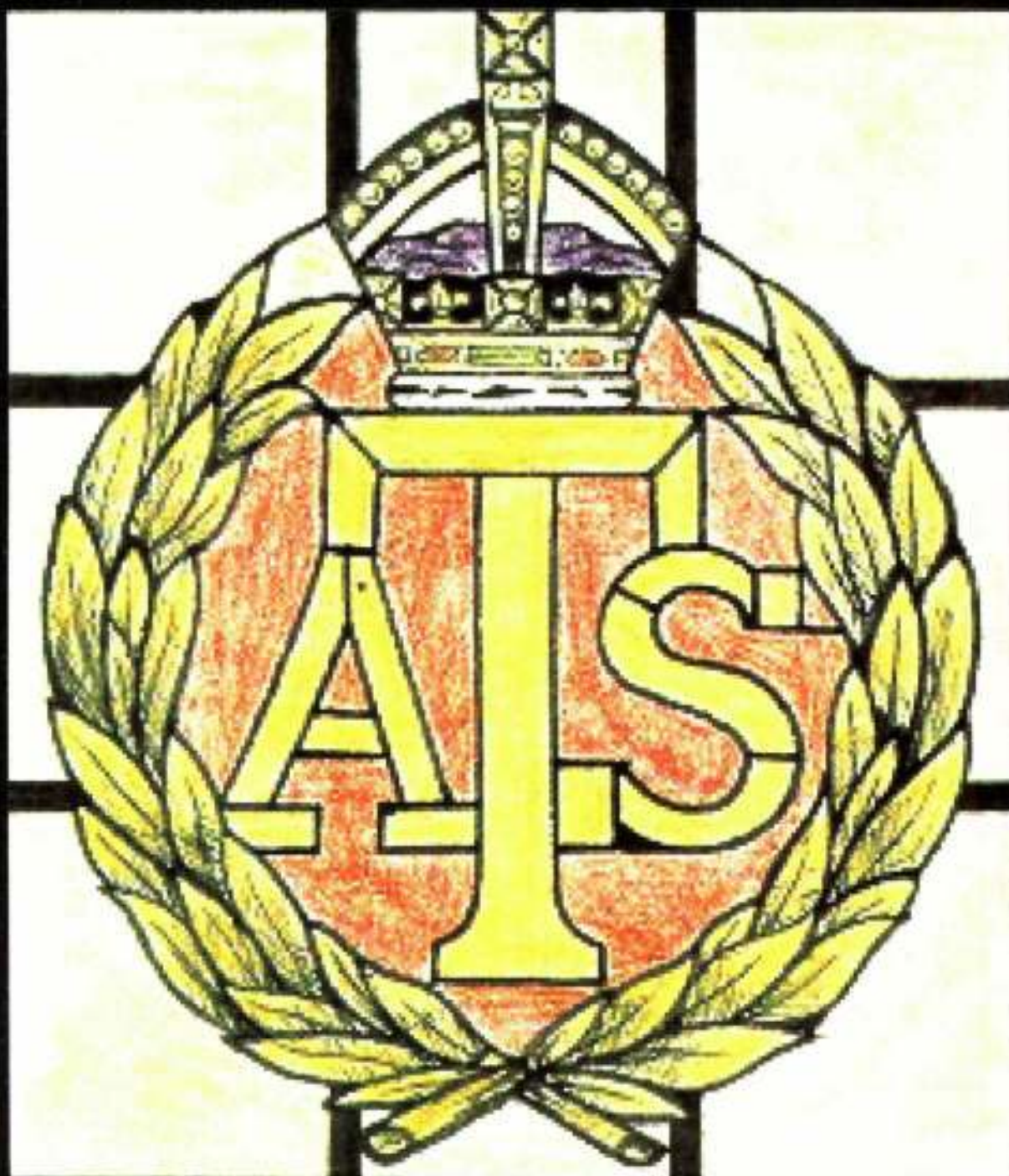


1998

No2

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# Lioness



**1938 - 1998**  
**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**  
**60 YEARS**

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# THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960- No 206184

Founded in 1919

Headquarters, WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down SO21 2RG

Tel: General Secretary  
 Tel/Fax: 01962 887570  
 ATN (727) 2570

## PATRON

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER

## PRESIDENT

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT, GCVO

## VICE-PRESIDENT

Brigadier H G MEECHIE, CBE

## COUNCIL OF THE ASSOCIATION

Chairman:

Vice-Chairman:

Life Vice-Presidents of Council:

Brigadier H G Meechie, CBE

Colonel A Clissitt

Brigadier E J Nolan CB

Colonel C E Hammond CBE

Miss M M Thomson TD

Mrs F M White

Mrs A H S Matthews

General Secretary:

Honorary Treasurer:

Editor of Association Magazine:

Editorial Team:

Fiona White

Val Trout Sue Westlake

Maurice Mager Andrea Denham Eleanor Bowles

Lauren Fletcher

Typists:

ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG

Tel: Direct (01962) 887612 or 887478

Tel: ATN (727) 2612

Chairman of Trustees:

Chairman of Grants Committee:

Case Secretary:

Brigadier H G Meechie, CBE

Lieutenant Colonel M W Soames MBE

Mrs A H S Matthews

## Cover Photographs

Front Cover  
 Best Wishes ATS

Back Cover  
 Galaxy of Stars  
 Courtesy Caralou Marquet,  
 Long Beach NJ USA



Member of the Association of Service Newspapers

Contributions for next issue by 16 OCTOBER 1998

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## EDITORIAL

*This will be my last issue as Lioness Editor. I have thoroughly enjoyed the pleasure of putting the magazine together and reading the large numbers of articles submitted by the many contributors. Through Lioness I have made many friends. Please continue to support my successor and I am sure Lioness will go from strength to strength.*

*Meanwhile, there are lots of proforma to be filled in and articles to be read.*

*My thanks for your support.*

### BRIGADIER ANNE FIELD

Brigadier Anne Field thanks most warmly, the Association Branches and members who generously contributed to her farewell present. As there were so many contributors she hopes you will forgive her for not writing to each and every one individually.

## LETTER FROM GENERAL SIR JEREMY MACKENZIE KCB OBE ADC GEN – SENT TO BRIGADIER (RETIRED) H G MEECHIE CBE

Dear Helen,

You will be aware that when the Adjutant General's Corps was formed in 1992 we inherited the original eight members of our Regimental Council from the antecedent Corps. My appointment was previously, of course, Colonel Commandant WRAC and the Deputy Colonels Commandant, with the exception of Anne Field who had been Deputy Controller Commandant, WRAC, were Colonels Commandants of their Corps. Their numbers included Colonel Commandant MPSC and two Colonels Commandant RAEC.

In 1993 the council was reduced to five members, the Colonel Commandant and one member for each branch of the Corps. However, the council anticipated that during the Corps' formative years there would be a need for a senior female member to act as "Female Focus" representing the interests of female officers and soldiers throughout the Corps. We were fortunate that you were able to take up that appointment. For convenience, and because the greater number of females were employed in SPS Branch, your appointment was listed under that branch. The appointment of Chief of Staff to the Adjutant General as Assistant Colonel Commandant was introduced later when the Director General post was disestablished in order to maintain a serving two-star influence on the management of the Corps.

The Corps is well into the seventh year of its life and three council members, including yourself, are approaching the end of your tenures. It is widely acknowledged that, although there is still work to be done, the integration of women into the Corps has been a major success story, and it was for this reason that at its meeting on 1 May 98 the Council agreed that there was no longer a need for Female Focus; it is generally felt that there are sufficient female officers in responsible positions to represent female concerns in the future. It was therefore decided not to seek a replacement for you when your tenure expires in July this year.

The Regimental Council acknowledged, however, that there will be a need to keep alive the essential link between the Corps and the WRAC, particularly because the WRAC as an antecedent Corps is not represented in the branch structure. It was proposed that this link should be maintained on a regular basis through the Regimental Colonel's and Regimental Secretary's contacts with the General Secretary of your Association, being co-located at Worthy Down, and on a more formal basis, when required, between the Colonel Commandant AGC and the Vice President/Chairman of the WRAC Association Council. I suggest that we should leave it up to the Regimental Executive Committee AGC and your General Secretary to decide what practical steps must be taken to maintain the link. It has been suggested, for example, that your Association might be represented on the Board of Trustees of the AGC Museum in due course and this we shall pursue further.

I should be most grateful, if you are happy with this arrangement, if you would inform your council and members. I for my part will arrange to inform the serving officers and soldiers of the Corps and will emphasise that the new structure reflects the Corps achievements towards the integration of women and in no way diminishes the importance we place on our links with the WRAC or on the part women play, in the future of the Corps. I shall also, of course, ensure through General Paul Bray that the decision to reduce SPS Branch representation on the council is properly understood in the branch.

Yours Jeremy.

# Officers' Lunch

## OFFICERS' BRANCH LUNCHEON

### PDF Compressor Free Version

The annual meeting of the Officers' Branch of the WRAC Association will take place in the Winchester Room of the Officers' Mess, AG Corps Centre at Worthy Down Winchester on Saturday 19 September 1998.

The meeting will assemble mid-morning for coffee. This will be followed by a talk from a serving officer and an opportunity to ask questions.

Pre-lunch drinks will consist of an initial drink included in the overall price. After that a cash bar will be operated.

Lunch will be in the old Ante-Room of the Officers' Mess. Wine will be served with the meal.

Inclusive price for morning coffee, pre lunch drink, lunch with wine will be £15.00.

Please send your cheque for £15.00 made out to WRAC Association with the application form below and an sae for return of your ticket.

Please apply no later than Tuesday 1 September 1998.

### CLOSING DATE TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 1998

TO: WRAC Association HQ  
AGC Centre  
Worthy Down, Hants SO21 2RG

From.....

I wish to attend the Officers' Lunch on Saturday 19 September 1998.

My car details are:

Make:.....Colour:.....Reg No: .....

I enclose a cheque for £15.00 for the lunch.

I enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for my receipt and ticket.

CHEQUE MADE PAYABLE TO  
WRAC ASSOCIATION PLEASE

Date.....Signed.....

## OFFICERS' LUNCHEON

Please note that the Officers' Mess is undergoing renovation and a certain amount of disruption has been caused. Coffee will be served in the Winchester Room and lunch in the main ante-room where we met last year. Lt Col Isobel McCord has kindly agreed to update us on Equal Opportunities in Today's Army.

## 'Army Padres and Women Chaplains' Assistants

Please could anyone who served as a Chaplains' Assistant, and Officers and ATS Service women who had contact with Chaplains' Assistants and Padres during the Second World War, write to me and assist with the research I am doing towards a PhD. If you know anyone else who may be able to comment on the work of chaplains, please draw their attention to my request. I am investigating the relationship between soldiers and chaplains that developed during the war. Usually this relationship was close and supportive, but occasionally there were tensions and disagreements. During WW2, chaplains trained at Chester Teacher Training College, this institution has now become University College Chester where I work.

Please write to  
Alan Robinson,  
Dept of History,  
University College Chester,  
Cheyney Road,  
Chester, CH1 4BJ,  
or phone me on 01244 341088

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EMBROIDERED  
STOCK DESIGNS  
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\* T-SHIRTS  
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\* SWEATERS  
\* BASEBALL CAPS  
FOR FREE COLOUR BROCHURES CONTACT:  
**TEES TOTAL**  
High St, Wootton Bassett,  
Swindon, Wilts SN4 7AB  
TEL: (01793) 849888  
FAX: (01793) 849890  
CREDIT TERMS FOR H.M. FORCES

# Officers' Dinner

## WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB

### PDF Compressor Free Version

At the final meeting of the WRAC HQ Mess the proposal to form a WRAC Officers Dining Club was floated and met with considerable support. Two years on, the club was formed and continues to this day.

The aim of the club is to hold one dinner each year, normally in Autumn. To date, three dinners have been held. The inaugural dinner was held at the Army and Navy Club in London on 14 October 1995. The second dinner was held at the Stakis Hotel, in York, on 19 October 1996. The third dinner in November 1997 at the Army and Navy Club. The fourth dinner will also be at the Army and Navy Club by popular request.

The WRAC Officers' Dining Club currently has a membership of 200 and is open to anyone who held a commission in the WRAC or WRAC TA.

The club has to be self supporting financially and an initial subscription of £5.00 is required to help cover basic administrative expenses.

If you are not a member and wish to join, please complete the proforma below and return it to me, with your initial subscription, by 14 September 1998.

## WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB

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

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

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

I would like to attend the dinner on 31 October 1998 (delete if not applicable).

SIGNED .....  
NAME.....  
ADDRESS.....  
.....  
.....  
TEL NO:.....  
RANK/TITLE .....

RETURN BY 14 SEPT 1998 PLEASE.

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE WRAC ASSOCIATION

To the General Secretary  
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION  
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 .....

# WOs' and SNCOs' Dinner

**WOs' and SNCOs' Dinner - Friday 20 March 1998**

**By SSgt JA White AGC (SPS)**

**PDF Compressor Free Version**

It is with great pleasure and relief (PHEW!) that I can report on the second WRAC WOs and SNCOs' Dinner which took place at the WOs' and SGTs' Mess, Beaconsfield on Friday 20 March 1998. To mark the occasion, an official photograph was taken with our Guests of Honour, Brigadier Anne Field and Lt Col Sue Westlake.

Then it was back to the Mess for pre-dinner drinks. This was an ideal opportunity for Brigadier (Retd) Field to be re-introduced to old friends and colleagues. The evening had an excellent atmosphere throughout even though a few invited guests failed to appear! It was commented on, and hopefully the attendance at next year's dinner will produce an even greater attendance.

During dinner, the wine flowed, the laughter was infectious and everyone seemed to be getting on famously, almost as if time had stood still in some cases. Isn't it funny how what was only an idea two years previously, has now materialized into an annual event? Let's hope this continues for many years to come.

The after dinner speeches were given, in particular, Brigadier Field mentioned how pleased she was to see such a resplendent table complete with friends who had at some time, been associated with her in one way or another. The response was well received by all but something gave me the impression that this was not going to be a 'quiet evening'. The next move was to prove successful.

On hearing 'Honoured Guests. Ladies, let's retire to the bar', everyone enthusiastically left the table in order to continue their conversations within the bar and rumour has it that WO1 (RSM) ME Simon was heard to say 'the bar will stay open for as long as I'm here!' Well, if that wasn't a challenge, then my name is Anneka Rice. Consequently, the evening then turned into early morning for some. How nice to see that some traditions have not died.....!!!!

Finally, I would like to say a 'big thank you' to all those who attended and from the complimentary letters, cards and flowers received, it seems everyone had a enjoyable time.

Next year's dinner which will be organised by WO2 (SQMS) Nancy Thorne. The date for your diaries is Saturday 13 March 1999 and the location will be the WOs' and SGTs' Mess Worthy Down Winchester. More details to follow.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

REMEMBER TO PAY FOR 1999 BY FRIDAY 13TH  
NOVEMBER 1998.

If you wish to pay by Direct Debit Please contact:  
Mrs Sue Myers at Headquarters

**WRAC WOs' AND SNCOs' DINNER NIGHT**

**THE NEXT WRAC WOs' AND SNCOs' DINNER NIGHT  
IS TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY 13 MARCH 1999 AT  
THE SGTS MESS WORTHY DOWN.**

**IT IS HOPED THAT THE MESS CAPACITY OF 120  
PEOPLE SEATED AT DINNER WILL BE FULLY  
UTILISED FOR THIS PRESTIGIOUS FUNCTION.**

**ACCOMMODATION IS AVAILABLE TO THOSE  
ATTENDING. THE APPROXIMATE COST WILL BE  
AROUND £20 - £25 (TBC)**

**THE GUEST OF HONOUR FOR THE EVENING WILL BE  
MAJOR A MASKENS MCINTYRE, ACCOMPANIED BY  
LT COL S WESTLAKE.**

**SO WOULD YOU PLEASE PASS THE WORD AROUND  
AS IT PROMISES TO BE A GREAT EVENING.**

**TO REGISTER FOR THE DINNER NIGHT THE  
CONTACT IS:**

**WO2 (SQMS) THORNE  
CSM PS WING  
CVHQ AGC  
WORTHY DOWN  
WINCHESTER  
HANTS  
SO21 2RG**

**TEL 01962 887305 (CIVIL) 727 2305 (MIL)**



*WRAC WOs' and SNCOs' Dinner  
Friday 20th March 1998*

### *Rear:*

*Karen Loftus, Tracy Todd, Sandra Elliott, Leslie Trattles,  
Mo Green, Ssgt Avril Laver, Sgt Karen Ellams, WO2 Nancy  
Thorne, Ssgt Karen Smith, Capt Lisa Twidd, Sgt Linda Munday,  
Ssgt Dawn Bagnall, WO2 Mul Tibbits, WO1 Elaine Swift,  
Jackie Murphy.*

### *Centre:*

*Linda Graver, Maria Pownell, D Mitchell, Sue Taylor, Rose Murphy,  
June Rayner, Sgt June Rigby, Sandy Barclay  
WO2 Helen Sleightholme, WO2 Gill Cross, Angie Hamilton,  
Gill Rich, June Skelton.*

### *Front:*

*Agnes Doig, Nancy Miller, Joan Grimston, Betty Green,  
Ssgt Julie White, Brig(Retd) A Field, WO1 (RSM) ME Simon,  
Lt Col SJ Westlake, Ssgt Angie Hopewell, Irene Hall,  
Capt Liz Lawrence.*

# WRAC Luncheon/Dinner Club

I would like to attend the second WRAC Luncheon/Dinner which is to be held at **Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford, on Saturday 3 October 1998**. The weekend package includes:

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## **Friday 2 October 1998**

Informal Table D'Hote Dinner -

Potters Restaurant

Bed And Full English Breakfast

Full use of all leisure facilities which includes gym/swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi/sun beds etc

## **Saturday 3 October 1998**

Conference facilities plus tea or coffee

**WRAC Dinner - Tillington Suite**

Bed and Full English Breakfast

The cost of the above weekend is **£90** per person sharing a Twin Bedded Room and **£100** per person in a single Room. The allocation of 60 rooms is for a limited period only.

**\*Guests, who are not WRAC, will be able to enjoy the same menu as the WRAC Dinner, on Saturday evening, but in the Potters Restaurant.** Members who wish to attend the **WRAC Dinner only** - the cost is **£20**. **\*\*CLOSING DATE 5 SEPTEMBER 1998\*\***

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs/Miss/Ms/Rank \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Lclub Membership No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Army Serial No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Enlisted: \_\_\_\_\_

**Accommodation Required:** Single Room ☐ Twin Bedded ☐ Double Room ☐  
Smoking ☐ Non Smoking ☐  
Disabled Facilities ☐ Willing To Share ☐

**WRAC Dinner Only:** Yes ☐ No ☐ \*\*please tick options

**Special Dietary requirements:** Vegetarian/Diabetic etc .....  
(Please State)

Name of Guest - If applicable: .....  
(State any special needs they may have etc)

I enclose a **£20** cheque as a deposit for the weekend of Dinner Only Package\*. ☐

I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for my receipt, ticket, hotel information etc ☐

## **CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE 'WRAC LUNCHEON CLUB'**

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Return completed form to: Mrs Ann Deakin, 'Cobblestones', 2 Chesham Road, Stafford, ST16 3JP. Telephone: 01785 249992 A copy of the WRAC Luncheon/Dinner Club application form can be found on page 9 of No1 Issue of the Lioness 1998 or can be obtained from the above address.

## **WRAC Register**

Since starting the Register in 1995 I have received a number of applications from ATS ladies at home and abroad. I am very sorry but I do not have the manpower to create another Register for ATS ladies. Due to volume I am unable to include them in the WRAC Register. If anyone out there would like to undertake the task of an ATS Register then please let me know.

Ann Deakin  
01785 249992

## *ATS Dinner Club*

**ATS DINNER CLUB.**

# PDF Compressor Free Version

In September 1938 the Auxiliary Territorial Service was formed and became part of the regular Army during World War 2 playing a vital role by providing Cooks, Orderlies, Clerks, Drivers, manning Anti-Aircraft Guns and Searchlights etc.

This year 1998 sees us celebrating 60 years of formation.

The ATS Dinner Club meet annually for a Luncheon on normally the first Saturday in October and this year we will be meeting in Birmingham on Saturday 3 October 1998 and celebrating 60 years in our own special way.

We would like to see as many ex-ATS there as possible, we come from all walks of life from all over the world, so if you would like to meet up with old Comrades and talk over your experiences of World War 2 and beyond, please contact Mrs M Rogers 103 Lion House Road, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 2SE, the Ticket Secretary. If you enjoy coming and would like to become a member of the Dinner Club we will put you in touch with the Membership Secretary.

The Luncheon will be held at the Albany Hotel, Birmingham.  
(Which is quite near to New Street Station, Birmingham).

Menu - Tomato, Basil and Lentil Soup.  
Slow Roast Breast Chicken, Mushrooms, Onions  
in a White Wine Sauce.

Chocolate Rum Truffle  
Coffee And Glass Of Wine.

The cost of the Luncheon is £18.50 for members and £19.50 for non-members.

The Hotel will be open from 12 noon for lunch at 1pm.

So please come and keep the comradeship and friendship of those 60 years alive. We look forward to hearing from you.

Marguerite Fellows.

## A.T.S. DINNER CLUB APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME (Stating MRS, MISS or RANK)

## FIRST NAMES

**ADDRESS**

**SERVICE IN THE ATS**      **From:**

**To:**

NAME WHEN SERVING IN THE ATS

**ARMY NUMBER**

**LAST RANK HELD IN THE ATS**

## DECORATIONS

**To: The Membership Secretary, ATS Dinner Club  
Mrs D.I. Brookes  
99 Meadow Road  
Nunts Park  
Coventry CV6 4GW**

**I wish to join the ATS Dinner Club and enclose:**

\*either one/two or three years subscription

£2 per year or £5 for 3 years                      £5 .....

or LIFE Membership subscription at   £10 .....

**Entrance Fee must always be included      £    1.00**

**CHEQUES/POSTAL ORDER/CASH  
ENCLOSED** £

**Cheques and Postal Orders to be made payable to:  
"ATS Dinner Club"**

**\*delete item not applicable**

DATE ..... SIGNATURE .....  
A stamped addressed envelope would be appreciated

## CAN YOU HELP?

Alison Schofield had her handbag stolen the South of France. It contained her Diary and Address book, in which she had written the names and addresses of several Members who approached her at the AGM at the Victory Club asking for details of the South Area Reunion (Aldershot 23 August 1998) and Branch Dinner (Hook 20 October 1998). If you were one of these please ring her on 01 252 714083

# Cardiff 2000

## CARDIFF 2000

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There are many hotels in Cardiff. The selection printed here is from the top end of the market and these have been earmarked especially for our Reunion at a special price.

There are smaller hotels and B&Bs, not so near to the centre which cannot be block booked until 2000 when the prices will undoubtedly be higher.

For all information about accommodation please contact.

## CARDIFF MARKETING

01222 667773

## WRAC Association - Grand Reunion

CARDIFF - April 2000

Friday 7 April - Sunday 9 April 2000  
ACCOMMODATION RESERVATION FORM

Cardiff Marketing acting on behalf of the WRAC Association, has secured accommodation at advantageous rates for all involved in the WRAC Association Reunion.

## HOTEL SELECTED FROM OVERLEAF

1 Choice      2 Choice      3 Choice

## ACCOMMODATION REQUIRED

No.      No.      No.  
Single Rooms   Twin Rooms   Double Room

Please List room occupant names

Name .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... COUNTRY ..... POSTCODE .....

TELEPHONE No ..... FAX No .....

To reserve your accommodation, please complete this form and send to Cardiff Marketing Ltd together with a 10% deposit. Payment must be made in sterling by one of the following methods: Visa, Amex, Diners Club, Mastercard or Cheque payable to Cardiff Marketing Ltd. Written confirmation of your booking will be forwarded to you together with a voucher to be presented to the hotel on arrival.

If paying by credit card:

Name & initials

on card: ..... Expiry Date .....

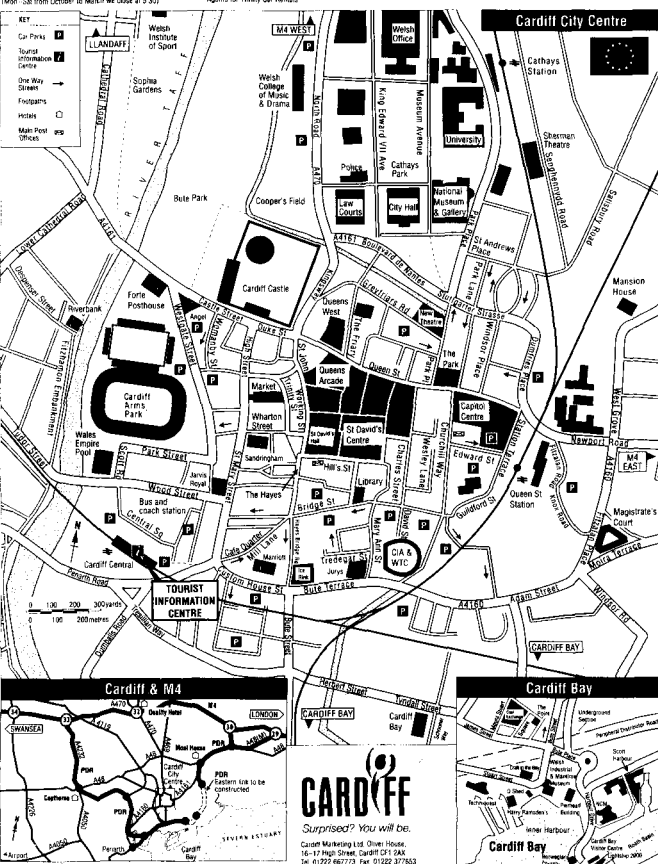
Card No .....

Send your completed form, no later than Monday 20 March 2000, to Hotel Reservations,  
Cardiff Marketing Ltd,  
Oliver House,  
16/17 High Street,  
Cardiff,  
Wales CF1 2AX  
Telephone No 01222 667773 - Fax No 01222 377653

**Cardiff Tourist Information Centre**  
Cardiff Central Station, Central Square,  
Cardiff CF1 1QY Phone: (01222) 227281  
Fax: (01222) 239162

**Opening Hours:**  
Mon 9-5.30 Tue 10-6.30 Wed-Fri 9-6.30 Sat 10-4  
(Mon-Sat from October to March we close at 5.30)

**Our services include:**  
• Friendly and knowledgeable staff  
• Many languages spoken  
• Information and leaflets about what to see and do and how to get there  
• Reservations can be made for local accommodation that evening  
• For accommodation of your next destination use the RAB (book a bed ahead) service  
• Bureau de Change 7 days a week  
• Fax and photocopying service  
• Maps, Souvenir Books, postcards and stamps, phone cards, street parking vouchers, CAW and STA heritage passes, souvenirs made in Wales and Bristol Channel cruise tickets  
• Agents for Thrifty Car Rentals



## OVERSEAS LIFE MEMBERS

Now that the despatch of the Lioness magazine has been taken over by a distribution company from January 1998 it is only possible to operate a one tariff postal system.

It will therefore be necessary to request an annual contribution of £3.50 to help with the cost of posting. Members who previously received the magazine by airmail have already been advised of the balance on their airmail account.

## Cardiff Marriott Hotel

De Luxe

Centrally located in the colourful Cafe Quarter, 5 minutes from Cardiff International Arena, Theatres and Museum, this stylish air conditioned hotel has outstanding facilities including a large leisure club. Spacious bedrooms have one or two double beds and offer all the extras you would expect from one of the worlds favourite hotel groups.

City Centre.

**£158.00 Single**

**£108.00 Sharing**

## Jurys Marriott Hotel

Highly Commended

A warm welcoming hotel situated opposite Cardiff International Arena, in the heart of the capital city. Extensive shopping, entertaining and attractions are within strolling distance.

City Centre.

**£127.50 Single**

**£93.50 Sharing**

## Quality Friendly Hotel

Highly Recommended

Close to the junction of the M4 and the A470 on the northern edge of the city, this modern hotel lies in the shadow of the fairytale castle - Castle Coch. Facilities at the hotel includes carvery restaurant, friendly bar and a relaxing leisure club.

FOUR MILES FROM CITY CENTRE.

**£156.50 Single**

**£101.50 Sharing**

## The Park Thistle Hotel

De Luxe

Situated in the heart of the city on the edge of the shopping precinct, within walking distance of all facilities, 10 minutes walk from Cardiff International Arena. Built in 1883, the hotel recalls an era of Victorian opulence. The park is spacious and elegant.

City Centre.

**£199.50 Single**

**£139.00 Sharing**

## Cardiff Bay Hotel

Highly Recommended

Strategically located for both Cardiff Bay and the City Centre, 5 minutes walking distance of the Cardiff International Arena.

City Centre.

**£195.00 Single**

**£120.00 Sharing**

## Riverbank Hotel

Commended

Family owned and operated. Recently refurbished. Situated in the heart of the City and only 5 minutes walk from the Cardiff International Arena and central bus and railway stations. Secure car parking, licensed bar and restaurant.

City Centre.

**£93.00 Single**

**£69.00 Sharing**

## Forte Posthouse - City

Commended

Modern three-star hotel located in the heart of the city opposite Cardiff Castle, Bute Park and River Taff. Within 5 minutes walk

from the Cardiff International Arena, arts and theatrical venues. Offers free car parking to residents.

City Centre.

**£136.00 Single**

**£96.00 Sharing**

## Cardiff Moat House

Highly Recommended

Four miles east of the city centre, the Cardiff Moat House offers superbly appointed bedrooms, a popular carvery restaurant and bar. To complete the picture, the hotel boasts a first rate leisure club with swimming pool.

FOUR MILES FROM CITY CENTRE.

**£134.00 Single**

**£114.00 Sharing**

## Forte Posthouse - M4

Commended

Positioned on the western side of the city this three star hotel places an emphasis on creating an atmosphere of welcome and informality. Facilities including health club with swimming pool.

FIVE MILES FROM CITY CENTRE.

**£126.00 Single**

**£86.00 Sharing**

## Lincoln House Hotel

Commended

Privately owned family run hotel offering high quality personal service. The Victorian house has retained its original features and atmosphere. Conveniently situated in a select area, within easy reach of the city. Regular bus service into city.

ONE MILE FROM CITY CENTRE.

**£115.95 Single**

**£84.95 Sharing**

## The Central Hotel

Approved

Situated close to train and bus stations, within 2 minutes walking distance of Cardiff International Arena

City Centre.

**£109.50 Single**

**£69.50 Sharing**

## Holiday Inn Express

Newly built hotel adjacent to junction 30 of the M4 motorway. All rooms have tea/coffee making facilities, satellite TV in-room movies, hair dryer and direct dial telephone. The hotel has no bar but is adjacent to a Big Steak House. Continental breakfast only.

SIX MILES FROM CITY.

**£126.00 Single**

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## Campanile Hotel

Commended

A comfortable, friendly hotel situated three miles from the city centre. Separate from the accommodation is a Bistro restaurant and bar featuring daily French specials plus Hors d'oeuvres buffet.

THREE MILES FROM CITY CENTRE.

**£79.45 Single**

**£49.50 Sharing**

The rates given above are per person and inclusive of a weekend delegate rate for 2 nights bed and breakfast, with Dinner and VAT.

# Reunions

## Reunion - Royal Army Pay Corps

All ladies who served with the Pay Corps during the War years and afterwards.

There is to be a Dinner at the Moat House Hotel West Bromwich.

For further information contact

John Hudson  
Low Well House  
Low Well Park  
Wheldrake  
York  
YO4 6AF

Tel: 01904 448575

## London Area Reunion.

Luton Branch will host the annual reunion this year to be held in Luton (Town Centre) on Saturday 12 September 1998. All are welcome.

Tickets £10. Please contact:

Mark Evans, 15 Laburnum Grove, Luton, LU3 2DW

Telephone 01582 617313



### LONDON AREA WELCOMES YOU

*Stella Keogh, Eileen Carter, London Area Chairman,  
Dorothy Foster, London Branch Chairman  
Eva Ellison, London Branch Secretary*

## Wales And The West Area Reunion 1999

To be held at the Oakley Centre, Crewe. On the 18 September 1999.

Further information will be available from November 1998.

E Francis.  
Area Secretary.

## SCOTTISH A.G.M. AND REUNION.

The Scottish Annual General Meeting and Reunion will be held on Saturday 24 October 1998 at:

Block 25  
Bedford Barracks  
Colinton  
Edinburgh

From 11am - 4pm

Members wishing to attend should contact their Branch secretary.

## North East Area Reunion 1998.

The Reunion will be held on Saturday 19 September 1998.

To be held at:

Park Hotel  
Grand Parade  
Tynemouth

Tickets £12.00 from Mrs G.Friday, 25 Murton Grove, Billingham TS22 5AZ  
Telephone 01642 556101

Reception from 11.30am, three course lunch followed by entertainment.

## TAUNTON 1965 - 1967

Mrs C Harrison, 8 Newburn Avenue Blackley, Manchester M92 LD, is organising a reunion for anyone who served in Taunton 1965-1967 in the Signals.

Please contact her at the above address.

**Snowdon House, 46 River Street, Rhyl, LL18  
1PT Telephone: (01745) 331786**

**W/454215 Sue De Barr** (Mrs Roberts) runs the above Licensed Guest House. She is offering registered Two Crowns Tourist Board accommodation with full or half board. Snowdon House is three minutes from the sea, shops and amusements. Ex WRAC who book accommodation will receive a discount.

**Ann Deakin**

# AG Corps Day

A G CORPS DAY 1997

Please note that the next Corps Day will be in 1999.

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*"The Brigadiers"*



*Jean Troubridge RQMS Denham, Rosemary Perry  
AG Corps Day 1997*



## Royal Cambridge Home

RESIDENTIAL CARE IN RETIREMENT & LATER YEARS

Situated near Hampton Court Palace, the Home is beautifully appointed within its own grounds. Founded in 1851 for the widows of soldiers we can now welcome into the Home those women who have themselves served in the Army and/or the Army Nursing Services and Nursing Yeomanry. An enhanced quality of life in retirement awaits you in a safe, manageable and comfortable environment. For further details and a brochure please call or write to:

*The Superintendent, Royal Cambridge Home,  
82184 Hurst Road, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 9AH  
Telephone (0181) 979 3788  
Registered Charity No 225674*

## AGM AND CATHEDRAL SERVICE, GUILDFORD

**17/18 APRIL 1999**

Meals and accommodation at the University of Surrey will cost £40.00 (includes B & B, lunch, evening meal, coffee and tea).

We need an idea of numbers wishing accommodation, by 30 September 1998.

Please return proforma as soon as possible if you wish to provisionally book overnight accommodation.

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK LETTERS

I would like to provisionally book overnight accommodation.

ARMY NO: .....

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

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

POSTCODE: .....

BRANCH: .....

SIGNATURE: .....

# Letters



## LETTERS PAGE

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

Dear Editor

A strange coincidence in 1997 No1 Issue of 'our magazine'. A photo of a small group of ladies in York. One had my maiden name of Favell - as her maiden surname. I wrote and we both agreed we had never bumped into any Favells in our 4 years wartime service. Both our forebears hail from the same area of Bedfordshire so somewhere along the line.....?

It was rather like meeting an old friend and we both did the same work in the Army too!

Margaret Cranmer  
Viva Neuva  
2 Moon Ridge  
Newport Park  
Topsham Road  
Exeter

Dear Editor

How saddened I was to read in the Lioness of the death of Enid Cox. I served with her in 305 Bn WRAC/TA. She was a respected and well liked RSM. After leaving the WRAC in 1963 I used to look forward to meeting her at the reunions and ATS Luncheons where she was popular and always surrounded by friends. Sometimes I was the only member from Hull, but I always got a welcome from Enid to join her and her sister.

Reunions will never be the same again for me.

