

2000

No. 2

LIONESS

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960- No 206184

Founded in 1919

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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT GCVO

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Brigadier S P Nield, CBE

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Cover Photographs

Front Cover

The Princess Royal's Memorial Rose Garden
at the AGC Centre, Worthy Down

Back Cover

WO2 Liz Kemp with General Jackson
and his staff in Kosovo



Member of the Association of Service Newspapers

Contributions for next issue by 19 Oct 00

CONTENTS

Editorial	1
Letter from the Vice President	1
Articles of Interest	2
ATS Reminiscences	8
WRAC Reminiscences	13
Life in the Army Today	19
Gunners' Corner	22
Where Are You Now?	24
Branch News	29
Wedding Anniversaries	54
Letters	56
Obituaries	59
AGM Minutes.....	62

EDITORIAL

Well, the Grand Reunion has come and gone, and by the letters we have received everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We have some pictures in the centre of the magazine to remind you of the event.

The format of the Lioness has changed slightly in this edition. The section entitled stories has been divided up into a number of new ones – Reminiscences of the ATS, Reminiscences of the WRAC, Life in the Army Today and Articles of Interest. A formal letters page has also been included which I hope you will respond to.

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Major Bill Jay on 20 June 2000 after a long illness. Major Jay was appointed as General Secretary of the WRAC Association on the retirement of Lt Col David Dunn.

WRAC DINNER CLUB AND WRAC DINNER 2000

The Annual WRAC Dinner is being held at Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford on the 14 October 2000. Anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the WRAC Dinner club and would like to attend the next Dinner, and/or the weekend, please contact:

Ann Butler-Deakin, Membership Secretary
'Cobblestones', 2 Chesham Road, Stafford ST16 3JP

Tel: 01785 249992

LETTER FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

Dear Members,

I am writing to you today at the end of June 2000. I find it difficult to believe that next month I will have completed one year as Vice-President of the Association. So much has happened or is scheduled to happen within the next few months that the time has just flown by.

The outstanding event this year so far has been the hugely successful Grand Reunion in Cardiff. I know from your comments at the time and from many letters I have since received that you enjoyed it as much as I did. How very fortunate we were to have such a splendid venue at the Cardiff International Arena. Many congratulations to the Wales and West Area Chairman and all the branches involved – it was a triumph. I would like to thank the Cardiff branch in particular for their warm welcome, their cheerful enthusiasm and their hard work. We all know how difficult it is to organise such a large and diverse event and how much extra work is involved to make it look effortlessly smooth. Well done everyone.

I have not forgotten some of the points raised at the AGM, for example the recognition for women on local War Memorials. We will investigate this and other issues raised. You also gave me one other unforgettable experience when with General Mackenzie and the Deputy Lord Mayor, I was driven round a corner after waiting some time to appear on the saluting base, only to find you all disappearing very smartly into the distance. However, you recovered very well and we met you on your very smart return trip!

As I write, several other events lie in the future.

A philatelic cover is to be produced later this summer to mark the battle waged against the V1 and V2 rockets deployed against us in the summer of 1944. All services were involved and one of the scenes illustrated will be of ATS personnel working as part of an anti-aircraft gun crew on the coastal gun belt set up to defend against V1 attack. I know we are all justly proud of this part of our history. I am sure you will all be very pleased that it is to be given such public and prominent recognition.

In July, as you know, the celebration of Her Majesty the Queen Mother's Centenary is to be held on Horse Guards Parade. This promises to be an outstanding evening of pride and celebration. All organisations with which the Queen Mother has been involved over many years will be represented. We have had a long association with Her Majesty as Colonel in Chief of the Corps and as Patron of the WRAC Association. We expect to see on parade on the 19th, a party of ten Association members escorting our Standard led by Major Maskens-Mackintyre, and in the military part of the parade a party of twelve serving women marching as a formed body under the command of Lt Col Westlake. I feel we should all take great pride and satisfaction in these tributes to the unique contribution made by women in the Army, past, present and future.

This is my first letter to you. I hope you find it of interest. I believe we should talk directly to each other through this magazine about our lives, hopes for the future and our ideas on the future development of the Association in these fast moving and changing times. To this end the Editor will be setting up a formal letters page. Let's talk!

Shirley P Nield

Articles of Interest

Before the WRAC, there was the ATS and before the ATS the QMAAC. This extract from 'Old Comrades' Association Gazette, November 1925, covers the first 15 years, but the sentiment expressed will, I am sure, strike a chord.

THE TRADITIONS OF THE CORPS

Every branch of the Service has its traditions, its stories of wisdom, or daring, or steady fulfilment of duty under difficult circumstances, handed down from the past to the future. I wonder how many of those whose actions gave rise to the traditions knew or remembered their own great moment. Now that it is nearly nine years since Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps came into being, and nearly six years since we were disbanded, I wonder how many ex-Service women remember the traditions they helped to make.

Do the Boulogne signallers, for instance, remember an air raid during which they were on duty in a rather insecure, glass-roofed office, and put through their calls in record time? It seems they did not either faint or begin to cry, though this does not at all surprise us, it surprised and impressed the Signals officer on duty, and he wrote up to Higher Authority asking that their names should be mentioned in orders. But Higher Authority paid them a far bigger compliment than that. "We do not thank soldiers" was the reply, "for devotion to duty. We do not propose to treat these women differently." I look back to that as the time when we really became part of the Army on active service.

Then there was the first occasion on which one of our camps was wrecked by bombs; in Abbeville, that was, and the administrator, whom some of us had thought a little frivolous, carried on and never turned a hair, nor did the women. No one was killed that time, but there were serious casualties among coatfrocks and greatcoats, some of which were blown on to the tree-tops. I don't quite know what people were wearing when they arrived at work next morning, but I know they got there up to time. And that was a tradition of the Corps: Whatever happens, Q.M.A.A.C. reports punctually for duty.

I remember - I wonder if she does - my first discipline case. She was one of the household at Wimereux, and she ceased to work, and was reported to me on the grounds that "I came out to work for the boys, ma'am, and I'm sorry to disoblige you, but I won't work for girls." It was rather a come down, you know, when one had imagined oneself giving the most splendid meals to men returning from the line - but I am not sure that it should be called a tradition of the Corps! It is all in keeping with the tradition, however, that this particular woman, when the situation had been duly discussed, returned to duty and worked so well that, when she asked for it a few months later, she was transferred to the kitchen of a base depot.

It is pleasant, too, to remember a very early unit in Etaples, area - they were the first women, I believe, to travel in those "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8" trucks - who, learning that soldiers did not generally have bedsteads on active service, and that there was a temporary shortage of bedsteads in the neighbouring hospital, asked that theirs might be sent there, and slept on the floor for several weeks. But that was before some of us learnt to sleep eight in a tent in Crecy Forest.

All the same that little episode did something to shape the Corps, for the Corps made itself, in those early days, to a

very large extent. I am always glad to remember, for instance, that the first suggestion that our discipline should be that of the Army - and a very sound suggestion it was - came from a woman in the ranks. I was inspecting in Rouen at the time, and she had committed a minor "crime" - late for roll call, I rather think - had been awarded a somewhat imaginative punishment by her administrator, and appealed to me after the unit had been paraded. "I told my friend in the office about it," I remember that she said, "and he said that his officer couldn't have done that to him. And please, ma'am, I want to be treated the same as a soldier." It was after that that I took to studying King's Regulations and the Manual of Military Law, and discovered fatigues, and conduct sheets, and other useful things that came into Corps Orders later on.

