLACKPOOL.

Why You Should Join

The Association exists to keep serving and ex-service women in touch with each other, and to help them in times of hardship and trouble. The strength of the whole depends on the individual, and you can help by joining NOW.

How to Obtain Help

If you are in need of help the Association may be able to help you through its Benevolent Fund. Write direct to the Secretary, ATS & WRAC Benevolent Funds, Block 10, AGC Centre, Worthy Down SO21 2RG, giving name and number while serving, dates served, and details of the trouble or contact your local Soldiers, Sailors, Airmens Families Association (SSAFA) whose number will be in your local 'phone book.

Application for Membership

To the General Secretary
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION
Block 10, AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Winchester
Hampshire SO21 2RG

I wish to join the WRAC Association as a

Life (£30) member and enclose £.....

Annual (£5)

Date Signature

Subscriptions include "LIONESS"

(Please complete in Block Letters)

Surname.....Miss/Mrs/Ms

Christian Names

Address for Correspondence

.....

.....

.....

.....Post Code:

Telephone:.....

Units during service.....

.....

.....

Surname when serving.....

QMAAC/ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number
(Please strike out whichever is not applicable)

Last Rank held (Present Rank if still serving)

Date of Enrolment.....Date of Release

Decorations

Attention: For those who "borrow" Lioness . . . now you can have your own copy.
Just complete the form below.

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