I treasure the memories of the 1997 ATS' Luncheon. I was there with a friend and we stayed for the weekend at the Ground Hotel (Butlins) and who should we meet there but Enid who was on her own. This was unusual as she was usually at the Victory Club. We joined her and talked about Army life well into the night.



Enid Cox Blackpool 1997



We knew she was very ill but that night she showed no signs of it, she was her bright and cheerful self and dare I say it, her funny side too. We got up early the next morning to wave her off in a taxi and a promise to meet at the next reunion.

May I offer my sincere condolences to her sister as I do not know her sister's address. I hope to see her sister at Ipswich Barracks, York in August.

The enclosed photo is of Enid marching at Blackpool 1997.

Mrs M Kirby (W/32892 Sgt Redmore)  
119 Westcott Street  
Hull  
HU8 8LZ

The enclosed photograph was taken on recent visit to the Canal Zone, Egypt, organised by the Suez Veterans' Association.

Olive was a telephonist at GHQ telephone exchange, as I was. She was a friendly girl with a warm personality.



I would like relatives and friends to know that the Military cemeteries at Fayid and Moascou are so peaceful and green, and so well looked after. The Egyptian gardeners really care about them.

We had memorial services at both cemeteries, it was a very moving experience. I have happy memories of Fayid. I met my late husband Gerald Evans out there, he died in 1974. I was then W/350112 Pte Margaret Armstrong, known as Greta.

If anyone would like a copy of this photo, or of general views of the cemeteries, I'd be pleased to send one.

Margaret Evans  
36 Heathercroft Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk IP1 6QJ

Dear Editor

Despite the disappointment of not getting to Blackpool until the following day owing to the station being closed here in Crewe, I had such a lovely time especially whilst waiting in the queue for the church service. A voice with a quiet Scottish accent said 'you are not Jean are you?' What a lovely surprise meeting up again after 54yrs, when we were stationed together in Edinburgh. I was invited to join Rose and the ladies from the Glasgow Branch at Blackpool again last year and had a fantastic time. They were all so very nice and now I shall be meeting up with Rose and the girls again in June. I am looking forward to it very much.

Jean Webster  
35 Hulme street  
Crewe



*Rose Watt on the right of the photograph.  
Jean Webster on the left.*

Dear Letters

Is there anybody who reads the 'Lioness' who remembers me?

Called up April 1942, went to Fulford Barracks, York for 3 weeks training. Sent to Tetterhall College (Wolverhampton) on six weeks Clerical course. Posted to 'E' Coy Beds/Herts to B Area Eastern camp, worked at Brewery House Dunstable Beds clerical duties became full Sgt. Stayed there until demob February 1946 at Regents Park Barracks. Nickname in ATS was 'Muss' (muscles). Went back to my old trade until 1967. Changed to Civil Service, retired 1980.

Miss C Dorrell (W/154971 Sgt)  
12 Fairfield  
Darsham  
Saxmundham  
Suffolk LP17 3PY

Dear Lioness

In the last Lioness you published a letter referring to my telling the Nottingham Evening Post that the ATS were soldiers etc. Well out of the blue I received an airmail from Australia. It was from a Betty Simpson, an ex ATS, thanking me for standing up for the ATS and how pleased she was to have ex soldiers thinking highly of the ATS. It shows the reach of the Lioness.

W Court  
Marsh Acres  
High Hare  
Sloothby  
Alford  
Linc LN13 9NP  
and  
Betty Simpson  
19/8 Merope Mews  
Rockingham  
W. Australia 6168

Dear Madam

Thank you for the Lioness magazine No1 which I find most welcome. I enclose photograph of Corporal 'Billie' (Millie Haws). She was stationed on the guns in Hyde Park with me in 1941. We were formerly stationed in the 'Mayfair Court Hotel' (off Piccadilly) which was hit by a landmine and demolished. I have been a member of the ATS since 1940, February, I wish you success with the magazine and hope it gets full support.

Mrs Mary Foreman (Née Cunningham)  
18 Jericho Court  
Liverpool L17 5AY



Dear Editor

I was a member of the ATS Mobile Exhibition which travelled around the country in the Autumn of 1941 to give shows on how to plot enemy and friendly aircraft. It was done on a table laid out for this purpose. During the show we had a recording of an air raid and bombs exploding and guns firing.

I am still in touch with Jo Crampton who married a naval officer and who has lived in New Zealand for 53 years. The other girl from Fareham was Pte Edna Lawrence.

From the Lioness I recognised Jo Crampton at the right hand side of the photograph in the front row. I also recognise Subaltern Egleton who was with us throughout the tour.

I do hope this information will be of some use and more of that group will be in touch.

Mrs DA Judge (nee Tizzard)  
8 Hillbrow  
Letchworth  
Herts SG6 3 RA

Dear Editor

The reason I am sending this donation is because a couple of years ago whilst attending Wilma Armstrong's farewell party, I discovered that there were no trains leaving Dundee in time for me to catch my flight from Glasgow.

Later on that day Gladys Hudson presented me with some money collected from other members attending the party to pay for a taxi from Dundee to Glasgow.

I was very grateful for this and it has bothered me that I could not pay it back to them and then I thought what better way than donating it to the WRAC Association Benevolent Fund. It would then help someone else in need.

Please may I through the Lioness thank all those people who contributed to my fare.

Miss WK Pickard  
61 Water Splash Road  
Shepparton  
Middlesex  
TW17 0EE

Dear Editor

I have read the magazine from cover to cover searching in vain for a familiar name or face, but no luck.

However I was sent a copy of 2/97 in which Miss Doris Sayers (unfortunately deceased) was mentioned. She was our CSM (1st Somerset Coy ATS) at Warminster where we were attached to a Tank Training Unit.

In this issue Mrs J Huxtable enquires if anyone has a number lower than hers - W/404. My number was W/46? I joined the 1st Somerset Company ATS in Bath in September 1938. It

must have been one of the first companies formed as a lot of our numbers were in the forties.

Having been in Canada since 1949 I have lost touch with my ATS friends except two and we correspond regularly. It is wonderful to know that you have such a thriving organisation. Best wishes for the future.

Mrs Molly Donaldson (ATS W/46 Sgt M Francis)  
1560 Bush Street  
NANAIMO BC  
Canada

Dear Editor

May I say many thanks to Barbara Dante for her account of 'The Army Post Office 1939-1947' in the last issue. I found her article very interesting indeed.

Mrs M Rowling requested the date that HPD/RE (as it was then called) moved to Gorst Road. It was in the Spring of 1956, on Sunday, but I cannot remember the date. The late shift (SO111) had the job. Anyone have the exact date please? Margaret Grant may know.

I might add that the working conditions there were a great improvement compared to Raphael Street.

Mrs Maureen Brown  
(W/382419 Cpl. Merritt)  
4 Kennet Close  
Gosport  
Hants PO12 2DZ

Dear Lioness

In April 1941, I decided to join up. The fact that I was under age didn't seem to matter to the Army. I was tall for my age anyway.

Arriving at Glen Parva Barracks Leicester, just vacated by the men, we were the first women soldiers there. Meeting all the volunteers from all walks of life was an eye opener. On one side of me was a London prostitute, on the other was a Brigadier's daughter who was instantly put in charge of the hut!

Bob, a Commando, met me when he was home on leave. We married, and the 1997 anniversary of V.E. night should have been our golden wedding. How he would have enjoyed all the celebrations. Sadly not to be, but, on the British Legion parades I wear his medals with pride.

My sons and grandsons have all seen Army service and enjoyed it, agreeing with me that those years, and the friends you make are set apart. You never forget them, so many memories to keep.

Mrs Joan Frampton  
Ex LCpl Jex.  
W/69088  
Field Stores. R.A.O.C.  
Aldershot  
Hants.

Dear Editor

July 22nd, 1942, I was posted to Felsted, Essex, a day to remember as it was my twenty-first birthday. The billet was a hut in the grounds of the public school, my job was a shorthand/typist attached to 11 Corps HQ.

We had a very good social life, the men outnumbered the girls and then the Yanks arrived to construct the airfields. Claire, my special friend and I met two officers at a dance. She, being the prettiest got the handsome one I got John. He was not bad-looking though and had a kind thoughtful nature. He felt sorry for us having to eat Army food and each week brought me chocolate, peanuts, cigarettes and American magazines. He took me out to dinner in Braintree once a week, I might add, the food was almost as bad as the mess but I never had the courage to tell him.

I went on a P.E. course to Stirling and he presented me with a box of goodies to take on the train. On my return to Felsted we never met again and I presumed he had turned his attention elsewhere.

Over the last twenty odd years my husband and I have visited the USA, and, on his instigation, we have tried to locate John by looking in telephone directories, approaching Army Records and leaving messages at veterans' posts, all to no avail. Then one evening we caught a TV programme about a women trying to trace fathers for their offspring. After sending off a fee I received a print out of the

name Bartmess in every State. My intention was to write off in turn but to my great surprise the first one on the list turned out to be John confessing that he must be the one as he had my name and service number in his address book.

In 1993 a big celebration was being held at the US Memorial in Cambridge so we invited John and his wife, Wilma, to come for a visit. He reply was that he had not planned to visit England but that we should visit them in Cincinnati.

It was our intention to find a nearby motel but he insisted we stay in his house and after two such requests we could hardly refuse. I was quite apprehensive as our wartime encounter had been so brief.

He was instantly recognisable but fifty years had left their mark. He probably had the same thought.

We stayed a week, had a hilarious time, they both said they wished we could have stayed longer but we had already planned a cross country trip. Wilma confessed that she too had been very apprehensive.

John told me he had been posted to Europe while I was away. The lipstick he had requested his mother to send for me was given to a French girl.

I then knew why he still had his address book for he never threw anything away.

W/128587 Madeleine Croll nee Rees.



W/128587 Madeleine Croll nee Rees.

Dear Editor

May we say thank you to Edith Francis, for her marshalling of the ATS/WRAC column at Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday.

She had a thankless task but managed to keep her humour and patience intact and most of us there appreciated her efforts.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lilian Hollis  
(Hon sec)  
3 Parklands Ave  
Groby  
Leics  
LE6 0BL

On Behalf of Leicester Members

Dear Mrs White

Sue Dash (ex WRAC) and I (ex ATS) represented this Branch at the Cenotaph on Sunday, 9th November. Having spent the last 17 years trying to emphasise there is no difference between the ATS and WRAC just a change of designation, we were shattered to be told that I was to march in the front and Sue was to march towards the back. This we refused to do and trust it will not be encouraged.

We also disagreed with the positioning of those in green suits and berets and those in civilian clothes. While the latter are most welcome surely it would be preferable for them to march in the centre of the contingent and not be shown as an almost separate group.

One further suggestion - an RSM rapidly produced order out of chaos following our church service in Blackpool in April. Would it be possible to persuade her to officiate at the annual parade at the Cenotaph please?

We really are grateful for the effort that has been involved in persuading the RBL to permit us to march as a separate contingent but above are just points we would like considered for the future.

Yours sincerely  
Mrs Eileen Kent  
Branch Chairman

#### Editors Note

This year all members of the ATS and WRAC will march under the same banner, which will read QMAAC, ATS, WRAC.

Dear Editor

May I reply to Mrs Barbara Castell, of Groby, Leicester, and give her, and others, the reason for the anonymity of my letter last year. I hope that it would spark off a discussion about a uniformity of appearance, or not, at the Remembrance Day Service in London.

It certainly did that when we all met in Blackpool. However I wanted the discussion to be completely objective, unclouded by Branch names or personalities. In that way I felt everyone could say exactly what they felt, with no fear of giving offence.

We, in Plymouth Branch, pride ourselves on our smart appearance at any formal service occasions, and the Cenotaph Service is the occasion of the year. After all, ladies, I asked only for the green beret, not the 'full monty!!!'

Despite the rainwear last year, friends who watched tell me that we presented an overall 'green' impact as we marched up Whitehall. So thank you to all who helped to achieve that.

Till we meet again!

Betty Mitchell  
Plymouth Branch  
50 Revell Park Road  
Plympton  
Plymouth PL7 4EL

Tel 01752 348632

Dear Editor

This photograph shows Number 3 Squad Special Operators Training Centre on the Isle of Man around 1944. I am the Sgt in the centre, Hazel Elvey.

Aren't they a jolly lot?

Mrs H Prebble (nee Elvey)  
Castle View  
Walton Down  
Clevedon  
Somerset



Dear Mrs White

As I was browsing through the latest Lioness (before I really started from the beginning - I always enjoy reading every word), I noticed the photograph of the Weymouth and Portland branches 40 Anniversary celebration. I was amazed to see a member with the same Christian name as mine. I wonder if their Chairman, Mrs Necia Trent has ever come across any more Necia's - I haven't and I have celebrated my golden wedding.

Yours Sincerely

Necia N Wolfe.

Dear Editor

In April 1942 I was sent from Cameron Barracks to RAOC Stocktaking Dept M.T. Spares Depot, Limfin Lane, Derby. The first billet was the Orphanage, Ashboume Road then Normanton Barracks. At the Orphanage I was in a concert party. One of the soldiers from the depot wrote a song which we had great fun singing. Does anyone out there remember?

I am still in touch with three who were in the concert party. Ssgt Margaret Ellison now Thompson (Repton Derbyshire), Sgt Nan Livie now Sime (Carnoustie) and Cpl Margaret Petrie now Matthews (Aberdeen).

I enjoy the monthly meetings with Fife and Tayside Branch in British Legion Hall, Perth and getting my copy of the Lioness.

Yours sincerely

Helen Thomson  
16 Castmor  
Scone  
Perth  
Scotland PH2 6NH

Dear Editor

At the recent Association AGM in London I noticed that not only were the Area Chairman, V/Chairman and Area Secretary present but ALL Branches Wales and the West were represented.

PDF Compressor Free Version

Can we have full marks for attendance?

Yours Sincerely

Edith Francis  
Area Secretary.

Dear Editor

It is with certain sadness that I find myself writing to your magazine. You see, I am the daughter of one of those brave gallant and amazing ladies that served with the ATS during the war - Mrs Joan Darroch (née Kemp) - who tragically died in late February of this year. My mother spoke often of the war years and her time in the ATS, she would frequently regale her family with stories both amusing and sad and I could listen to her anecdotes for hours. She passed away just a few days short of her fifty third wedding anniversary leaving an unfillable void in all of our lives.

She had attended the reunion in York last year, despite



Laura on Left  
Joan on Right

the fact that she had been quite ill and I know she enjoyed the time immensely, meeting up with many other ladies, although unfortunately, never finding anyone she knew or had served with. I have enclosed a photograph of my mother with her friend Laura, with whom sadly, she'd lost touch and could never manage to locate her whereabouts. If anyone should recognise her, I'd be delighted to hear from them.

Finally, may I congratulate you on the production of this magazine, giving many opportunities to maintain contact and share their wartime experiences. Above all, I would urge all those ex serving members to tell their stories to their children and grandchildren - don't let those times be forgotten.

Yours Sincerely

Fiona Wyper  
British Aerospace Plc  
Lotus Compound Villa 56  
PO Box 98  
Dhahran 31932  
Saudi Arabia

Dear Editor

#### Re:Troopship 'Khedive Ismail'

In Lioness No1/98 you published a request from Mr RV France for any information concerning the Troopship 'Khedive Ismail'. I have now written to this gentleman and given him such information as I have on the incident.

I was stationed in Kenya at the time with the ATS, but heard nothing of the sinking. Although the troops concerned were stationed in Kenya and sailed from Mombasa en route to Colombo in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) military censorship kept us in the dark.

The story of the Khedive Ismail is particularly poignant. She sailed from Mombasa carrying troops from 11th (East Africa) Division bound for Burma, together with 86 young service women, WRNS, locally enlisted Women's Transport Services (FANY) and Army Nurses.

The Khedive Ismail formed part of a five-ship convoy when she was attacked in the Indian Ocean by a Japanese submarine on the 12th February 1944. The submarine fired four torpedoes, two of which hit the Khedive Ismail. The boiler-room exploded and the side of the ship was ripped apart. She sank within two minutes.

In all, a total of 1,297 souls were lost, a disaster greater than the loss of the Titanic. The few survivors including nine service women and 113 Askari gunners (from 301 Field Regiment, East Africa Artillery). Even more tragic, the captain of one of the destroyer escort was compelled to drop depth charges as men and women struggled in shark-infested waters for several hours. The Japanese submarine was forced to the surface and later sunk by torpedoes.

Because of the security blackout, records of the subsequent Court of Inquiry were sealed for 40 years. The wireless operators who learned of the sinking at the time were ordered not to talk about it. Two of those wireless operators, Sheila Robinson and Sheila Hammet, worked in the wireless room in the days when the signals were received. They were determined the memory of the disaster should not go unrecognised. So after a space of some 50 years a service of dedication and remembrance was held in the WRNS' church of St Mary Le Strand, London.

I am indebted for information on the Khedive Ismail to Doreen Skinner (née Chorley), ex ATS, a member of our ATS (East Africa) Clerical Group Association who sent us an account from her local newspaper. Also to Brigadier Malcolm Page who recalled the disaster in his book 'The Story of The King's African Rifles' (1998).

On an earlier personal experience, the convoy I sailed on in November/December en route to Kenya was dive - bombed and strafed by gunfire on two occasions in the Mediterranean. Again in the Indian Ocean we were trailed, unsuccessfully, by submarine. Our troopship the 'Arundel Castle' and all of us, 250 ATS, arrived in Mombasa harbour on the 19th December 1943, one month and four days since leaving UK.

Yours Sincerely

G Fahy

Lt Col M G Fahy MBIM  
Eastwell  
38 Blackmore Road  
Malvern  
Worcs WR14 1QT

Tel 0684 561868

Dear Editor

I read with interest, Lioness No1/ 98, the report on the WRAC Luncheon Club and of course wish them well. A thought crossed my mind - are all these good ladies active members of their local branches of the WRAC Association? If not, why not? I can of course only speak from local knowledge, but it is a fact that the branches within London Group of the Association are predominantly ATS. Unlike the TV advert for 'Orange' - "The future is bright", I feel it is not for the Association. We ATS have served our three score years and ten, we will continue to carry on as long as possible.

Without a doubt we do need younger WRAC members to come forward and take over from us in the Branches while there is still something to pass on. I live in hope!

Yours Sincerely

Alma G Stride

Dear Editor

I read with enormous interest the letter to the Editor concerning a posting to Cairo, for at intervals over the years, I too had wondered what had become of Kasr-el-Nil Barracks. After the D Day landings, I volunteered to go to France, so naturally was posted to the Middle East.

I too lived in one of those flats. There were six to a flat (three to a room), and each morning complete silence reigned until we had got ourselves over to the mess. We had a rota as to whose turn it was first in the bathroom.

Which flat it was I do not now recall, but at the end of the row there was a French hairdresser, and it was there I first discovered the 'backwash' system of shampooing hair.

The mess was awful, and we lived on a diet of tea and water melon, trying not to look at the cockroaches, but fortunately we all had lots of boyfriends and eating out was the norm.

In those days I was W/112168 Pte Legg W, attached to Movement Control at GHQ, and in spite of my best endeavours I was always caught out by the sunset call in the middle of the barracks square!

You have certainly brought back memories - of shared adventures - remember the Cairo trams/ shared civilian clothing (illegal of course); picnics in the desert, dinner at Mena House, Luxor on leave, and I was at Suez when the prisoners of war came back from Japan.

That I do not forget. There we were - all hot and dusty and sticky, with our clothing store all ready when the first lady came through. She was lovely; elegant and slim and dressed in black. I have often wondered who she was. She was put through as a proud gesture of course, but the men - how can one ever forget those walking skeletons? We only saw the fitter cases for others could not come off the Hospital ships.

Unlike you, I have never been back to Cairo. There is a certain irony in the fact that I did not know the Hilton Hotel was built on the Kasr el Nil site, as for many years I worked for the Vice Chairman of the company which owns the group!

Mrs Winifred Garner (née Legg)  
27 Tennyson Avenue  
Wanstead  
London E11 2QN

## CAPTION COMPETITION

"I'm sure Fiona said the Nit Nurse was coming next week"

Won by Ann Deakin  
01785 249992

# Letters from Abroad

## ATS Reunion Niagara Falls Canada.

My sister and I travelled the long trip from Wonder Lake Illinois USA to Chicago and then changed trains via Buffalo, New York to Depew, Canada. We went by train to see more of the country.

We were met at Depew by an ex Navy man called Fred Skinner who kindly volunteered to look after us. As we left the train he asked if we were the ATS girls, claimed our luggage and escorted us through customs to his car to the home of Marie Chamberlain who gave us breakfast and insisted we have a rest until our hotel room was ready.

Fred and Marie's husband Ivor later took us to the Ramada Hotel to get settled in for the reunion. It was situated in Niagara Falls and registration was at 2.30pm and a wonderful craft show had been set up by the members.

On Saturday after breakfast we had the business meeting and then were free to sight see. We were taken around by the local Navy club members who were so kind to us.

Saturday evening began with cocktails. The blessing was given by the Chaplain of the Navy club and then we had a dinner. There was singing and dancing afterwards and a lot of reminiscing took place. We met a young lady who came from the same town as us in UK - Walsall Staffordshire. Her name was Gladys Buswell who now lives in Centralia Ontario.

Sunday breakfast was served followed by our saying our goodbyes until we meet again next year. Over 100 girls had attended from all parts of Canada and four of us from USA. We had a grand time and would like to thank our hostesses Marie Chamberlain and Rose Atkinson for being Chair persons. They did a wonderful job and we really appreciated all their hard work. Also a big thank you to the Navy Boys.

Harriet Wilsom (459 Battery 124 Regt HAA)  
4206 E Wonder Lake Drive  
Wonder Lake  
Illinois 60097-8332  
USA



ATS Reunion September 1997  
Niagara Falls

Marie Chamberlain with Fred Skinner and Ivor Chamberlain

## News From Canada

I really enjoy Lioness, though it makes me wish I was 18 again and could be back in the Army again. Anyway I am in the next best thing, the Corps of Commissionaires so I am still in uniform.

I have enclosed a picture of myself carrying the Corps Flag in the Battle of Britain Parade last September here in Vancouver.

My sister (Mrs Elsie Carter) and I really enjoyed ourselves at the Blackpool reunion. Whilst there I mentioned that I was interested in starting a branch of the Association here in Canada. Please contact me if anyone out there is interested.

Hilda Campbell (WRAC R Sigs)  
14085 72nd Avenue  
Surrey BC  
Canada V3W 2P7



Hilda Campbell  
Battle of Britain Parade.

## TROOPS LEARN TO FAINT

Canadian Troops have been sent an official memorandum telling them how to faint without losing control of themselves.

The order says;

The soldier must turn his body 45%, squat down, roll to the left and retain control of his weapon.

To avoid personal injury or damage to the weapon.

Soldiers who faint in a slovenly way will be reprimanded.

Excerpt From The Star August 17 1976  
From Hilda Campbell  
14085 72nd Avenue  
Surrey BC  
Canada.

## Memories From Australia

I was astonished to say the least, when turning to page 11. I was one of the ATS Guard of Honour for the late Queen Mary. I served in 451 Hy(M) (AA)BTY RA. After joining up at 100 George Street, then to Ayrton - on - again to Burrowhead, eventually to Cribbs Causeway, Byttenbury, Westbury - on Trim - Bristol where we were in action before the male Bty moved out. Our HQ 133 Regt was in Woodbine House. The other side of Clifton Suspension Bridge was where all the girls from section 2 were. To name a few, Renie Hill, Kath Hearn, Sadie McGibbon nee Crook, Elsie Patterson (from Gala) Mina and Lily Murray (twins), Janet Fleming, Peggy Clark (née Watson), Ginger Setchell, Mickey Kemp, Edith Stovell, Ray Fimister, Winnie Moss, Mavis Bird, Paddy Stack, Stella Huntley, Nan Ironside, Mrs Priecy (J.C.), Miss Watson (Sub) and Miss Gamble (Sub), (not forgetting - Mushroom) and many others.

Over the years from July 6th 1941 to March 1946 I made many friends. Just recently I had several phone conversations with Vee Robinson, through her I am now also a member of the RAA.

I look forward to the next Lioness.

Emily (Bunty) Jones  
Nee Beattie  
W/72949  
Caerlee House  
5/1 King Street  
Warrawong  
NSW 2502  
Australia

## On Parade With Royalty

It was lovely to read a letter about something in which I was involved. The Queen's visit to Newbattle Abbey, Dalkeith. I remember it well. It was during an Intermediate P.T. Instructor training course from 30 August to 22 September 1944.

We were told that an extremely important visitor was coming, and we were to give a P.T. display, to make sure that we were clean, tidy and smart, although how one could look smart in the orange and brown P.T. issue, I will never know!!

The previous evening, we discussed, tossed it around and wondered who it would be, concluding that it had to be 'Royalty'.

I was on the front row. Queen Elizabeth was wearing a very elegant pale dove grey outfit, with most beautiful soft leather court shoes, matching her garments exactly. Princess Elizabeth in blue with the prettiest hat I have ever seen, it was all pastel coloured flowers.

I am enclosing a photograph of myself, perhaps someone will remember me. Draughtswomen, part time P.T.I., later an education instructor (AMS), finally a recruiting Sergeant.

Marjorie Phillips (nee Ailion)  
18 Haldane Street  
Elizabeth Downs  
South Australia 5113



*Marjorie Phillips née Ailion*

## Romance Blossoms In Brussels

Service in the ATS was not only about duty rosters and camaraderie, romance also loomed large in those years. There were as many stories as there were brides. Not all of those war time weddings took place in picturesque village churches with friends and families present.

At the end of the War my cousin Nora married. She was a refugee from Nazi oppression and Nora and her family fled from their native Vienna to Brussels in 1938. Soon after Hitler invaded the Low Countries persecution began anew. In 1942 the little family went into hiding to escape deportation to the 'camps'. For almost three years Nora and her parents and younger sister holed up in two small basement rooms. The girls never saw daylight save the rays that filtered through tightly closed shutters on a bright day.

When Brussels was liberated towards the end of the war, the family emerged from their hiding place. Almost immediately Nora was snapped up by a young Canadian soldier who had helped in the city's liberation. The bride's dress was faded and patched and the cake was made from ration coupons by the village from here and there. Last year the happy couple celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary in Montreal.

Frances Nunnally  
7139 Cherokee Road  
Richmond VA 23225

### **E Mail To Houston**

Mrs Kathleen E Storm a member of the Association has sent her E Mail address for anyone who has a computer and would like to get in touch.

K - storm@1x.netcom.com.

5500Grand Lake Street  
HOUSTON  
Texas 77081

### **Hot Bedding In Huddersfield**

Having been in the WRAC Association for donkey's years, and scouring every copy of the 'Lioness' from cover to cover, and taking a magnifying glass to every picture of re-unions, I have never found anything about anybody I knew, or with whom I served, until the last one (No1 1998). Sadly it was in the obituary column. Lt Col Joan Godolphin MBE. Joan and I did our basic training together for the ATS in the dark days of 1939, at Zetland Street Huddersfield Drill Hall. I never know where Joan came from as we hadn't time for small talk, but I should think that she had a job in Huddersfield. She was one of nicest people I ever met in my life and if every other Officer and NCO had been like Joan, I would have had a much happier war! When the numbers came through, they were mostly 99, mine was 9951 but I believe there were a couple of 7's. When stripes came through most of us got them, I got 2, although I had no idea what they were for, or even that we got more pay. We were really green or at least I was! The volunteers got 8.4d per week, sub leaders (Cpl) 11.8d and leaders (Sgt) 14.4d all found?

The first rise we got was for 5'd per week for cleaning materials, shoe polish and silvo. We went to camp in July to KOYLIS at Strensall Barracks near York. Joan had jumped from volunteer to CSM all in one go and a good one she proved to be. We were allowed out into York on the Saturday night with instructions to be at York Minster Cathedral about 10pm for the last bus to camp. There seemed to be hundreds of women in

khaki. There were two who had a whale of a time, jackets unbuttoned, ties undone, caps on the back of their heads, singing and roaring drunk. The MP's marched them off, ostensibly to be shot!

We were sent to Otley showground about 30 miles from Huddersfield. We were now called the 3rd West Riding Platoon and all we did for days was walk around getting to know everyone and making jugs of tea. We ate at the camp and the mail wagon took us into Otley to our billet at night. I was one of about 6 who went into a common lodging house. We wondered why our beds were always warm. We discovered we were sharing beds with men lodgers who went to work on the night shift. We got fleas! Apparently the Army was only paying one penny per person per night. Next we were taken to an empty new house which the Army had commandeered, beside the camp.

It had no electricity or blackouts, but it had 2 fireplaces downstairs, so we slept 4 to a room and made a big fire, covering the windows with Army blankets. We just undressed and got into our camp beds, which we had to buy ourselves. We brushed our buttons and shoes in bed. A man from the camp brought us coal for the fire each day.

Eventually we got jobs, I was cooking for the Sergeants Mess, and my cookhouse was a little wooden affair about 3x3 yards square, with no windows or doors, no floor, only duckboards. The door came later but the window never came. The stores was a marquee and my mate worked there. She was fetched out of bed one night to help rescue the Quartermasters stores, which the wind had blown down. There really was ham mixed up in the jam that night as well as mixed up in the sauces and pickles. Eventually we had to have duckboards for paths all over the camp as the river was only 2 fields away and when it overflowed the camp was waterlogged. I have never been able to come to any of the re-unions as I live in Australia now, and have done for the last 43 years and it is too expensive. I am planning to come to the unveiling of the memorial to the women who went to war. I am disabled now and my daughter will be coming with me. Isn't it a pity nobody thought of this memorial years ago? Half the girls have died, and the others, like myself are on their last legs, or I should say I have one good leg left, the other having been broken, is a liability. Those who have gone won't know how they were appreciated.

The bugle has sounded, you've answered the call  
To that last big parade in the sky  
When you meet with our comrades, just tell them hello  
And say we'll be there bye and bye  
Joan, my good friend, I am proud to have known you.

Mollie Davies (née Wilkinson)  
1/1 Buchanan Street  
CARLTON 2218  
Australia

# Poets Corner

## It Used To Be Good

PDF Compressor Free Version

We met and we married a long time ago.  
We worked for long hours when wages were low.  
No TV, no wireless, no bath - times were hard.  
Just cold water tap and a walk up the yard.  
No holidays abroad, no posh carpets on floors.  
But we had coal on the fire and we didn't lock doors.

Our children arrived, no 'pill' in those days,  
And we brought them up without any State Aid,  
They were quite safe to go and play in the park,  
Then, old folks could go for a walk after dark.

No valium, no drugs and no 'LSD'  
We cured most of our ills with a good cup of tea,  
But if you were sick, you were treated at once -  
Not 'Fill up a form and come back in six months.'  
No vandals, no muggings, there was nothing to rob,  
And we were quite rich with a couple of bob.

People were happier in those far-off days,  
Kinder and caring in so many ways.  
Milkmen and paper boys used to whistle and sing.  
A night at the pictures was our one mad fling.

We all get our share of troubles and strife,  
And we just have to face it; that's the pattern of life,  
I remember the blessings, our home and our love,  
And that we shared them together.  
I thank God above.



## The Service Is Not What It Was.

By Barbara Reeves.

In my days in the ranks  
We'd no cash in the banks,  
The pay was no more than a pittance:

Now each little dolly  
Can draw the big lolly,  
A big spender regardless of gender.

Our buttons we polished  
(till brass was abolished)  
On tunics of rough Khaki serge.

Now it's camouflage suits  
And big comfy boots,  
They look both efficient and smart,

Down on the square  
We would hate, I declare  
P.T. in just vests and our knickers.

I have heard it said  
Now they spring out of bed  
Romp through an assault course before breakfast.

If a girl lost her head  
And the chap wouldn't wed  
The disgrace you would never believe.

Now it's pregnancy leave,  
And there's no chance to grieve,  
And she's back on the job within weeks.

Girls are in the front line  
And they don't undermine  
The work of their male counterparts.

They are no stranger  
To places of danger  
(Not even the back streets of town.)

So here's to the lassies  
Who've taken our places,  
Good luck to you all,  
The short and the tall,  
And here's to the next generation.



## An Awful Warning!

This is the tale of Sally Tupp  
Who failed to put the blackouts up  
Forgetting that the Hun might be  
Somewhere in the Vicin-ity!

But watchful Jerry saw the light  
and dropped a bomb on Sal one night  
Now bandaged in the CRS  
Sal's showing signs of great distress

Now take the case of Tilly Toss  
As good an AT as ever was  
Who never passed a window by  
When blackout time was drawing high  
But earned her comrades admiration  
By thorough blackout preparation.

The moral of my little rhyme  
Is see the job is done in time  
And do not be like Sally Tupp  
Get em ruddy blackouts up!

B Hallam (née Carstairs) 447 Bty AA  
Bermerdene Road  
Whitley Bay





### ATS CHORUS

PDF Compressor Free Version

Don't take away the ATS, you'll need them bye and bye,  
Every girl of military age is ready to do or die,  
Don't take away the ATS, they come next to the Navy on  
the sea,

So if you take away the ATS  
Where will the Empire be Cor Blimey where will the  
Empire be.

Don't take away the ATS they all are needed for  
Putting pep into the little jobs we do in the Ordnance  
Corps.

And if you take away the ATS, there'll be no Monday  
evenings on the spree,

So if you take away the ATS  
Where will the poor lads be Cor Blimey where will the poor  
lads be.

Don't take away the darned P.T., now lift those knees up  
high,  
It will help your dinner to digest, if you don't collapse or  
die,

No don't take away the darned P.T., it is helping us to face  
the Nazi foe,

And if you take away the old P.T.,  
Where would our figures go Cor Blimey, where would our  
figures go.

Don't take away the Depot Clerks, you need some snappy  
girls,  
Everyone a-pushin' of the pen, along with our soldier pals,  
So if you take away the Depot Clerks from Provision and  
the P.B.

I think you really must with me agree,  
Where would the Depot be Cor Blimey, Where would the  
Depot be.

Don't take away the ATS if you want to win this war,  
We're all here to do our very best, then its home sweet  
home once more.

And if you take away the ATS, you'll have Adolf Hitler  
calling round to tea,

So if you take away the ATS  
Where will old England be, Cor Blimey, where will old  
England be.



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# Naafinews

## The Everest Marathon 1997

Major Kathie Kneel AGO (EES)

Snowflakes, forming dark shadows through the translucent light on the side of the tent, confirmed the worst. The Everest Marathon would be run this year in a blizzard of snow, with the already difficult paths icy and treacherous. At 17,000 feet, the combination of the altitude, the constant dehydration and race nerves had meant that sleep for all 74 runners had been fitful at best. We were camped at Gorak Shep at the foot of Kala Patar slightly higher than Everest Base Camp which lay to our east at the base of the notorious Khumbu Glacier. There is nothing at Gorak Shep save two tea houses and the expanse of moraine and glacial debris; the end of the track for anyone undertaking the Everest Trek and the beginning of the mountaineering routes up Everest.

While the Sherpas prepared breakfast in gloriously jovial and noisy fashion, it was time for all competitors to prepare themselves for the task in hand; 26 miles of tough unforgiving terrain would have been covered by all of us before the sun set. It had taken 3 weeks to walk up from the end of the tarmac road at Jiri to the high altitude staging post at Namche Bazaar, 14,200ft and the eventual finish of the Everest Marathon. Trekking days had been interspersed with 'rest' days in order that all runners acclimatise effectively. The term 'rest' was largely a misnomer. Rest days were in fact running days for most runners and far from restful!

As the Sherpas brought morning tea to the frozen, I contemplated as so often is the case in Nepal the tremendous dichotomy of our positions. While we undertook one day's worth of pain, pitting ourselves against the phenomenal terrain, for them the hardship is their way of life which they bear daily without complaints; indeed their good nature makes their sacrifice harder to accept. For the past 3 weeks each group had been allocated 40 porters and sherpas to carry the entire kitchen, burners, pots and pans, all the food, all the tents and camping equipment, all the medical supplies together with most of the runners' personal kit. The list was endless as the line of sherpas strung out across the terraced trails.