Rouen, Havre, Etaples, Abbeville, Boulogne, Calais, Dieppe, G.H.Q. itself, and all the smaller places in between, I could tell you stories about all of them, and you, I have no doubt, could tell me one or two! There are splendid stories about the retreat in '18, when our women surpassed themselves in "continuous good service and devotion to duty," when the women at Flexicourt fed and directed troops on the move, and the women at St. Omer were kept on duty as indispensable.

There was one thing which the founders of the Corps had not definitely foreseen - we were good for morale. Those dances and tea parties, which you gave and which you went to, were reminders of home, and so they helped the men to carry on. Here is a very small and frivolous illustration: One day I arranged to take my head clerk to G.H.Q. to disentangle some problem about files or correspondence. I found A.G. Branch wondering what could have happened, for it was the first time in the war, they said, that sergeant-major had put on his puttees!

We have a great tradition of the service of the country behind us, if, as we all hope, there is peace in our time, let us live up to the traditions of the Corps in civil life, and let us remember to help each other when we can.

H C I GWYNNE-VAUGHAN, Sometime, C C., Q.M.A.A.C., British Armies in France

ELSIE FROST WAAC 1897-1969

From Mrs Stella Palmer, 52 Alport Road, Frecheville, Sheffield S12 4RX (Daughter of Elsie Frost WAAC).

My mother, Elsie Frost, was born in Sheffield in 1897. It was at Christmas time, and when the doctor was summoned, he had to ride on horseback through the snow!

When the First World War broke out, my mother was very anxious to do "her bit for the war effort" and joined the Forces. She was very proficient in shorthand and typing, and was asked if she would go to France to do duty there, but her mother (my grandmother) refused to give her permission. My mother was then stationed in the Arboretum in Nottingham and worked in the office there. At that time the military were still forming their personnel, and although my mother was part of the Army, some of her uniform was actually RAF. She enjoyed her time there, and although the hours of her duty were lengthy, I think her position in the office gave her a few privileges, so she was able to get some free time occasionally. I recall her mentioning a room

of girls who were called "sail makers" and the long hours and hard work they did. When my mother was able to go shopping, she brought back cakes or buns, or whatever she could buy, to give the sail makers a little treat, as they had very little spare time. Despite this, they were a very cheerful crowd, and got on well together.

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The photograph is of my mother, and the girl sitting in the chair is mother's friend Betty. They are of course in their uniform.

My mother died in 1969, aged 71 years old, in Sheffield.

A GRAND DAY IN AUSTRALIA

In September 1999 I went to Australia for 5 weeks. Whilst in Sydney I visited "Victoria Barracks" and was immediately taken under the wing of Major Pat Hincks and WO1 Mike Biente.



Left to Right:
WO1 Biente, Margaret and Major Hincks

As soon as they found out that I was ex ATS RA they couldn't do enough for me. I was given a tour of the barracks and presented with a signed "History of Victoria Barracks". They also dedicated another beautiful book, "Australia Remembers 1939 - 1945" to our school library. Finally I was given a bush hat complete with RE badge, Australian Army Badge and company flash. I had a wonderful holiday but that day was certainly one of the highlights and very special.

Mrs Margaret Hampton (nee Jackie Jackson ex 547 Bty MHAA RA)

THE EXIGENCIES OF A POST WAR WEDDING

As nobody had thought to bring a camera to my wedding on 26 October 1955, the first photograph my husband Bill and I had taken was two weeks later.



"The delayed wedding photo".

To get to the wedding we all went to Alton on the bus. My best maid was Pte Ann Archer and our best man was the plumber from Huron Camp. I wore a pink and grey suit which my sister had sent me from Canada.

I had been stationed at Huron Camp and on my discharge the RSM very kindly found a job for me in a hotel in Hindhead until Bill, who was stationed at Bordon, was demobbed complete with blue pin stripe suit.

Forty five years on and we are still happily married.

Mrs Celia Rooney Bass, (Pte C M Rooney W/377094).



Celia and Bill Bass today.

THE TABLECLOTH MAKERS

I returned from our Colchester WRAC Association Meeting the other day to find the Lioness waiting for me. On reaching Page 22 I needed no printed caption to tell me I was looking at a picture of Pat Mabbutt who I had lost contact with when our 582 Battery was split up early in 1944.

I wrote to her straightaway and sent her some of our old wartime photographs.



P Mabbutt J Marshall and friends

Pat is in the bottom left hand corner holding our tablecloth. We were given a piece of rust coloured hessian and told to "do something with it". Well we decided to embroider it in green and gold - I can't remember where we got the embroidery thread from. Between us we blanket stitched round the edge, put an ATS badge in one corner, radio sparks (we were radar operators) in another corner, OFC for Operator Fire Control and MR CHAD in the other 3 corners. We then embroidered our names individually in the middle - all in green and gold with the exception of one sole Scots member who used blue thread.

We had many laughs over the job and I still have that cloth - its 58 years old!

Also in the Lioness was an article and photograph of our Colchester and Chelmsford WRAC members at the unveiling of an ATS badge. I am a minute figure in the photograph but we had a lovely morning although when I saw myself in the TV interview that evening I had a hard job to convince myself that I wasn't that old hag talking. Time flies and I no longer look like the smart ATS girl in the photograph.

I thoroughly enjoy the Lioness articles and I find I learn a lot of what other ATS did during the war - few other people seem to realise what we were doing though.

J Marshall (nee Kelsey) W/184281
Annandale, 5 The Street, Kirby Le Soken, Frinton, Essex
CO13 0EE

FOND MEMORIES OF THE LATE CHIEF COMMANDER O'LEARY

I was saddened to read on pages 52/53 of Lioness No 1 of 2000 about the death of Chief Commander Elsa O'Leary ATS. The then Senior Commander Elsa O'Leary was my

CO in 1944/45 at 2/8 Southern Platoon HQ Corsham Garrison Group ATS. We worked in the same office. Through the hatch immediately above my desk she, and Junior Commander Elliott, passed papers and instructions for me to deal with. She was always a pleasant and easy to get on with person and appreciative of my work. She even loaned me out for short periods to other ATS platoons in Wiltshire when below establishment or needing office reorganisation, thus affording me experience for promotion.

A couple of funny incidents spring to mind while at Corsham. Some days, the Senior Commander and the rest of the office liked to have freshly baked buns for their teabreak and I was 'volunteered' and despatched to the village on my bike to procure these. One such morning it bucketed down and I got soaked to the skin. Thus, before returning to work with my purchases, I injudiciously went back to the barrack room to change and to hang up my wet tunic. For my pains the duty corporal, who subsequently inspected quarters, admonished me for having discoloured brass buttons and threatened me with a 252. Senior Commander O'Leary explained the situation and the matter was dropped, to the annoyance of the corporal.

When answering the telephone the CO always identified herself in her well-spoken and distinctive voice as 'O'Leary here'. One caller must have sarcastically tried to mimic her careful enunciation, because I heard her say 'No, not Oh Really, O'Leary, actually'.