The day before the race all runners had to pass a medical before the final ascent to the start line. Under leaden skies, in a field full of grazing yaks, doctors armed with stethoscopes checked runners' lungs for fluid and tested balance, making sure that all had acclimatised effectively and were race fit. As a result, 15 of the 89 runners dropped out only 3 miles before the start line. Included were two disappointed Gurkhas who had not acclimatised properly and were to start at the 4.3 mile mark which is 500m before the start line.

At 0650hrs it was time to leave the warmth of the tents. In true military style we were required to 'number off' on the start line. Shivering in lycra, the international field of runners called out their numbers and started whistle screaming into the freezing air. The 1997 Everest marathon was underway. The difficulty in breathing the oxygen thin air was compounded by the undulating, rock terrain and at one point a continual ascent of more than 1100ft that reduced even the elite runners to a fast walk.

An ice covered uphill section below Tengboche monastery plagued everyone at the half way point, causing runners to slip backwards. Dick Opsahl, a 65 year old man from New York broke a rib sliding on the ice. He finished in 9 hours 37 minutes. Doctors were posted at three mile checkpoints and as a necessity runners all raced with bivvy kit. As a precaution, all runners had attended a seminar on Altitude Mountain sickness AMS, outside the Himalayan mountain rescue post at 14,000ft.

For the Everest race average marathon times are usually nearly double what runners are accustomed to clocking for the 26.2 mile distance. Hari Rokaya, a Nepali farmer and Olympic marathon runner, sacrificed all water stops throughout the race in an attempt to break the record. He won the race in a time of 4 hours 15 minutes and 29 seconds to the delight of the 2 Gurkha Teams competing and the Nepali onlookers. One Gurkha team from 69 Sqn, Maidstone, led by Maj David Caulfield had travelled out from the UK to race and the other team led by Maj Chris Davies had been training in Kathmandu.

Anne Stentiford smashed the women's record in a time of 5 hours 16 minutes. Considering the conditions, this as a remarkable feat. She holds the World record for Bob Graham Fell Race and is renowned in UK fell running circles. As diverse as the nationalities are the motives which each runner has for competing in such an extreme event. Several competitors had raised £20,000 in sponsorship and resting on them completing the event for charities such as Water Aid. The first British Gurkha Dilip Rai, came in a time of 5 hours 8 minutes followed by the first lady, the Gurkha Rajendra Kumar Rai and Changrahang Rai in 5 hours 28 and 5 Hours 45 respectively.

John Gluckman, 46, a dairy farmer and mountaineer from New Zealand entered the race after successfully reaching the summit of Mount Everest four years ago with his friend and guide Rob Hall. Gluckman had mixed emotions upon returning to the world's highest peak as Hall died during a disastrous climb in May 96 and his body remains on the mountain.

The military presence at the marathon was impressive this year. Maj Caulfield finished in a time of 6 hours 8 minutes just in front of Ssgt Charlie Charalambous, 20Tpt Regt in 32nd place just in front of me in 6 hrs 33 and the Third lady position. Cpl Nick Guest RE came in 38th position despite chronic cramps. Followed by 4 other Gurkhas. Lt Col McCurdie RAMC provided medical backup before the race and led a walking safety cordon to follow the runners off icy wastelands.

All runners would probably agree that it is the uniqueness of this race which make it stand alone among other marathon events; the raw beauty of the terrain and the lasting friendships made with other runners. With sponsorships from the AG Corps included, I was able to raise £520. All competitors aim to beat the target figure of £60,000 to continue to support the Medical and Dental facilities which have been established over the years by the Everest Marathon Fund. It is in this small way that the race attempts to give back something to a people who are renowned for their unquestioning generosity and spirit and without whom the event would not be possible.

**My Recollections Of The 1948 Olympic Games**  
by  
**Audrey Mitchell (née Williamson)**

As an Olympian I have many memories of the London Olympic Games, especially so this year when unbelievably it is 50 years since I competed at Wembley and won a silver medal in the 200 metres, second to Fanny Blankers-Koen, of Holland.

The British Olympic Association plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the staging of the 1948 Olympic Games on Wednesday 29th July, 50 years to the day since the 1948 Opening Ceremony. The BOA will host a relaxed buffet style luncheon and include 1948 memorabilia, a screening of the official 1948 Olympic film and re-enactment of the protocol. I will be attending the celebrations. The staging of the Olympic Games in London so soon after the war was in itself a cause for celebration in the economic climate of the time.

The London Games were a magnificent testimonial to the British people's belief that sport was an integral part of society - both national and international - and that now World War II was out of the way, sporting life should resume as quickly as possible. Consequently, despite all our problems the un-held XIII Games allocated to London for 1944 became the XIV Games of 1948.

I had played a lot of games at school but we did not have athletics or a sports day. I joined the ATS immediately on leaving school on 29 September 1944 the day after my 18th birthday. After an initial PT course I was posted to HQ South Midland District in Oxford as a full time Corporal PTI. I first competed in an athletics meeting in 1945, to set an example as a PT Instructor and to encourage other girls to enter the District meeting.

I continued to compete successfully at Command and Army Championships in the 100 yards and relay events. I was first spotted by the Women's Amateur Athletics Association at the Women's Triangular Athletics Meeting (ie Combined Services) V. Combined Universities V. Southern Counties W.A.A.A. in September 1947 as I had beaten an international athlete in the 100 metres. In December 1947,



*On Your Marks*

as Supervising Officer PT/ATS at HQ North Midland District, I was selected as an Olympic possible for the 100m and 400m relay. Life then became exciting. I was posted in April 1948 to HQ Western Command, Chester as Staff Officer PT/ATS, and promoted to junior commander.

Unlike today's professional athletes, I had to fit in my training sometimes before breakfast running round the Chester Racecourse which lay just below the ATS Officers Mess! None of the modern tartan tracks; not even cinder tracks in Western command.



*Jnr Commander Audrey Williams 723. Almost there*

But barely four weeks before final selections were to be made, I was sent for intensive training to the Army school of PT (ASPT), Aldershot with all its facilities including a six-lane cinder track at the Military Stadium and lots of open green spaces where I could train with other Army athletes. Most important of all, Captain Harry Harbin APTC was asked to coach me; he was an experienced athletics coach, an instructor at the ASPT and a D Day Veteran. Not only did he give a great deal of his time to my training schedule but he introduced me to, and designed my own starting blocks, quite an innovation in those days the alternative was a trowel! To him I owe a deep debt of gratitude and to the ASPT for the excellent facilities. Looking back I was very single-minded, enthusiastic and focussed but I was not too keen on jogging more than once around the track - 440 yards! The marathon would not have been for me! Having said that I was an all round sportswoman and played most games at Army/Command level so I was very fit.

The final selection for the Women's team was made after the WAAA Championships at White City on 26 June 1948 when I was chosen for the 200m and 400m relay. Harry had recommended that I should try the 200m; I had never competed in a 200m event until a few weeks before when I had shown promise over the longer distance. I was to report to Team HQ in London for the Olympics on 27 July.

Once selected we had fittings for the uniform at Bourne and Hollingsworth in Oxford Street ie a white dress, navy jacket and white beret. We had to provide our own white shoes (with medium heels), stockings, a white slip etc out of our coupons entitlement - no extra coupons were allowed. We were sent red and blue ribbon and an extra union jack to stitch on a sleeveless white cotton vest which we had to sew ourselves and red and blue ribbon to stitch on black shorts which we had to provide to specific measurements ie not too short - a far cry from today's lycra all-in-one leotards. We also had to buy our own spikes. A navy track suit was provided - not waterproof!

There was no Olympic village for female athletes; the men were at RAF Uxbridge and other national teams were accommodated in Richmond Park (where I was in 1950-51 with 12 Bn). The women of the GB team were quartered with Australians and New Zealanders at the school of Domestic Science, 53-54 Eccleston Square SW1. We had to make our own transport arrangements to Wembley (on the underground people tended to stare at my starting blocks) except on the day we were competing when we were collected by car. We could also request a special breakfast on those days. We were amazed to see the Australians tucking into steaks which they had brought with them by sea (5-6 weeks voyage). I chose a boiled egg but it did not stay down! I shared a room with Elspeth Whyte, a London University student, who was in the Discus and putting the shot with Bevis Reid (Shergold) see Lioness No 1 of 1998 page 47.

I remember the freebies on my bed - a Ramer sponge and Ovaltine (or were they horlicks?) Tablets, a far cry from the Olympic hand outs of today; the sponge was used to good effect at the opening ceremony in heat-wave conditions, when boy scouts holding national banners were passing out!

I was very diet conscious and was lucky to be on heavy duty rations (which included extra milk) whilst attached to the Army School of PT. Drugs.....I had never heard of them! I remember collecting food parcels from the amateur Athletics Association office in Chancery Lane sent from Australia and Canada to supplement our 1948 rations! Mine included evaporated milk, salmon, sliced beef, pure cane sugar and chocolate milk concentrate. Nowadays of course 'elite' athletes have dieticians, physiotherapists, coaches, fitness trainers, managers, agents, plus the opportunity to train at altitude and in the sunshine in Australia, South Africa, America etc during the British winter.

The opening ceremony was held at Wembley on Thursday 29 July and all team officials and competitors were invited to take part in the March past which is a solemn and integral part of the games; we all had to be dressed in the 'official uniform'. Greece was by tradition the first team to enter the stadium, then 57 countries in alphabetical order and last, as the host Nation, Great Britain. 6000 competitors in all. We received a tumultuous reception from the packed stadium. HM King George VI took the salute and declared the Games of the XIV Olympiad open.

The women's 200m heats were on Thursday 5 August; this event was included in the Olympics for the first time. In the warming up arena outside the stadium, I remember seeing Chief Commander Lady Bowyer Smythe, the Commandant at Windsor ATS OCTU when I was commissioned in January 1947 and many other friends, waving and wishing me luck. Later waiting in the tunnel to be called into the arena was a nerve-racking experience; I was in the last of seven heats in the 200m. I heard that Fanny Blankers-Koen had won the first heat in a time I knew I could do; little did I know she had strolled through her heat.

Heat 7 4.00pm- my big moment; rain began to fall and we had two false starts. The athlete concerned was disqualified by the starter; she had come from Chile! On the third attempt, when you could have heard a pin drop, I stayed put for what seemed ages but eventually had an easy race, winning in the second fastest time of the seven

heats. A team official hurriedly took me down into the bowels of the stadium to lie down in a darkened room before the semi-finals at 5.00pm!

Fanny won the first semi-final. In the second semi-final I ran a dead heat with Shirley Strickland timed at 24.9 seconds equalling the British record; the photo-finish camera (being used for the first time in the Olympics) could not separate us. Timings were only to one tenth of a second, not to one hundredth as now. The judges could not believe it and called for a second copy of the photo-finish; this was the first dead heat recorded in the games.

For the 200m finals the next day, the heavens opened and conditions were atrocious; the track was under water and lanes could not easily be seen. One newspaper reported that the driest place in Wembley on 6 August was inside the Empire Pool. Even so the stadium was at full capacity with 80,000 spectators, as there were on each day of the athletics. There were six of us in the finals and I was in Lane 4; we had a good start. Harry Harbin was an Olympic official, on the wind gauge in the centre of the stadium whilst I was competing; I was very conscious of his support and encouragement at the time. I well remember waiting to the last possible moment, as instructed by Harry, before making my final burst for the tape and I pulled up from fifth to a mud-bespattered second. It was undoubtedly the timing of that final supreme effort that gave me the silver medal again decided by a photo finish, placing A Paterson USA 3rd, Shirley Strickland Australia 4th, Margaret Walker GB 5th and Daphne Robb South Africa 6th. After her 200m Victory, Fanny said 'that was my hardest race and I am terribly happy'.

Fanny was undoubtedly the star of the games with three individual gold medals in the 100m 200m and 80m hurdles and a team gold for Holland in the 400m relay. At this time



*The Plaudits*

she held five world records - 100 yards, 100m, 80m hurdles, high jump and long jump! No wonder she was known as the Flying Dutchwoman!

It was a very moving experience on the rostrum as I watched the Union flag raised to second place. We stood to attention for the Dutch National Anthem with no hugging or signs of emotion! My only regret was that the rain had played havoc with my hair, my track suit was saturated and the white heather pinned on by a well-wisher was looking decidedly limp. The President of the International Olympic committee, Mr J Sigfrid Edstrom presented my medal in a box, not on a ribbon placed over my head as nowadays and no bunch of flowers. I was then hustled away to be interviewed first by Max Robertson in the radio van and later high above the stadium by Jack Crump on television; in those days there were very few who had television to see my very bedraggled state so I need not have worried!

My parents who had been a great support throughout and my brother Desmond watched from the stands near the 200m start with A G K Brown, the 400m Gold medallist in the 1936 Berlin Olympics and my brother's housemaster and athletics coach at Cheltenham college.

The closing ceremony was a formal occasion with the flags of all nations carried into the arena accompanied by the music of the massed bands of the Brigade of Guards. The Greek, British and Finnish National Anthems were played as their flags were hoist above the main scoreboard. The President of the IOC pronounced the closing of the games of the XIV Olympiad and then handed the special Olympic flag of embroidered satin to the Lord Mayor of London for safekeeping until the next games of the XV Olympiad were celebrated in Helsinki. After a fanfare of trumpets the Olympic flame was extinguished. The choir and massed bands were conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. The competitors had marched into the arena and waved to the crowd; it was a happy finale although there was none of the pantomime and razzmatazz of modern closing ceremonies.

The full length technicolour film 'XIV Olympiad - The Glory Of Sport' the official film of the games made history in two ways: it was the first Olympic colour film and also the first full length feature film to be produced in so short a time. In September 1948 I was invited to appear at an early screening of this film in Cheltenham, my home town. In 1992 I was invited by the British Film Institute to a private showing of refurbished film. The 1948 colour film was fading and also the material of the film was highly inflammable so it had been restored. I met other Olympian guests including of course Fanny Blankers-Koen. It was good to meet her again.

Looking back all that time ago, representing Great Britain was a wonderful experience. Fifty years later I remain in the record books under Best British Medal Performances for my silver medal in the women's 200m event!

The opening ceremony had engendered an exhilarating feeling of national pride with 59 countries represented, such a short time after the war. In the famous words of Baron de Coubertin, founder of the Modern Games:

'The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part. The essential thing is not conquering but fighting well.'

Is this true today?



1918-1998

## The First World War Remembered

A special exhibition and programme of commemorative events at the Imperial War Museum  
19 September-28 December 1998

# THE FIRST WORLD WAR REMEMBERED.

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A number of accompanying talks, readings, film shows and other events are planned.

June 1998

|                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Press information   | Imperial War Museum |
| Christopher Dowling | Lambeth Road        |
| 0171 416 5310       | London SE1 6HZ      |
| Fax 0171 416 5311   | 0171 416 5000       |

# Are the Barracks still standing?

Guildford

From Camp to Driveway

Do you ever wonder what became of Queen's Camp/The WRAC Depot and Training Centre/Queen Elizabeth Barracks/WRAC Centre/Queen Elizabeth Park/The Army Women's Training Centre at Guildford?

Well, I did and five years after its closure I found out from the MOD that it will be demolished in order to build an estate of at least 300 houses on the 48 acre site. No date has been set for this although it is likely to happen within the next two to four years. The site continues to be maintained and the local TA has bought a plot of land which has now been fenced off and includes the former HQ Offices, the Stores building and the flagpole.

Meanwhile, would it be possible to pay a visit to the site before the bulldozers move in? Thanks to Lt Col Chris Berry of HQ 4th Division at Aldershot and Mr David Cope, the former Accommodation Services Accountant, I was able to spend a very nostalgic morning on 12 March visiting old haunts which I had not seen for 29 years and had never expected to see again.



*The Main gate*

## Where are the Battleaxes?

Back in 1965, I had arrived at the Depot in the 'yellow peril' on 12 April just six months after it had been officially opened by the Queen. Everything was brand new and the latest thing in 1960's public architecture. I came straight from school one week after my seventeenth birthday and although very nervous as I had never had a job before, I was excited to have left home and proud to be joining the WRAC. The previous year I had paid a visit to old Barracks and the new buildings made quite a contrast to the old Nissen huts there.

I joined intake 227, No 2 Training Company, 6 Platoon, commanded by Capt MA Moore with training NCO's Sgt Pickard, Cpl Gunnill and LCpl Fletcher. (Are you out there somewhere?) I still have all the letters I wrote to my parents back home and commented in the very first one, 'The sergeants etc, seem OK and our platoon Officer is very nice. I haven't seen any battleaxes - yet, but some of the girls look very peculiar'.

Following my Passing out Parade on 13 May, I joined the WRAC Staff Band. As we were based permanently at the Depot, I was to become very familiar with it over the rest of my four year's service.



*The Guardroom*

## Memory Lane - Outside

It was a very funny feeling entering the camp again for the first time in nearly 30 years, particularly as it had hardly changed at all. The years fell away and I was 17 again, only this time all the buildings seemed much closer together and the place was full of greenery - the thin saplings had grown into mature trees. The wide open site that I remembered was now enclosed by housing, the buildings had acquired pitched roofs and replacement windows and the cookhouse had grown an extension. There were additional buildings dotted about the site that I didn't recall and the small 'vending area' seemed to have disappeared under landscaping. I noted the assault course laid out on the grass at the side of the square and reflected that the only assault course we went on was the one at the dances at Aldershot NAAF!!

## Inside

First stop was Accommodation Block 12. The band was based on the top floor before they moved to their own block in 1968. Inside, the ironing room now had a fire exit built into one wall but the ablutions were much the same. I was sorry to see the going of my cosy Corporal's bunk nearby which had been removed to allow for a larger drying room. The main addition to the rooms was that of carpets which would have seemed absolute luxury to us. My memory is of polishing the floors till you could see your face in them, often at 6.30 in the morning so that we could get hold of the polisher before anyone else was up. However, polishing stopped abruptly after one Camp Commandant slipped and fell during a CO's inspection!

The general aspect of the rooms was unchanged and I recall my proud parents, now both dead, visiting them on the day of the Passing Out Parade and the Camp Open Day on 7 August 1965. Like many other fathers I expect, my dad took some photos and cine. film, all of which I still have as a reminder of what the camp looked like at the beginning.

## Back to the Present

Walking on round the site, the Bandroom, now long silent, was almost exactly as I remembered it apart from the small store room for our music which had been extended. As for the Sergeant's Mess, it seemed unchanged apart from a mature orchard at one side. My room on the top floor now had smart white cupboards but was fundamentally unaltered.



*The Bandroom*

Moving on, it was sad to see the Church, where we had played so many times, empty and deserted and hemmed in by houses instead of backing on to open fields. The NAAFI, where we purchased essential kit such as name tapes, black marking ink, dusters and coat hangers and danced to the hits of the swinging 60s, displaying a large plaque at the entrance. This commemorated the completion in 1989 of the major maintenance of a now redundant camp.

The phone box in front of the Education Centre used mainly for anguished calls home and to boyfriends was still in place as was the accompanying letter box. I have a photo, of the band marching past with the postman watching in amazement.

Returning to the entrance to the site, the building of the former Medical Reception Station (MRS), where I spent a couple of days sick during basic training, seemed unchanged, as was the stores. The Museum is empty now of course, and the Guardroom deserted, with no-one to care whether we came or went. A major change on the site was that of HQ Offices as the white balustrade and steps up the frontage had gone completely, to be replaced by fire escape-type staircases at either side.



*The Cookhouse*

## Final Thoughts

It seemed very strange to be walking around the camp in casual clothes, especially trousers! We weren't allowed to wear them to the cookhouse, let alone down into Guildford. I recall too, that visiting the local tattoo parlour was a chargeable offence! What a contrast to today's Service women with their camouflage B.D.s. and big combat boots. As for tattoos, they're soon to be compulsory I expect!

The names of places had altered, the YWCA (the 'Y-Do' to us, I have no idea why!), was now 'Sands', the Junior Rank's Dining Room, (the cookhouse), was 'The Elizabethan', and the NAAFI 'The Tudor Rose Club'. The Education Centre was now the 'Instructional Centre', perhaps because only instructions were received there, as opposed to Education?

Considering my visit overall, I was sorry to see the Depot now deserted after having been such a show-place for the WRAC for nearly 30 years. I was pleased though, to have been in almost at the start of its life and now, to be able to see its passing, although I hadn't expected it to happen quite so rapidly.

I'm proud to see the way in which the WRAC has now been fully incorporated into the British Army and to have played a part in that. I'm glad though, that the emphasis is now on the work that service women do, rather than on the wearing of the 'badges' of femininity which so oppressed us.

I am particularly grateful to Lt Col Berry for making my visit possible and to Mr Mike Cope for giving up his time to take me around. There may be a possibility of more visits so if anyone is interested, please give me a ring on 01705 - 873259

Jane Smith

Formerly W/425499 Sgt. Stark P.J.  
WRAC Staff Band.

## Deepcut

I keep meaning to write about the barracks at Deepcut. When my friend and I went to the Dinner at Frimley Green we took the opportunity to visit our old barracks, it used to be occupied by the 2nd and 10th LAA.

I worked at various offices at the 2nd LAA, while my friend was a staff driver.

The whole site had been re-built and is now occupied by the Royal Logistic Corps.



*The Barracks Blackdown Camp*

We were first looking at the Garrison Church when the congregation came out, they invited us for coffee after which one of the Officers kindly went and took us round the camp. The only place we recognised was the old gym. Everywhere else had been re-built with the exception of the Officers Mess. We could also see in the distance our old company office.

At the end of the barrack square where our CSD was situated, and where I worked, there was one wall standing.



*Deepcut Camp Garrison Institute*

We looked round the very interesting Museum, also sent some items for inclusion in it. I also enclosed a rough map of the camp as I remembered it.

Mrs Agnes Cain (née Vertigan)  
5 Dairyfarm Close  
Fakenham  
NR21 8AT

### Hayling

My old Gun Site is still there, I strolled around it in October this year. It is now part car park picnic area, the bases of the HAA guns are still there with seats attached to the perimeter walls and a plaque commemorating the names of gunners killed when the site was bombed in 1940. Even the ammunition store is still there. Hayling Island Council and Historical Society is to be congratulated for preserving this area.

I returned to Hayling in 1995 in order to attend a meeting of the local Historical Society and by chance met an ex ATS who had been in the same Battery as I, 458 (M) HAA. She now lives on the Island. We attended the ATS Dinner Club



*Eve Matthews née Evans*

this year when they held their tea party, we also visited the house that was our BHQ. The present owners are very interested in their home's past history.

I spent five days at Sinah Holiday Village, Hayling. It was a 'We'll Meet Again' holiday and it was certainly a return for me as the 'Village' is only yards away from where the Gun Site was - very nostalgic!

The photograph was taken by the GL 'Mat' (Radar) and the hut was where we slept whilst on night duty - I was Eve Evans then and I am centre behind Radio Mech.

BSS/P/1 Eve Matthews née Evans

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June 1998

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Fax 0171 416 5311

Imperial War  
Museum

Lambeth Road  
London SE1 6HZ  
0171 416 5000

# Life after the WRAC

## From Newcastle to Arabia

When it comes to Arabs in general I am only interested in the four legged variety - so if you don't share this interest then I suggest you move on to the next piece!

I enlisted in the WRAC at Darlington ACIO in 1978 as a driver and reached the dizzy heights of Sgt before leaving for a break of service. I re-enlisted as an 'R' type Recruiting Sgt and served for another 6 years - a total of thirteen and a half years. I'm sure you are all aware that during the re-structuring of the Army in general and the WRAC in particular a lot of recruiters like myself were forced out of their jobs, for me that was a blow but not the end of the world.

Horses have always been my first love. My sister and I have been riding since we were 6 and 4yrs old respectively and have owned horses since we were old enough to do a paper round to support them! I left school and went straight to work the next day at a local racing yard. I continued to work with horses for the next



*One of last years*

3yrs until I fancied something with a bit more of a challenge.

Had my recruiting Sgt had her way I would probably have taken root at Melton Mowbray and still be serving now as a kennel maid/groom! But I stuck to my guns and after a couple of months wait (which I spent working at Butlins, Filey) I enlisted into the WRAC.

When it became increasingly obvious that I was going to lose my job at Newcastle ACIO I started to plan ahead. This realisation coincided with my sister and her husband thinking about moving house to somewhere with some land and stables and she asked me if I would

ever be interested in 'doing something with her, with horses'. She had recently been to the UK International show for pure bred Arabian horses and was totally smitten by the breed and their beauty - and it didn't take long for me to come round to her way of thinking.

After nearly three years of hard work and preparation - not to mention a frightening amount of money - we now have a small stud in Epping Green, Essex, where we breed and show Arab horses. I live in a converted barn with 3 gorgeous Persian cats, from which I also breed, and my sister and her husband live in the 'big house'.

As I write this in February, we already have one filly foal which was born 5 days ago and are very excited about the next two, which are due in the next couple of months. We have three brood mares, a 2 year old and an 18 going on 80 year old pony of dubious origins and unknown pedigree!

Last year we were fortunate enough to get two of our mares booked in to the top stallion in this country at the moment. He is called Simeon Sadik, and is owned by Mrs Shirley Watts (you may have heard of her husband Charlie, the drummer with the Rolling Stones) This stallion is Egyptian bred and black and as our two mares are also black we are expecting two beautiful, exquisite and very desirable foals. Our aim is to breed the best to the best and arouse interest in our stock from all over the world - maybe even Arabs themselves - the phrase 'coals to Newcastle' springs to mind!

When I think back to the times when I was a training NCO at Guildford, marching across that hallowed ground that is the parade square, or driving some Brigadier down to Blackdown for a mess night, or standing up, pristine in front of a 100 school kids to tell them about the Army - I wonder if this is the same person. Now I wander around looking like a bag lady (but admittedly a stone and a half lighter) in furry cap, wellies covered in hay and straw and goodness knows what else, up to my elbows in the smelly stuff - but never happier. I do think that I have found my vocation in life.

However, my time in the Army was not wasted, and I thoroughly enjoyed most of it, as all of the experiences I encountered in the Army gave me the self confidence and self belief to undertake a venture such as this.

If anyone who got past the first paragraph has a genuine interest in what we are trying to do here, visitors are most welcome - just drop us a line.

Sandra Elliott  
Barnleas Arabians  
Barnleas  
Epping Green  
Epping  
Essex  
CM16 6PU

## Corps of Commissionaires

For years while I was growing up, my father would talk of the commissionaires, of course I had no idea what he was talking about. Now years later, I am a commissionaire and into my eleventh year as one.

## PDF Compressor Free Version

In November 1987 I joined the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires at Halifax Nova Scotia, and served four years with them. It is a security outfit, that employs ex-military personnel. So it is almost like being in the Army, because we wear a black uniform, with white shirts and black tie, and we all have that something in common, because we have all served.

In the four years in Nova Scotia, I served at the Victoria General Hospital at the Nautical Institute. I did a week-end at the Lieutenant Governor's mansion two weeks at the legislation building, and ended up working in the Maritime Command HQ in the HMC Dockyard, where I was the guard of the 'Top Secure' area.

I also took part in the 'Nova Scotia International Tattoo' two years running. In November 1991 I moved to British Columbia on the West Coast of Canada. Where I worked about three years at the Vancouvers International Airport, where I just missed delivering a 'baby' by about half an hour. I discovered a lady in labour in a washroom.

I've also worked at all the various Tax offices, in and around Vancouvers, and the passport office.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Commissionaires and have met so many wonderful people, and I would recommend it to anyone.

It has also been a way of putting my Army Training and discipline to good use.

Hilda Campbell (nee Grover)  
14085 72nd Ave  
Surrey, B.C.  
V3W 2P7



## Beauty Therapist And Mother

Yes, there is life after the WRAC and what a different new life it has turned out to be for me.

I was a member of H.M. Forces for 26 years, 22 years exactly to the day, under the badge of the WRAC before rebadging to serve the next 4 years in the Royal Signals under the 'Jimmy'. (The affectionate name for the cap badge of the Royal Signals).

During my last 5 years service I attended College at Farnborough in preparation for my second career as a Beauty Therapist. This was to give me a broad spectrum of qualifications and included, body massage, manicures, pedicures, eyelash and eyebrow tinting, facials, electrolysis, waxing and aromatherapy massage.

It was in April 1996 when I finally left the services with the hope of starting my own business, initially from home, but plans for eventually running my own salon. The business really started to do well, with most of my clients coming from the Army dependents. The plans for my own salon being put on hold for a couple of years, until my husband would have left the services.

BUT as it turned out all plans have now been temporarily postponed due to our additions to our family.

All my married life I had longed for a baby. Unfortunately, due to medical reasons I was unable to conceive naturally and over the years had undergone many operations and examinations, but to no avail. Since then I have been visiting a private hospital in London where I have had many IVF attempts to become pregnant. Nothing happened!

After leaving the Army, I decided to have one last attempt during February/March 1997. In fact the day I completed my treatment was the same day as the very first WRAC SNCO's reunion Dinner held in Worthy Down on the 8th March 1997. This date being one that I will always remember.

Lo and behold, just two weeks later I was told that I was pregnant!

To cut a long story short, I am now the very proud mother of twins, Alice and Benjamin, who were born on the 9th October 1997 - 8 weeks early may I add. Who would have believed it!

I consider myself to be extremely lucky to have had a really wonderful career in the WRAC where I had a thoroughly great time. Now I feel extremely fortunate in having a second career which I hope to resume one day. But in the meantime I have two marvellous bundles of joy, who keep me fully occupied (day and night).

W0437498 WO1 June Skelton née Hawkhead  
5 Walnut Drive, Coleme, Chippenham, Wiltshire.



Alice and Benjamin

## The Army Cadet Force

Major Sue Davies-Jenkins nee Wilson has served with the Army Cadet Force for 14 and a half years and loves it. She has sent in the following photographs and articles. Any ex WRAC or serving women who wish to work with the ACF, should contact Major Davies-Jenkins to learn more.

### Driver To Instructor

Gwent Army Cadet Force (ACF) Sergeant Instructor Louise Hale nee Thompson of Pontypool with two of her cadets. Bronze medallist of the Gwent ACF Junior Team Cadets Gareth Williams (13) of Abertillery and Steven Margan (14) of Pontypool.

'I'm very proud' said Louise. 'Nine of the 20 cadets in the Gwent teams this year come from my detachment'. Louise was a driver in the Women's Royal Army Corps, and left the regular army to be with her Welsh Guards husband. 'Coming out of the army was the hardest decision of my life', she said. But, she wasn't unemployed for long; just one week after becoming a civilian, she got a job driving for parcel force, and she has been with them ever since. In the meantime, she joined the Army Cadets in Gwent as an Adult



*Picture courtesy of Major Sue Davies-Jenkins*

Instructor, and is clearly very happy with her new part-time job in uniform looking after teenage boys and girls.

The Army Cadet Force is a voluntary national youth organisation sponsored by the Army, which currently has some 40,000 cadets.

Gwent ACF contact: Major John Ryan on 01633 267077.



## JSHHG

The Joint Service Hosanna House Group (JSHHG) Family Group has recently formed to help all male or female ex-service personnel or their dependents who have special needs, enjoy a week's holiday of a lifetime in France, at Hosanna House.

Nominations for places in the JSHHG who will join in the 1999 International Military Pilgrimage celebrations are being taken now and volunteer helpers are required on a one to one basis.

The group will travel by air from Exeter to Lourdes. Cost inclusive to nominees and helpers alike approximately £380.

Sponsors and donations for nominees fares and group medical supplies are welcome from any serving/ex-service association, branch or individuals.

More information through your Service Chaplain or direct to JSHHG Secretary:-

Ann McDonald,  
37 Barn Park Road,  
Peverell,  
Plymouth,  
PL3 4LP,  
Tel/fax: 01752 253471



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# Stories

## GLADYS LANGRIDGE

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My own memories of life in the ATS are as vivid today as the actual events in the years 1941-1943. They are anecdotes from an ordinary private.

I well remember the day in August 1941, when having applied to join the ATS I was summoned to London for a medical examination and was given the 'Kings Shilling' to keep and to swear to keep my loyalty in the service of King and Country. To celebrate that evening I went to my first Promenade concert at the Albert Hall!

My initial training took place at Wrexham in North Wales, and it was a very wet introduction to the parade ground, enough to dampen the spirits of all but the most determined volunteers. Inoculations further highlighted the often intense home sickness most of the Rookies, as we were called, felt in that first fortnight of joining up. This gradually lessened and by the end of our initial training we were ready to go out to the units we were assigned to.

I found myself with a group of about 12 on a train to Cheltenham to join a Signals Unit, whilst I was vetted for security reasons and this took several months. I was assigned to the Officers Mess as an Orderly. Eventually, the security release came through and I began work at the War Office Signals Office as an Orderly/Messenger.

Late in 1942, the Americans came to Cheltenham and our unit was disbanded and I was sent to Bradford, to the ATS Signals Training School, to train as a teleprinter operator, and after the course I was posted to Reigate. After a few months I was diagnosed with Encephalitis and Parkinsons and spent most of the next two years in hospital.

These are the bare facts of my life in the ATS, but convey nothing of the great comradeship that I experienced in common with many thousands of service personnel in wartime.

The heightened dangers of war and the isolation from ones family all combined to bring us together. Friendships were formed and loyalties to our particular branch of the service contributed to the determination to see the war to a successful conclusion.

It was during my long illness which took the form of complete paralysis that this comradeship most manifested itself. I was sent to Leatherhead to an emergency hospital, quite a few miles away, yet not a week passed without one or more visits from my friends, Officers and other girls that had been in my section.

I can still remember waking on my birthday, on my bedside table were presents from my fellow patients and

nurses, one patient had contributed a small bunch of spring onions, having heard me complain that they never serve spring onions in their salads!

After lunch on that birthday a deputation from Reigate arrived staggering under the weight of what appeared to be a packing case! They first presented me with a huge cake, decorated with sweet petals and chocolate icing - the whole Signals Unit having given up their sweet rations so the cooks could make it for me. There were lots of bars of chocolate, 200 cigarettes, eggs and all sorts of other goodies which in war time austerity meant a good deal of personal sacrifice, in order to make my birthday a happy one. There was also a Gigli record, as I was an opera fan, and a book which remains with me as one of my most precious possessions, called 'Of Human Bondage' by Somerset Maugham, and in it was a get-well message by the C/O Reigate, A Section and the NCO's and Privates of C.Section.

The following Christmas was just as exciting. On Christmas Eve a group, who had obtained permission to take me to Reigate, arrived armed with a wheel chair and overnight sleeping things. I was carried to the billet and arrived in time for Pay Parade. Sadly I was not entitled to draw any. Hospital Allowance was paid by the Army Hospital Administration Officer who came round on Thursdays and paid me the princely sum of 7 shillings. The party that evening was a great success. I tried to remain calm even though my heart was bursting with a mixture of pride and humility. I was cossetted by the Sergeant Major who saw to it that I was not overwhelmed by the excitement. Next morning she disproved the sarcasm of the old war time song by not only bringing me a cup of tea, but my breakfast in bed as well!

A week later I was invited by B Section to the New Year festivities and then I was allowed to stay for two days, the welcome was equally warm and I was even taken to the YMCA for coffee and to the cinema.

Alas the Hospital refused permission for me to go to the C Section party saying I had enough excitement.

Looking back on those days, which did so much to lighten the dreary routine of hospital I am all the more certain that despite great medical care and treatment, had I not had the moral boosting comradeship of so many of my friends in the ATS I would not have survived, let alone largely recover from my illness. I still correspond with many friends of those times, and a few I still visit.

Gladys Langridge  
c/o 1 Moorland Park  
Old Newton Road  
Bovey Tracey  
Devon TP13 9DH

## SISTERS IN ARMS

At the end of July 1941 my sister and I reported to No.15 ATS Training Centre at Aldermarston Court. Our feelings were mixed, excitement and, yes, a little apprehension. Mother had been rather tearful as we had packed the previous night. Excitement won the day, however, and our sight of the Court was unforgettable - a lovely building smothered in wisteria in full bloom. We were directed to our huts and saw, for the first time the biscuits and blankets folded at the foot of each bed, and took surreptitious glances at those who were to be our companions for the next three and a half weeks.

We were all vaccinated and inoculated over the first weekend. We were not unduly affected by all the medical attention, although a few girls were faint and otherwise unwell. Sympathetic but firm NCO's were at hand to comfort them.

On the Sunday morning we joined the Catholic Church Parade attired in the only uniform then available - khaki lisle stockings, brown walking shoes, a khaki overall and a khaki raincoat, in July. As in those days women and girls wore hats to attend church, I was stumped for a head cover as I had no scarf with me. Using initiative, I wound a narrow blue silk girdle around my head, snakewise. I asked where we were going and was told 'to Douai' which didn't really enlighten me. Imagine my appalled embarrassment when, arrived at church and installed into the back pews, a contingent of boys marched in and I realised that Douai was a boys school. I shrank into the corner hoping that the boys would not be too curious about the distinctly odd group huddled in the back pew. Both my sister and I envied those girls who had joined a week or two earlier and who wore caps and uniform. Incidentally I little thought then that, 20 years or so later, my next visit to Douai Abbey would be to enrol my sons there.

I really enjoyed my basic training, loved the drill and the PT which seemed to consist of English country dancing and ballroom dancing sessions with Gwen Sylvester who, as Victor's sister knew a thing or two about the subject. We had, of course, also to take our turn at cleaning the ablutions - I remember we used paraffin and sand to clean the baths, which surprised me not a little. I also spent a whole day in the kitchen cutting up a side of beef for next day's stew and being chided by the NCO i/c for cutting off too much fat.

At the end of our training we were all anxiously and hopefully waiting for our posting instructions. To our delight and surprise both my sister and I were posted to HQ Company. To us this seemed like a privileged life. No more sharing a large barrack room with 20 or 30 others, but the luxury and privacy of a small room of one's own.

For some time I worked in the postroom where the importance of security was drilled into me by the NCO i/c. At one time I was assigned to the strangest job - that of night guard. For a week I reported to the Officer's mess at about 8.30pm until the following morning. The first duty each evening was to fill the hot water bottles and put them into the Officer's Mess where I extracted the last ounce of warmth from the dying fire. During the night I was expected to make (quietly) a tour of the Court three or four times, presumably to ensure that there was no sign of fire, and, some time before the morning, to fill the coal scuttle for the next day. I was also able to read the newspapers and various magazines lying about the mess, which was a bonus. At 8am I was free to leave the Mess, have breakfast and return to my room to rest - it was not easy to sleep - until lunch time. My sister and I would sometimes hitch into Reading where a kindly grocer sold us bags of broken biscuits.

We have a sad remembrance of that time. This was when one of the switchboard corporals died suddenly. Her funeral service was held in the little church in the grounds and she was buried in the graveyard there. HQ Company formed a guard of honour from the church to the grave, and the sight of her young teenage daughter saddened us all. I remember that there was none of the usual laughter for the rest of the day. We were all very quiet.

A happier occasion was in October 1941 when H.R.H. The Princess Royal visited the Training Centre. There was much shining of buttons and shoes for that event.

Eventually, in December 1941, my sister and I were separated and posted away from Aldermarston, but those five months there remain as a very happy beginning to my six and a half years in the ATS.

Mrs EM Ballance nee Charles  
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Oxford OX2 8NP

## BE SURE YOUR SINS WILL FIND YOU OUT.

We were an Ambulance and Staff car Unit at Folkestone. We worked flat out during the evacuation of Dunkirk after which we were moved back to a little village near Leeds Castle called Otham.

We had our field Ambulance taken away from us with the result that for a short time we had surplus drivers. A batch of us were sent out every day to help in the hop fields. We must have been an amazing sight with our gas masks strapped to our chests and our tin helmets on our heads whilst the Battle of Britain went on overhead. The East Enders who used this as a Summer Holiday could pick a bin of hops in the time it took four of us to do the same. They were a lovely friendly collection of very old and very young. We gave our earnings to the Spitfire fund.

On Saturday nights a three tonner filled with girls used to attend the Village Hall for a dance. The girls were not allowed in the bar and a Sergeant had to be in charge.

On my first duty I met a handsome REME Corporal who danced well. He asked me what my job was before being called up. I was too ashamed to tell him I had not had one and the first thing that came into my head was that I had been a Tight Rope Walker! He was always there when it was my turn for duty. He was enthralled with my previous profession. I talked about my training, diet, clothes, parasol, where I had worked and life in a caravan always on the move.

One evening I was letting down the tail board of the lorry to let the girls out when he rushed out of the hall saying, 'I am so glad it is you Serge, there is someone in the bar who you must know, a real Lion Tamer'. My heart sank, I felt dreadful. Be sure your sins will find you out. Luck was on my side however as the Lion Tamer was assisted out drunk before the evening was over.

I have since wondered if he was a Lion Tamer?

Daphne BD Lance  
(Major Rtd)  
15 Vint Crescent  
Lexden Road  
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I have recently come across an issue of 'the Lioness', through another ATS member and am wondering whether you would be interested in memoirs of one of the early members. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

I signed up, aged just 18, in July 1939, at a rally in Hyde Park and was called up on September 8th 1939. I presented myself at HQ, I cannot remember precisely where. There I was given a cursory medical, issued with army clothing and was posted to the 36th County of London platoon and sent to serve with the Grenadier Guards at Windsor as an orderly, there being no other posts available. We were only about 2 dozen girls and caused quite a stir as we marched (very awkwardly) through town. None of us had been to a training school, we were complete rookies. However, we were soon knocked into shape by the guards NCO's on the parade ground.

I was stationed at Windsor until September 1940, when I was sent to Royal Engineers at Brompton Barracks in Chatham to replace a girl who was unnerved by the bombing. We had to sleep in underground dug outs, there was almost continuous air activity and we had to wear tin hats whenever out and return for a 10.30pm curfew. One day we awoke to find some nearby houses had been demolished, also the Officers Mess where a number of people had been killed. I served in the men's mess together with 3 girls on my shift.

I applied to join the Royal Signals as a teleprinter operator and was sent to Bournemouth for a 6 week course at the Signal School. I was a clerk by trade, I soon picked up the teleprint but was rather non-plussed, when after 4 weeks training, I was unexpectedly sent to Chester having not learnt how to work the printer switchboard and was put straight on one! Thank goodness my fellow workmates were able to put me right.

After a few months, I was posted to the War Office at Cheltenham, working one teleprinter which included several coded messages and on week one the very large switchboard. I was there for 14 months and planned to be married on August 6th 1942, but suddenly we were all posted to other units. I managed to get compassionate leave, as did 2 fellow ATS who were my bridesmaids. We managed to have a lovely day accompanied by a few ATS who had not yet been posted.

My next posting was to the 41 A.A. Brigade just outside Cambridge. By then I was a Corporal and after 14 months at Cambridge my last posting was to Northern Command at Newcastle. There I was in charge of one of our 3 shifts and was due to be made a Sgt. However, after a few months I became pregnant and was discharged in January 1944 after 4 years 4 months service.

Since then I have lead an ordinary life and brought up 3 fine daughters.

I would not have missed my ATS years for anything, the wonderful comradeship and fun and still have a lasting friendship with two of my pals and keep in contact with the

children of my first pal, who sadly died over 40 years ago.

Mrs R Bradshaw nee Walker  
1 Moorland Park  
Old Newton Road  
Bovey Tracey

**V.J.DAY IN EAST AFRICA  
BY FLORRIE BRACHER (Née Debney)**

I have recently been introduced to the local branch of the Association and one of the members kindly gave me some back numbers of the 'Lioness' which I read with a great deal of interest, especially the letter by Barbara Kersley about V.J. Day in Africa in Issue No 1.1996.

This letter stirred up many memories for me, some happy others not so happy. I was also in Nairobi at that time serving with No 2 ATS Clerical Company, having been through the holding unit at Radnor Place in September 1943, prior to going out to Kenya in the November on the troopship ARUNDEL CASTLE. After six very uncomfortable weeks in convoy through the Mediteranean, we eventually arrived on Xmas Eve. This Christmas was never to be forgotten. On Christmas Day when we went for our lunch (NO TURKEY !!!!) We were given a bag of toiletries by the ladies of Kenya (the equivalent to our WRVS). From then on we were kept very busy working as we were in the Record Office which at that time was situated next to the Law Courts in Nairobi. We had our good times and enjoyed our leave every six months when we stayed at the only hotel near Thompsons Falls. We also had our bad times especially the tragic death of Sgt Jo Aston as previously mentioned. She was a great friend and colleague, having met up in 1941 while working in the Records Office at Leicester, then going on to Radnor Place and spending time together in London while waiting for movement orders. Then going out to Africa with some of the other girls we had been working with since we joined, we were all looking forward to our demob in the November and planning a real get together in London. My lasting memory of Jo was the party on VJ Night, when we all joined in the dancing with the men who were stationed at the transport Battery near our camp, which no doubt any of the girls reading this will also remember.

On the whole, I was glad to have had the experience of service abroad and it is very nice now to be able to share that experience with the other 'girls' at our meetings. I rose to the dizzy heights of Sergeant before being posted, but unfortunately we were sent over before my 180 days expired, so I had to revert back to Corporal. I was known to all girls as Deb as my surname was Debney, so if any of them are reading this I would love to hear from them. I look forward to our Association meetings, and my only regret is that I didn't join earlier, as we have a great bunch of girls here in Gt Yarmouth.

Mrs Florrie Bracher  
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Gt Yarmouth  
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## MICELHAM PRIORY

I wonder if anyone reading this served with me at E.S.S.D. (East Sussex Sub-District), based at Michelham Priory, near Hailsham, between April 1943 and February 1946 when it closed down? I was then Pte. Eileen Dench, O.W.L. (Operator Wireless and Line) with the Royal Signals Unit stationed at the Priory, along with clerks, drivers, dispatch riders, cooks and orderlies under the command of Brig. Costin. What an idyllic and beautiful place it was - and still is - situated on the Cuckmere river, close to the South Downs, eight miles from Eastbourne, and close to the lovely village of Allfriston, and Drusillas, where we often cycled for a delicious tea when we were in funds!

In 1960 the Priory was acquired by the Sussex Archaeological Trust and has ever since been open to the general public, and over the years I have often visited it, but never once meeting up with any other ATS members who were stationed there, although I was told by the curator that they did often have visits from people who had served there. On one occasion I was asked to sign the Visitors Book which I did, adding my previous name and rank, and my present address and telephone number, but no-one has ever contacted me. There was another name in the book which I knew immediately she didn't put her present address, so was unable to contact her.



*Sigs Trg School Putney*

I made a great friend at the Priory - Pte. Nora Law who came from Bolton, Lancs. And we kept in touch after we were demobbed and visited each other often. She was the telephonist who was always on the same shift as myself and we were close friends right up to her death in 1996 - a total of 53 years. Many will remember 'our Nora' for her never-failing cheerfulness and laughter, her north country humour and rich Lancashire accent.

The oldest parts of Michelham Priory date from the 13th century and, not surprisingly, was reputed to be haunted. I remember how spooky it was when on night duty in the Signal Office I had to take messages to the Duty Officer, making my way through the pitch dark corridors and up creaking stairs to his office, then returning all the way downstairs and out across the courtyard to the Signal office which was housed in a pre-fab wooden building in the grounds. We Signals worked a 3 shift system with a week's night duty every three weeks, at the end of which we were off duty from 8am on the Saturday until 8am on Monday. As I lived in the West London area I used to dash off after breakfast and cycle the three miles to Berwick (Sussex) station to catch the 9.20am fast train to Victoria, then take the underground to Hounslow, arriving home about midday.

I did my basic training at Talavera Camp on Northampton racecourse and I well remember how cold it was, being the depths of winter November 1942 so I was most interested to read Mrs Joan Scanlan's letter in No1 issue of Lioness this year, in which she mentioned that she also did her initial training at the same camp in January 1942 in bitterly cold weather. She recalled the wooden huts with the one round stove in the middle - how well I remember that stove! When it was my turn to get it going, which had to be done around 4.30pm every afternoon, I was told it was my responsibility to get the kindling for this, and fondly imagined that I would find plenty in the fuel store - wishful thinking - others had beaten me to it and all I could find was a pile of shavings swept up into a corner. I gathered up as much as I could and hurried back to the hut where shivering girls sat huddled on their bunks. I filled the stove with paper, plenty of the shavings, topped with oval coal brickettes, lit a match and sat back to enjoy my handiwork. Nothing happened at first, then, to my horror, smoke began pouring from the stove and from every join in the long chimney reaching up into the roof. People shot off their beds and fled out into the freezing night choking and coughing! I sat there horror struck while an irate corporal told me to rake it all out and start again, which I did, with tears of frustration - and smoke running down my blackened face, while shivering girls hung around the door. I struck another match - only to have the same thing happen all over again! It hadn't occurred to me that the shavings were very damp, having been rained or snowed upon during the day. The stove was eventually got going but certainly not by me!



*Michelham Priory R Sigs Section*

After leaving Northampton I was posted to Putney Signals Training school to learn Morse code and be a wireless operator although, having trained in civilian life as a shorthand-typist I had expected to carry on doing that, but the Army had other ideas, as is often the case. We learned later that we ATS 'OWLS' were needed to replace men operators who were being sent overseas. I couldn't believe my luck in being posted. Many's the time I've arrived on my parents doorstep with a couple of friends from the Signals school, ready to demolish the delicious meals my mother somehow managed to produce!

After leaving Putney I went through several postings before eventually arriving at Michelham Priory in the late spring of 1943 - such a beautiful place.

I am enclosing a photograph of part of the signals section at Michelham Priory about 1944/45 and would love to hear from anyone who served there from 1943-46. I also enclose a photo taken outside Signals school at Putney early in 1943 - if anyone recognises themselves please get in touch. I might add that I am now 76 and remember my service days with great affection.

Mrs Eileen Tasker (née Dench)  
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I enlisted in the ATS in 1941 having put my age up a year to do so! My initial training was in Northampton and after six weeks training I was posted to Hayling Island which had been flattened by bombs. After a short spell there I was sent to Birmingham College on a course for a Higher Grade in Clerical work and having passed that, was sent to Dover, known as Hell Fire Corner as the town was continually being shelled by the German's from France. At first I was clerking in Langdon Anti-Aircraft Battery before becoming a Plotter in the White Cliffs tunnels under Dover Castle; after the training and signing of the Secrets Act I was plotting small boats going across the channel to France on essential war tactics and their return to base. I was on duty when the German Battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau slipped up the channel in the thick fog due to a radar fault, and nothing to do with me!



My next and last posting was to Maidstone where I worked in the Medical Room of a training camp. There I met my husband and in 1944 was married in the Parish Church of Maidstone, everyone being in uniform - apart from the vicar! It was there that after V.E. Day 1945 I was demobbed to start a new life in peace time.

Mrs Hazel Murphy née Crocker  
7 Medusa Court  
Kings Parade  
Holland - on - Sea  
Essex CO15 5JL

I was an Ambulance Driver in the ARP at Folkestone. At the beginning of the war until Dunkirk when I and three friends decided we were not doing enough to thwart Hitler, so in January 1942 we enlisted in the ATS. One friend and I were posted to Northampton Race Course on January the 10th in 3 feet of snow, we never got warm! For the first week, while we were still not allowed out of the Barracks, we had no success in lighting the Tortoise stove. We were supplied with coal and damp paper but no wood! The ablutions were down a paved path about ten yards away, and the showers were across the far side of the enormous Parade ground. The showers were always cold. We all had terrible arms after our injections, and for the first few days had to help each other get into our clothes. At night we piled on all our clothes, including our heavy greatcoats on top of our beds, to sleep and keep warm.

As soon as we could, we trudged into Northampton and went to the public baths twice a week for a hot soak, we had a cup of cocoa or bovril by the swimming pool afterwards. We learnt to drill on the parade ground on top of the snow and never saw the concrete. Margaret and I and five others, were posted to barracks at Hereford, for a 10 week Training Course on Army trucks. 80 percent of the course could already drive. The male instructors had all been regulars in India and in the Norwegian Campaign or at Dunkirk and said they were going to turn us into men. The training centre had only been open as an ATS training centre for 5 months.

Some of the men were suffering from 'post Dunkirk' nerves so we ambulance drivers were sought after as reliable truck drivers. - for instruction.

Then we were posted to Henlease Barracks, Bristol, where it was quiet, so Margaret and I and two others managed to get a posting after a few weeks, and were sent to 31st Cheltenham M.T. Coy, there I found myself immediately driving a security van to London, on a daily shuttle for the War Office, partly evacuated to Cheltenham. Five 'pick-up points' on the way, and every other night in London. (2 drivers per vehicles.)

After 2 months the W.O. went back to London as things seemed quieter. 31st Cheltenham M.T. was posted to Bristol to 202 OCTU, RASC - HQ Clifton College. We girls were billeted in 3 enormous ex theological houses on Clifton Down. Very early on a girl went to pick up an officer to take him round the scattered night guards. 'I can't take a girl round the guards' he said. 'Well sir, either I drive or you walk'. No more protest!!

Then the Americans took over Southern Command, and we all 'upped' and went in convoy to Southend, Essex, 100 girls and 1000 men, and half of them cadets.

I took part in a lot of schemes, driving an Adjudicator or the M.T. officer, but by Christmas I was suffering from eye-strain, night convoy driving on schemes with only light under the differential of the vehicle ahead to follow, so I opted to go to Camberley on a driver instructors course at No1 MTTC.

After some time, I went on to teaching the '16 Tasks' on vehicles, and then into the yard permanently, and finished up an MT.Sgt with 60 vehicles under my charge.

We did almost everything except repairing accidents, de-coking, and lifting 12 shafts. The last of small vehicles, such as Austin 'Tillies' - IOHP and 'Bugs', was caused by students doing 'kangaroo hops' on taking off, (double de-clutching and no synchro-mesh in those days) and having to be towed home after taking out the broken shaft.

Our breakdown vehicle, a 3 ton Bedford, was called 'Cinderella', because she did all the dirty work. The entrance from Portsmouth Road into No3 Coy grounds had a drainage ditch in front of the hedge on each side, and students driving a Field Ambulance or a 2 tonner sometimes turned insufficiently and landed in the ditch. One had to get ex-railway sleepers from the oil-change pits in the yard, put them in the ditch, jack up the vehicle, etc and tow it out backwards.

In the summer of 1945 when civilian vehicle hooded headlights were being relaxed, a student doing 'night driving' on a 15cwt Bedford was going towards Bracknell, and dazzled by the new headlights, drove straight into a telegraph pole on the verge and turned over, snapping the pole, which fell over the roof. By the time we arrived some Americans had righted the vehicle and taken the girl to hospital with a broken arm. Once a Post Office van had freed the truck of the pole and wires I was towed back to base. On arrival, I discovered I had been sitting in a pool of acid. (The batteries on 15cwts were fixed between the two seats behind the gear levers). I had a quick bath and dunked my dungarees and underclothes but they soon had holes all over. The Post Office must have cursed us, we had brought down all the lines between Ascot, Bracknell and Reading!!

In very cold weather we were in the habit of going down the line of 15cwts before they started off in the morning and swinging the engines on the starting handles to save the batteries. On one occasion I did not check the vehicle number, it had a re-conditioned engine, and kicked back. I nearly had a dislocated shoulder.

I was de-mobbed on January 16th, 1946, after a somewhat devastating last 6 months, 3 months clearing up the yard and delivering vehicles, motor bikes and tools to depots all over the place. The motor bikes we took to Pontefract!! (in Cinderella) after that a Cpl and I were posted to Gresford, N. Wales for the last 3 months, where the vehicles were an awful worry. I did a lot of 'convoy' work on a motor bike, sometimes round Lake Bala.

I came out of the ATS very thin, but rippling with muscles.

I met an ex-tank commander back at Folkestone after the war. We were married in 1949, so we celebrate our Golden Wedding next year!!!!

Mr and Mrs RS Hall  
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## HONG KONG - JUNE 1997

First impression on arrival on 24th June were the wonderful decorations and the spirit of the majority of the people as they waited for the 30th June. Hong Kong is always a blaze of neon lights and signs, but this surpassed anything I had seen on previous trips.

The people were not waiting in fear, as predicted by all the media, in fact, in the New Territories, celebrations had been going on for a week, and this is an area through which the P.L.A. were to pass after crossing the border. When they did come they were greeted with cheers and flowers. Tanks did not come rumbling through the streets and when I left three weeks later military personnel had not been seen on the streets. They came to replace our troops and with the memories of Tiananman Square, we all hope that the one country, two systems, will be successful.

Due to the monsoon rain we watched the events on big T.V. screens and who could fail to admire the spirit of all who took part, ignoring the appalling weather? In the great Exhibition Hall the Handover ceremony was conducted in a dignified manner and congratulations are due to both countries. It was thrilling to watch and a moment of history to always remember.

There was a tremendous cheer in the streets as the Chinese flag unfurled at midnight. Not many people went to bed that night. I was lucky enough to join in the Reunification celebrations that followed the 1st July. Wonderful concerts in the Cultural Centre where music and songs composed for 1997 were performed. The children's choir singing 'Joy' was a delight and words fail me when it come to Tan Dun's symphony 1997 'HEAVEN, EARTH AND MANKIND'. Perhaps thrilling would be an apt description and the anthem sung by Jackie Cheung summed up the hopes of the people:

Heaven, Earth and all Mankind Listen!  
The bells which no longer sound 'farewell'  
Knock at Spring's door.  
The wind of Winter past blows the bugle of jubilation.  
The drum, no longer announcing war, plays with everlasting harmony.  
The mother, no longer crying, singing of joyous peace.  
Ah! Heaven, earth and Mankind are symbolic.  
Everything in the world is one.

I am deeply grateful to Elsie Tu who made my trip possible and now look forward to returning in 1998 to see how and if life has changed in Hong Kong S.A.R. (Special Administrative Region).

Norah Bexhall - ATS No 4861

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

REMEMBER TO PAY FOR 1999 BY FRIDAY 13TH  
NOVEMBER 1998.

If you would like to pay by Direct Debit please contact:

Mrs Sue Myers at Headquarters

## CAN YOU BEAT THIS?

The Thomson family from Edinburgh produced the following ATS volunteers.

Jean served from 1941 - 1945

Coastal Bty.  
LYDD

Betty (nee Handyside) from 1941 - 1946 Gordon Bks and  
then Rocket Bty

Helen served from 1944 - 1975



*Jean Thomson*



*Betty Handyside*



*Helen Thomson*

## FOR THOSE BORN BEFORE 1940.

We were born, before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen food, zerox, plastic contact lens, video, frisbees and the pill.

We were born before radar credit cards, split-atoms, laser beams, ballpoint pens, dish washers, tumble dryers, electric blankets, air conditioning and drip dry clothing - before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?).

We thought that 'fast food', was what you had in Lent, a Big Mac was an over sized raincoat, and crumpets was something buttered for tea. We existed before 'house-husbands', computer dating, dual careers and when 'meaning full relationship', meant getting along with the cousins and when sheltered accommodation was where you waited for a bus.

We were born before Daycare Centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks or electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yoghurt and young men wearing earrings.

For us, time sharing meant togetherness a chip was a piece of wood or a potato, hardware was nuts and bolts and software was not a word.

Before 1940 'made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' was how one did in exams, 'studs' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way', meant staying on the bus to the terminus.

Pizzas, Macdonald and instant coffee, were never heard of.

In our days, cigarette smoking was fashionable, 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was in the coal cellar 'joint' was eaten on Sunday, and 'pot' was for cooking in. Rock music was granny's lullaby, a gay person, was the life and soul of the party and nothing more, Aids meant beauty treatment or helping someone in trouble. We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch, when you think how the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder we are sometimes confused and a generation gap exists today, but by the Grace of God.....We have survived.

Jo Anscombe  
Hereford Branch

### DOES ANYONE REMEMBER ME ?

I spent most of my ATS service in Norfolk, having done basic training at Newbattle Abbey, Dalkeith in Scotland, - Hut 50, early 1942, sometime around March to April. My mum wouldn't sign my papers at first, but since I said I would go anyway as soon as I was 18 she gave in, and there I was, square bashing, and sobbing with homesickness the first weekend, but that soon passed.

After three weeks training was over and I was advised I was to be trained as a teleprinter operator in the Royal Corps of Signals. I bid a tearful farewell to all the friends I'd made, Tony, Pearl, Stella and Susan - off to be cooks or Ack-Ack girls (which is what I wanted). So long ago, I can't put faces to names - were you little and blonde, Stella? And Tony were you tall? Do you remember me? Ray Darling?

After your train pulled out leaving me in tears, (strange how quickly we made strong friendships way back then), I returned to Hut 50 and sobbed my heart out. There I was found by Micky Nisbet from another hut, who took charge, bundled all my blankets together and ordered me to follow her. We were being kept back as chickenpox had broken out at Symington camp where we were supposed to go for training, and all the odd-bodies had to be kept together to free the huts for the incoming trainees.

Mick and I are friends to this day, we had a reunion in Hunstanton, in Norfolk, to West Norfolk sub area, or 'Wensa'. We were known as Scotty (Mick), Mac (Eileen), and Jock (myself).

There Mick met Frank, a real 'across a crowded room' romance, which has lasted over 50 years, though she lost him last May.

At Hunstanton, we were each paired off with three switchboard operators, Kitty and Louie from Millwall, London, who were school friends, and Kath from Grimsby. Kitty and Louie are gone now. Kitty was my partner, Louie with Eileen and Mike with Kath. We never sat out a dance, and were convinced we were all beauties. With hindsight, we realise there was a plethora of males, Royal Engineers, North Staffs, RAF etc, and a scarcity of women.

After three months we were moved lock, stock and barrel to Hillington Hall, near Sandringham, an old baronial type building with high rooms and long draughty corridors.

Kitty got engaged to Alf, her childhood sweetheart, Louie met Stan, one of the four RAF wireless operators seconded

to our unit, and eventually they married. Sadly Kitty, Louie and Stan have all passed away, as has 'Uncle Bill' another of the RAF lads with whom I kept in touch, and his wife also, and Bet Linge, from Canvey Island, one of the cookhouse girls who was loved by all us Signal girls.

I am still in contact also with Molly Sweeney, our little Irish colleen, now Mrs King, and Mary Carter now Mrs Brown. Pam Sladden who lives near Ashford in Kent but whose maiden name I can't remember, and Barbara Alexander (née Barton) now living in Louisiana, USA.

If any old West Norfolk friends read this I'd love to hear from them. I am now 74 years old divorced granny with three sons and two daughters, nine grandsons, six grand-daughters, and one great grandson with two others on the way. I am blessed with good health, go line dancing three times a week and square dancing one night. I love all the world and its people!!!!

Rachel Davison  
née Darling.

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### DOES ANYONE SHARE MY MEMORIES ?

The 1997 No 1 issue of the magazine brought back so many memories for me triggered by the picture on the back cover of the wings for Victory Parade in June 1943. I am wondering if anyone else had the same memories of being in that special parade at Windsor Castle as an Officer Cadet while training in Windsor at Imperial College.

I joined the ATS in October 1942 and became a training NCO at the Guildford Basic Training Centre, in due course I went to pre OCTU in Dalkeith, Scotland and then in June 1943 I was posted to the Windsor OCTU, hence I was in the parade in June of 1943. I am in the second rank on the right nearest to the King, George VI, I passed out as a Second Lieutenant on July 2nd. I have another picture of the HQ Company parading passed the King, showing far more of the castle, Band and VIPs behind the platform.

On leaving OCTU I was posted to 34 Brigade AA in Sutton Coldfield as a platoon Officer. In May 1944 I volunteered for searchlight training in Rhyl, North Wales, where we had a great time learning all about searchlights as well as how to ride motor bikes in the hills and narrow roads of North Wales. After training I was posted to 'B' Troop 93rd (M) S.L. Regiment Stationed in Knebworth Park, Hertfordshire, our HQ was in Hatfield. We were an entirely female Regiment at site level, male Officers were at HQ only. It was a happy and active time with quite a number of excitements of one sort and another. I drove my 250cc motor bike around my six searchlight sites, crashing on one occasion outside Beverly Nichols' house in York St. Lawrence.

In January 1945 at the time of the Buzz bombs and Doodle bugs we were transferred lock stock and searchlights as a regiment to Wimbledon area London. 'B' troop was stationed on the golf course on Wimbledon

common. Here too we were kept on our toes and had some hairy moments, but the only serious casualty was when a golf ball (yes they were still playing on the course between raids) broke the front glass of the searchlight at Troop HQ.

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The two lasting memories of that period were, one, lighting a path for the pilots who were going to France at the time of the invasion. We all had to 'expose' our lights at a low level in a given compass bearing, for what we did not know at the time, to form an arrow in the direction of the airborne landings. The other was on VE night when my troop was chosen to take three 30cm searchlights to St.Paul's Cathedral to illuminate the cross and the two front spires. One light was in the bomb crater at the back of the Cathedral, very early in the morning we were on our way to Buckingham Palace, me sitting on the bonnet of my troop utility!

We were then posted to Titchfield in Hampshire to be disbanded, a sad time as we had all been together for some time and been through quite exciting times all together. I was posted to Balhousie Castle in Perth to join HQ S.E. Scotland, looking after laundry unit disinfecting blankets, quite a change after action with searchlights! Then in November 1945 I was sent on an Officers course again at Windsor (nice for me as my home was in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire), on returning to Scotland I volunteered for service in Egypt, but I never made it as I was posted back to Windsor OCTU as a junior commander Instructor in ATS records. An interesting time, but not very inspiring to teach records. We paraded each Sunday to the Royal Chapel in Windsor Castle and Princess Elizabeth as a junior commander took the salute at one of the Passing Out Parades.

I was demobbed in July 1946 from the OCTU posting, so you can understand why the Wings for Victory parade made such an impression on me. Windsor played quite a part in my service life, OCTU as a student, and then again as an instructor for the last part of my service. Happy days!!!

I would love to hear from anyone who has memories which overlap mine, especially anyone who served in the 93rd (M) S.L. Regiment from September 1944 to VE day.

Jean Elisabeth Asdell  
née Bedwell, nick name Tiz  
Peveril  
Winchester Road  
Micheldever  
Winchester  
SO21 3DG

### RECOLLECTIONS

After my initial training in Inverness I was posted to Oswestry for Ack Ack training then on to Kent, Sussex, Essex and then over the sea to Antwerp Docks. After VE Day those due for demob returned to UK and those of us who remained were asked to remuster.

My friend Peggy and I ended up by being sent to the B.A.O.R. training centre at Sennelager to train as ATS

Provost which didn't make us too popular with others at the time.

When we had completed our courses, we spent a short time on patrol in Brussels before being posted to a Civil Internment camp (Sgt Steel) at Neumunster Germany.

Our duties there were to look after and guard a few hundreds EX SS women awaiting their trials and some times going out with other sections of the Police to arrest others still in their homes.

During my time there, and this is when I would very much like to get in touch with anyone who remembers, we



*War Crimes Trials in Hamburg*

moved all the inmates by train (fixed with searchlights and armed guards) down to No5 level Internment Camp at Paderborn.

My last duty from there before being demobbed in April 1947 was to attend the War Crimes Trials in Hamburg - photo enclosed shows me on the right - Sgt. Lewin at the back and Eva Barry on the left who I'm pleased to say got in touch with me a few weeks ago by the teletext and I hope to meet up with her.

I've received the Lioness for a number of years now always hoping to see or hear of someone I knew, so at last have written hoping someone may recall having known me.

I have been in touch with Peggy Leitch and Edie Costin 579 Bty for a number of years now (we hope to meet up again in August at the Ack Ack reunion in York).

I will end by saying I had a most adventurous and memorable time during my service, enjoying the comradeship and would do it all over again.

Mrs A Smart (née Chalmers)  
Flat 7 Dunkeld Road  
Perth PH1 5RF

## TWO MARGARETS BECOME TWO MOTHERS IN LAW

**Mrs Cranmer served in the ATS during World War II and the following is an account of how she met up with a lady called Margaret Peterson who served at the same time in the Australian Womens Auxiliary Service.**

Margaret Peterson is the much loved mother-in-law of my son Nicholas who married Janette - Margaret's daughter, they have lived in Queensland for ten years.

Nicholas met Janette whilst trekking in India and they came back to the UK to be married. Margaret visited us at that time for a month and it was then we both learned that we were ex ATS/ AWAS serving members during World War II, but how different were our lives - one battling against flies and heat, the other against tented Ack Ack sites and wet socks!!!

But in spite of..... we both have reached our mid 70's and between us have two adorable 'Aussie' grandsons (and yes, we both have creaking joints!)

### AWAS LIFE IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

When war was declared I was still a 16 year old school girl, with 2 younger brothers. My father an engineer found his firm had been made a protected industry - making army service weapons etc.

After I had completed a typewriting commercial course at Business college, I was employed in the office of Julius Kayser (Kayser Bondor in the UK) where I became a punch card ledger machine operator, the forerunner to the present computers. With the war many changes occurred in Aussie land, dramatically so the once isolated young country became a hive of activity with the arrival from overseas of many service personnel. Mainly the Americans caused great excitement, bringing with them their different cultures and changing the lives of Aussie forever. Then came the unexpected queue lines for accommodation the coupons for everything and of course the shortages.

Some nights voluntarily I served as a waitress in kitchen help in the 'Red Shield Huts' run by the Salvation Army for service women and women. On Saturday afternoons I worked in a factory canning fruit because of the shortage of labour. Most of these cans were sent to service personnel. Our land thankfully had only a few enemy attacks - at Darwin, the Japanese bombs killed over 200 people, and their midget submarines shelled the Sydney harbour area. Of course all this must seem minor to you for I am even mindful of the hardships, headache and the bombing of your own country.

When I was 20 years old, I joined the Australian Womens Army Service (AWAS) in July 1943, the service had been only formed about 12 month earlier. I was assigned to the Corps of Signals Unit, having already a knowledge of morse code, which I had been taught previously from an Air Force Base.

I did a months Rookie school, then on to a Signals Unit, where the course included map reading and general mechanics besides furthering my Morse Code speed. On completion and whilst waiting for a posting up North as a wireless operator, I volunteered to do a courier pigeon

communications study. Little knowing what was involved and thinking it was attaching messages to the pigeons by capsule only, a rude awakening found me cleaning out the pigeon lofts!!!!

I then did a 6 weeks car maintenance course which apart from greasing, cleaning and general care, learnt to drive jeeps, amphibian trucks and 4 wheel drive vehicles. Unfortunately and foolishly I didn't keep driving up and it wasn't until 10 years ago after my husband died that I gained another licence to drive.

Eventually I was posted to Movements Control in Townsville, Queensland, some 1000 miles North of Brisbane. I spent 4 months there working to New Guinea, then it was to MT. ISA, 600 miles West and near the Northern Territory Border, MT. ISA was and still is a large copper mining town, and then it was a staging camp for servicemen going North to Darwin and overseas. The six months I spent there were most enjoyable, but the heat was unbearable at times - nearly always over the century. I lost a stone in weight - mother thought I looked like a scarecrow! From there it was to Alice Springs, Northern Territory, 750 miles in an open army truck. Not so bad whilst moving but when the truck stopped, literally millions of flies descended upon you. Then it was a battle between the flies and you to see who are first to get eaten by mistake! I was only a couple of months at Alice Springs and then caught the train 'the Ghan' down through the desert to Adelaide and then on to dear old Melbourne. After an absence of 14 months it was great to see my family and relations again. The winter season was commencing and it was cold, especially after the heat up North. My arrival was just in time to participate in the 'Victory in Europe' march through Melbourne - May 1945, the streets of Melbourne went berserk, such excitement and relief that part of the war was over. I spent over a year in a camp on the outskirts of Melbourne working a teleprinter link, high speed links to Kandy (Ceylon) and eventually Kune - Japan. When the BCOF troops arrived in Kune - Iwo Jima, they opened a link from there to Melbourne. I was on night shift when it happened and received the 1st communication sent, which appeared the next day in the daily papers. I still have a copy of that.