In the same issue of Lioness (p.54) you also report the passing of Major(Retd) Edwina Malley WRAC. I wonder if she was the Sergeant who served in Palestine Company ATS, Middle East Land Forces with me during 1946/48. We were in the same Sergeants' quarters at Allenby Barracks, Jerusalem. (See also pp 38/39 Lioness No 1, 1998). She wrote to me from England after I was demobbed in 1948. If so she must have transferred to the WRAC.

Alice R Alexander (Mrs), (W/277067 Sgt Siesel ATS)
23 Brodie Road, Chingford, London E4 7HF

MINI RE-UNION IN WARRAWONG

A few weeks ago I managed to get together 4 ex-gunners, namely Ada George, Mary Webb, Barbara Stockley and of course myself, Bunty (Beattie) Jones. We had a wonderful couple of hours and have decided to meet again.



*Left to Right:
Mary Webb Barbara Stockley Bunty Jones*

Also it may be of interest the Australian Ex-Service Women of Wollongong have sent a donation of \$50.00 for the memorial fund.

W/72949 Bunty (Beattie) Jones
Caerlee House, 511 King St., Warrawong, NSW, 2502,
Australia

NEWCASTLE BRANCH ATS REMEMBRANCE DAY LONDON NOVEMBER 1999



This photograph was taken at Horse Guards Parade where we all assembled for our march to the Cenotaph to pay our respects to our war dead. There was a big TV screen at the Cenotaph and we were able to see for the first time the laying of the wreaths. After the service we went back to Horse Guards Parade where Prince Charles took the Salute. When we were dismissed we met up with our friend Carol from the Weymouth Branch and enjoyed a hot drink from the Salvation Army van. It did bring back old memories of the war years.

We then made our way up to the Westminster Gardens of Remembrance where we laid our Poppies with crosses. Altogether the day of Remembrance was a very moving experience for all who attended.

Mrs Grace Fatherley (nee Bell), 109 Hartington Road,
Marden Estate, North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE30 3PU

CAN YOU BEAT THIS

Mrs Betty Wood has written to tell us about this amazing feat achieved by her friend and fellow branch member.

Mrs Pat Oakes, aged 80, a member of the Birmingham Branch WRAC Association served in the ATS at home and abroad during the 1939-45 War.

She took up the challenge to abseil from the roof of Rackhams store in Birmingham in September 1999!

In 1997, her grandson, Corporal Robert Stevenson of the Worcester and Sherwood Foresters, suffered a life threatening accident while abseiling.

Now fully recovered, he undertook this abseil together with his parents, sister and grandmother to raise money for the

two hospitals which had cared for him after his accident and for the cancer charity Oasis.

A tremendous day for all the family and most notably for Pat Oakes.

Mrs M E Wood, 12 Paterson Court, 1 Kenilworth Road,
Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands B93 0JB

SHOWTIME FROM NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE CONCERT PARTY

"There's no business like Show Business, it's corny but it's true. So here we are once again to show you what we oldies can do!"

These lines were printed in the programme for our Millennium Concert in January, and the complimentary comments and applause of our captive audience, our club-members, proved them to be true. The show was a success.

Our first show took place 5 years ago and we have performed regularly since using our own ideas. We have had some "Cameo" memories, like "Lily Marlene" and her Tommy, which we have been requested to do on more than one occasion. Then there is "Thanks for Memories", a tribute to our years in the ATS, written by Joyce Stephenson and Peggy Binns. We then hoped to encourage other ATS Branches to do the same and I wondered if any of them ever formed a Concert Party and, if they did, are they still going today?

We started with 7 members but sadly we are down to 5 now. We intend, however, to carry on as long as we are wanted. From our last performance, we have proved that, like "Good Wine!", the vintage improves with the years.

It's amazing what 5 people can do, always ready to double up on jobs, helping in whatever way we can, the comradeship happily still flourishing.

This year, as always, we varied our acts - a bit of this and that, a mixture of songs, comedy, short sketches, (we write our own!); then there are the slow dance routines - no high kicks for these dancers, we wish to survive for yet another day!

So, here is our Millennium programme. The full cast opened with a parody on the "Ovaltines" written by Joyce. We were all dressed and acting like the terrible St Trinian girls.

Then I, Peggy, playing all four parts, performed a Victorian Melodrama entitled "Poor Little Nell", which I also wrote. It was an hilarious time as I changed props on stage for each of the four characters, whilst the audience shouted the familiar boos, hisses and cheers.

To follow, we mature ladies looked good, dressed in the latest 1920's bathing suits, as we sang some familiar sea-side ditties. We got whistles! too! Joyce read some very funny verses she wrote to go with the act.

Back to the laughs again, with Anne and Peggy as "Glad and Gwen" who insisted on being called Gwendoline!. They looked strangely like Les Dawson and friend and raised many laughs. Peggy wrote the script.

Our finale proved that we are becoming more ambitious as we went into our last number, "Diamonds are a girls best friend". Who better to impersonate Marilyn Monroe than our own delicious Nora, complete in slinky black satin (all five foot of her including her tiara) and ending up loaded with diamonds. Her timing was perfect and her four supporting Beaux, complete in evening dress, top hats and canes, proved that there are still some folk who remember the romantic dancing of Fred Astaire.



Marilyn and her "Beaux"

Our grateful thanks for the support our members have always given us. Thanks goes to Andy of the RE Association who played the music for us and to Gordon, a friend, who prepared and printed the programmes and also supplied our ATS T-Shirts, without charge.



Left to Right: Joyce Stevenson, Ivy Bennet, Ann Palianis, Peggy Binns, Nora Mills

Best wishes to all Association members from Peggy Binns on behalf of the Concert Party.

Mrs M Binns, 22 Denbeigh Place, Benton, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE12 8DE

NEW PRESIDENT FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE WOMEN'S GUILD



Margaret Jackson

The Co-operative Women's Guild is the oldest women's organisation in the Country, being founded in 1883 and has been responsible for campaigning to better the lot of women, maternity rights and getting women to take more part in public life.

Earlier this year, Margaret Jackson was elected National President of this organisation. Mrs Jackson, then Margaret Wood, enlisted in the ATS in 1942. She served as a Drill Instructor at Glen Parva Barracks in Leicester and later as a Company Sergeant Major at Chilwell Ordnance Depot before being "de-mobbed" in 1946.

THE LOST POET

Capt Bill Leonard was the Radio Maintenance Officer on a bleak H A A gun site on the Isle of Sheppey in 1942. Serving there at the same time was a young ATS girl called Mary (she cannot remember her other name). Apparently, when not working as No 4 of the GL crew, Mary spent a lot of her spare time observing her companions and writing about them and their situation. When Capt Leonard was posted, Mary presented him with many of her writings.

The following poem is one from the collection which Mr Leonard still has. He would like to make contact again, so if you are a member of the Association Mary, please contact the Headquarters.