Our first AWAY casualty happened at Adelaide river near Dawin, when our jeep overturned and killed the driver. I knew him, as we had served in the same unit earlier.

In July 1946, 3 years and 10 days after enlistment I was discharged and back onto civvy street, and I didn't like it, everything seemed so strange. Having to make my own decisions without a command or order seemed at first odd.

I resumed my employment with Kaysers, where I remained until after I married in Jan 1953. My younger brother joined the Navy in the later part of the war and saw service in and around Japan. My other brother an engineer and toolmaker was in a protected industry.

There are many incidents and details I've admitted - the good times - such as the comradeship, the fun the high jinks, the socials that the camps entertainment groups produced. You probably can relate to this little tale! When AWAS were invited to a dance at an all male camp, we would be transported there, counted like so many head of cattle and afterwards recounted again. The transport wouldn't leave until all were accounted for. We hated this procedure, the yanks thought it quite archaic and laughed openly, I can now look back and laugh too.

There were other times when the palliasses were half empty and uncomfortable, sleeping on the ground too hard and the draught and cold in the tents. The meals were often incredible, sometimes fly blown, we would then spend our meagre pay at the canteen on biscuits to fill the void. But that was that for war time experiences. I feel proud to have been one of so many who served in the women's services and have never regretted doing so.

I've kept in touch with a few of the ex AWAS we meet for luncheon, get together and Signal Reunions. But the ranks are thinning now. Our Corps Signallers motto is 'Certa Cito' (swift and sure). I hope this applies to my letter.

Margaret Peterson  
VF511610  
516/WM Westwood.M.

**PRIVATE'S FLIGHT.  
DAPHNE ATTRIDGE (NÉE WILLIAMS)  
SOUTHERN COMMAND SIGNALS.**

Is the 'PRIVATE' in this tale reading this article I wonder?

In 1944 two girls from SMD (South Midland District) based in Oxford were wandering round the high class store of Elliston and Cavell when the stopper off a bottle of bleach one girl was carrying came off and sprayed over a lovely gown on display. A horrified assistant called the Manager who looked at the petrified girl and said 'Have you a private income?' And she replied 'no, only a private's!' Of course the store was insured but I'll never forget how we all felt when she returned most upset but we did so admire her reply which we thought priceless, though no wit was intended.

**OBERJOCH - Re-visited**

by Helen Jeffries (ex Capt. Beaver)

For those of us fortunate to be stationed in BAOR in the ski season the name Oberjoch will doubtless revive memories (and perhaps this article will encourage others to write about their WRAC service days).

Oberjoch in Bavaria (Southern Germany) was at one time the venue for the Army Alpine Ski Championships and the training ground for army Regimental Biathlon teams. I am not sure how many years the WRAC skied there and completed for the Macfie cup (answer please Colonel Betty Michell!) We did not of course compete with the men and by comparison our skiing was a very low-key affair, most of us being Novices. I recall on one occasion back in August, talking to a WRAC Major about skiing. She told me there had been 'one or two very mediocre Macfie Cup winners' and I said 'Yes, ma'am, you are talking to one of them now!'

Well I was lucky enough to ski at Oberjoch both in 1967 and 1968 several QARANCs also came and we enjoyed some preliminary training in Holzgau and Lermoos (Austria). Where you there then? Have you skied since? Have you been back?

By chance in 1984 whilst on a family holiday in the Odenwald region of Germany we had to drive our motor caravan to Oberjoch to collect the 'husband' from a 'Cure'

- a wonderful 'holiday' paid for by the German's health insurance. Oberjoch looked quite different in summer but we found the shoemaker's house where I had stayed one year and had a drink at the Mattlihaus. I had stayed here on the second occasion and remember what a walk down it seemed to meet up with others in the Lanig hotel. This latter has become very big now with its own ski school and several shops.

Our friend was actually staying below in the valley at Hindelang. The drive down was panoramic and not as terrifying as my first car ride when another Officer and I were taken out by two corporals in a car loaned them by their CO (a brave man). I do not even remember the social event in Hindelang only the long very steep climb back up to Oberjoch round unending hairpin bends!

The family were very taken with the area and we arranged to share a cottage with our German friends in Christmas 1985. The snow was very disappointing and I felt I should never master the new type boots (the ones from the shoemaker I had bought with my left over 'meal allowance money' could not be made safe with the skis) and shorter skis. Had I not joined a ski class I doubt I should have moved at all. I prayed no one would recognise the one time cup winner! With the British army having moved elsewhere one rarely hears an English voice except for the occasional Langlaufaer.

Again by chance we were in Germany for carnival and the snow came and we ended up back in Oberjoch/Hindelang in 1994. The skiing was exhilarating and probably the most adventurous for me bearing in mind Oberjoch boasts only Black run (which only our sons has done) and has only drag lifts. In 1995 I skied more gently with my daughter. Always toying with langlauf, though I never know how to stop, I did this all the time in 1997 when we went later in the season and I really thought that I would not 'downhill' again. But 30 years on 1998 and perfect snow found me once more enjoying the ski slopes at Oberjoch and we have already booked our apartment in Hindelang for next year.....any takers!

Certainly Oberjoch has become quite a ski venue (especially for Langlauf) for the Germans and the Dutch and there are more lifts, hotels and B&Bs - all fully booked in the season but the LOWEN still retains its old world charm and the place remains unsophisticated and cheaper than most ski resorts.

Helen Jeffries nee Beaver  
23 Manningham Rd  
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Wellingborough  
NN9 6TF

**40th INTERNATIONAL MILITARY PILGRIMAGE  
TO LOURDES 13 - 19 MAY 1998**

By Cpl Cheryl Stephens AGC (SPS), 1 GS regt RLC

The Second in Command came into the Orderly Room, gave me a piercing look and said 'I'm going to make you an offer you can't refuse. I need a volunteer for the Lourdes Pilgrimage all expenses paid. Treat it as a holiday in France'. How could I refuse, so.....

On a sunny Wednesday morning I packed my bags and headed for Gutersloh train station along with 29 other budding pilgrims for the start of our pilgrimage to Lourdes, 24 hours away.

The military train comprised of both German and British servicemen and women with the odd Australian thrown in for good measure. Our first stop was at Aachen where we were joined by the Dutch contingent for a welcome mass, mainly spoken German, Dutch and a little Australian. After the mass we had just enough time for a quick ice cream before we boarded for part two of our journey. This stage was highly religious with the bread and wine flowing freely. The piper of the Irish Gds kept us well entertained with renditions of 'Highland Cathedral' and 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling'.



*The Road to Lourdes*

We finally arrived in Lourdes 26 hours later, after a short (ish) delay due to French train strike. Once in the hotel, rooms were allocated and sleep set in, after a little shopping spree of course.

Friday started with a march through Lourdes to the Grotto, apparently to get us used to the route (we got enough practice at it.) Father Steve gave us the welcome address where we were joined by the Navy and RAF, then on to Father Mark's Tour of Lourdes - well I know where all the good coffeehouses are!

After a hearty lunch it was a stroll up the longest hill in Lourdes to 'La Cite St Pierre' (known as The City of the poor). This was accommodation provided at little or no cost to people coming to Lourdes that could not afford to

stay in the hotels. Most of the accommodation is adapted for the disabled as well. The motto of the city is 'Lourdes is for everyone not just those who can afford it'.

After that it was a quick run down hill in Barrack Dress and change into No2 dress. We marched through the town for the Opening mass at St Joseph's Chapel. During this service, one of the British contingent was ordained into the Catholic Church. This was followed by the Opening Ceremony held in the underground Basilica which was affectionately known as 'the underground car park' and holds up to 30,000 people.

Saturday started on Friday, well almost, at 0615hrs we marched through the town behind the band of Hussars and Light Dragoons to the Grotto for English Mass. Anyone who was sleeping soon woke up as we marched past.

Next we had the group 'MUG' shot. This photo involved squeezing in all 300 of the British contingent on to steps in front of the Rosary Basilica. We had a few hangers on when about 10 Italian Soldiers decided they wanted to be in on the action. The stations of the cross came next, but as it was up and down numerous hills I decide to decline the invitation to attend and opt for a glass of lemonade and a sunbathe in the hotel grounds.

After lunch we went for yet another march, this time to the Rosary Basilica for the service of reconciliation, which was quite an eye opener for a non catholic as the service included confession. Needless to say I decided not to confess all, there were 2 days left of the trip!

We were then asked if we would assist on the procession of the sick, I was pushing a lady called Mary from the Hosanna House (an ex services organisation). This was a very moving experience. The procession is to me the true meaning of Lourdes where the sick come first. The people in the wheelchairs all had a terminal illness, but, because of their faith they not only had the courage and love for themselves but for everyone else. It was a very humbling experience and it made me realise how lucky I am to have my health.

Sunday started with the International Mass at the 'underground car park'. The same sentence in 7 different languages is quite amusing after a while. Sunday afternoon was the highlight of the pilgrimage for me - The Closing Ceremony. I was asked to carry the Union flag for the British contingent, only one slight problem, I am 5'3" and the flag was 8ft tall.

We marched through the streets of Lourdes behind the Irish Gds Piper greeted at every corner with cheers and applause from the crowds. The British contingent were very popular with the French (!). At the ceremony, all the nations Armies joined together as one singing 'Auld Lang Syne'. If you have never heard that sung in 7 languages at once you don't know what your missing.

We travelled back on Monday stopping off at Orleans for a farewell Mass - in German. Much to my horror I was selected to read the lesson which provided some amusement when the priest dropped the microphone just before I started to speak. We finally arrived back in Gutersloh on Tuesday refreshed from our trip away.

I have to admit there is something magical about Lourdes - whether or not it's religious is your decision.

# Memorials

Brigadier Eileen Nolan represented all the British Women's Services at the dedication of women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington Cemetery. Here is an account of her Visit.

## WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE FOR AMERICA MEMORIAL

The idea was born some fifteen years ago. In what became the largest gathering of servicewomen from World War One to the present day ever held, the magnificent Memorial was dedicated on Saturday 18 October 1997 by the Vice President of the USA, Al Gore. Standing at the East Gate of Arlington Military Cemetery, Washington DC, the memorial is a fitting tribute to all women who served or are serving in a military role for the United States of America. Under the inspired leadership of retired Brigadier General Wilma Vaught and her Board of Directors, thousands of



*Arlington National Cemetery*

workers have made the dream a reality.

The building is large and dramatic and houses a Hall of Honour, museums, a theatre, computerised database of registered service of all women who have requested inclusion, and a library is planned. It has to be visited to appreciate the enormity of this splendid achievement.

I was honoured to receive an invitation to attend the four days' celebrations as a representative of UK Women in the Services. I arrived in Washington to find the arrangements for our group of twenty in the most capable hands of my hostess (and opposite number when we were both serving) Brigadier General Inez Bailey. The programme was amazing!

### Thursday 16 October

**Noon** Civil Reception and Buffet Lunch for Board members and guests.

**Evening** Gala celebration Dinner.  
5,400 attended. 500 waiters!

A wonderfully decorated room (huge) which coped with us all.

The Vice President, his wife and many guests attended.

The oldest speaker was 101.

### Friday 17 October

**Morning** Breakfast at 7.30am for 500 Field Workers - the fund raisers from all the States. I addressed this group at 8.30am and gave greetings from the United Kingdom. Their work 'out on the ground' had been invaluable.

**Noon** Lunch. Each Service had a different venue. 3,300 women attended the Army Reunion.

**Evening** General Reunion for all. So many memories - such chatter.

### Saturday 18 October

**Morning** Breakfast at a splendid venue, for senior officers of all women's services who held one star rank or above. I was invited to address this group for 30 minutes.

**Midday** The moment everyone had waited for - the Dedication. It was attended by 30,000 people in a crowd which stretched all down the road from the Memorial itself. Vice President Al Gore with his wife and General Vaught cut the ribbon, then there were speakers and memories. Prayers were said by four women Chaplains of the services. (In the USA the Marines are a separate body.) The finale was in the form of a fly past of helicopters with all female crews. It was a very memorable occasion indeed.

**Evening** A silent march past and short service outside the Memorial.

### Sunday 19 October

"A time to give thanks." At Arlington Cemetery Amphitheatre.

Out of doors, and a fitting climax to four splendid days.

The whole experience was made all the more special by the help we all received from the scores of young servicemen and women, all in best Parade uniform, who were at our side assisting us in so many ways - Always cheerful and enthusiastic. I shall long remember the young man who appeared at my side on one occasion and said, 'Ma'am, will you please do me the honour of allowing me to escort you to your table.' Those four days belonged to all women who served, or are serving, their country in uniform.

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# HONOR



# PRIDE

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## PHOTO CREDITS

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## Memorial to the women of World War Two

Many will be aware that Mrs Jean Crawley who lives in Canada, wrote asking why there is no Memorial in the UK, to British servicewomen who did so much to overthrow Hitler and his infamous war machine, to ensure Britain and the rest of the world would be free from that oppressive and menacing regime.

The Imperial War Museum confirmed that there is no National Memorial to record the critical role undertaken by servicewomen, or any other women during World War Two. Further research showed that in addition to the 650,000 servicewomen, there were hundreds of thousands more women who were Land Army Girls, Munitions Workers, ARP Wardens, SSAFA Sisters, Overseas Executive Operatives and many, many more. The Daily Mail is quoted as saying 'according to the Office of National statistics, there were more women involved in the war effort than men!'

It was decided to start a properly structured project so that a Memorial is erected, to record the invaluable work done by all these unsung heroines, in whatever role they played, as part of our national heritage. We needed Royal and Ministerial support to give us weight, lots of publicity so that the public are made aware of what women did, a place to erect it in the Capital City, a sculptor to make it and of course, a great deal of money to pay for it.

Mr Hugh Bayley, MP for York, and now one of our Vice Patrons, very kindly tabled an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons to get support from MPs across the House, also to stimulate media interest to gain publicity for the Project. Over 264 MPs signed up to the Motion, as a result, we have appeared in the national press, 'Women's Hour' (Radio 4), 'Kilroy' (BBC 1). BBC News, Sky News and

local TV, radio and press. A Letter to HM The Queen (wartime ATS herself), elicited a reply asking to be kept informed of progress and agreement to unveil it, subject to state commitments. HRH The Princess Royal's acceptance to become a Vice Patron provided us with a much needed endorsement of credibility. The Minister for the Armed Forces has offered help to find a location for the Memorial and we are anxiously waiting for a reply from Westminster Council to arrange a meeting to start the first of, what no doubt will be many, discussions regarding sites, maintenance costs, installation costs and other technical aspects of locating the Memorial. We are also waiting for advice from the Charity Commission, in response to our application for Charitable Status, at which point we will make a formal approach to the Lady whom we hope will become our Patron and will also lead our corporate fundraising programme. Fundraising has of course already started and we are delighted to announce we already have over £6,000. But we have long way to go. The Memorial will cost about £75,000 plus installation and maintenance costs.

The project is moving forward in a structured and positive manner, but help is needed - **YOUR HELP**. Tell your local radio, TV and papers what we are doing and why we are doing it. Ask them to interview you and put pictures of you (and your friends) wearing your medals. Don't be shy because it will be a good heart warming article for them, which makes excellent reading, but remember it is **critically important to tell them we need funds** and give them our address and ask for cheques to be made payable to 'Memorial Central Bank York Garrison'. This will achieve two important goals. It will maintain the profile of the Project and bring it much needed funds. It works, because this is how the first £6,000 has been achieved.

Maj (RETD) DM Robertson President.



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# Where Are You Now?

**Mrs Nancy Barclay (née Goodall)**

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I am trying to trace anyone who knew me during my service days, particularly **Trudy Ballinger** - Photo enclosed taken in the Montgomery Club, Brussels, 18 May 1945. (I am the one with the spectacles.)



I was stationed in Gresford, North Wales, (D Coy Pay Clerk 1942 - 1944), Aberfoyle, Perthshire, (Pay Clerk 1944) and Q (Maint) 3, No 1 Continental Group, 21 Army Group, (Normandy - Germany 1944 - 1946).

I have been to the reunions in London, Glasgow and Blackpool, but have not met anyone who remembers me. I would be delighted to hear from someone who does.

I was W/172164 Cpl Nancy Goodall

Contact:  
Elm Bank  
42 North Street  
Bishopmill  
Elgin  
IV30 2EF

**Mrs Brenda Rogers (née Oliver)**

I would like to hear from any ex-ATS who was stationed at Tonfanau North Wales on the permanent staff of 'J' Coy 7 (M) H.A.A. Training and Practice camp from May 1942 to May 1945. Especially **Muriel Williams** (Cornwall), **Dorothy Parr** (Porthmadog), **Marie and Pat Sweeney** (sisters, Liverpool area), (Curly) **Angus Cannan** (S Wales) Stockport etc. and any of the men that were on the camp permanently.

Contact:  
42 Woodlea Court  
Verona Close  
Cowley  
Uxbridge  
Middlesex  
UB8 2LJ



*Mrs Brenda Rogers (née Oliver)*

**Mrs M. Hands née Fitzgerald**

Bulford Camp 1943-1946.

Mrs Hands would like to hear from anybody in the photograph taken at Bulford Camp (1943-1946).

Front right, **Ellen Monkhouse**, me (Tony Fitzgerald) far end **Ann Milne** (who married Johnnie Jones).

Back row, right, **Pam Hooper** (who married Tom Dover) and then there is Ann from Nottingham, surname unknown (one other missing great pal was **Doreen Phillips** (married name Pullen). Where are you now?

Contact  
6 Houndsfield Grove  
Wythall  
West Midlands  
B47 6LR



### Mrs Betty Roberts (née Sullivan)

Mrs Roberts would like to hear from the other two ladies in the photograph.

Me (ex Sgt Sullivan), Mrs Roberts, Mrs Hedley. They served with me in C Wing Office, War Office Wireless Station, Queen Ethelburg's School, Harrogate, York 1942-1945.

I am now an old lady of 77 (widow).

Contact  
26 Lannoweth Rd  
Penzance  
Cornwall  
TR18 3AB



### Edith Ellen Wake

Mrs Wake's daughter would love to hear from anyone who served with or has any photographs of her late mother who enrolled at Newcastle in 1941 and left from Northumberland Group Berwick in 1944. Her number was W/54270. As a school girl **Mrs Hedley** often visited her mother at Berwick and wonders if anybody remembers her?

Contact Mrs W Hedley  
254 Titchfield Terrace  
Pegswood  
Northumberland  
NE61 6XD

### Mrs Rona Buchan née Ridley

I joined the ATS with a friend, it was Friday 13th 1942. I have just met my friend again, she was down from Fife in Scotland visiting her daughter in Cheltenham, so it was lovely to entertain her here in Hereford. She is Rona Buchan (née Ridley) and like me was born and bred in Sussex, we went to the same school too. She went from training at Guildford to Catterick Camp in Yorkshire 152 ACTU Marine Lines Royal Signals and later to Gaza Lines. She met her future husband John Buchan a Sgt at Catterick camp. She seeks the following friends from those early war years. **Ruth Quiller** both from Balham in London. **Jacky Gordon** from Selsey, Bill in Sussex and **Margery Wenham** who came from Sussex and may have worked in LEWES before joining up.

Please contact Mrs Jo Anscombe  
6 Haydock Avenue  
Hereford  
HR4 9LZ

Hon.Sec for Hereford Branch 01432 270165

### Ex L/Sgt Betty Ridgeway

I am looking for ex L/Sgt Betty Ridgeway (ex 'Y' Group), home address was Vicarage Road, Kings Langley, Herts. Her service number was W/74033.

She and I were hairdresser trainees at the Regent Street Polytechnic before joining up in 1941-1942.

Contact  
Mrs M Bushell  
Grimston  
Kings Lynn  
PE32 1BA

### NAAFI CLUB KIEL

I am looking for any ATS lady who was stationed in Rendsburg Germany, on the Kiel Canal at the NAAFI CLUB KIEL, between 1946-1949.

I remember the manageress Miss Downee (?) Ginger Jean, but altogether there were about 10 to 12 Naafi girls there.

At that time, I was 11 years old. Very often these girls handed over all kinds of goodies to us children.

Now I am working on the history of the time after the war in Rendsburg. The Naafi Kiel Club was a part of that time. I need a photograph of the Club or anything in connection with it.

I remember that I brought Jean fresh strawberries from time to time.

So If anybody, stayed at Rendsburg Germany on the Kiel Canal between 1946 and 1949 please contact me.

Heinz Johannsen  
Suhmsheide 1a  
24768 Rendsburg  
Germany

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encl. Picture of the Kiel Club from a Postcard. 1950



*Kiel Club from a postcard 1950*

### Mrs Jean Johnston (née Milborne)

The enclosed photograph was taken in Felsted Essex. I would love to hear from anyone who remembers me as, Pte Jean Milborne. I married Sgt Jimmy Johnston in 1944 and was discharged in Newmarket in 1945.

Contact  
Mrs Jean Johnston  
28 Linden Court  
Park Gate  
Southampton  
Hants  
SO31 6AZ



### Mrs Muriel Poole

Do you recognise yourself among this bevy of energetic beauty??

We were on a PT course in a hutted camp situated below Stirling Castle, and the date of the course was from 7th to

30th April 1943. I wish I had a fraction of the energy that I had in those days. I would love to hear how the world has treated any of my fellow sufferers who recognise themselves from the photos. The other request that I would like to make is for any information at all, about an ex colleague, **Corporal Barbara Fraser**. She was the Battery Clerk of 579 Bty, 155 (H) H.A.A. Regiment R.A. stationed at one time on Woolwich Common, and the last contact we had was at one of the post war reunions at the Royal Albert Hall probably 1949/50. She lived in Tooting, at 13 Topsham Road, and prior to joining the ATS worked for London Transport, at 55 Broadway, in the typing pool. I would dearly love to get in touch again.

Contact  
17 Brockhurst Gate  
143 De La Warr Road  
Bexhill On Sea  
TN40 2JJ



### Mrs Marjorie Jones (née Davidge)

The enclosed photograph shows the members of a course sometime during, I believe 1943. I was then Pte Marjorie Davidge and am shown sixth from the left at the rear.

Unfortunately, I can't remember anything about this course beyond the fact that I was awarded a distinction!! If anyone recognises herself and has a clear memory of all the details I should be delighted to hear from her.

Contact  
91 Somerset Road  
Folkestone  
Kent  
CT19 4NW



### Mrs Gwen Darnbrough (née Copeland)

Where are you - **Irene Brown** of Runcorn, **Nora Higginbottom** of Chesterfield (became Nora White after marrying Jack) **Olive Scott** (the office stoker), Rita from Manchester, and **Early Birds** from No4 Camp, Longtown, Carlisle, all worked in Planning Branch HQ. Between the years of 1942-1945.

My name in those days was Gwen Copeland, and later became Gwen Darnbrough, please get in touch if you read this.

Contact 6 Milton Court  
590 Burnage Lane  
Burnage  
Manchester  
M19 1RX

### Mrs Pamela Green (née Rice)

Where are you now? ATS Special Platoon 1942.

The photograph in this years No 1 copy of the Lioness evoked many happy memories. When the platoon was disbanded many of the girls transferred to the ATS Provost.

I recognised **Gwen Griffiths, Winnie Pearce, Joan Clover** and several more who joined us in London District Provost. Happy days!!

How nice to be in touch again? Indeed where are you now?

Contact  
5 Mill Lane  
Woodford Green  
Essex  
IG8 0UN

### ITALY 1945-1946. ANNA

A Mrs Moira Haylock is trying to find a friend from post-war Italy. The missing friend was a former German Jew called Anna serving as a Sergeant attached to the RAEC either in Naples or Padua. Her home in UK was near Lincoln, possibly at Lewick. If anyone can help identify or find this lady or provide any information about her, please contact the Association Secretary.

### Jean Tidd

Posting Wing, St Georges Hall.

The main influx of ATS was in 1942/44, but many of the 'characters' were to be found in the earlier drafts. All the ATS above were volunteers in 1939 and 1940.



*The 'Early Birds' St George's Hall Reading*

Does anyone recognise themselves?

Jean Tidd (ex WO1)  
12/A Dartmouth Avenue  
Sheerwater  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU21 5PH

### Olive Joan Munday

Do any ex ATS members who served during World War II remember my mother Olive Joan Munday?

I do not have details of her rank or where she was stationed, but she came from Plaistow or Leytonstone and was aged 25 when she was discharged in 1946.

She then went to live/work at the Coram Street Hotel, Coram Street, Holborn, London, until I was born in 1949.

Its possible she may have had a colleague called **Muriel Ellis or Knight**, last known address in Harlow, Essex, did you serve with her?

I hope someone out there can help me by sending any information, however small to;

David Nugent  
66 Marine Court  
St Leonards In Sea  
East Sussex  
TN38 0DW

### Mrs Margaret Cranmer née Favell

I should so much like to contact any 'G.L.' Ops of 461 Battery Stationed at Newhaven and later somewhere in Suffolk in 1943-4 and 5. I was Margaret Favell, tall with curly hair (inside leg measurements not known).

Viva Neuva  
2 Moon Ridge  
Newport Park  
Topsham Road  
Exeter

### Mrs Margaret Lapidge (née Cotterill)

I would very much like to make contact with any of the girls in the enclosed photograph taken behind the RA Mess, Woolwich in 1958. They are members of 'C' Coy 12 Platoon and lived in Shipbourne Camp.

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Rear L to R

**Unknown, Sheila Hughes, Unknown, Betty Tyson, Sylvia Frost, Maureen Kickman, Dons Catterill, Ella Lane, Mayone Unwin.**

Front Row L to R

**Carol Joyce, Barbara Knockolds MBE, Unknown (behind), Jean Sherwood, Known, Me finally Sylvia Blair.**

I have always kept in contact with Madge Unwin, but would love to hear from any of the others, plus one not on the photo but was on the same shift **Dorothy Walts** also **Dora Davy** (named Mockridge).

Anyone looking at this and recognises the girls I would like to hear from them.

Mrs Margaret Lapidge (nee Cotterill) W/397829 Pte

Contact  
54 Cleanthus Rd  
Shooters Hill  
London  
SE18 3DD



*'C' Coy 12Pl*

### Mrs Anne Bradshaw (née Ranyard)

Whatever happened to the Rose Bowl, that 610 Coy RASC 1944/5 won?

I would like to contact any ex ATS on this photograph.  
**Sylvia Salmon, Daphne Day, Audrey Preistley.**

Contact  
Mrs Anne Bradshaw  
71 Castle Rock Drive  
Coalville  
LE67 4SE



*Winners of the Rose Bowl for Best Company*

### Joan Where Are You?

The photograph is of the marriage of **Joan Leek** (Leek, I believe to have been her maiden name). She served with myself and **Joan Connor** who now lives in New Zealand with her husband Bill. Bill and the two Joans served with 122 RASC (CMT) Coy Haywards Heath and the Joan in the photograph attended the wedding of Joan and Bill Connor.

Can anyone help trace Joan picture below? And who is the Sergeant she married on Saturday October 12th 1946.

Mary Santer  
74 Walvern Rd  
Benington  
Hants  
SG2 7LS

Tel 01438 869618.



### Mrs Pauline Cook (née Lorimer)

Here is a photograph taken by myself of some of the Clerks when we were stationed at the Army School of Hygiene, Keogh Barracks, Mytchett, Surrey between 1942-1946, ATS attached RAMC and all the Clerks in the VCB where are they now?

Contact  
Mrs P Cook  
25 The Hermitage  
25 Holmesdale Gardens  
Hasting  
TN34 1LY

Tel 01424 438954



### Are You On Parade?

Major Joan Leslie sent in this photograph showing General Slim, inspecting a Platoon at Maryhill Barracks Glasgow in 1952. Does anyone recognise themselves in it?

Contact  
Maj J Leslie TD  
1 Clarendon Court  
East Grinstead  
West Sussex  
RH19 4EF



### Who Is Connie?

The inscription on the back of this photograph reads. 'Sweet Memories of 593 Battery taken Crab Lane Gorleston -On- Sea. 1943 from Connie with all my love XXX'

Mrs M Watson  
31 Marmers Close  
Gorleston-On-Sea  
Norfolk  
NR31 6TU



### Mrs Eileen Mesheau

I would like to hear from anyone who served with me at Weymouth and Portland. We were plotters at 'The Verne'-Portland and worked in the Naval Dockyard. A few of the names were:

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| Hilda Bullock  | Birmingham       |
| Lila May       | Southampton      |
| Rene Lewington | Winchester       |
| Betty Denver   | Trowbridge       |
| Vera Wheeler   | Leith - Scotland |
| Betty Parsons  | ?                |

Pat Riley and I were the PT instructors, the girls will remember early morning runs in the misty weather at Portland and 'Dancing at the Regent'. Also there were two ATS's stationed with me at 'Tinto' Lanark, Scotland. They were from Belgium and were kind enough to obtain a couple of yards of Belgium lace to finish my wedding dress in 1945. They did not receive my wedding pictures as I was transferred while on leave and they went elsewhere. I would like to thank them again for their kindness. The dress is still A1 condition and I tell my granddaughter about the lace bodice and sleeves.



*Eileen and Pat*

I am hoping that some of the girls mentioned above receive the 'Lioness'. It's a great magazine and I only heard about it a year ago. As soon as it arrives in the mail, I drop everything and read it.

I am enclosing a picture of my mother and myself. We are still close friends (since 1940) and visit each other often. She is now Mrs Clancy and lives in Aldershot, England.

Eileen W Mesheau 03/11/98  
11 Cady Street  
Ludlow MA 01056  
USA  
E-Mail (tankcorps@AOL.com)

#### Who is Jean?

I have recently been given a copy of the Womans Royal Army Corps magazine 'Lioness' and wondered if your readers might be able to help me trace a Wartime member of the ATS, I have enclosed a photograph. All I know is her Christian name which is Jean. I believe that the 'Grenade' insignia on her uniform means she was attached to the Royal Artillery. I also believe that she was involved in the sifting of the guns.



Jean became engaged to my brother Leslie Cook who was a Bombardier with the 1st Airlanding Anti-Tank Battery R.A. and sadly he was killed at Arnhem in September 1944 a few months later. My family lost touch with her as naturally she had her own life to lead, but I would very much like to find her again as I feel she may be able to help me to discover more about my brother, in those few months before he was killed, and may also have knowledge of which troop he was with and the circumstances of his death.

I was only 3 at the time and my mother is 91 now and her memory is not very good, my sister was only about 9 at the time and thinks that Jean came from the Eastbourne area originally. Unfortunately neither of them remember her

surname. Perhaps Jean takes your magazine, or perhaps one of your readers may recognise her, and would kindly get in touch with me at this address.

Contact  
Mrs J R Good  
Rouxinol  
11 Horseheath Rd  
Linton  
Cambridge  
CB1 6LU

#### Mrs I D Lynch (née Stokes)

I have enclosed a group photograph of the 12th West Lancs, Coy ATS, taken in Ilkley in 1943, we were attached to the 125 OCTU RA.

Perhaps some of your members recognise themselves. I am 7th on the right in the back row.

At Ilkley we had a successful concert party and used the local theatre, which was also our mess hall, for our production of Aladdin and Revue.

It would be great to hear from anyone who remembers me. I was billeted in 'Gatecliffe'.

After 'D' Day I went to RAOC Derby.

Pte I D Stokes W/30294

Contact  
10 Louise Rd  
Northampton  
NN1 3RR



*12th West Lancs Coy ATS*

#### Mrs Linda Steele 515 Bty

The enclosed photograph shows 515 Bty sent by Mrs Linda Steele. She is on the 3rd row, 5th from left. Does anyone remember her.

Contact  
Mrs L Steele  
5 Willow Avenue  
Broadstairs  
Kent



**Mrs Mary Dalton (née Beacock)**

559H (M) Ack Ack Battery.

Mrs Mary Dalton nee Beacock would like to hear from anyone who remembers her.

25 King Edward St  
Wirksworth  
Derbyshire  
DE4 4FE.

**Mrs P Bradshaw (née Johnson)**

I am trying to find Mary Tiffany of Knowle Avenue, Leeds, York. My number was W/140584. We were never stationed together, I know that she did get a posting to Europe later in the War but then we just lost touch. If I remember rightly she was in the HAA, just hope that you can help.

Phyllis Bradshaw  
23 Barlow Rd  
Wendover  
Bucks  
HP22 6HS

W/140584 Pte Johnston.

**Mrs Dorothy Tiplady née David (456 AA Battery)**

Mrs Dorothy Tiplady nee David would like to hear from former members of 456 AA Battery, particularly from the girls in hut 7, who signed a book bought as a 21st birthday present for her.

Margaret Fenby, Amy Sinton, the two Fenby's or Betty and Joan the twins. 'Bash Bash Bobbie', or any one who served with us.

I have met the other five ladies in the enclosed photo but no one who served in the RADAR.

Each year when we go to the reunion at York we hope to see our numbers increase but so far six is all we can muster.

Mrs D Tiplady  
15 Singleton Court  
Patrington  
Hull  
HU12 0SF  
01964 630807



*Left to Right  
Georgina Pope (née Potbury), Beryl Kneeshaw (née Bostock),  
Dorothy Tiplady (née David), Ethel Abbott, Joy Williams.*

**2nd Lt Eustelle Peck ATS.**

Lt William Stewart who served with 1st Canadian Armoured Division 1942-45 seeks news of 2nd. Eustelle Peck ATS. Her last known address was Nelson House, Shady Bower, Salisbury. Believed to have come from Shepherds Wells in Kent, and to have married Sgt James Watt of the Eighth Army.

He would dearly love to get in touch. Please contact  
William Stewart  
R.R.1, Kirkfield  
Uphill  
Ontario  
KOM 2BO  
Canada

Tel 00 1 705 833 2286 Fax 00 1 705 833 2434

**Miss Frances Green**

Miss Frances Green would like to know if anybody recognises themselves all those years ago.

Contact  
12 St Georges Cres  
Fordingbridge  
Hants  
SP6 1ET



*Guildford Training Centre*

**Mary Irene Burgess**

Does anyone have any information on my mother, Mary Irene Burgess known as RENE. She married in 1944 Pat Newman who served with the Royal Dragoons.

My mother served with ATS Signals between 1942-1945.

Please contact  
Maggie Smart  
Longlands  
Copse Lane  
Freshwater

### Mrs J Hamson

Does anyone recognise this building and the girl sitting on the fountain. Also in the second photograph does anyone recognise themselves as one of the five.

Please Contact  
Mrs J Hamson  
5 Foster St  
McKinnon 3204  
Victoria  
Australia

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*The Mystery Lady*



*Famous Five*

### BSM A Bayley

Major (Retd) AW Bayley was the male BSM with 435 HAA Bty RA - 132 HAA RA at Buckhurst Hill. He would like to hear from anyone who served with him.

77 Western Ave  
Felixstowe  
Suffolk  
IP11 9NT

### Sylvia Cameron née Munro

Mrs Eliza S. Cameron known as Sylvia, single name Munro. Served 1941-1946 trained at Oswestry then to Arborfield then London 457 Battery (4 Section) 'Bomb Alley' then to Rye Marshes she is looking for **Jessie Ramage** (Glasgow) and **Ella Davidson** (Aberdeen). She has yet to meet any of her old colleagues and if any of the above rings a bell with anyone please contact her. She would love to hear from any of you.

Sylvia Cameron  
3 Appin Cottages  
Dall  
Aberfeldy  
Perthshire  
PH15 2JQ

### Mrs Josephine Shelly née Hardacre

I wonder if any members remember this picture being taken. I must have sent it to my brother, who was in the RA serving in Burma.

My brother died a couple of years ago, and my nephew found this picture in his effects, it was taken in 1942, but where I can't remember.



*503 M HAA Bty*

The second picture is getting worse for wear, but I would dearly love to know what happened to (Cavvy) Caville can anyone remember her.

**PDF Compressor Free Version**



*Cavvy Caville*

Mrs Josephine Shelley  
45 Chauncy Rd  
New Moston  
Manchester  
M40 3GG

Ex CSM W/12933

Tel 0161 681 4632

### **Mrs Eva Hughes (née Meire)**

Does anyone recognise themselves in this photograph.

Mrs Eva Hughes (née Meire)  
8 Fairfield  
Oakleigh Park North  
London  
N20 9AW



*ATS & PT Admin Staff  
No 1 ATS PT School  
Glen Parva Bhs 1944*

### **Mrs Lynda Parsons**

Mrs Lynda Parsons would like to hear from anyone who recognises her.

29 Desborough Rd  
Eastleigh  
Hants  
SO50 5NY



*Lingfield 1961*

### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

REMEMBER TO PAY FOR 1999 BY FRIDAY 13TH  
NOVEMBER 1998.

If you would like to pay by Direct Debit please contact:

Mrs Sue Myers at Headquarters

# Gunners Corner

## 525/155 H(M) AA Bty RA

May I please express my thanks to Rosa Riley (née Davis) who was one of the contributors to the first Poets Corner, in the Lioness No 2 1997. I was the surprised subject of her poetic prowess and was bowled over by the most complimentary lines!!

A few of the 'GL girls' of 525 have been in regular touch and we've held a small annual reunion since 1990. The 45th Liberation Festivities in Antwerp were widely reported in Lioness No 1 1990 by Doreen Peters, when she and I were two of the seven lucky ATS to be present there in 1989 along with hundreds of veterans and friends. Stemming from an article in the Antwerpen Gazette at the time, I made contact with Ida (née France) Mees who had married a well known Antwerp and International footballer. Ida and Vic met whilst 525 Bty was in the area. Ida and I then set out to find as many GL as we could and so began our yearly get together. We've been pleased on these occasions to have the company of those husbands who are still around and we've met in different places including Norwich, Antwerp, Lichfield, and Harrogate, to name a few. Our latest was at the Park Hotel, Tynemouth, and this for me was an exceptional event as, coupled with this reunion, was my 80th birthday at which they gave me a right royal time!

The 'regulars' at our 525 Bty do's are:

Rosa Riley (Davis), Ida Mees (France), Margaret Muskett (McIntosh), Mona Heeley (Lindsay), Hilda Taylor (Wilson), Betty Lander (Ashton), Helen Wilson (McHardie), and myself Mabel Bolton (Dee). We've also had Joyce Challoner (Ingerfield) sadly now deceased, and Nica Hollis (Ede) who is now not able to travel.



*Mabel Bolton cuts her birthday cake at the 525 Bty Reunion*

Thanks to the husbands for their help. If they're asked by people why they're at these celebrations they say 'We're attached to the ATS'!

More thanks to Rosa who, when we were attending again in Antwerp, the 50th celebrations, composed and read out at a very large gathering, a poem for the occasion. This was written on vellum-type paper in calligraphy and was presented to the Burgermaster, H. Cools.

Best wishes to all who served with 525 in Danson Park, Welling, Kent, and in Antwerp.

From Mabel Bolton (Dee)

## 93rd Searchlight Regt RA

There will be a Luncheon at 12 noon on Saturday 26 September 1998 at the

Union Jack Club  
Sandell St  
Waterloo  
London  
SE1 8UJ

Price To be advised

Contact Mrs Ann Slater  
39 Hawthorn Rd  
GT CLACTON  
Essex  
CO15 4QX

## Sisters Unite After 32 Years

Mrs Rosa Blewitt encloses two photographs of her sister and herself.



*Rosa on the Left 1942*

We both joined the ATS and served in the Ack Ack for nearly six years, her number was W/93432 and mine W/93433. We kept in touch the whole of our service, my sister having been a plotter, and me a predictor number she calls herself 'the old soldier', as she was demobbed a month later than me.

### PDF Compressor Free Version

On demob we both got married, my sister emigrated to Australia and we met up again this year when I went to Australia for five weeks holiday. We had a lot to make up for after 32 years apart.

We were both in 498 Battery 144 Regiment.

My name Rosa Blewitt née White, my sister Grace V Baldwin née White

Rosa Blewitt  
14 Croft House Ave  
Morley Leeds  
West Yorkshire  
LS27 8NW  
0113 2531375



*Rosa on the Right 1997*

#### Burrow Head

My wife and I read with great interest the article relating to Burrow Head.

My wife Rita Higgs nee Penman and I met while we were serving with the 483 (M) HAA Battery attached to 139 (M) HAA Regiment.

We were wed in 1944 and are celebrating 53 years of happy marriage. We remember vividly the 24 hour plus train journey that our unit had to reach Burrow Head from the South, I believe that we may have been amongst the first of the mixed units to go there.

One of the impressions that came to mind about our arrival at Burrow Head was the urgent need that we had to lay duck boards down over the sea of mud to form paths to reach the doors of the Nissen huts.

Another feature that constantly reminds us of Burrow Head were the incessant gales that always seemed to be blowing. A member of our unit small in stature had a lucky escape when his steel helmet was thrown back violently by the wind thus threatening to strangle him. Could I mention in closing that we have seen only one person of our old unit and his name was Ben Healey and he was working in the next street to ours.

Rita and Ernie Higgs  
16A The Green  
West Drayton  
Middx  
UB7 7PJ  
Tel 01895 446059

#### Battery Linking

Sue Crook welcomes all who wish to be put in touch with others in their battery in which they served during WW2.

Please give full details of your Christian - Maiden - Surnames and present address. Also all Battery Numbers. Sue makes no charge but a SAE would be appreciated for reply/List.

On a sad note, Sue wishes to pay tribute to Miss Margery Wells, (606) who died in February 98. Margery was my friend from the time I was posted to B Troop after my marriage in 1944. After demob, she visited me when our two children were born and we then kept in touch at Xmas, with only two meetings until our first reunion in York 1993 for the Ack Ack gathering. We talked well into the night! She championed my cause of 'Linking for the Reunion' and indeed, in 1996, fetched the Master Gunner over to meet me and tell him of my involvement, I and so many others will miss her. Thank you Margery.

Other new names are still coming. A lady from Canada has just met up with someone from her Bty (473) they live in the same postal area, and almost halted the meeting they were attending when they chatted together. Numbers are on their way to 1600. Keep writing everyone!

Sue Crook

14 The Larches  
Horsell Vale  
Woking  
GU21 4RE

#### Memories of 602 (M) HAA Battery RA

In 1942 my fiancé, Leslie was classified as missing, after the fall of Singapore and it was six months before I was informed he was a Japanese Prisoner of War. Life seemed so uncertain to me, and so I decided to be positive and join the ATS and trained at Glen Parva from 9th October 1942. I received additional training at Arborfield and then did Gunnery practise at Weybourne. I was stationed in a large red brick hotel at Sheringham. It was December, bitterly cold, the toilets were frozen over and the hotel had been strafed by German fighters. The lorry journey to Weybourne certainly put colour into our cheeks but did not always improve our gunnery accuracy.

In early 1943 we were posted to Northern Ireland. Sections 1 and 2, which included myself, were at Ballysnod, with sections 3 and 4 at Island Magee, and then onto Mallusk. It was during my time at Ballysnod that I was informed that my brother had been badly wounded whilst fighting with Rommels Africa Corps. It was at times like this that I fully appreciated the quality of the wonderful friends around me.

In January 1944 we made the long journey to Sinah Common, on the South Western trip of Hayling Island. It was a dangerous area, just opposite to the Portsmouth docklands. Shortly after arriving we found out the camp had been completely destroyed by German bombers in April 1941, the Island being a decoy site for Portsmouth and District. I was a height and range finder and the four A5 anti - aircraft guns and Z batteries were right behind me, it was a terrific noise and we had our fair share of Junkers 88 bombers! Our officers were Miss Vaughan Lee, who later married Brigadier Bill Bradford, Major Woodruff, Captain Thomson, Lt Mathers and Lt Beers. We girls used to visit the Tudor Rose tea shop in nearby Havant, and also HHS Northney, a naval base for some good food and a dance. We, in turn, had a happy time in our Naafi with Sgt Lewington playing the piano and Tony Dashwood on the accordion. We were sworn to secrecy, but we could see the construction of Mulberry

Harbour, which was to become so vital to the D-Day landings on June 6th 1944. As the months crept nearer to June we all knew something big was going to take place, and Hayling Island should have sunk with the weight of troops living under canvas. We at the camp were kept alert by the local fighter boys who used to zoom in fast and low and tip their wings and wave to us from their cockpits. One evening, shortly after D Day, myself and a few friends walked to the beach and came across items of flotsam, carried by the tide from Normandy. Pieces of khaki, clothing and footwear left nothing to the imagination, but wallets, letters and photographs did! I can clearly remember the first V1 rocket, (Doodlebug), to explode on the English mainland - it fell onto Portsmouth after passing over us.

Looking back, I think the most amusing incident, but not at the time, happened during a night raid. Normally I could jump out of bed, slip on my kit, and run to the gunnery green. On this occasion I made a mess of it, so put on tin hat and ran in my pyjamas. 'Who was that bloody ATS girl running around in pyjamas?'

My time in the ATS was hard, at times frightening, but also exciting. Very good friends like Rita White from my home town, Hugglescote, Lois Wedgworth from Stoke On Trent and Kathy Parker from Redcar. Also, to this day, I write to Reg and Benny Curtis, who married in late 1944.

After the 'Doodlebug Campaign' I was posted to Greenford, working as a switchboard operator, and making a good friend in 'cookie'. London had suffered terribly, what with the blitz, the V1's, and then the V2 rockets causing devastation.

The ending was happy. I danced outside Buckingham Palace on VE Day, and rejoiced on VJ Day. My fiancé survived his hell on the railway of death, and we married in 1945, to have three children. My brother, Maurice, survived the war also.

I am very happily married, but every now and again my mind drifts back to the 1940's and I remember a young girl in the ATS, her name, Private Betty Hatter.

Betty Kendrick  
79 Fairfield Rd  
Hugglescote  
Coalville  
Leics  
LE67 2HY

## 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

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary  
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION  
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 "LIONESSE"**  
(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 .....

# Rosemary Perry Retires

Mrs Rosemary Perry our Chief Clerk retired from the Civil Service after over 40 years service. We were extremely sad to see her go. Thank you to all the Branches who very kindly contributed to her leaving cheque.



*A cheque from the Association*

Brig Meechie presented the cheque after the Grants Committee Meeting in April where several members of the Association were present.



*Rosemary cuts the cake*

The Association then hosted a lunch time party in the new offices where many of Rosemary's friends and colleagues had gathered to surprise her. She was then given Garden Tokens from her colleagues before cutting the delicious retirement cake.

We wish Rosemary a happy and healthy retirement.

## THANK YOU

To all Branch members who contributed to my retirement gift I would like to say a big 'Thank You'. It was a huge surprise and I was quite overwhelmed. Thank you also for your cards and good wishes.

I had a lovely party and it was a very memorable day. I have enjoyed working for the Association and have got to know so many interesting people. I'm sure I will miss it and I will think of you all with affection.

Rosemary Perry.



*Farewell to Rosemary*

## 'Army Padres and Women Chaplains' Assistants

Please could anyone who served as a Chaplains' Assistant, and Officers and ATS service women who had contact with Chaplains' Assistants and padres during the Second World War, write to me and assist with the research I am doing towards a PhD. If you know anyone else who may be able to comment on the work of chaplains, please draw their attention to my request. I am investigating the relationship between soldiers and chaplains that developed during the war. Usually this relationship was close and supportive, but occasionally there were tensions and disagreements. During WW2, chaplains trained at Chester Teacher Training College. This institution has now become University College Chester where I work.

Please write to  
Alan Robinson,  
Dept of History,  
University College Chester,  
Cheyney Road,  
Chester, CH1 4BJ,  
or phone me on 01244 341088

# Branch News

## Aberdeenshire Branch

PDF Compressor Free Version

The branch covers a large and scattered area so that attendance at meetings is often not very high. However, for our November meeting we met in an Aberdeen restaurant for an early supper, an event which was most enjoyable. Sadly, one of those present died a few days later, a shock to us all. Frances Bohan was a good supporter of the branch, she is greatly missed.

We have made a donation to the Erskine Hospital, Renfrewshire, it cares for all-ranks on long or short term stays.

Three members took part in the march-past at the Cenotaph in London on Remembrance Sunday as they have done for some years.

For our May meeting we shall be having a High Tea at an Aberdeen restaurant.



*Forces Sweethearts*

The enclosed photograph of three dolls in wartime uniforms is submitted by Mrs Mary Newton (née Blundy). The ATS one was knitted during her service at Clay Cross, the others were made more recently because of the interest shown in W.W.2. by her grandchildren. The pattern cost 3d!

Mrs Joan Chapman.

## Aldershot Branch

Brigadier Nolan opened the year's proceeding with a very interesting and entertaining account of her visit to the dedication of the Women's Services Memorial at the Arlington Cemetery in Washington, USA. Her audience was not only enthralled, but filled with admiration for her indefatigable stamina in surviving three days of non-stop activities, at many of which she was required to speak to very sizeable gatherings.

Future delights in store are a visit from Mrs Alice Matthews, who will be telling us about some aspects of her work with the WRAC/ATS Benevolent Fund and a return visit from Miss Joan Tubbs, who will be showing us some of her slides of the Spanish Pyrenees. These will have taken place

before publication, but still to come are a talk on bell-ringing (in time for the millennium!) And an indoor 'boules' competition on July 14th in honour of Bastille Day.

Plans are well-advanced for the South Area Reunion, which Aldershot is to host this year on August 23rd - we hope to see many former comrades then. October and November bring our annual dinner and AGM and we shall be rounding off the year with our usual Christmas party.



*Pipe Mayor and Mrs Fleming (née Ssgt Dawn McLean)  
Baby Cameron Wallace Fleming (07.08.97)*

## This Was Aldershot

The accompanying photographs give a flavour of Aldershot in the late fifties and early sixties.

Now, in the late nineties, the South Area of the WRAC Association is to hold its reunion in Aldershot on Sunday, August 23rd 1998 and one of the visits on the programme is to the Garrison Museum. Whilst on a planning visit there the Aldershot Branch Secretary was told that the museums hold very few photographs of Aldershot during World War II. Can you help? If so, if you would be prepared to lend your pictures to be copied, it is promised that very great care will be taken of them and that they will be returned in good order. Photographs will be used in two ways:-



*Aldershot 1960.  
Leaving Mandora Hutments for Aldershot show.  
Anyone recognise themselves?*

1. To form part of the permanent display at the Garrison Museum.
2. For a temporary exhibition to be viewed at tea in the Church of Scotland Hall during the reunion meeting on 23rd August. For this exhibition we would also welcome photos of any date, taken in the Aldershot area.

Please label your photographs clearly on the back with names, place, date, (if possible) and MOST IMPORTANT, your own name and address.

Send to:-

Mrs A.M.K. Schofield  
5 Middle Avenue  
Farnham  
Surrey  
GU9 8JL



*Queens Birthday Parade  
DADWRAC Maj Dorothy Stroud with Garrison Commander*

### **Aylesbury Branch**

Hear ye all of this. Aylesbury Branch Report and News Letter. To assist all these members who cannot attend Branch meetings, firstly let me welcome Sandra Rowlands, Leona Goffin and Shirley Prime who have been posted to us by Headquarters. We welcome them and extend our hands in comradeship. I trust that they will be able to join us at some, if not all, of our Branch meetings which take place on the first Saturday of each month at 11am, in the Ex-Service Club, Walton Street, Aylesbury. I know that I repeat myself but Please do telephone 01296 630590, anyone who was not at the previous meeting. We do on occasion have to alter our meeting date and there is nothing more frustrating than to have made a journey and find it has been in vain.

**DECEMBER** A short business meeting. We then enjoyed a hot lunch in the dining area of the Ex Service Club, returning to our meeting room for wine and pudding, followed by party games etc.

**JANUARY** As stated in 'Lioness' No.1 98, no official meeting this month or August. However, some of us met at Aylesbury College for an informal lunch provided by the catering department students.

**FEBRUARY** We were entertained by a talk on 'Community Health Care'. The speaker being arranged and introduced by our Treasurer, Joan Robinson.

**MARCH** Our meeting had to be brought forward to 28th February - see what I mean about telephoning first!!! During this month a visit to Buckinghamshire County Museum was organised with lunch being taken at St Mary's Parish Church, this being a short walk from the Museum. Later in the month a visit was paid to the Royal British Legion Club at Princes Risborough, this time organised by two of our members, Molly Marshall and Edna Tapping, where a most enjoyable lunch was provided - us country girls do like our food.

**APRIL** We had a visit from Councillor Mrs Freda Roberts M.B.E., Chairman of Aylesbury Vale District Council. Her late husband was a member of the Bucks Hussars, Territorial Army. Following her visit we felt Local Government who we are and what we are about. Following this I wrote to the Mayor of Aylesbury, another lady, Mrs Rosemary Hicks, telling her about the "World War II Memorial to Woman" project, also suggesting they may like to support the idea, at the moment there is not movement in that direction, however all is not lost.

We have received an invitation from Mrs Hicks to visit the Mayor's Parlour to view the Town Regalia etc...and meet the Mayor. As stated earlier, Mrs Roberts and Mrs Hicks have taken an interest in our Association, I approached Mrs Roberts for her plans to support a plan to have the ATS Badge planted out in flowers on one of the town's raised flower beds. This has been passed and I have paid a visit to the Park's Department with Badge details etc. It is, of course, to celebrate our 60th Birthday - 1938-1998.



*Aylesbury Branch take tea with the Mayor*

*Courtesy of Bucks Herald*

Our meeting with the Mayor took place on the 29th April and 15 members attended. After an interesting talk on the history of the Regalia, we were served with cream teas. I'm pleased to say the local press were present, complete with a photographer. Some of the girls were asked to volunteer their experiences during war service, Joan Shrimpton - A.A. days at Spurn Head, Molly Marshall - on cloak and dagger in France, Joan Robinson - how she joined the ATS with objections from her mum and Alma Strde on moments of adventure when doodle bugs were falling around, after some bullseye shooting by Z guns A.A.

Now a confession!! The Floral Badge idea was not originally mine. One of our members Ellen, Duddridge of Bicester, Oxfordshire, together with her husband - pioneered the idea with the Town Parks Department. At their invitation we shall be sending a delegation to Bicester for the unveiling of their tribute to 60 years continuous women's service in the British Army.

MAY At our meeting this month we hope to have a quiz followed by a Bring and Buy sale.

P.S. A reminder to Annual Members. As stated in Aylesbury branch report 'Lioness' No.1 1998, your Annual Subscription of £5.00 must be received by the Branch Secretary - Mrs Alma Stride, Ticehurst Cottage, Peggs Lane, Buckland, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP22 5HX, by 1st November 1998 if you wish to receive your 'Lioness' in

### **Bexhill Branch**

I wonder if we are still the newest branch? New or not, we have been going 'great guns' since our first meeting last March and now have 30 members, plus a few more in the process of joining. A good source of recruitment has been through our local paper, where we submit a monthly report of our meetings. We all find it quite surprising so many old girls (sorry Jenny our one WRAC!) live in the area, for Bexhill is not a very big town.

After the first few meetings, held in the Secretary's bungalow, we now meet in the Bexhill Royal British Legion and we are most grateful to them for the free use of a committee room.

Meetings have been well attended. We have already discussed how we might mark the 60th Anniversary of the ATS due in September. Planting a tree seems most popular at the moment. On the social front we had a successful Strawberry/Cream Tea in July, weather was a bit uncertain but we did manage to boost our funds considerably. We are looking forward to enjoying a Christmas lunch together in December and sherry and mince pies a week later in the home of member Ena Moloney.

We need to make a fund raising priority. Despite great generosity from our membership in so many ways, we all realise that money is a necessary part of a successful branch, to allow us to expand and go on to greater things.

Certainly we look forward to the continued success of the branch in 1998. Maybe we should also say thanks to Eastbourne and Hastings branches for their encouragement and support and extending the hand of friendship to us.

Finally a sad note - to report the death of member Kath Polhill (née Hill) aged 83, who had spent the last two years of her life in an excellent home in Battle. Kath came from Bradford and her blunt Yorkshire humour came to my notice, when I first met her in Hastings, at the RASC record office. She used to keep an eye on we younger girls, she was a lovely person and in all the years of our long friendship she never changed. I shall miss her!

May Jackson.

### **Blackpool Branch**

We have had to suffer the loss of Sarah Cudlip, she was on the Advice Stall at the Reunion and a wonderful person, very proud of the Association and its aims.

We had a lovely day in York seeing the sights and a Trip to the Ice show.

This past week we started our Christmas Celebrations at Fulwood Barracks Preston where the Sgt's Mess entertained us to lunch. Traditional fare - ending with the loyal toast - port wine and mince pies, many thanks to the Regiment.

We hold our meeting at the RBL Club Cleveleys on the third Friday of every month.

Olive Driver J.P.  
Secretary.

### **Bolton Branch**

The Branch is going through a bad patch at the moment owing to the resignation of both the Secretary and the Treasurer, no one seems very keen to take up these positions and both Joan and Vera are carrying on for the time being, when other members have had time to think about volunteering. Vera has not been in the best of health for some time now and she also has a sick husband. Joan is resigning for health reasons, since being in hospital last year it seems to have been an uphill struggle. The only way to better health for both of us we feel is a little less stress.

Betty Crompton, one of our stalwarts has also left us, she gave unstintingly of her time and her fund raising was one of her favourite causes. Before she resigned she donated a number of soft toys which she had knitted. These were sold and raised an excess of sixty pounds for Branch funds. Well done Betty.

Our social activities have been somewhat curtailed. We visited the Mayor and Mayoress and after a brief talk by the Mayor, tea and biscuits and a guided tour of the Town Hall. This is an annual event and enjoyable.

The anniversary of VE was marked by a service on the Town Hall Square where wreaths were laid. the parade was followed by a Buffet Lunch at our local Barracks.

The 60 years anniversary of the formation of the ATS will be marked by a garden plot depicting the ATS badge in gold on a background of green with lettering in red. The plot will be in full bloom in June (photos in next issue of Lioness).

Vera and Bill Worthington celebrated their Golden Wedding in December, when they received a certificate of congratulation from Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip.

### **Bradford Branch**

Greeting to all Members.

Our meetings are on the 2nd Monday in each month with a regular attendance of 25-30 members.

November is always a busy month beginning with the Festival of Remembrance, which was very well attended and a very good show.

The following Sunday being Remembrance Day Parade and service a busy day for many but the numbers on the parade do not lessen, a very solemn and sad occasion.

We attended a smaller service in the afternoon, smaller parade and less people but no less dignified than the first. We hosted our Annual Veteran Luncheon, to which SVA members and their wives were also invited. We have just one veteran from the Great War - Harry Holmes who had his 100th birthday on the 6th November.

Christmas lunch was held at the University, joined once more by the Dunkirk Veterans and their wives.

In February a presentation was held by the Royal British Legion at which Brooches and Certificates were awarded. The following in recognition of their selling poppies over the years as follows.

For 15 Years - A poppy Brooch to Ada Hendson, Ruth Harrison, Eva Kimaid, Peggy Kenny, Norah Kendall, Elsie Lambert, Olive Rhodes, Elsie Wilkinson. 10 Years Certificates to Mildred Foster and Margaret Ashworth.

In April I accompanied Peggy Kendale to London for the AGM, where I was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for 15 years (now in my 16th year) this was a great honour for me and feel very proud to receive it.

Little did I realise that when I volunteered to carry the standard that very first time (remember that word volunteered) that I would still be carrying 16 years on. On looking back the years seem to have gone in a flash, I have great support from my colleagues wherever I go and still feel proud as I did the first time I went 'on parade'.

In April I also attended City Hall with Mr M Cooper, Chairman of the Federation of Ex-Servicemen and Women and presented a cheque for £500 to the Lord Mayor for his appeal - a scanner for Royal Bradford Infirmary, a very worthy cause, and in the past week we also presented a cheque for the same amount to Manorlands, a hospice which does such magnificent work.

The Standard will be presented on the 17th May at the civic service to mark the end of the Lord Mayor's year of office. On the 24th May we will join the DVA and travel with them to attend a service at Sheffield.

Our Secretary Joy Weston contacted City Hall with a request for a flower carpet to mark the 60th anniversary of the ATS, this has been granted and will be placed in Ilkley - so if any travellers should happen to be in the area of 'Ilkley Moor BA TAT', it will be on 'The Grove' Ilkley.

In July we will be having our yearly bring and buy sale and Pie and Peas Luncheon at the Undercliffe Cricket Club - courtesy of Ivy Whelhouse. This is always a successful event.

Norah Kendall.

## Bury Branch

The work of the Auxiliary Territorial Service has been commemorated in Bury

A reunion of ex-members of the ATS gathered in Sparrow Park in Silver Street on Friday to mark 60 years since the wartime organisation was formed.

The Mayor of Bury, Councillor Roy Walker unveiled a plaque paying tribute to the ATS which was renamed the Women's Royal Army Corps at the end of the Second World War in 1949.

Before long more than 200,000 women were giving their support to services fighting the war.

The women served as cooks, nurses, clerks, drivers, searchlight operators and even as 'lady gunners'.

Locally many girls served with the Royal Army Pay Corps based in Radcliffe, dealing with the accounts of men serving overseas.

The unveiling of the plaque was to ensure that the courageous women both locally who served in the ATS are remembered for their service to the country during World War Two.

A report from the Bury Times Newspaper sent in by  
Mrs Mary Gregory  
11 Royds Street  
Tottingham  
Bury  
BL8 3NH



Sparrow Park, Bury

## Chelmsford Branch

In Lioness No 2 1997, we were preparing for our holiday in Littlecote, Warners new holiday venue. Beautiful gardens and historical house, great success.

We welcome a guest speaker from the RNIB Talking Books in June, who told us £40 million is spent yearly on this service, as so many folk have failing eyesight.

July our anniversary outing was to Dovercourt and Harwich, with tea arranged by WI at Wrabness, our last outing for a well loved member, Miriam Humpherson, who died in August, she was such an asset to our Branch and is sadly missed. We also lost another member, Cathy

Wilsher, and a very popular member, Audrey Rayner. The latter happily moved to the Peak District to be near her family, we do miss her cheery personality besides all the help she gave us.

We have had several members 'in the wars' including Emily Bristowe, who broke a bone in her foot falling whilst cleaning windows, and Peggy Turner, who slipped getting out of the bath. Does this tell us something? - easy on the cleaning, personal and otherwise!

Peggy does our monthly Newsletter, which is eagerly awaited, as it is always so interesting, and Joan Scrivener is our Press lady, which means we get free local publicity, thereby gaining new members, we have welcomed several this year.

We have a good band of helpers, which keep the Branch running smoothly.

October our guest speaker was John Hayes from BBC Essex, who has a great following in Chelmsford and had us in stitches, recounting tales of everyday life in local radio. We also had our annual Christmas shopping day, somewhat early, in Peterborough, and on the way home enjoyed sherry, mince pies, sausage rolls and crackers, a great start to the Christmas season.

November the United States Assn invited us to their Social - a pleasant evening with super food.

We have just returned from a Turkey and Tinsel break at Gunton Hall in Suffolk. Chelmsford ATS will be remembered there for the lone entry in the fancy dress competition, brave Emily brought the house down as Chelmsford Town Crier, with her weeping on the compere's shoulder. Her tears were so realistic. She well deserved the champagne and the pretty brooch awarded her.

December we await our annual Christmas lunch, hoping the wintry weather will not prevent our Area Chairman, Lady Kemball, from joining us. We look forward to another year of comradeship. Many of our members meet up between meetings, which proves what a success the Association is.

### **Colchester Branch**

Another year gone by - how time flies! We spent an enjoyable Christmas meeting in December with 60 members and had a lovely spread. Our January meeting was also well attended and we were entertained by the Copford ladies Bellringing team. We had a wonderful time singing along with all the well-known songs which brought back many memories for us all.

At the moment we are busy planning our future programme of speakers and visits for the coming year and were delighted to hear that the memorial to 'Women at War' is going ahead and things are moving at last.

On March 24th some 20 members are attending a luncheon at Clacton Golf Club - an outing which we all look forward to as we are always made so welcome. Our next outing is to the old fishing village of Burnham-on-Crouch on 21st May. Other outings have been arranged to visit Felixstowe and Lavenham when we hope that the weather will be kind to us.

We have already had two speakers this year. Firstly Mr Hardy gave us an interesting account of his travels in Scotland which he illustrated with some beautiful slides. The scenery held us spellbound and whetted our appetites to visit this lovely country for ourselves. Following this we had a nostalgic trip into the past when Dr Peter Tolley related his remembrance of Christmases spent in Clacton during the 1930s. We had a good old laugh at all his stories and reflected on how different things were in those days for both children and their parents.

We are now looking forward to a long hot summer and many happy meetings and outings to come.

Mrs S.E. Tooley  
26 Holland Park  
Clacton-on-Sea  
Essex  
CO15 6LR

### **Crewe Branch**

In October four of us went with our Chairman's husband to his 8th Army Reunion at Stoke-On-Trent he made quite an entrance arriving with four ladies in tow and we all had a jolly evening.

In November five members attended the Cenotaph Parade in London the weather was not very kind this year being very wet but there was the usual good turn out of ladies on parade.

In December joined by our friends and relatives we enjoyed our annual trip to the Theatre to see the pantomime. After the Christmas break we resumed meetings again in February our workforce is even more depleted this year through illness and other reasons.

In March our Chairman Betty and Secretary Edith with Officers from the other branches in our Area went down to Hereford for a meeting with our Area Chairman Mrs Maggie Purkis. It was decided that Crewe Branch should host the 1999 Wales and West Area Reunion and Shropshire and Stafford will assist us. The Grand Reunion 2000 is going to be organised by the Cardiff Branch. Also in March we were invited to a dance given by the Royal Marines at Stoke-on-Trent several of us managed to go and enjoyed the night out.

Because we could not find a date to suit everyone for our Christmas dinner at Christmas time we decided to leave it until the New Year. We eventually ended up having it on March 29th members and husbands went for Sunday lunch at the Crewe Arms Hotel, we all enjoyed it so much we are hoping to do it again later on.

Betty Patton went to the 93th S/L Reunion at Leamington Spa on April 4th she said it was a very pleasant weekend. She is now looking forward to seeing her Ack Ack friends again at the York Reunion in August.

Betty, Edith and Mabel travelled down to London for the AGM, thanks to Mrs White everything went off very smoothly. We wished Brigadier Field a happy retirement and also Lt Colonel Soames. Then we welcomed Brigadier Meechie as our new Vice President. We all wish her well for the future.

Edith who was there as our Area Secretary noted that Wales and the West Area was fully represented.

Our first fund raiser this year was a Dance on May 7th at the Crosville Club Crewe which we always enjoy doing. We have another fund raiser in May at Nantwich and a Charity Market Stall at Crewe in June.

What a lot of trouble we have had to get a Flower Bed done to commemorate our 60th Anniversary. As our local Council has ceased to do them because of lack of funds they provided us with a site but we had to find someone willing to do the job and that has been very difficult. However, it would seem persistence has paid off I think we are fixed up now fingers crossed everything is looking good.

We shall be attending the usual civic and service parades during the summer period and we have been invited to Rhyl again this year so we are looking forward to going there for the Welsh Tea.

We shall also be busy this year making arrangements for our reunion in Crewe next year.

Betty Patton  
4 Chapelmere Court  
Copenhall  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 4SW  
Tel 01270 585524

#### Exeter Branch

On the day the 'Lioness' comes through the letter boxes of the members of Exeter Branch not much housework is done. We all continue to search for faces that we might once have known. Older we may be, but in the warmth of our support and friendship we have changed not one jot. Our membership continues to increase. From a nucleus of eight we are now a thriving group of seventy- and still growing.

1997's first meeting set the scene with a speaker from an Image Consultant Company called 'Colour me Beautiful' we acted as models for scarves, makeup and stylish ideas which sent us all home with a lighter step. The speaker had complimented us on our youthful appearance (the lovely jewel coloured scarves certainly helped). The meeting cheered a grey January day.

Our subsequent speakers have been informative and fun.... 'Life on Lundy Island, Recipes from Israel, Keeping beautiful with the help of Aloe Vera' etc.

We hired a hall in Centre of the City and sold our cakes, books and plants and coffee to passers-by. Few knew what our initials stood for ATS? Are you the tyre company? Our younger clients marvelled that we were all once real soldiers - and in a war too....!

Several of us went to Worthy Down and others to Blackpool, but our most memorable Sunday was the one spent with our sister group in Plymouth. We attended a Service and the Blessing of a Book of Remembrance for members who had died. Our sincere condolences went out to our friends at the sudden loss of two of their members, Both well known to us.

July found us at Diana Waters home where the food she and Mary Pay had made ruined our diets. Money made for funds and we'll diet tomorrow.

At our Annual Birthday lunch at Exeter Catering College, we were again so pleased to have Mr and Mrs Hill as our guests. Doreen is an honorary Member of our group.

All has not been such smooth going though. The Royal British Legion has changed it's venue and quite suddenly we found ourselves out in the cold. But not for long. Exeter ladies are nothing if not supportive. The committee found a room we could use and by dint of much phoning around we were able to meet and now look forward to again meeting at the Legion's new venue. (Providing someone will volunteer to haul us up the rather steep stairs). Once we all make it we shall have another excuse for further celebrations at our January meeting.

Funds are healthy. We again supported the Poppy Appeal and our own Benevolent Fund. Our stalwart member Mrs Joan Parsons never forgets to send cards to anyone not well, and Mrs Irene Woods embroidery skills now hang in Exeter's Civic Hall. She made a square in a quilt. Our crest was beautifully crafted showing the richness and diversity of the people of Exeter and Devon.

We send greetings to all fellow members. Stay well and cheerful and sustain yourselves with the continuing friendships which are so precious to us all.

#### Fife and Tayside Branch.

To date we now number 34 Life Members and 53 Annual Members. We still meet on the last Thursday of each month at the Royal British Legion Club in Perth for lunch and a small raffle. About 26-28 members turn up each month so it was decided to hand out a news letter to each member, the cost of which is subsidised by the voluntary 50p's each member attending pays. December 1997 we had our Christmas lunch at the Royal George Hotel, Perth with 46 members attending and the highlight of the day was a very large Christmas cake baked for us and donated by 45 Commando Unit, HMS Condor. Our Association badge had been carefully iced on to it which made it extra special. We donated £200 to our treasurer towards funds.



*Fife and Tayside. Intent on Talking/Eating*

We decided to have a 'Membership Quiz' guessing names with given clues and the prizes were Marks and Spencer gift vouchers £15, £10 and two at £3 each. First Mrs Isobel Watson, 2nd Mrs Grace Kirkland and third equal Mrs Anne Clark and Miss Beatrice Arthur (who makes endless trays of tablet for us). **PDF Compressor Free Version**

A few of our members have been discovering that they did their training at the same place, so have been getting together on the telephone and travelling to the monthly lunches together. One of our members Mrs Peggy Miller knitted three sets of very lovely doll's clothes for another member Peggy Leslie, for the dolls which sit on her bed, and belonged to her grandchildren when they were young children. Mrs Leslie is unable to travel and can't come to our meetings but gives generously to our sales tables, raffles and boot sales. A BIG THANK YOU BOTH PEGGY's.



*Scottish Branches Arbour  
A Peaceful Corner*

Plastic containers were handed out to our members who wished to have them, in February. This is an emergency information scheme run by the emergency services and caring agencies and supported by the Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance Service, the Local Council, NHS Trust, Health Board, Gas and Electric and the Churches. A form is completed with medication details and placed inside the fridge, along with personal details, doctor, carer and contact. There are 'emergency' stickers one for the fridge

door and one for the inside door to alert any of the aforementioned services and this can only be a comfort for anyone living alone. Just as a matter of interest are there any similar schemes in any other parts of the country, we would be interested to learn????

We are celebrating our ten years as a branch in March by planting two roses in our Scottish branches walled garden bower. The roses are named 'Fellowship' which we thought was appropriate. We will also have a small plaque done 'for the ten years'.