MESELF

I'll tell you the tale of Mary B
- A most unhappy, O.F.C.,
Her job in life is "No. 4"
She groans and sighs and mutters "Lor!"
There's "grass" an inch high on the base
- Exasperation on her face.
The standing breaks are madly beating
Is it coming or retreating?
"Search bearing nine to one, two, owe!"
She turns the cabin to & fro -
At last, a break, its coming in -
She shrieks "On Bearing!!" with a grin
The guns are going with mighty blasts -
Oh this is smashing while it lasts.
Whats that, it's friendly, can't be true -
Not one of ours - one of "the few" -----

PS Her teeth she now is madly gnashing
Even though the view was smashing.

MEMORABILIA

ATS Enamel Badges	£2.75
WRAC Enamel Badges	£2.75
Association Badges	£2.50
Association Key Fobs	£1.80
Association Square Lapel Badges	£1.50
WRAC Booklets	£0.50
Sandwich Trays	£4.60
Square Trays	£4.80
Teapot Stands	£3.50
Bone China Mugs with ATS and WRAC Badges	£4.50
Pens	£1.80
Regi-Bears (ATS or WRAC)	£7.50
Postcards (pack of 10)	£1.00
ABF Scarves	£2.50

All prices are inclusive of postage and packing.
All cheques payable to WRAC Association and sent to:

WRAC Association HQ
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
Winchester
Hants SO21 2RG

DID YOU SERVE IN THE ATS IN ESSEX

Recently some members of the Chelmsford Branch attended a Church Parade Service for Ex-Service personnel and their families at The Chapel, Warley Barracks, Near Brentwood, Essex. Many Regimental Colours are Laid Up in the chapel where they hang as a perpetual memory to what they represent. Later on it was discovered that there were over 300 ATS serving at Warley Barracks during the Second World War and from there the thought arose that it might be possible for this to be recognised in some way and to include in it those who served anywhere else in Essex. The Barracks are now closed, but were at the time, the home of the Essex Regiment, now part of the Royal Anglian Regiment.

Approval has been given for an engraved plaque to be placed in the Chapel to commemorate the service of ATS who served at Warley and elsewhere in Essex, and a Service of Dedication has been arranged to take place on the Sunday, March 4th at 11 a.m. We welcome all members who would like to attend this important event.

A Roll containing the names of ATS to whom this applies is being compiled as this will be of interest to the Chapel Archives and to the Association. Further details can be obtained by returning the slip printed below.

a. I served in the ATS at Warley Barracks in Essex
from _____ until _____

I was employed as a _____

b. I served in the ATS in Essex from _____
until _____

My Brand is: _____

Signed: _____

Regimental Number: _____

My address is: _____

Please complete a. or b. as necessary

Return to:

Mrs Gina Shadrack
Honorary Secretary
Chelmsford Branch WRAC Association
100 Arbour Lane
Chelmsford CM1 7RL

Telephone: 01245 251088

ATS Reminiscences

THE ATS GIRLS KEEP THE AMERICANS ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW!

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During WW2 the 11th vehicle Reserve Depot, of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, occupied a huge area at Quernmore Park which contained hundreds of vehicles, from jeeps to Scammell 6 x 6 Gun Tractors. Situated 2 miles east of the city on the A683 (3/4 mls east of M6 Jtn 34).



Photograph reproduced courtesy of Lancaster Guardian and Lancaster City Museum

Mrs Olive Driver has sent this photograph showing ATS girls working on American Jeeps at Quernmore Park in July 1943. She knows that it was so because she was one of those working there as a Driver Mechanic.

HOW THE FORCES RECEIVED THEIR MAIL

By Mrs Barbara Danter

30 Blake Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5JL



In response to your request for photographs of our service days, depicting the work we were engaged in during the years of W.W.2 I have enclosed a photo of some members of the Army Post Office, Home Postal Centre, R.E. We were stationed in Nottingham, and almost entirely took over the work previously done by the sappers of the Royal Engineers.

There were thousands of us and I think we were just about everywhere, in church halls, disused factories, and we were billeted all around the City of Nottingham. To this day, no one seems to know that we were doing top secret work, and to my annoyance, we are not even mentioned in the history of the city, a fact which I intend to put right as soon as is possible. The work was repetitive and we stood for many hours at a time. The picture is of some of the girls at the sorting bay. We read the envelope from the bottom up, and had to get used to all sorts of abbreviations such as, EADCU (Enemy Ammunition Depot Control Unit), SEALF (South East Asian Land Forces) and many hundreds more. As the Allied Forces advanced, extra pigeon holes were added to the bays to accommodate extra theatres of war. Imagine what it was like at Christmas. We worked around the clock in eight hour shifts, but at the festive season we worked many more than that as we tried to get the mail to the lads overseas. This work was of the morale boosting kind, what could be better for our fighting forces than a letter or package from home? Many of these letters were insufficiently addressed, and it was amazing how often our specialist sections managed to track down the correct zone to send them to. I could write reams about the very happy years spent with my friends of the APO, but we do have an association called the Army Post Association and we meet up every year for a week of nostalgia and fun. Unfortunately our numbers keep dwindling either due to illness, or the inability to make the journey, and other reasons, but we try to keep all members in our minds by sending out a news letter three or four times a year. I do hope the enclosed photo will be of interest to your many readers.

MY WAR DAYS IN THE ATS JANUARY 1943 - MAY 1947

By Mrs Hanna Kennedy (née Nancy Jenkins)

W/229373 Liverpool Branch

58 Lutworth, Ashurst, Skermesdale, Lancs WN8 6TT

I was called up into the ATS on 15th January 1943 and did three weeks basic training, learning to march, drill etc at High Leigh Hall, Knutsford. From there and after my first leave I progressed to the driving school at Gresford, North Wales. It was an eleven week course, map reading, First Aid, mechanics, then the dreaded driving test which I passed after eight weeks. My instructor then let me take her to Liverpool, where I lived, to tell my mother the good news. It was the first time I had driven through the Mersey Tunnel.

My first posting was to Whitchurch Bristol driving for 666 Mxd HAA Battery, but very shortly we all moved by train to a firing camp on the coast at Aberforth. We were there for three weeks. We then moved back to Bere Alston on the edge of Dartmoor. This was a beautiful place and the people were very kind to us. A few months later we were off back to Bristol area at Westbury-on-Trim but shortly after that 666 Battery were disbanded and we all went our separate ways.

I was posted to 102 Signals Unit at Silver Hill between Hastings and St Leonards where we felt the full force of the doodle bugs all the time. A few weeks later we moved on to Orford in Suffolk. By this time I was driving an American Jeep which I was allowed to use off duty although I don't think that the officers were aware of this! Ted our MT Corporal was very good to us. We were still there when war ended in June 1945 and Records reminded me that two years earlier I had volunteered for overseas service. I was moved with others to

a camp in East Hampstead Park outside London. A month later, after all our injections, embarkation leave etc, together with about 250 more ATS, I boarded Dunarta Castle not knowing our destination. We threw our pennies on to the quay to ensure we returned and we set sail for what was rumoured to be Durban, South Africa. After a week of a very sea sick journey we docked at Naples.

Disembarking we were fed, fitted out with KD and despatched by lorry to Caserta. We were only allowed off camp if the person we were going out with signed us out and in again. I was issued with a 3 ton Canadian Dodge to drive and loved it, especially finding my way round Naples area. If I was on duty at the weekend I would sometimes transport people going on leave to Rome on the Saturday, and spend the night in a room provided by the Nuns in one of the beautiful churches there. On Sunday mornings I would pick up people returning from leave and take them back to camp.

If we were off duty we could travel, by lorry, for a shilling (5p) return to Sorrento on Saturday morning. For 2 shillings (10p) you were able to get a bed and all meals at the WVS hostel.

Our unit then moved to Padua, so still driving I had to find my way about all over again. My friend and I, returning from a journey we were making, once spent a night at Mestre outside Venice. We stayed in a big house which was a sort of stopping off place. There were no locks on the doors so we slept with "one eye open".

Being a driver I saw a lot more of Italy than other service people did, Sorrento, Capri and inside the Vatican. I even rode with an American soldier on the back of his motor bike and visited the ruins of Pompeii. We used to dance every night in the Caserta Palace, where the Peace Treaty was signed in 1945. I also saw the balcony in Rome where Mussolini met his gruesome death. My friend Vi and I were friendly with two Americans who were stationed on the opposite coast of Italy. They said that they flew over to Caserta at weekends which, of course, we did not believe. Eventually they took us to the airfield and in their little 4 seater plane flew us over and around Naples in a splendid air tour.

I was chosen with others to take part in General Alexander's farewell parade. We had to march with a Scottish Pipe Band in front and an American Band behind us which made it difficult to keep time!

In October 1946 I became the wife of one of the men in my unit and during the winter I developed a bad bout of bronchitis. I came off driving and worked in the ration store, nearer to my husband. There were several couples getting married at that time, so the Army equipped and opened a small hotel called Battaglia, run by a sergeant called Steve. Each couple had a bedroom and sitting room and shared bathrooms. We all ate in the dining room and held dances at the weekends.

After three months of comparative luxury my demob came through and I was sent home at the beginning of May 1947. I travelled home by train, no windows, sleeping on your kit in case it was stolen. At Villach in Austria we disembarked for five days and then continued on another train through France, across to Dover, and on to Aldershot for demob the following morning.

One thing I know, I wouldn't have missed the ATS experience for anything in this world.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ATS RECORDS CLERK

By Winifred McGhie (née Holland)

10 Grantley Street, Shawlands, Glasgow G43 0PU

It was good to see a member of the ATS Records Office clerical section, Mrs Joan Halliwell, née Moon writing in. I too was at the RASC Records Office and met my late husband who was in the RAF at a dance in Hastings.

I well remember when Private Gladys Field fell to her death from the roof of Hydneye House where we were billeted. She was an only child and her parents lived locally. I was a corporal in that section and like Joan I will never forget my time in the ATS.

I was on duty when the first doodle bug went over. I jokingly remarked that the aircraft must be ours because of the light in the tail and I got a shivery feeling when I read in the press that it had been a missile aimed at London. The Spitfires used to try to shoot them down before they hit London. My bedroom window was blown in by one, luckily while I was out!

STARTING A NEW LIFE IN THE ATS

By Mrs M P Chiles - always known as "Pam"

formerly W/284742 Pam Wade, ATS Driver

born 17 Feb 1926.

'Lanterns', 12 Cross Road, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5SR

On the 3rd September 1943 my service started at Waterloo Station on my way to Guildford to start my initial training in the ATS. When I left the train I was to discover there was quite a large intake and we were all herded on to the back of a Troop Carrying Vehicle. Quite an assortment of us - high heels, low heels, short, fat, etc. I was a 17 years old volunteer and I didn't have too much trouble settling in, in spite of never having met so many different people in all my life. Once I had discovered where my left foot was I was fine!!

During those weeks (I think there were 3), I made several friends, one who was called May spoke French fluently and was much older than me; and another one was particularly kind and helpful to me (I can tell you I needed it at times!). Careless talk cost lives, so I never did know or even ask them where their future lay. I went to Camberley to train as a driver, but were those women destined to join the S.O.E.? Recently there has been much to remind us of their courage. I would love to know if anyone remembers those days, albeit 57 years ago.

WAR OFFICE TELEPRINTER ROOM

From Barbara Reeves (nee Absolon),

Ex Corporal, WO Signals.

8 Roman Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 1UR

In response to your request for photographs of our wartime workplaces I am sending this one of the War Office Teleprinter room under Whitehall, where I worked from 1941 to 1944. Unfortunately I am not in the photo - I must have been in the Signals Office when it was taken, but two of my friends are. It was deep underground, with inefficient air conditioning and when all the



machines were in action the noise was horrendous. Ah - Happy Days!

Thank you for a very enjoyable magazine. Best wishes to all.

REMINISCENCES OF A MEMBER OF THE ATS PROVOST

By W/99278 Betty Campbell (née McKay), 1 Guthrie Place, Rhu, Argyll & Bute G84 8RF

Now the Millennium is here, everyone is talking of new beginnings, and that is simply what this is all about. Since 1946 on being demobbed from the ATS, getting married in 1950 and having a family, I always had a yearning that I should have spent more time being interested in the ATS friends I left behind. Recently I saw in the SAGA magazine that the Scottish AGM and reunion was to be held in Glasgow on the 16th October 1999. All those years I had been quite ignorant of any reunions, so I felt this was a door opening for me and I phoned Mrs McGavin who very kindly advised me how to join and come along. This I did on the day mentioned and very nervously got talking to the lady next to me from the Perth branch. She asked what section I had been in, I replied Provost Section, but keep it quiet as we girls of the Provost always knew we were not the most popular section. Without any hesitation she said "Oh, Ann Smart will be interested to meet you, she too was in Provost and stationed in Germany". In no time at all I was meeting the said lady. After going through our previous situations and postings, both having been in Antwerp and Brussels it turned out we had served under a Sgt Steele from Kirkcaldy, a Sgt Robinson from Newcastle and ended up in No. 1 C.I.C. BAOR, although unfortunately not at the same time. I was first in this camp at the time SS women were being brought into the compound, July 1945. Our police duties consisted of searching, finger printing, ration deliveries, mustering the women for interrogation and escorting them when they were going on trial. It was all very different from the street and station patrol

which I had been doing since 1942. Ann was able to tell me what happened when she took over my duties. I took early demob in January 1946 because I was anxious to meet up with five other members of my family who had also been in the Forces, and a home coming of a dear brother who had been a prisoner of war since Dunkirk. Now that I am the only survivor it has been wonderful to fulfil my wish of meeting up with some ATS of my own age and interest.

I had a very happy time in the Forces and feel I would have missed out in a lot of ways had I not been there. Now I am with the Glasgow branch I feel I have a whole lot of new friends to get to know, and for me it is a new beginning to travel to Glasgow once a month to meet up with them. I may also add I had a very memorable day at the reunion and hope to enjoy many more.

My best wishes to all ATS friends who may or may not remember me, especially LCpl Margaret Earl who I was with for three years.

FROM PEACE IN VIENNA TO WAR IN BURY ST EDMONDS

By Frances Nunnally

7/39 Cherokee Rd, Richmond, VA 23225, USA

The Lioness' first issue of the new millennium is full of significance for the old World War II veterans. The 1940s, years of our service and glory days now rest firmly in the past century, ready for the history books. Indeed we, the Auxiliary Territorial Service, are history.