One of our members Mrs Maureen Lowson (WRAC vintage) was running in the London Marathon and we had a T.Shirt printed for her with WRAC Association Fife and Tayside Branch on it- she was proud to wear it and to date she has raised over £600 for our local mental hospital. Today we learned that she had just completed walking the West Highland Way and had climbed Ben Nevis so WELL DONE MAUREEN WE ARE PROUD OF YOU.



*Marathon Girl  
Maureen Lowson*

We held our AGM at the City Mills Hotel on the 25th April. This was attended by 37 members. We discussed our future Scottish AGM at Redford Barracks in October and the first competition for the shield which will be competed for in the form of a tapestry on the day. ?100 was handed to our treasurer. Once again thanks for all the hard work which goes in to compiling the 'Lioness' It is looked forward to, and read eagerly.

## Dumfries Branch

Our new session opened in September when we held our Annual Bring and Buy sale in aid of Erskine Hospital. It was well attended, enjoyed by all and a very successful evening. After tea, we were entertained by Mrs. Julie Birkenshaw, who sang a selection of songs both old and new but all were sung beautifully.

Our Scottish AGM in October was held in Dumfries and thirty five of our members attended. The event was tinged with sadness as we said farewell to our Scottish Secretary, Captain Pat Stevenson, who has now retired and moved down South. We will greatly miss her, but wish both she and her husband a long and happy retirement.



*Presentation to Capt Stevenson*

Sunday 9th November was our Armistice Service held once again in George Square Glasgow. The weather was in our favour, being a dry bright November day, so the service was well attended, and the hospitality received from the Glasgow City Council was most appreciated... Later that month, we enjoyed a display of Floral arranging by Miss Mary Mair, who most generously gifted her many arrangements to our members.

Sadly, we have lost three of our long standing members. Mary Blackadder, Cathie Guy, Babs Donaldson. All will be sadly missed.

Miss Blackadder kindly left a legacy of £1000 to our branch to be used for outings for the members and in September we enjoyed a grand day out to St. Andrews. On our journey a meal was enjoyed by all at the Crows Nest Hotel in Anstruther.

Our Christmas Lunch is being held on the 11th December in the Grovener Hotel Glasgow, an event we all look forward to and a pleasant way to end the session.

Our best wishes for the New Year go to all Branches.

Maynard Ratray  
33 Cumming Drive 3/2  
Mount Florida  
Glasgow G42 9AD



*Scottish Reunion*

## Grimsby Branch

I cannot believe how fast the days go by. It seems only yesterday I was writing the comings and goings of our branch for the last 'Lioness', and here we go again. One of the penalties of getting old I'm afraid.

First of all I must blow the trumpet for the Grimsby Branch and the Northern Area Reunion, what a lovely day we had! The meal was excellent. Many thanks to Jimmy Jackson and his staff at the Wintergardens, Cleethorpes. Also to Colin Lovelock who played the organ through lunch and afterwards for community singing. Then we were entertained by the 'Humber Belles', a Barber-Shop choir, who sang several songs which we all enjoyed. They had a break from singing while one of the Grimsby ladies, Marjorie Thompson, gave her rendering of two monologues about how things used to be. Time to go home came all too quickly, but it was a pleasure to see all the smiling faces of members as they left. The Grimsby Branch thank all for coming and hope it will not be long before you come again.

Earlier this summer we went on an outing to Heartbeat Country, some of us had lunch in the 'Aidensfield Arms'. What a lovely village Goathland is, it was even better before television made it famous as Aidensfield. We finished the day at Whitby stopping for a meal on the way home.

Next came our Summer Fair in June. We all know what a wet month that was this year and this day was no exception, but we made the best of it and didn't finish up too badly at the end of the day.

We had another outing in August to the Cheese factory at Hawes in the Yorkshire Dales. It was a beautiful day. We learned how the famous Wensleydale cheese was made on a film and then toured the factory. Lots of the ladies went home with Wensleydale cheese and fruit cake in their bags.

We had an AGM in October, the Officers Audrey Porter, Chairman Eunice Dillerstone, Secretary Ruth Jenner, Treasurer were all returned unopposed. Our President Pauline Ellis thanked them and other members of the Committee for all their hard work over the year. Sadly on the day of the AGM several of us attended the funeral of Betty Anderson one of our hard working members. Although not a member of the committee she was always first to turn up at our fund-raising efforts. She will be sadly missed by all of us. Our new Standard Bearer Carol Tyler was on duty for the first time for Betty's funeral, and an excellent job she made of it, especially as she had no time train for a funeral.

In December we had our annual lunch at the 'Inn on the Park' again. We had a very good meal and spent the afternoon nattering over coffee and drinks. A very enjoyable time was had by all.

In December we had our Christmas Fayre. In spite of the weather being very good we did fairly well. We made our usual donations to the Benevolent Fund and Poppy Appeal from the proceeds of the Fayre.

We have already booked our bus and hotel for the Northern Area Reunion and will be joined by the members of the Hull Branch for the trip, which we are looking forward to.

Our new standard bearer Carol Tyler is now being trained by the British Legion.

Pauline Ellis

## Harrogate and District Branch

It seems amazing that we continue to greet new members! It is generally thought that, after De-Mob, we all set about building up our interrupted lives, often marrying, raising a family and pursuing a demanding career, all of which is, as we know, very time consuming. Then suddenly, you sit down, retired (chance'd be a fine thing!), take a deep breath, and take stock! Sometimes alone, widowed, with children far away, you remember the 'good old days'- the camaraderie. But there's no one to reminisce with. 'Wait a minute, though - how about the WRAC (ATS) Association? Do they meet anywhere near me?'

The Editor (a lady) of our local paper is happy to put in our monthly report, and the word gets around. Passing on the Lioness too is a good advert - such an attractive magazine!

We have had some fascinating speakers recently. One of our members, Barbara Dawson, gave us a very interesting talk on the Canals of Great Britain; she has a lot of experience of these, having a narrow boat herself. Vicky Radford enthralled us with a talk and demonstration on the art of lace-making - what hidden talents lie in our ranks! An ex-SAS man, a member of our local British Legion, gave us a talk and superb demonstration on the making and furnishing of Doll's Houses, all to scale.



*The Monica Bradley Seat*

Another of our speakers, Mr Deryck Moore showed a set of slides which he had taken from all over the world, but this took the form of a quiz, in which we had to say (or guess) where they were taken! As it turned out, he only had to tell us very few of the answers. As he writes a column in the local paper, he wrote an article on our history which appeared in the paper itself.

Sadly, we lost one of our Otley members, Mrs Lydia Lee, on May 1st 1998. She had attended the Annual Luncheon in March, and our monthly meeting only two days before. She will be greatly missed.

### Article Written By Mr Deryck Moore

The Friday Report - The Women's Royal Army Corps Association.

Margaret Potter is the current Chairman of the Harrogate Branch of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association, founded in June 1968 and she arranged for me to meet many of their members who had loyally turned up, in spite of the rain, for a photo opportunity around the memorial

seat, dedicated to Miss Monica D. Bradley, the founder of the Harrogate Branch.

Serving in the ATS from 1943 to 1946, the late Monica Bradley was employed as a Cipher Operator High Grade because of her fluent French and German and was one of the operators who handled General Eisenhower's official communique to the British Liberation Army in Brussels intimating that the war in Europe was over.

Still attending the Branch meetings on a regular basis, is the sprightly 85 year old founder member Miss Dorothy Wilcockson, who told me that she was born and bred in Harrogate and joined the ATS in 1939 as a Clerk with the 5th West Riding ATS Company and before leaving Catterick was promoted to Lance Corporal and eventually commissioned to Sub Lieutenant to go to Egypt in 1940.

As an Officer she joined the 501 Company of the ATS, attached to HQ in Cairo but actually stationed at a most secret location in the Desert called the Digla Garrison. Their location was so secret that even the British Army had no idea where they were, let alone the Germans, which, she believes, accounted for their strange staffing complement which ranged between 1 Officer and 60 other Ranks to 20 Officers and 6 other Ranks!

The Secretary of the Harrogate Branch is Mrs Sheila Pantin, from whom any information can be obtained by telephone 01423 507154, and she joined the Yorkshire and Lancashire ATS Regiment in Pontefract, straight from school, until '.....they decided what to do with me!' That decision came in 1942 when Sheila Pantin became the recruitment poster girl of the ATS and joined a special Platoon which had been set up to counteract the smear campaign, prevalent in those days, insinuating that members of the ATS were only from rich families and indeed were nothing more than camp followers. What a great slur this was on so many loyal and devoted British girls, who were playing a vital role in the fight against the enemy. Sheila borrowed the money to get to Pontefract!

What a distinguished career Sheila Pantin led as, following the ATS, she became a F.A.N.Y. Ambulance Driver after 'D-Day', driving the K2 Ambulance to the fronts through Holland and Belgium, and was stationed at Waterloo for VE-Day, and at Eindhoven for VJ-Day. Her grandson enjoys saying that his granny was at Waterloo! Having taught in schools for twenty years, Sheila Pantin went back into uniform by joining the WRVS Welfare Services, a job which took her all over the world.

I felt I had made a real link with Harrogate's past history when I met Barbara Dawson, the great grand-daughter of George Dawson, the fiery-charactered builder who added the wings on to the Crown Hotel in 1840, built the elegant Cambridge Crescent in 1867/1868 and many other of the Town's famous buildings.

Barbara was born in Subiaco in Western Australia to where the Dawson family had emigrated in 1914 and came back to this country in 1959 for a 12 months holiday and stayed! She became a Sergeant in the 65th Signal Regiment of the TAVR in London and taught young lads to drive 3-ton lorries. She now runs 'Grandad's Attic' in Granville road, in Harrogate, where she specialises in the sales of working antique tools.

Finally, I must mention that in a memorable day of meeting these wonderful ladies, I was introduced to Mary Croft from

Belfast, who joined the ATS in 1941 and was sent to Dalkeith to train, with a number of her colleagues, alongside the Black Watch regiment.

Unfortunately their squad training was not very successful as they couldn't understand a word the drill Sergeant Major said and they always seemed to turn the wrong way. She was finally graded as a Radar Operator and went to Devizes for special training. She then returned to Scotland where she was needed to replace men who had left the gun site to form the REME and eventually became a Captain when she moved into the Administrative branch.

My visit touched the history of Harrogate and how much I enjoyed being with this very happy group of ladies, whose contribution to the war effort was inestimable and whose warm comradeship together has lasted so many years. To be with them is to be infected by their benevolent happiness!

### Hastings Branch

1998 marks the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS and 1999 marks the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAC - two very important anniversaries for us all. We do hope that this year the ATS badge will be displayed all over the country and we send greetings to all who served in the ATS and to our younger sisters who served in the WRAC.

We seem to have achieved quite a lot in 1997/98 and our attendance at meetings remains at about 50% of the membership.



Joan Lovell AGM 1997

Our secretary and Joan Lovell attended the AGM in Blackpool despite the activities of the IRA. Joan received her certificate of Appreciation from Brigadier Field and we congratulate Joan on the well deserved recognition. She attended the first meeting of this branch and has been active and supportive ever since. In June last year she had the honour of parading our standard when the Queen visited Hastings to open our new shopping precinct. Again in June Joan provided the Branch with a strawberry Tea in her garden which was a delightful setting and raised funds for the Branch.

Another item of interest last June was the attendance of Norah Bexhall at the handing-over ceremony in Hong Kong and a separate article on her visit is attached. A truly historical event.

Our Social Secretary, Sue Dash, arranged the summer outing which was a visit to either Hampton Court or Kew Gardens. It was a wonderful day out we thank Sue for organising it.

In August our Chairman, Eileen Kent, received a rather special invitation. When Her Majesty the Queen boarded the Royal Yacht for her holiday in the Western Isles, relatives of the crew were invited to be present on the quay side and our Chairman had the honour of speaking with Her Majesty and she presented flowers and greetings from Hastings Branch.

Our founder member came from Wimbledon branch and in the past members of that Branch have visited Hastings to attend our Church Services. In 1997 they came for a day out at the sea-side and we hope they enjoyed it as much as we did. It was good to meet members from another Branch and show them our town. The photograph shows them assembled for homeward journey following tea at our local RBL.



Wimbledon Branch visits Hastings

Two of our members were invited to represent us at the 50th Anniversary of Canterbury Branch and Muriel Poole spoke of the visit at a recent meeting. They had a wonderful day and were most impressed by the arrangements which had been made for the celebration. We have just 32 years to go to our own 50th Anniversary and sincerely hope we will have some younger members to organise it for us!

We have seven members living in Rye so each year in the past our Luncheon Club has met once at The Top of the Hill Inn in Rye and this has always been very well attended. Therefore, in 1997 we had two lunches there and they were so successful it is to be a regular part of our programme in future.

We have one or two speakers at our meetings each year and a talk by Mrs Louise Denny who composes military marches was one of particular interest to us and one of the most successful we have had.

We held our usual Christmas Party but instead of a Christmas lunch in 1997 we had a New Year Lunch on the 3rd Wednesday in January (our usual meeting date). It was a good idea and enjoyed by all who attended but perhaps if this is to be a regular feature in our programme it should be nearer to New Years Day.

We have been delighted to hear of the success of the newly formed Bexhill Branch under the guidance of May Jackson and we hope they are having a very satisfactory year.

Finally - to mark the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS we will be holding a Church Service on the 6th September at 3.00pm in St Matthews Church, Silver Hill, St Leonards on Sea. This is being organised in conjunction with other Branches in the South East and we do hope all ex ATS, ex WRAC, and their friends who may be in the area will join us on that occasion.

Greetings to all

### **Hereford Branch**

Thank you to Judi Hole for once again typing this report for me. Since my last report we have been very busy raising funds for the Benevolent Fund and our proposed Standard Fund. Jackie Neave has run a monthly raffle at her place of work as well as knitting beautiful baby jackets to sell. I have written numerous letters pleading for donations towards the Fund and Win Birt has also knitted teddies. Several of our ladies have generously given cash for the cause also and our thanks go to everyone who has supported us so readily. Our gratitude also to Crewe and Birmingham Branches for procedural help.

In September at our AGM the same officers were appointed - Chairman Mrs Mary Nicholls, Treasurer Miss Joyce Nicholls, Secretary Mrs Jo Anscombe. Mrs Sue Walton remains our printer of newsletters and cards. In November several members attended Remembrance Sunday Church Parades. Mrs Eva Burton and Mrs Rosemary Jones were our representatives when Eva again placed our Poppy Wreath at the War Memorial in the City. Six of us attended the Civic Service on November 11th.

Several of our ladies have been enjoying pub lunches each month and November was no exception. A good time is had by all and anyone who would like to join in please contact either Joyce Nicholls or Jo Anscombe. Most planning for future events takes place around a glass-filled table you know!!! Jackie Neave and Jo Anscombe are both knitters for the Association Knitting Circle and once again, anyone interested please contact either knitters. Joyce Nicholls has been selling WRAC 'Bears' as well as a constant order for badges etc, Jo Anscombe submitted a design for a 'Diamond' ATS Garden and we have been accepted by the city Council, but not sure yet, which park garden in Hereford it will eventually be planted.

In December we once again met at the Stage Coach for our Christmas lunch and held a large raffle and Jackie Neave baked and iced a Regimental cake which was won by one of our Branch members - Linda Hutton. Joyce Nicholls sold memorabilia, all for Branch funds. We were especially pleased to welcome Mrs Lilian Cross our Shropshire member

of Hereford Branch, along with her daughter Maureen (an honorary member) who makes lovely dolls and sends them for us to sell. John her son-in-law came too - as chauffeur. We always read the Collect before our meal and Toast Her Majesty the Queen and Her Majesty the Queen Mother and 'absent friends'.

In February we started selling tickets for an April raffle. We had 25 prizes and thank all those who kindly donated them. We also heard that Mrs Billy Cordner, a very staunch Branch member who had moved to Evesham two years ago was hoping to start a Branch there. She had been given press space for airing her views and had several interested enquiries. A few of Hereford members live in the Evesham area and would find meeting there an asset, though we should loathe to part with 'them', we do not mind handing 'them' over to Billy's branch! We shall always work hand in hand anyway.

March saw the usual Branch Officers meeting of Wales and West Area, again at the RBL Hall in Belmont Road Hereford on the 7th March. All Branches were welcomed, sadly not Wrexham, owing to another commitment and they all brought raffle prizes and we are once again indebted to them. Our lovely 'Ross Ladies' under the 'command' of Mrs Mary Davis, once more gave us splendid refreshments with help from many members. It was as usual profitable and £100 has gone to the Benevolent Fund as a result. We love hosting these meetings as they are informal and happy and it is so nice to say 'Hello' to our wonderful friends. Thank you for supporting us and travelling so far. We closed the meeting under the Chairmanship of Mrs Maggie Purkis, with the area Secretary Mrs Edith Francis, just in time before the River Wye overflowed and halted our homeward journeys. March 24th saw us working on a table sale of Bric a Brac in the Butter Market and £93.17 was raised in 5 hours. We plan another on July 7th with a car boot on Sunday July 12th. Six members travelled to the AGM on April 18th at the Victory Services Club in London. It was nice to be there to say 'goodbye' to Brigadier Anne Field who has now retired. She was in her usual good humour and nice to welcome Brigadier Helen Meechie. Jo Anscombe was lucky to win a tin of shortbread in the raffle.

On April 29th we drew out raffle prize tickets, Mrs Celia Davies and Mrs Nora Maunder doing the honours. 1st prize of £15 was won by Mrs Marjorie Prestidge from Pershore. 2nd prize of a bottle of whisky won by Philippa Williams from Ross on Wye and 3rd prize a bottle of brandy won by Liz Kemp a serving soldier in Germany. Twelve other recipients were military also. Final count of money will be announced later. Thank you to all those who contributed towards the success of the raffle.

On May 7th we are holding a meeting at Jackie Neave's home to finalise plans for the Standard and on May 12th our Ross ladies are planning a 'Bring and Buy' stall and cream tea for Branch funds. We shall also hold another raffle. Thank you to all members who keep our branch a happy and successful group and we wish all our 'not so well' ladies a speedy recovery especially Mrs Phyllis Martin in Gwynedd who is recovering from an operation. 'Get well soon' Phyl. We all send our love. We also welcome our latest member No59 Mrs Heather M.V. Kemp from Abergavenny, and look forward to meeting soon.

If anyone knows the whereabouts of two Hereford members who have moved and not left me their addresses, would they please contact me at 6 Haydock Avenue, Hereford, HR4 9LZ. They are Ruth Bromage and Linda Williams. Thank you. No address means no delivery of Lioness, both are life members.

### **Ilford Branch**

Our average attendance is between 10-16 members meeting the first Saturday afternoon of every month.

On paper we have a membership of approximately 40, some of these members we have never seen sadly some we have lost contact with in spite of our efforts to keep in touch.

Our members come from various places in East London and Essex and some of them travel quite a distance to be with us.

This last year has seen sickness amongst our members and their families and we have been delighted to welcome them back when they are on the road of recovery. Our rent last year was trebled and I think it is quite possible we shall have a further increase this year.

Toch H our landlords have been very kind to us over the years and we were delighted on arriving at our last meeting to find our room had been attractively re-decorated. Members have rallied round to help with the increased costs and by running raffles and increasing their monthly donations towards the tea and biscuits we are still solvent.

1999 will be our 80th birthday of continual meetings a record Ilford can be proud of. Perhaps it's a case of 'small is beautiful'.

E.M.H.

### **Isle of Wight Branch**

We have been having our usual busy year on the Island with the reunion in Blackpool figuring 'top of the list'. Twelve of our members travelled North enjoying a long weekend at the resort. It would appear that the Church Service was greatly appreciated and in particular the sermon given by the Vicar who obviously has a great sense of humour!!!

Our birthday lunch last May was as usual a great success when we were so pleased to welcome members from the Southampton and Portsmouth Branches - they really do support us so well each year and we wonder whether it maybe our SUPER raffle that is the attraction??

The Bembridge Street Fayre was again our 'charity' venue and due to the very hard work of our committee and a few of the members we raised just over £200 so we put the few extra £'s required from our funds to make a donation to our local SSAFA who have been so kind and helpful to some of our members who have had minor problems at home. A very large turn out in August to the home of one of our ladies with the help on another we had a super lunch with the usual raffle we were once more - with a little help from our Branch funds - to send £400 to HQ for the ex-ATS Benevolent Fund - with such a small membership number which has been reduced over the years has now dwindled down to 40, paid up members. We do appreciate the co-operation of most of our members when called upon to help.

On Remembrance Sunday the IOW Branch was represented by Vera Royal whose name was drawn out of a hat at the ATS Diners Club to carry the wreath at the Cenotaph. She marched so well under very difficult conditions with bad weather and a great deal of personal pain - we are a tough lot, the World War II Veterans.

### **Leeds Branch**

We continue to have our usual monthly meetings at which we would welcome any new members specially those recently leaving the Services, only in this way can we continue the comradeship.

We had our usual happy Christmas party and a visit to the Pantomime at the City Varieties. Three members were lucky in the draw for tickets to the Remembrance Day Service in Westminster Abbey a truly memorable occasion. Preceded by the evening performance in the Albert Hall and followed by an excellent view of the parade in Whitehall this was certainly a weekend to remember.

Arrangements are in hand for the Ack Ack weekend at Nantwich, the combined services weekend in Bridlington, the mixed Hy AA Reunion in York and the Northern Area Reunion which we are making into a short holiday in Whitley Bay.

Our Secretary has been in touch with the City of Leeds Parks Dept. They have promised to make a special ATS Floral Display to mark our 60th Anniversary.

We were all sorry to hear of the death of our President Colonel Stead, several members attended the funeral and money was sent to the Benevolent Fund in her memory. Captain May Conley was unanimously elected to the position of President, an honour well deserved and appropriate as she has recently been awarded a certificate for Meritorious service to the WRAC Association.

We are looking forward to meeting our usual friends at York.

### **Liverpool Branch**

Since our last report we have had a busy year, and happily welcomed at least eight new members to our monthly meetings. For the record these are held on the third Wednesday of the month, (except January, August and December), at the Royal British Legion (Liverpool City Branch) 34, Rodney Street, Liverpool 1, in the Concert Room (ground floor) commencing at 1-30pm. Our meetings are informal and a good opportunity for socialising with others of like interests. Any ex-ATS/WRAC members living within the Mersey-side area who wish to come along will be made most welcome.

In July 1997, several of our members once again travelled to Rhyl to join in their 'Afternoon Tea' held at the Town Hall. As ever it was an excellent event, our friends at Rhyl really do know how to stage a social afternoon. Even their husbands are enlisted to provide the musical entertainment and act as MC's, so it really is Combined Operations.

Our next event was our Christmas Luncheon held on the 10th of December at the Masonic Hall, Garston. Forty members attended and once again it was voted a 'Christmas Cracker'. I'm sure that this will now prove to be an annual MUST.

Our first outing of 1998 was in March to join Liverpool Branch WRNS Association, at their invitation, and fifteen of our members were lucky to obtain tickets, which were limited, since the reunion incorporated all women serving during World War 2 and since, including WAAF, Land Army, Nursing Service etc. A rollicking good time was had by all and we now look forward to joining the WRNS and RN for

their annual Service on the 16th of May at the pier head Liverpool. Naval members will be travelling from Canada for a special service of Blessing the Trees (Canadian Spruce) to commemorate the Canadian Forces who served in and around Liverpool during the 1939-1945 hostilities.

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On the 21st of April, twelve of our members travelled to Rochdale to join in their 15th birthday celebrations, it was nice to meet up again with old friends and acquaintances and we had a most enjoyable afternoon with a superb buffet. Fund raising events and a raffle were the order of the day, and we do thank the committee and all members of Rochdale branch for their hospitality that day.

Our social life has really taken off this year, for amongst future outings during the coming months are a visit to Wilmslow branch to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the ATS and yet another trip to Rhyl. Just hope that we can stand the pace!!

One of our long standing members, Dorothy Churchward, has regretfully been obliged to give up her home and take up residence in a Nursing Home following two hip replacements and other problems. She seems to be settling in well and hopefully we shall be able to visit her to assure her that we still care. Several of our members were in hospital during Christmas/New Year period, but happily all are now fully recovered.

Our former Secretary, Margaret Barton, and her husband Andy celebrated their Golden Wedding early in the year, as did Trudi and John Orchard on May the 1st. We congratulate both couples and wish them many more happy years together.



*Dot Cook née Hitchen with 99 year old Ted Rimmer*

## Liverpool Branch

On Friday 7th November 1997 many of our members attended the Memorial Service in St John's Gardens Liverpool as they do every year at Remembrance Weekend. The Royal British Legion stage this event to open the Garden of Remembrance in connection with the Poppy Appeal. It is always very well supported by ex-Service Personnel and is a very emotive occasion. The enclosed photograph shows one of our long serving members - Dot Cook (nee Hitchen, WO Signals) who is currently Madame President of the Ladies Section of Algburth RBL and a major worker for the Poppy Appeal, she is standing beside Ted Rimmer who is 99 years young. He served in the 2nd Kings Rifles (Liverpool) during 1914-1918. He saw service in Arras and Paschendale as a scout for the Unit and saw many of his comrades lose their lives. He himself escaped death three times. After the war he served 30 years in the Police Service.

## London Branch

Since our last report we have welcomed many new members who have joined in our activities and become regulars at our monthly meetings which now attract at least sixty members. We held our usual Christmas lunch in December which we all enjoyed. The January meeting was a very lively discussion on various topics and included some amusing anecdotes from new members on their war-time activities. In February there was a warm welcome for Mary Coomer who has a great fund of ATS reminiscences to tell. Some of you may remember her at The National Army



*Dorothy Foster receiving her certificate*

Museum when they held a 'Study Day' on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition, 'The Right to Serve'. At the March meeting, Roger McKenna talked about the Cutty Sark and in April E C Brooks told us all about the bridges in the London Area of which there are many more than just those spanning the Thames. Both were illustrated with slides. The AGM at the Victory Club was enjoyed by many members and we congratulated our Chairman, Dorothy Foster who received a Certificate of Appreciation from Brigadier Meechie.

Our first coach trip of the year in May was to Knole in Kent, a very venerable pile with a great deal of Tudor furniture and portraits on display. The rain which greeted our arrival soon cleared and even the unseasonable biting wind did not prevent us from enjoying the gardens.

Eva Ellison

### Luton Branch

On Sunday 26 October 1997 we were honoured to welcome Brigadier Anne Field, CB, CBE to Luton Parish Church on the occasion of the dedication of our branch standard. It was, she told us, her last official engagement as Vice President of the Association. She will be missed by us all. Representative of other local ex-service organisations, the Royal British Legion, WRVS, Scouts, St John's Ambulance, families and friends also attended the service at which the Reverend Sue Hudspith officiated. The RAF Association and Burma Star Association also paraded their standards, which helped our novice standard bearer immensely. She was Eleri Pirie, who is also our very able secretary. The escorts to the standard were Dot Bell, who served in the ATS, Diana Lidstone, who was in both the ATS and WRAC, whereas Eleri was WRAC, so, purely by accident, we had continuity. Afterwards we retired to our meeting place at Luton Social and Working Men's Club where a buffet lunch was laid on by our members. Four of our guests drove down from Stafford: Ann Deakin, Daphne Jarvis, Majorie Powell and Mr Deakin. The buffet must have been acceptable - very little was left!



*Dedicating the standard, Bearer Eleri Pirie*

We took the standard out for its second airing on Remembrance Sunday at our local parade, where 15 members were on parade. We subsequently received a



*Dedicating the standard, Brig Field and Members*

charming letter from the President of Bedfordshire British Legion complimenting us on our bearing and turnout.

In December we had an informal Christmas party at our venue with a competition for the most prettily wrapped present, won by Georgina Gregory and everyone present received a gift.

On 22nd January 1998 we celebrated our 2nd anniversary formally, holding a luncheon at Barnfield College, where the catering students once again provided an excellent meal.

Four members attended the AGM at The Victory Club on 18 April. This coincided with a branch meeting where two members of the Post Office gave an interesting and amusing talk on the history of the GPO.

### Forthcoming events:

We are entering a float in Luton Carnival on 25th May depicting 'Service Thru' the Century'. Major Simon Sadler RA, Officer Commanding our local TAVR unit, has kindly agreed to provide a Land Rover and driver (Pte Tracy O'Reilly AGC). On board will be 3 members dressed in QMAAC, ATS and WRAC uniform, plus one member in beret, blazer and tartan skirt carrying the standard. We shall be brandishing collection tins for the Benevolent Fund. Hopefully we shall have some pictures for the next 'Lioness'. Our grateful thanks go to Jean Westrop of Dacorum Branch and Daphne Jarvis for the loan of the ATS and WRAC uniforms respectively.

In June we hope to have a talk by Major Patricia McParlane AGC, who was formerly in the WRAC, on 'Women in the Army today'.

Finally we are hosting the London Area Group Reunion on Saturday 12 September 1998 at Luton Social and Working Men's Club, Unit 19, 1st Floor, Luton Arndale Centre. We hope it will be a success. Tickets are available through branch secretaries, but if you cannot obtain one this way, please contact either Eleri Pirie on 01582 611759 or Madge Evans on 01582 617313. The cost is £10 per head. We have to limit the numbers attending to 120 due to the size of the venue so it will be 'first come, first served'.

## **Manchester Branch**

Although we have been slightly depleted over the last few months, owing to transport difficulties and a spell in hospital for one of our members, we have managed our monthly meetings as usual. We are pleased to say the operation of our member hospitalised was a great success, so we can once again welcome her back to the fold.

We have had a number of invitations to visit other branches which we will endeavour to accept. We had an invitation to Rochdale Branch, unfortunately at the last minute we were asked to attend a funeral service with the request to form a guard of honour. We dashed to Rochdale to explain our difficulty, they in turn were most considerate, and made up 'doggy bags' for those who had to leave early. Thank you Rochdale Branch a show of true ATS comradeship.

Our next venue is a visit to Wilmslow branch, we are looking forward to it. It will be nice to go there for the first time and meet the members.

We still have a full diary, our next venue is a visit to Rhyl Branch. This means a day out to the seaside for us, although we don't have much time to see the sea. We are much too busy at the Branch who always pull the stops out to ensure our journey 'was really necessary'.

One of our members is ex Ack Ack and is looking forward to going to York Reunion for the weekend. This is a very popular weekend. The service in York Minster is an experience in itself and the complement of ATS fill it to capacity each year.

We are trying to find out what arrangements are afoot for our celebrations by the Manchester Council, this year but have not yet been advised.

## **Medway Branch**

The branch has not had their feet off the ground since the New Year started. Many Councils have been approached to do the Floral Display, but only Chatham agreed to do one free.

In April three members will go to Ypres to visit War Graves. We held a charity weekend at the Historic Dockyard raising money for the Benevolent Fund. Nan Ovenden held a coffee morning to boost the fund a bit higher.

WRAC Luncheon was attended by three members in October in 1997 and we hope to join them for the 1998 one. Our attendance has dropped to only 15, although more members have joined the Branch, we would like to see more in the future.

The Branch will attend the Dover Patrol in June. We have many invitations but a lack of transport.

Sittingbourne ladies no longer meet at Ann Owen's House. They now attend the Medway Branch. We would like to thank Ann for the kindness she has shown. We will have a fete at a local school, raising more money - Bring and Buy - still bringing in funds.

In September we will have a party for the formation of the ATS Sixty Year Anniversary. We hope members will get in touch with the secretary by August saying they will attend at the same time paying their subscriptions.

We were sorry to say cheerio to Marjorie Huggett who went to live in Canada to be nearer her family.

Several members attended the AGM in April.

## **Newcastle Branch**

We continue to have our happy gatherings on the third Thursday of each month at the Newcastle Companions Club, Leazes Park Road, Newcastle, and we often have in excess of 50 attending. The management and staff are so good and we endeavour each year to make a reasonable donation to the club's funds, as they do not make a charge for us holding our meetings there. Inevitably there are now occasional absences due to illness or weather or transport difficulties as we cover a fairly large area.

Christmas 1997 came early for our Branch. In November our own small entertainments group gave us a polished performance of tableaux, sketches, and musical numbers. There was also a sumptuous spread of food and a good time was had by all. We decided not to meet in December so near to Christmas thus giving members time to devote to their own home festivities.

Our last outing in Autumn 1997 was a bus ride to Blenkinsop Castle Inn in Northumberland, where we enjoyed a meal, beverages, bingo, and dancing. Despite age, we still have a number of active types ready to go; at the drop of hat.

The 1998 Northern Area Group Reunion is being held in our region. We are currently co-operating with the Group Chairman, Colonel Cook, and arrangements are in hand for the event to be held on Saturday, 19th September 1998 at the Park Hotel, Tynemouth, where we should have in excess of 200 present for lunch. We hope it will be a huge success.

Best wishes go to those of our members who are unable to attend our meetings for whatever reason.

## Norfolk and Suffolk

1997 was a good year for us with ten new members joining. The Branch now has 105 Annual Members and 61 Life Members. We still continue to hold our monthly meetings on the first Saturday of the month at the St. Luke Centre, Aylsham Road, Norwich at 2pm (except Jan), with a varied selection of speakers. 1997 brought us a change of office with Joan Awbery retiring as Branch Chairman after six years. Mrs Olive Brown of 36 Calthorpe Road, West Earlham, Norwich, became our Chairman, and Mrs Trudy Bond of 29 Middleton Crescent, New Costessey, Norwich, tel 01603-744576 became our new secretary, Joan having also been in this position for 18 months. Well done, Joan! A few Branch Members travelled to Blackpool in April for the Reunion. Having had a very nice weekend they all are looking forward to the next one. Our summer holiday took us to the 100th Bomber Group American museum near Diss, and then onto the Butterfly Farm and Falconry at Great Ellingham. It was a nice day and enjoyed by all who attended. November was a busy month for us, on 9th November, several members travelled to London for the Remembrance Service and Parade at the Cenotaph. The day went well except for the heavy showers during the service. However, the rain stopped in time for the march down Whitehall. So, having put away our rain jackets, we marched with



*Norfolk & Suffolk Branch*

pride, and it was a very proud moment too with such a large contingent of us attending this year. Several Branch members attended the service in Norwich at the war Memorial. On 11th November, we joined our Gt. Yarmouth members for a service at the plaque situated at the Palm Court Hotel. During the service a wreath of poppies was placed on the plaque by one of our committee members, Mrs Elsie Blanchflower in Remembrance of the ATS girls who were killed there in a bombing raid in 1943. Coffee and biscuits were served afterwards in the hotel lounge. On the 13th November, several members attended a military display given by the Norwich Squadron of ATC at the TA Centre in Aylsham Road, the evening ending with a

Remembrance Service. 1998, being our 60th year, arrangements have been made in King's Lynn for the City Council to provide for us a garden plot set with golden flowers, also with a plaque. This had to be achieved through the hard work of one of our King's Lynn members, Mrs Elsie Plummer who would not give up until they said yes! We now hope to get similar ideas for Norwich. Several of our members still continue to knit for Oxfam. Our lovely Kate (Kate Todd) is still knitting her squares for blankets, keep up the good work, Kate. We are now working on our next years programme of events, and venues for outing etc, and membership. So all in all, we think the branch has a very busy year ahead.

ATTN Norfolk and Suffolk Branch

Subs for 1999 to be paid to our new Treasurer

Olive Brown 36 Calthorpe Road  
W. Earlham, Norwich, Norfolk  
NR5 8RN

Tel 01603 490060

## Portsmouth Branch

Here is a photograph sent by Miss Bray of the Branch at the unveiling of the statue to Field Marshal Montgomery on 4 June 1997.



### **Plymouth Branch**

After our AGM in November 97 we started our year with a thoroughly enjoyable Christmas lunch in the newly opened Prysten House in December and then started planning for a busy 1998.

At the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month Plymouth Federation of ex-services paraded their standards in the City Centre, it was an impressive sight, attended by various dignitaries, to be presented annually we hope.

Sadly, in February, we lost another life member Mrs Reed former member of the WRAC, and a stalwart supporter of our Branch.