Nevertheless, many of the ATS girls are still very much of the present, and our stories and memories make the text of the history books look pale.

I grew up in Vienna, Austria, the only daughter of indulgent parents who strove to protect me from the realities of life. The years between the two World Wars were hard, filled with privations which today's generation can scarcely grasp. My parents, I am sure, sacrificed much for me. I was taught English and French. I learned to play the violin to turn me into an accomplished young woman who, some day, would marry a respectable young man and live in bourgeois comfort ever after. At age 15 I was sent to a "Dance School", where instruction focused not only on learning the right Foxtrot steps, but also on picking up social graces and the art of moving in good society.

Then, in a blink of an eye, all of that changed overnight. In March 1938, the Nazis goosestepped into Vienna. The persecutions began immediately. The world of us young Jewish teenagers was turned upside down. School was forbidden; parks, museums, libraries, swimming pools, cinemas, theatres, all forbidden. In summer's heat we cowered behind closed curtains, dreaming of a dip in the pool or a swim in the river.

When out on the streets, we wore our mothers' black or brown skirts, our hair hidden beneath colourless kerchiefs, no jewellery or adornment of any kind. The mousier we looked, the more likely we were to return home unharmed. Beatings and worse were the order of the day. Old bearded men were forced to kneel and scrub the streets with toothbrushes dipped in caustic soap.

In May 1939, my desperate parents sent me to England as an au pair, a mother's helper. I scrubbed and polished floors, served meals and cared for two small children. In

1941, I joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service and became Private Huppert, W/99790. I was posted to Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. The pretty little market town became my home for the next five years.

On the living room wall of my present home hangs a colourful map. Not the kind they use in schools to drum geography into the children's heads. This is a "grown-up" map of Wartime East Anglia, pinpointing British and American Airfields that dotted the region as densely as mushrooms after rain. As I pass by a dozen times a day, my eye roves over familiar names: Bury St Edmunds, Lavenham, Mildenhall, Thorpe Abbots. All filled with memories of an era gone from our lives forever.

We are now grandmothers, great-grandmothers even. But somewhere, within, still lives the young devil-may-care soldier girl who got up and did her part to win the war. No matter whether we tracked enemy airplanes, drove convoys, or toiled in steaming cookhouses, we all now come together in the Lioness. In it's pages we meet old friends and often make new ones. We reminisce in the silence of a house from which the children have long since gone. And doing so, we gain a new perspective on life. Our generation was indeed favoured. Our youthful strength, talents and energies went toward defeating an evil such as the world had never known. And in this, we are forever one.

MY LIFE IN THE ATS

By Edna Rickett (née Cross) ATS W/154724 - 1942/1945

I enlisted at Fulford Barracks, York, in April 1942 and was posted with other new girls a few weeks later to Lanark in Scotland for training in Signal Office Procedure and to brush up our keyboard skills. At that time my Mother was seriously ill at our home in Essex and I applied to return to the South to enable me to see her more readily whenever the opportunity arose. After a time, during most of which I peeled potatoes, no doubt as a penance, I was returned to a Holding Company in York. Then I moved to a Mixed Signals Unit for training at Kenry House, Harrow on the Hill, a house belonging to King Farouk of Egypt. The group photograph in uniform was taken at that time. (I am sitting in front, second from the right).

Before long we were moved to A A Comd HQ at Stanmore replacing a team of men for service overseas. While there, we were inspected by the then Princess Royal. We were issued with smart new blankets for the occasion and held our breath in the dining room as peeling paint fell from the ceiling into the dish of jam as the royal party walked through. After the visit the new blankets were withdrawn! Our Officer at this time was Elizabeth Crowther. She was greatly respected and liked, and after the war she wrote to tell me

she was then working for the Red Cross.

In July 1943 I married Peter whom I had known since well before the war. He was serving in the RAF and was posted abroad a few weeks later, and did not return until August 1946. The routine of the Signals Office continued at Stanmore and in due time I reached the dizzy heights of Acting Corporal (paid) and shortly afterwards War Substantive Corporal. We were a very diverse but happy team. At one stage I volunteered for a PT course at Hendon Police College in spite of, or was it because of, having contracted severe poliomyelitis when young, I had been fortunate to make a substantial recovery.

From Stanmore we were transferred to 1st Group Headquarters at 206, Brompton Road, London, an old tube station. We worked at the top of a large house in Thurloe Square. We were lucky enough to be billeted in some of the elegant houses in Kensington and, if funds allowed, could walk to Harrods for tea - a rare break in the London of those days. Mostly we patronised a nearby cafe at the other end of the market which we called affectionately 'Hell's Kitchen'.

After Brompton Road we moved by truck to Kirkee Barracks, Colchester, where the familiar Signals Office shift routine continued. Occasionally we escaped on bicycles, in sports clothes, on the pretence of going to play tennis. We cycled miles but not a tennis ball was struck. A group of young and handsome Italian prisoners of war working in the barracks attracted a good deal of attention. I had to call the girls from time to time to close the windows and return to work.

We were sorry to leave Colchester but our next move took us on what I think was a detachment to Hurts Hall in Saxmundham, Suffolk - an old house with a fine garden. This was my last posting before being packed off in July 1945 to the Military Dispersal Unit at Northampton for discharge.

We had become a team of friends who, despite wartime conditions, had enjoyed our service together. Those shared experiences have added a special lustre to later life but sadly I have lost touch with most of the girls I knew. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who was part of my memories.

PS: Peter and I are looking forward to our 57th Wedding Anniversary in July 2000.

MEMORIES

Ruth Negus of Birmingham Branch sent us these two pieces. She wrote them over 30 years ago and came across them recently when searching for something else. I'm sure many of you will recognise "Jack of all Trades" and have asked yourselves the same questions over the years.

1. DE-MOBBED 1945

Where are you now, Barbara? You are approaching middle age, just as I am - how different are you now from the girl I knew?

Do you ever think back to those days, twenty or more years ago, when we were so close and vowed that we always would be? But we drifted apart as I suppose we always knew we would. Do you remember me and the laughter and the tears we shared?

Do you recall the endless pounds of "spuds" we "bashed" on the Ack-Ack sites all over England and the mountains of



greasy plates we tried to wash in cold water ... the metallic clanking of empty shell-cases dropping endlessly on concrete as the guns fired into the darkness, their flashes silhouetting steel-helmeted gunners ... long nights in the Radar sets, stuffy and punctuated with Cornish Pasties and thick sweet corn poured from a tin bucket into tin mugs?

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How unbelievably fresh and clear were the dawns as we "Stood-Down" and the "All-Clear" sounded across the estuary and, tired-eyed, we made our way to the Nissan hut to sleep.

You can't have forgotten the endless polishing of boots and buttons - parades and Kit layouts - FFI's - hands covered with GS grease - cheese and potato pie - NAAFI buns - shrilling alarm bells - lectures and ENSA concerts - Aircraft Recognition - Goodnight kisses behind the coal bunkers.

There were the others too - pretty Amy and vivacious "Red". Black haired Sylvia and fair Joan. Welsh Katy and Irish Maeve - Jack and Tiffy, Willy-Natter and the Major - so many girls and so many men, once all part of each other's lives and now so scattered. Where are they now, Barbara? Would we know them if we met them ... would we know each other? Are you staid and matronly or are you still bright and scintillating and laughing at life?

Would you like to walk again on the crumbling cliffs and smell the heady scent of the bean-fields and know that you are "Out of Bounds"? Are you glad that all the intensity of youth is behind you? Look back once more, Barbara, remember it all, the hardships, the heartaches, the home-sickness, the grumbles, the laughter, the fun, the loves and the hates -

Did we get what we were fighting for? Did we win in the end? It would be nice to think that we did.

Ruth Negus
08.10.65

2. JACK OF ALL TRADES

I'm Jill. Once upon a time, 1941 actually, I was a secretary, bored with my job ... I asked myself ... what are you doing in an office? There is a war on. Go and join up! So I did, in the ATS. Soon I was in khaki, a female soldier, drilling on the Barrack Square, polishing brass buttons, using a strange object called a button-stick. I'm a lady's maid, pressing my uniform ...

I Trade-Test as a Radar Operator, on an Anti Aircraft Gun Site. I'm in battledress now, I wear boots and gaiters. I know about Radio and Electricity as well as Radar. I'm a Night Watchman gazing at a Cathode Ray Tube watching for moving "blips" which mean enemy aircraft. I go into action tracking them. Sweeping the Barrack-Room floor, shaking mats, cleaning windows - I'm a Charlady. Making my bed - I'm a Chambermaid, then a Housemaid - cleaning out the stove, collecting coke from the bunker. Cleaning the ablutions, what am I? A lavatory attendant!

I'm a scullery maid in the cookhouse, washing hundreds of plates. I "spud-bash" thousands of potatoes. I'm a sentry at the camp gate, I'm a beggar going round the neighbourhood in search of rags for cleaning the guns. Sewing stripes and flashes on uniforms, I'm a seamstress.

I get grease all over my hands maintaining the Diesel Unit - I'm a motor mechanic. I'm a laundress, washing my kit.

I queue up for my weekly pay, my cigarette ration, my bar of chocolate, my soap coupon - I'm a wage-earner.

Four years later I'm a "civvy" again. I was "Jack of All Trades". Now I'm Jill, a housewife ... What does that make Me?

Ruth Negus (née Newall), 92 White Gables, White House Way, Solihull, West Midlands. B91 1SE

AMENDMENT

In Centenary Celebrations in Huddersfield (Lioness 1/2000, p8) we erroneously printed Miss Christina Shaw's month of birth as February instead of January for which we apologise.



After working as the Regimental telephonist at the Drill Hall, Miss Shaw transferred to Signals and served all over the country, ending up as a sergeant in charge of the signals office.

After the war she went to Germany and served as a deferred volunteer for 2 years in Weinburg, Luneburg and Bad Oynhausen. Having volunteered early in 1939, she was finally demobbed after eight and a half years in September 1947.

OVERSEAS PAYMENTS

Please note that in future, all payments for subscriptions, postage and memorabilia will only be accepted in Sterling. Please ask your bank for a Money Order or Sterling Cheque.

We regret to have to impose this restriction, but due to the vagaries of exchange rates, the majority of overseas payments fall significantly short of the amount due.

WRAC Reminiscences

THE WRAC IN THE 1950s BY EVELYN NORTON W 375520

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My service in the WRAC started in the TA when I was sixteen and a half years old having been "not quite honest about my age". I was sent on two courses, one as a Radar Operator and one as a PTI. I enjoyed myself so much that I decided to join the Regulars for three years after I had persuaded my parents to sign the forms.

Following basic training, instead of being posted to another unit, I remained at Guildford and worked as a waitress in the various messes. I enjoyed marching and looked forward to going on parade, I was proud of my uniform which was always immaculate.

In 1953 I was chosen to take part in the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. We had to "bull" our shoes twice a day for a month.

Although there were no videos then we did appear on TV and my parents bought their first black and white set especially to watch me.

In 1954 I was given a choice of a posting to either the Far East or the Middle East, I chose Egypt.

After embarkation leave, on to Holding and Drafting at Kingston-on-Thames, whilst there we could watch Forces Favourites at Earls Court and collected autographs of many famous people including Richard Attenborough, Ronald Regan, Teddy Johnson and Pearl Carr.

We eventually sailed away on the Empire Ken and fourteen days later arrived at Ladysmith Camp Fayid. My job was to deal with the transit of families from all over the world, - men to the mens camp and women and children to our camp. I worked long hours helping them settle in, arranging sleeping quarters and food. In the day time I was in charge of six Egyptian general duties men who made the beds, cleaned, waited at table, etc all of which I helped with when we were busy. Off duty I went to the beach to sun bathe (I couldn't swim then) danced and watched films. I was surprised at the number of girls who couldn't dance so I taught them a few steps and to Rock ad Roll.

To practice for Sports Day we had to get up at 5 am whilst it was still cool and go to the Stadium. I won a bronze medal for a high jump at 5 feet 3 inches. I once asked my boyfriend to take my uniform to his dobbie man because I wanted it to be smart for the Remembrance Parade. It came back so stiff it looked like a cardboard box!

At the end of my three years I came home to get married but then didn't, I always regretted not signing on and going to Cyprus with my friends.

Instead I went to work as a Fork Lift Driver at the Royal Ordnance Depot and spent a further two years in the TA. Later on I went to work for Ford as a driver for twenty nine years, then owing to two hip replacements I retired and celebrated my 65th birthday in February.

I attend our Ashby De La Zouch Branch Association meetings, it is good to talk about the old days.

I loved my life in the Army and, like J James said (in Lioness 1/2000 Page 9), come along WRAC Ladies lets hear your stories.

LIFE IN THE WRAC IN THE 1950s By I L HOWE (W/38946 CHAMBERLAIN I L (BUNNY))

As J James (Lioness 2000) wrote, to reach out to WRAC members, well, here's one. Not as exciting as J James but

I joined the WRAC Aug '55 in London. I did my training at Guildford. My first memory is boarding a train to Guildford, and meeting other young bewildered girls, two in particular come to mind, Gill Dawson and Peggy Galmoye. We became firm friends for quite a while. We lost contact later as we had different postings.

I truly enjoyed my "Square Bashing" and believe it or not kit inspection. I never quite got the hang of the "spit and polish" for my boots and shoes, and who can ever forget the "passion killers" and "lisle stockings" which I wore throughout my service. I couldn't afford to replace them with civilian ones.

I wanted to be a PTI or a Driver, alas I became a mess orderly at the barracks in Canterbury, and later a general duties orderly at the Sergeants' quarters. My Sergeant put me forward for Provost who were doing a recruitment drive. I next found myself at Kingston-upon-Thames for further training. I passed the necessary exams and awaited my new posting. I was ready for action, that was until it came time for my jabs which I did not like. My next stop was to be BFPO 40 München Gladbach and my new unit.

My journey started from Harwich bound for the Hook of Holland, the vessel was a flat bottomed boat (whatever that meant). I had never been on the sea before and didn't know what to expect. Once we set sail I found out. I was alone with no other WRAC personnel, it was one of the roughest seas in a long while. I fought against the sway of the boat, oh dear! not a good thing to do as I later found out. What a journey! I was met at The Hook by an army personnel carrier and taken to my destination, 145 Pro Coy. My new colleagues wondered what on earth had landed. I won't go into it but I ended up in Sick Bay for three days. I found out later, through experience, that I can travel the waves on deck but definitely not below.