In April, Mrs Pratt entertained us by reminding us of 'Going dancing in the 1940's' I hope we can see her again giving another of her entertaining talks.

In May a large group of us, together with some ex-WRNS, are taking a nostalgic trip on the steam railway to Minehead. This is followed in June by the South West Area Reunion, our Treasurer has been happy taking bookings. It looks like being quite a large gathering, we look forward to seeing old friends. The Lord Mayor of Plymouth will extend a welcome to all and after lunch a present day serving officer will give us a talk on 'Service in Angola'.

At our July meeting we are going to hear about 'The Work of the Air Ambulance' and at the end of the month after going out with the collection boxes for the Army Benevolent fund in the morning, a group of us are invading the Citadel to attend the 'Music of the Night'. If the last one is anything to go by we are in for a spectacular evening.

Last summer Ruth arranged for a group of us to visit Looe Island we so enjoyed it we have asked her to repeat the performance in either late August or early September.

That brings us to our AGM in November all branch members are invited to attend. At the December meeting Mr and Mrs Pelton will talk to us on 'Hearing Dogs for the Deaf'.

Plymouth Branch wishes a successful 1999 to all our Comrades and a happy 50th anniversary to all former WRAC members.

### **Rhyl Branch**

Since our last report, we have been very pleased to welcome 6 new members to our branch.

Unfortunately, our Secretary Joan Salisbury Jones has had to resign due to her health. Our new Secretary is Mrs Jean Lander and we wish her well. We have had a very busy year yet again. The ladies turned out for the Remembrance Day with 14 members on parade and 3 more members were at the church. We were on parade again to join the Normandy Veterans at their parade.



*Rhyl Christmas Lunch*

We enjoyed our Christmas Dinner at the Oriel restaurant where eighteen members joined in the festivities (see photograph).

We are looking forward to all the activities this year with the reunions at York, Bridlington and Alvaston Hall, when we always look forward to renewing friendships and making lots of new friends.

As in other years, we are very busy organising our Social Afternoon at the Town Hall here in Rhyl on the 18th June this year.

There has been one other major change here in Rhyl, we have had to change our venue for the monthly meetings from the RAFA club, as a lot of our members were finding it difficult climbing the stairs there. We have been very lucky and have found a new venue at Naval Club, Wellington, Road, Rhyl, where we met every 2nd Monday of the month at 1pm, so if there are any members out there who find themselves on holiday in Rhyl on these Mondays, we shall be very pleased to welcome you to our meeting.

We continue to meet up at various places for a social chat and lunch once a month. 16 of our group celebrated St David's Day concert. On a final I note I would like to mention that it is our Branch 10th Anniversary this December as near to the date as we can. I will be reporting on this in the next issue of the Lioness.

### **Rochdale Branch**

Our last report ended on the cheerful note that our sick members were making good progress, but that was not to be, two have been called to higher service. Dear Joan Dagnall died in November, when five members were able to travel to Oldham to attend her funeral. Then our dear friend, Joyce Lindop, who had fought so hard and cheerfully to overcome her long illness. Nearly all our members attended her funeral, with a Guard of Honour and the Standard. May they rest in peace.

We have all found ourselves a little extra job, i.e. polishing our statuettes of the ATS girl and badge (were we all so slim and smart? Of course we were!).

21st April 1998 saw our 15th birthday, which we held at the Rochdale Masonic Club and enjoyed a buffet luncheon celebration. The management and staff certainly surpassed themselves with the food, which, as all present agreed, was excellent. Our friends from Rhyl, Liverpool, Blackpool, Manchester, Stockport, Wilmslow and Bury joined us and we were honoured with the presence of the Mayor of Rochdale, Councillor Jane Gartside and her escort, Councillor James Gartside.



*Birthday Celebrations*



*Birthday Celebrations*

The Mayor in her address recalled that she had an aunt who was in the WAAF so she was especially pleased to be asked to attend our birthday celebration and our 60th ATS Anniversary. She was pleased to be presented with our statuette (more work for her too!!) Together with a basket of flowers.

We remembered that it was Her Majesty's 72nd birthday so, of course, we had the Royal Toast with a rendering of Happy Birthday.

The meal was a great success, after which the cake was cut and our friend from Manchester Branch, Elsie Dagmer, got up to remind us that our branch and Stockport, Wilmslow and Bury had been formed from former members of Manchester (like the dear octopus).

Our sing-song was entered into with the usual enthusiasm and 'There'll Always Be An England' was sung with the same gusto as in our youth. The Rhyl Branch lead us in the now familiar conga, then we finished with Auld Lang Syne and the National Anthem, a truly wonderful birthday celebration was had by all. Thanks to all our friends who travelled to be with us.

J Shelley

### Salisbury Branch

We were delighted to welcome Brigadier Anne Field as our guest of honour at our Christmas lunch. 36 members were able to attend this very happy occasion. (Photograph enclosed)



Our meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month are well attended. Mrs Babs Mitcheson came to tell us about the WRAC Benevolent Fund Knitting Circle - and gained two more knitters, Phillis Richardson and Jean Robins.

Brigadier Helen Meechie was the speaker in February. She gave us a potted history of her WRAC service and her experience of the first months as our national chairman.

In March Mr Roy Nuttall gave an interesting illustrated talk on the history of the Fovant Badges. Many of you have probably seen the badges cut into the hillside at Fovant. The upkeep seems to be quite a task. We have been invited to the annual Drum Head Service there on July 5th.

Our Chairman Suzanne Gordon shared her slides and memories of her holidays in France with us all in April.

Our Chairman and Vice Chairman attended the AGM in London.

Our first Newsletter to branch members was launched in March and was very well received thanks to the excellent computer work of Carol Ederle. It is a good way to keep in touch with members unable to attend our meetings. If any other branches would like to send any contributions, coming events, etc, do please forward to our Secretary.

Salisbury District Council Parks department have agreed to plant the ATS badge in marigolds. This will be on Newbridge roundabout, so keep a look out if you are visiting our city.

We have been saddened this month by the death of one of our founder members, Colonel Betty Macfie.

## Scarborough Branch

### July

Thanks to our Chairman Major Mehan we had a very enjoyable day's outing to Catterick Garrison Cambrai Barracks Tank Unit.

We were instructed by two NCOs of the Queens Royal Hussars in the general workings of each tank - Centurion, Challenger and Scimitar.

Refreshments were provided and the toilets in the QM stores were made available to us - Photographs were taken of Branch members both the two NCOs, plus the driver of our mini-bus.

### August

Anti-aircraft Reunion held at Imphal Garrison followed by service at York Minster at which the new RA standard was dedicated - This now includes the Women's Section of the RA.

### September

NE Group Reunion - Cleethorpes. Four members attended, lunch and entertainment very much appreciated.

### October

AGM, this included a discussion on the proposed monument being erected in memory of the Womens Armed Forces - Election of Branch Officers still in obedience.

### November

#### Garden Of Remembrance Service

Planting of ASSN cross plus smaller crosses for deceased Branch members. Seven branch members attended the Parade on Horse Guards Parade and a service at Westminster Abbey.

### December

Christmas lunch still to be arranged.

Irene A Beal

## Shipley Branch

We enjoyed interesting and enjoyable meetings in 1997, which included talks and slides shows and we held two fund raising events, which enabled us to send our usual donations to our two charities.

We also enjoyed our Christmas lunch which was prepared and served by our Committee Members.

We have a full and varied programme planned for this year.

We now have a sad event to report, as we have lost one of the founder members of our Shipley Branch - Miss Evelyn Slater - who until she became too ill to attend our meetings was on the Committee and was Secretary from the formation of the Branch in February 1987. We miss her at our meetings, she had such a dry sense of humour and always enjoyed our visit to the Reunions and the holidays

organised by the Branch, especially the Nostalgia Week we enjoyed at Whitby with the 2nd World War Memories theme, and also the trip to France where we visited the War Cemeteries on the Anniversary of 'D' Day. Some of our members were able to attend the funeral service for Evelyn and all wore our badges, which the vicar who conducted the service remarked on, and said it was appreciated by Evelyn's family.

Now we look forward to 1998 to enjoy our meetings and look forward to the planned National and Area Reunions, to meet and talk and socialise with members of other Branches from around the country.

## Shropshire Branch

Our meetings now take place at the 'Haywood Lonsdale Court' Community Centre, Wellington, on the 1st Wednesday of the month, from 2-4pm.

We hope to have an occasional evening outing, to include Members who cannot attend the afternoon meetings.

We have sadly lost two more Members, Daisy Parsons (née Harries) in October, and Brenda Cookson in January. We attended their funerals with our standard.

Brenda served in the ATS/WRAC (TA), rising to rank of Administrative Warrant Officer, serving for 16yrs. Donations of £25 each, were sent to the Benevolent Fund, in respect of Daisy and Brenda.

Two items were omitted from the last report. Scrumptious parties were given for Nancy Meredith's 80th birthday, and Nancy Tipton's Golden Wedding Anniversary.

On Remembrance day we attended the Garrison Church Service, afterwards marching in the Parade and we then replenished ourselves with a very nice lunch at the Swan Hotel, Wellington. On the 11th, Lucy Bowyer smartly paraded our standard again, with some members of our local Royal British Legion, at the Charlton School Service. They later observed the 2 minutes silence in Wellington Square. Previously in November, Lucy and husband Charles were on duty in Tesco's selling Poppies.

In December, we thoroughly enjoyed the splendour and music of the Birmingham Tattoo, in conjunction with our local British Legion, organised by Lucy, who paraded our standard there.

Nancy Tipton has found another long lost ATS friend, Barbara Stockdale (née Atkinson) in Keswick, Canada, through the Canadian Legion Magazine. They were together at Catterick, 1946 and Barbara was also in WRAC/TA.

We still have our Attic Sales, some more profitable than others. Joan Purcell who kindly writes our Newsletter for us, sends it out to Members who unfortunately cannot attend any meetings at all.

Once again in January, we catered for Dawley Senior Citizens Christmas Party, which included bingo, a sing song, monologues, raffle, etc, ending with sherry and mince pies. Everyone was delighted and asked us to do it again next year, and do we 'Do' Weddings?!

it was our turn to enjoy an excellent night out in January, having our Annual Dinner at the Wroxeter Hotel, and despite the fact we are sitting on the stairs in the photo, we definitely were not ready for bed!!

A warm welcome was extended to new members at our meeting, Elsie Teece, Eunice Clark, and Amy Freeman, also, hoping to join us soon, is Jean Burnett Mottershead, whom we recruited from another party, during the evening of our dinner!



*Shropshire Branch at Wroxeter Hotel*

In April we had a quiz, causing much fun and laughter, which was won by Nancy Tipton. On the 18th some of us journeyed to the Victory Club for the AGM.

May 22nd was the Annual Dawley Day event, where we had our Tombola stall, which was a great success. We did some Recruiting at the same time, resulting in one new member.

We hope to visit Chelsea Hospital on Founders Day in June.

For the 60th Anniversary of the ATS in Sept, we are trying to organise something special. Our AGM will now be held in September, to keep in line with Annual Subs, etc.

We are looking forward to the Reunion at Wolverhampton in September, with great anticipation.

Once again, we wish to thank all our members for supporting us, and take this opportunity to invite any other Branch Members, who may be visiting our Area, to pop in and see us. You will be most welcome at our Meetings.

## **Somerset Branch**

The last year for Somerset Branch has been fairly quiet but we have managed to increase our membership with four new members. A big welcome to each. Our Annual lunch was held last March at a local hostelry. In addition to our usual members we invited other ladies from our sister branches of the area group, and what a pleasure to meet them. In total fifty sat down to an excellent meal. In July we are planning another barbecue at the home of our Chairman, last year was so good that it is worth repeating. Three members attended the AGM in London and what a delight to witness Doreen Hill receive her Certificate of Appreciation. Well done Doreen you certainly deserve it.

## **Southampton Branch**

Another six months of well-attended and enjoyable meetings.

In September 1997 four of our members went to the Imperial War Museum to see the exhibition of 'Forties Fashion and New Look' which was so enjoyable that the members would have liked to revisit - had this been possible.

During early December 10 ladies travelled to the Isle of Wight to join that Branch for their Christmas Lunch, as always most enjoyable.

Also in December we held our own Christmas Party which included various games and quiz brain teasers, as well as a competition for flower arrangements which produced many striking entries - making the judge's task rather difficult.

As usual in April we held our annual dinner at the 'King's Court Restaurant' in Chandler's Ford, another excellent meal.

Three members went to the AGM in London in April. Unfortunately our Secretary, Doreen Pledge, was in hospital undergoing an operation, and Mrs Sheila Clement attended on our behalf. We are pleased to say that Doreen has come through the operation well and is making good progress, even though it has to be (of necessity) slow.

We have again this winter experimented with a lunch time meeting instead of evening, and this has proved popular with members.

We would like to mention again our forthcoming 50th Anniversary lunch on the 19th September. We are hoping to make this a very special occasion and would welcome any visitors who would like to join us. Brigadier Field has accepted an invitation to attend.

Sadie Nias

## Stafford Branch

This report covers a year's activities.

We continue to meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month, at Trinity Church, Stafford, from 14.30 to 16.30 hrs and have a good attendance. Since the last Lioness report we have gained four new members and one has rejoined - Mrs Brenda Peck née Bird. The new members are Mrs Pat Pocock née Bird, Mrs Dorothy Archer née Ward, Mrs Gladys Davies née Jones and Mrs D M Shaw née Key. This brings our membership up to 50.

In August we decided to go out to lunch to a very old hall, just outside Stafford, known as Weston Hall which is now a restaurant. During the war Ingestre Park, the ground of the Earl of Shrewsbury's home and just a short distance from Weston Hall, was 27 Vehicle Reserve Depot and Weston Hall itself was the Headquarters of 27 VRD. Two of our Branch members served with 27 VRD so they were thrilled to see the Hall in it's present state and not a Nissen hut in sight! Is there anyone reading this who also served in this unit? We enjoyed our lunch so much we went there again for our Christmas lunch and we rejoined by our President and 3 out of town members - 2 of which we had not met before.

Seven of us attended the Wales and West Reunion in Coventry and representatives attended the Church Services on Battle of Britain Sunday and Remembrance Sunday. In April we had lunch at a restaurant in Penkridge, just outside of Stafford, to mark the 33rd year of Stafford Branch's existence.

Three members attended the AGM, London in April and enjoyed meeting up with old friends.

By now you have all heard about the WRAC Luncheon Club and Ann Deakin is to be congratulated on her achievement. Last April it was just an idea which took off in a big way when we were in Blackpool and, Thanks to Ann's hard work and long hours on the computer, it is now a thriving Club.

Mrs Daphne Jervis TD  
Secretary  
Stafford Branch

## Swansea Branch

Here we are again and still going strong. We continue to meet at the Swansea Guildhall the first Wednesday afternoon in each month. Our Christmas Lunch was held at the Oxwich Bay Hotel, facing the beautiful bay of Oxwich on the Gower Coast.

We all enjoyed a lovely lunch, and a sing a long of wartime songs with a group of senior citizens in another party.



*Swansea Branch Lunch*

Our January meeting was cancelled owing to bad weather.

In February four members attended the Hereford meeting, and three members were at the Cardiff meeting in March. Also in March we celebrated our Patron Saint St David, with home made welsh cakes and wine. Unfortunately the Mayor could not attend this year.

We enjoyed our meetings and often have a quiz set by one of our members. We are also looking at ideas to help Cardiff Branch in the year 2000 and our own venue for the months ahead. Two members attended the AGM in London on April 18th. The Branch wish to express their thanks and good wishes to the people concerned in publishing the Lioness, which we all enjoy very much.

## Weymouth and Portland Branch

Our report starts where the last one in the 1997 2nd issue of the 'Lioness' left off - with the Veterans Festival Week in Weymouth (14th-21st June) - when twelve of us took part in the Service at the War Memorial followed by the march-past along the full length of the Esplanade to the Pavilion. There was quite a long time to stand before the march began, and everyone had aching legs and feet by the end. However, the greetings and applause from the crowds lining the route made it all worthwhile. A few days later we manned a charity stall on the Esplanade in aid of the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds. In spite of heavy rain and high winds we managed to keep hold of all the sale items; and were delighted with the result - £129!

Two days later we assisted at a Military Tattoo at Sherborne Castle which was organised by the Army Benevolent Fund. Once again, the wind blew and the rain fell in gusty showers, and our job as ticket sellers at the gate left us cold and wet. Unfortunately, the weather seemed to keep people away - a pity for the ABF, for there were many interesting events arranged.

In November, one of our members, Sylvia Prior, gave us an interesting talk about her collection of musical boxes. They were quite fascinating and most unusual - thank you, Sylvia.

Last September we were saddened to learn that one of our members had suffered a stroke. She has made fair progress since, but is now in a Residential home in Dorchester and unable to get to meetings. We hope to be able to visit her from time to time.

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In March 1998 we held our Annual Luncheon at which we were pleased to welcome Brigadier Meechie and Lt Col Trout as our guests. Also, they will both be present at a coffee morning we are holding in April at which Brigadier Meechie will present Rose Stanbridge (our former Secretary for over 20 years) with a 'Certificate of Appreciation'. We are all so pleased her service to the Branch is being acknowledged. Well done, Rose and thank you.



*Miss Stanbridge is Appreciated  
Photo courtesy of Dorset Evening Echo*

We have recently welcomed 4 new members; three of whom live some way out of Weymouth along the coast. Due to the sparsity of local public transport it is feared they will find it difficult to attend our meetings, which are held fortnightly at the RNA Club in Weymouth between 1pm and 3pm on a Tuesday, when we have a regular attendance and quite lively sessions.

Again this year, we look forward to the Veterans festival from 14th-20th June, the Parade on the 14th; and hope for better weather for our Benevolent Fund stall on the Esplanade on 18th June.

#### Wilmslow Branch

Since our last report we have made a great start to 1998. We visited the Rochdale Branch for their celebration party in April. We were made very welcome and the food was excellent.

In June we will be visiting the Rhyl Branch for their party.

In July the Wilmslow Branch will have our very first party since the Branch convened in 1993. We are looking forward to this and hope many of the North West Branches will come along.

Our members are preparing for summer holidays. The Edinburgh Tattoo, Paris, America, Jamaica, cruises to exotic places and of course, to our own seaside resorts.

We are still recruiting new members and our members living abroad are in touch with us.

We are making plans for our usual trip to London for the Remembrance Parade. We are planning to visit a show this year instead of our usual tea at the Ritz or Dorchester and Savoy.

We look forward to meeting friends from our ATS days. Since our last report some of our members have received letters from former ATS girls and I am sure there were reminiscences of past experiences. Those days we will never forget, they were some sad, some happy.

We made the best of them and smiling whatever the experience. We knew there had to be a new beginning for all of us.

#### Wincanton Branch

Our monthly meetings have been well attended, especially as some members have quite a distance to travel.

In the past year we have held our annual coffee morning on a cold wet day that kept the public away, but was well supported by our members.

During the Wincanton festival week we had a Tombola stall in the street market, again on the coldest day in June.

In July, we celebrated the Branch Birthday with a lunch at a local hotel, and for once the weather was perfect and we enjoyed a social hour over coffee in the garden.

An outing to Ottery St. Mary and Bicton Gardens in September was enjoyed by members and friends and the weather was kind.



*Wincanton Branch birthday lunch  
Diana Clay, Margaret Nisbit, Molly Clay, Dol Stewart,  
Jean Rowlinson*

At Christmas we had a party in the hall where we have our monthly meetings.

Each member brought a selection of party food and a wrapped gift, and we were welcomed with a glass of bucks fizz. Following lunch and draw we were about to start the party games when it was announced it was snowing.

As some members had a distance to travel they decided to leave, which brought things to a sudden halt. A pity, as the snow did not last. We have started this year with a very good programme and have already had some excellent speakers.

One of our founder members, Eileen Spearpoint, has recently moved from this district, we shall miss her, and wish her well.

Mrs A Burke

### Wimbledon Branch

We have an average of twenty five members attending our branch meetings and in November held a Bring and Buy sale which raised £85.60, a very magnificent effort.

We were joined by Major Eileen Carter at our Christmas party in December. The table was laid with festive food and members were able to enjoy a glass of wine paid for by our Vice Chairman Beryl Douglas who was unable to be present as she had surgery on her toes. Two other members were undergoing treatment at the Royal Marsden Hospital and cards were sent to them to show they were not forgotten.

There is no meeting in January and in February we heard a talk and were shown slides by RENUE (Renewal of Urban Environment) who are working on schemes to harness the power of our local river the Wandle (a tributary of the Thames) to provide light for a small museum through a water mill and other ventures. At our March meeting we learnt of the sudden death of our Vice Chairman, Mrs Beryl Douglas. We observed a moment of silence and our previous chairman, Mrs Margery Hindley, gave a short appreciation.

We were then put through our paces by our Treasurer, Miss Betty Syrett, and took part in a series of exercises which can be done sitting down!! These went down well and it was suggested we should have a short session at each meeting. After exercising our bodies we stirred our grey matter with a quiz on collective names of animals, birds etc.

On the Monday following our meeting we were represented at the service of Thanksgiving for the life of Beryl Douglas.

Bessie Wright

### Wolverhampton Branch

We started off 1998 with a change of venue, we now meet at Darlington Street Methodist Centre, School Street, Wolverhampton. The reason for the change was the stairs we had to climb at the old meeting place and we are now on one level. With us all getting older and some disabled we were losing members. We are very happy where we are and we still meet every 4th Wednesday in the month from 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

The first few months of the year are very undecided weatherwise so we are inclined to entertain ourselves. The Secretary gave us her past experiences before the war when she worked for Norman Hartnell, the Queen's Dressmaker, and one of our members gave an account of a wedding she attended in Germany.

We are busy now preparing for our Area Reunion on 12th September which is being hosted by ourselves in Wolverhampton. Tickets and information available from Miss Mary Davies, 4 Carol Crescent, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton Council have kindly agreed to plant a badge of flowers in commemoration of 60 years of formation of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) in West Park, Wolverhampton which we will be visiting possibly in June. Our outing this year is to Hatton Country World, Warwick on 20th May. Unfortunately we have lost another 2 members, Beryl Rogers died on Christmas Eve and Trudie Muffatt died in March. They will both be sadly missed.

On a lighter side we were very pleased to see our chairman, Pat Hill, receive a Certificate of Appreciation for her work for the Branch.

QM Partridge  
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WV6 7AQ

**Snowdon House, 46 River Street,  
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**W/454215 Sue De Barr** (Mrs Roberts) runs the above licensed Guest House. She is offering registered Two Crowns Tourist Board accommodation with full or half board. Snowden House is three minutes from the sea, shops and amusements. Ex WRAC who book accommodation will receive a discount.

Anne Deakin

# Weddings

## 50th Wedding Anniversary

**BINNS - BELL** on the 20th September 1947 at St Anthony's Church Newcastle-on-Tyne. Aircraftman John Binns to Pte Peggy Bell A Coy, ATS Aldershot.

Present Address:

22 Denbeigh Place, Benton, Newcastle-on-Tyne. They met up after John returned after 3 1/2yrs as a Japanese POW.



*John Binns RAF Peggy Bell ATS*



*Mr and Mrs John Binns*

**SMITH - STEED** on 14th February 1948 at Holy Trinity Church, Roehampton, London, SW15 Flying Officer Geoffrey Smith (RAF) to Subaltern Iris Steed (ATS).

A surprise guard of honour was formed by colleagues from Iris's unit at the ATS Training Centre, Queen's Camp, Guildford, Surrey, one of whom, Eileen Nolan, second on the left, subsequently became director of the WRAC.

A celebration family dinner party was held on 'The Day' and a few days later Mr and Mrs Smith flew to Barbados to board P&O ship 'Victoria' for a two week Caribbean cruise. The Smiths have two daughters and two grandsons.

Iris is currently President of the Wimbledon Branch of the WRAC Association.



*Surprise Guard of Honour*



*The Smiths*

**HANDS - FITZGERALD** on 3rd April 1948 at St Marys RC Church, Hexham, Northumberland, Pte George Hands 7th Batt, Parachute Reg, to Marjorie (Tony) Fitzgerald Auxiliary Territorial Service Dorset and District Headquarters Bullford Camp.

**PDF Compressor Free Version**

Present Address:  
6 Houndsfield Grove  
Wythall  
West Mids  
B47 6LR  
Tel No 01564 6994



*Wedding Day Picture 1948*



*Now on our 50th Anniversary*



*The Kendricks 1945*

**CAMPBELL**

Tom and Hilda Campbell marriage June 21st 1952.  
Now at 14085 72nd Ave, Canada V3W 2P7



*Wedding Day 21 June 1952*

**KENDRICK - HATTER**

Betty and Les Kendrick seen here at their Wedding in December 1945 and then again celebrating their 50th Anniversary.



*The Kendricks 1998*

**BALLANCE - SHARLES** on 5th December 1947 at St James Church, Spanish Place, London W1, Captain Dereck WT Ballance RSigs to Jnr Comm'd. Eileen MG Sharles ATS, now celebrating 50 years.



*The Ballances 1947*

**DAVIES-JENKINS - WILSON** on 14th April 1973 at Bishop Gundulph Church, Chattenden, Major Michael Davies-Jenkins, Royal Welch Fusiliers, to Captain Sue Wilson WRAC.

Present Address: 13 Park Lane, Groes Faen, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taff. CF72 8PB.

The Davies-Jenkins today, pictured at their Silver wedding party at the 3rd (Cadet) Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales (Glamorgan Counties) where Sue is serving as an ACF Officer.

The cake was made by W/Cpl Jennifer Radford (nee Lawrence) RLC and formerly WRAC, who is currently serving with 1RWF, Michael's old battalion.



*Major Michael Davies-Jenkins and Captain Sue Wilson Cutting the Wedding Cake*



*The Davies-Jenkins Cutting their Silver Wedding Cake*

#### **Wedding Announcement**

I recently received an open invitation for the WRAC Luncheon/ Dinner Club to attend the Wedding of ex W/458373 LCpl Bev/Kermit Bolton and Edward Perry at 10.30am on Saturday 3rd October 1998 at Accrington Register Office, Willow Street, Accrington, Lancashire. Unfortunately, due to this very special occasion, Bev will be unable to attend the WRAC Dinner which is being held on the same day. I am sure everyone will join with me in wishing Bev and Edward every happiness for their special day.

Ann Deakin.

## Ruby Wedding

**MITCHELL - WILLIAMSON** on 1st February 1958 at St George's Garrison Church, Tanglin, Singapore, Major Brian Mitchell RASC to Captain Audrey DS Williamson WRAC. Present Address: 8 Tan-y-Bryn Road, Rhos-on-Sea, Colwyn Bay, LL28 4TU



*Singapore 1958*



*Wales 1998*

**WORTHINGTON - BAXENDALE** on December 13th 1947 at St Peter's Church, Farnworth, Lancashire. Bill Worthington, Royal Navy, (Burma Star Veteran) to Vera Baxendale Royal Army Pay Corps, ATS, present address: 7 Doe Hey Grove Farnworth Greater Manchester

They received a certificate of congratulation from the Queen and Prince Philip.



*Bill Worthington and Vera Baxendale 1947*



*The Worthingtons 1998*

# Obituary

## Colonel Vera Kathleen Stead OBE TD DL JP

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Vera Stead died at the age of 92 in Harrogate on 27th February 1998. She was the last remaining child of Charles Frederick Stead who owned the Sheepscar Tannery in Leeds and she was a member of the Board of Directors until her death.

An excellent horsewoman who still rode in her seventies. She had a lifelong passion for the countryside and shared several successful steeplechasers with her brother Phillip. She was actively involved with Riding for the Disabled.

In 1947 Miss Stead was appointed a magistrate and served on the Leeds bench until her seventieth birthday. In 1971 she became the first Deputy Lieutenant for the West Riding.

Miss Stead joined the ATS in 1938 and held various appointments. She commanded the 305 East and West Riding Battalion until her retirement in 1953. She was a member of the ATS & WRAC Benevolent fund Committee until 1957 and a member of Council until her death. In 1992 she was made a Life Vice President of the Council of the Association.



Brigadier Shirley Nield - on the left presents Colonel Vera Stead with a paper knife with the Association crest.

## Colonel Betty Macfie TD

Colonel Betty Macfie died on Tuesday May 5th 1998 in the 'Winton' Nursing Home, Nether Wallop, age 95. Colonel Macfie joined the FANY which was incorporated into the ATS in 1938, eventually becoming the WRAC in 1949. She served mainly in Scotland and London becoming Deputy Director of the WRAC at the War office, she also served on the Management Committee of the ATS Benevolent Fund. While serving at Southern Command Colonel Macfie with Barbara Taunton started the Salisbury Branch of the WRAC Association, serving as Chairman. Several members of the Branch attended a Memorial service of Thanksgiving for her in St Andrews church, Nether Wallop, on Thursday May 14th 1998.

It was during her service at Southern Command she brought 'Cob Cottage' at Nether Wallop, retiring there in 1955, to carry out her many activities, one of which was the pond club for the village children where they rowed the boats and helped feed the many ducks, geese and peacocks - not forgetting Larry the lamb. She was also very active with the WI and entertained her old comrades as she called us flying a WRAC tea towel from the flag pole.

Colonel Macfie was an expert at decorating, bricklaying, plumbing and all household repairs, having attended an Army course at Aldershot.

Among her many hobbies she used to make dolls houses and furniture. She had been a keen ice hockey player, also a champion skier.

Colonel Macfie had been in the nursing home for several years and was visited regular by members. She will be remembered with affection for her dedication and loyal support to the Salisbury Branch in particular and the Corps in general.

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**ABBOTT** Miss B of Babbacombe Devon on 1 January 1998  
ATS/WRAC

**ALEXANDER** Mrs Mary (née Ellingham) of London Ontario  
in early 1998. ATS

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**ANDREWS** Mrs Pam (née Markham) of Colchester on 16  
March 1998 ATS

**ARGENT** Miss Rowena Louise of Westbury on 13 January  
1998 ATS

**BAKER** Mrs Kathleen Peggy (née Bush) of Christchurch  
Dorset on 3 April 1998. ATS

**BOHAN** Mrs Frances (née Brannen) of Aberdeen in  
November 1997 ATS

**BONE** Phillis Mary (née Collett) of Bognor Regis during  
1997 ATS

**BROOKES** Gladys of Yorkshire in 1997 ATS

**BROUGHTON** Mrs N M (née Cubitt) of Norwich on 8  
January 1998 ATS

**BROWN** Mrs Doris Edith (née Wells) of Frome in  
September 1997 ATS

**CONRAD** Jnr Comdr Ines Helen of Rustington in 1997 ATS

**COOKSON** Mrs Brenda of Shrewsbury on 24 January 1998  
ATS

**COX** Mrs Enid (née Mallard) of Cromer on 30 December  
1997 ATS

**CRIST** Mrs Hilary of Albertville USA on 6 December 1997  
ATS

**CUDLIPP** Miss Sarah May of Blackpool in November 1997  
ATS

**CUTLER** Mrs Annie Elizabeth of Burnham Bucks in April  
1996 aged 103yrs QMAAC

**DAGNALL** Mrs Joan (née Cavanagh) of Oldham on 4  
November 1997 ATS

**DOUGLAS** Mrs Beryl (née Mackinnon) of Surbiton on 8  
March 1998 WRAC

**EADIE** Miss Masie of Johnstone Renfrewshire in February  
1998 ATS

**EDWARDS** Mrs Evelyn Jean (née Booth) of Kirkaldy on 1  
November 1997 ATS

**FLANAGAN** Mrs Martha (née Donaldson) of Glasgow on  
24 October 1997 ATS

**FORSYTH** Mrs Margaret (née Muir) of Hamilton on 16  
March 1998 ATS

**GREEN** Mrs Gwendoline Jessie (née Jones) of Hendon  
early in 1998 ATS

**GRIERSON** Col Jane Geddes of Gullane East Lothian on  
28 November 1997 ATS/WRAC

**HAGAN** Jnr Cmdr Isobel Georgina of Totland Isle of Wight  
on 5 February 1998 ATS/WRAC

**HARDY** Miss Joan of Freshwater Isle of Wight on 2 March  
1998 ATS

**HARPER** Miss Doreen Mary of Birmingham on 3 March  
1998 ATS

**HARRISON** Maj Pam (née Sandbach) of Newbury on 10  
December 1997 WRAC

**HARWOOD** Mrs Freda (née Catherall-Howard) of Spalding  
on 25 December 1997 ATS

**HENDERSON** Mrs Winifred (née Fairley) of Edinburgh on  
15 March 1997 ATS/WRAC

**HUCKLE** Mrs Phyllis Rosina (née Chaman) of Worchester  
Park in December 1997 ATS

**HUGHES MORGAN** (née Lindsey) Lady Isabel Jean of  
Kent in 1997 WRAC

**KIRKPATRICK** Mrs Geraldine of Edinburgh on 19 January  
1998 ATS

**MACFIE** Col Elizabeth TD of Nether Wallop on 7 May 1998  
ATS/WRAC

**MARTIN** Mrs Catherine (née Skinner) of Gloucester on 12  
April 1997 ATS

**MASON** Miss Elsie Irene of Wimbledon on 22 November  
1997 ATS

**MCCABE** Mrs Gertrude Elizabeth (née Jackson) of  
Birmingham on 19 December 1997 ATS

**MCQUAKER** Miss Christine of Ayr in March 1998 ATS

**MENDHAM** Mrs G H (née Jelinkova) of London on 25  
October 1997 ATS

**MILLER** Mrs May Jessie (née Sutton) of London on 9  
March 1998 ATS

**NICHOLS** Mrs Ruby Ann (née Larkins) of Great Yarmouth  
on 10 April 1998 ATS

**OPPICI** Mrs Audrey (née Metcalfe) of Lough in January  
1998 ATS

**PARSONS** Mrs Daisy (née Harris) of Telford on 20 October  
1997 ATS

**PERRY** Mrs Joan (née Thake) of Telford in November 1997  
ATS

**POLHILL** Mrs Kath (née Hill) of Battle on 27 October 1997  
ATS

**RAYMENT** Mrs Mabel Violet of Exmouth during 1997 ATS

**REED** Mrs Sheila (née Aitken) of Plymouth February 1998  
ATS

**REEMAN** Mrs Crystal (née Syrett) of Suffolk on 13  
December 1997 ATS

**ROBERTSON** Miss Edith Mary of Meigle Perthshire in April 1997 ATS

**RODWAY** Major Joan Eleanor of Whitstable on 7 February 1998 WRAC

**PDF Compressor Free Version**

**ROGERS** Mrs B (née Wall) of Darlaston on 24 December 1997 WRAC

**SAUNDERS** Mrs Sylvia Maria (née Farrant) of Merthyr Tydfil on 18 November 1997 ATS

**SEAGER** Miss Irene Winifred of Wallington on 30 January 1998 ATS

**SLATER** Miss Evelyn of Shipley on 2 November 1997 ATS

**STYLES** Miss Cecilia Anne of Bridport on May 1998 ATS

**SMITH** Mrs Brenda (née Mangham) of Grimsby in January 1998 WRAC

**STEAD** Col Vera Kathleen OBE TD DL JP of Harrogate on 27 February 1998 ATS/WRAC

**TILBURY** Mrs C E (née Grocock) of York on 6 January 1998 ATS

**WARD** Miss M O of Northampton in 1997 ATS/WRAC

**WELLS** Miss Marjery Ellen of Norwich on 15 February 1998 ATS

**WENTWORTH-REEVE** Mrs Margaret Marjorie CBE TD (née Wagstaff) of Hindhead on 31 January 1998 ATS

**WING** Mrs M J (née Sutton) of Westgate-on-Sea in February 1998 ATS

**WOOLRIDGE** Mrs Rosemary (née Street) of Isle of Wight on 19 February 1998 ATS

**WRIGHT** Mrs Nada (née Middleditch) of Croxteth in 1998 ATS

**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

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

To the General Secretary  
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION  
AGC Centre,  
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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 .....

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