Whilst in Germany Prince Philip visited our camp, which was very exciting at the time. I also had two weeks duty in Berlin for the Queen's Birthday Parade.

I saw the devastation of the war, part of Berlin was shattered and in the process of rebuilding.

Whilst in Provost I wore out the sleeves of my BD through continuous pressing with brown paper, in fact there was very little fluff left on any of my BDs. My sleeves were razor sharp with a very smart darn on the right one. The down side was having to pay for a new one out of my "Pay Parade" money. Does that ring any bells?

While enjoying my tour of duty, I met my husband of 42 years, he was an RMP 101 Coy. Who said it wouldn't last.

The 'Lioness' has brought back floods of lovely memories, and I am wishing I was back with the girls. I do regret not being a member of the Association before this year. Like many others I've been getting on with my life. I now realise what I've been missing out on. The WRAC was the first important part of the rest of my life. My mother died when I was sixteen and I was lost for the next year, until the companionship of the WRAC filled a big gap, and for that I will be eternally grateful. I'm now in my recycling years and am hoping to have many years of comradeship with the 'Lioness' and her cubs.

WRAC FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Mrs Maureen Clark ex WRAC W/429763 1967-69
(Née NASH)

Phyllis 'Lee' Clark ATS/WRAC died in January of this year. She was the WRAC Recruiting Sergeant in Portsmouth for many years and prior to that was in the ATS as a cook sergeant. Her maiden name was Le Brun.

Lee was my mother in law and although I was a resident of Portsmouth and member of the WRAC I did not sign on or meet her there. I joined the WRAC in 1966 signing on in Hereford. I then went on to Guildford for basic training and then on to Yeovil where I did my Clerks training. Next I was sent for a short period of time to HQ Eastern Command in Hounslow and was eventually posted to Berlin to HQ Berlin Infantry Brigade where I worked as a clerk/typist for G Int and Security in the British Sector. It was in Berlin that I met Lee's younger son Barry who was serving with the Royal Signals, and in 1968 we were married. After our marriage I continued to serve with the WRAC being the only married WRAC in the company, eventually being discharged in 1969.

A few years later I was somewhat responsible for encouraging my younger sister who had not long left school to go and have a chat with my mother in law resulting in my sister joining the WRAC. My sister was Hilary Yeomans who served from June 1975 to October 1981. Hilary served throughout Germany and Northern Ireland with the Intelligence Corps and got married during this time and became Sgt Hilary McClure. She was also a swimmer and diving enthusiast.

If there is anyone out there who remembers either myself or my sister Hilary we would be only too delighted to hear from them.

Contact: Mrs Maureen Clark, 15 Jumpers Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 2JR

SIX YEARS OF LIFE IN THE WRAC

By Mrs D L Simpson (Née LANE) W/379013, Cpl, WRAC

I was inspired enough by J James' account (p9 - 1/2000) of her life in the WRAC during the 1950s to put pen to paper and tell how much I enjoyed my own six years in the service from January 1953 to March 1959.

My basic training was at Guildford. I was then posted to COD Chilwell in Nottinghamshire as a Tels Technician. I worked in Technical Branch with my very good friend June

Sutton (nee WILLIS) and Pat Long who was in Basic Training with me. I am still in touch with June.



Cpl Daphne Lane and Cpl Valerie Young

I was posted to BAOR on my 21st Birthday. On the ferry from Harwich to the Hook of Holland some of the girls were interviewed by Jean Metcalf for a television programme called "Out and About". On arrival in Germany I was attached to ROAC HQ and had a very enjoyable two years. That was where I met Slim Whyles, who married a Petty Officer in the RN, and Val Young who I would love to hear from again.

I was posted back to Bicester, where I met up again with Harry (my late husband), whom I had originally met just two weeks before being posted to Germany, and we were married in March 1959. I attended Corporal and Sergeant courses at Liphook, but chose marriage instead of promotion. However, my youngest son is now WO1 REME, attached to the Paras, and is going to Germany in June. His wife is an ex-Corporal WRAC.

While in Germany I was on my first and only exercise, which seemed rather strange, especially at meal times when your mess tin had to be used for all three courses. I finished up with blisters and sore ankles after wearing boots and gaiters which I was not used to. We also spent weeks learning German to be able to go out shopping, only to receive the reply in perfect English. Happy times!

Please get in touch if you were in Germany during 1956-58, or Chilwell Depot, Tech Branch, 1953-55. My sister, Marion, was a driver at the same time.

Contact: Mrs D L Simpson, 56 Latimer Drive, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 2HT

It was in 1953 that I became interested in a Service Career. My grandfather had been an RSM in the first world war and told me lots of interesting stories.

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I decided to try my luck as a driver in the WRAF but this did not come about as you had to know how to drive before you were accepted.

I stayed in my civilian office job for a while until one day I saw an ex colleague on a bus wearing the Army uniform. I subsequently contacted her and after accompanying her to a Territorial Army evening, decided that I would like to join and try my hand at something quite different, ie serving with the Ack Ack, and joined in the September of 1954 at the age of 20.

After an eight month period of plotting in the 'ops room', my Unit at Ulverscroft Road, Leciester, was disbanded and I was able to transfer to an MT Unit - 308 Battalion - in Ashford Road, also in Leicester. This was much more to my liking as I would be taught to drive a variety of vehicles.

The Unit had a terrific sense of camaraderie, but one night a week was not enough for me, so I did Sunday training and week-end training too.

My first two week "Camp" was in August 1955 and was called a Regimental Camp. All of this was new to me having never been away from home before for longer than one night (TA week-ends) - I was, to say the least, green.

The camp was in Penicuik and our feet didn't touch the ground from the Saturday we arrived to the Thursday evening of the first week. Life was so hectic that the Major (Hon V V Kitson) decided to give us all a rest day on the Friday - my 21st Birthday. The unit spent the day on the beach at, if I remember correctly, Portobello. The day was glorious and I have the fondest memories of sun, sand and sea, two Scots dolls, and a travelling alarm clock which has only recently come to the end of its days, having been used constantly from that August. A really delicious birthday cake was made by the cooks (two of whom are unfortunately no longer with us).

Many happy years followed in the company of girls who I will remember forever. True friendships were established as were many acquaintances. Greetings are still exchanged at Birthdays and Christmas. Two sergeants and one officer in particular I have to thank - they will know who they are when/if they read this epistle.

My 12 years in the Service were varied, being a trainee driver, driver and then driving instructor and many tales could be told of the hilarious times, if I had the space. One 'night rally' in particular during a fortnight's "holiday" (as my day job employer called it) is well remembered. We had to leave Barnard Castle late one evening. We had scrimmed up the vehicles during the day - an exercise I would rather forget - and when the 'wagons roll' call was heard we jumped into our vehicles and away we went. My three tonner had the scrim netting rolled up underneath and as I drove away the netting caught in the prop-shaft. Many hands to the 'sump' as I reversed as slowly as I could and the girls lying beneath the lorry unhooked the netting as I went. Not an easy job as they would tell. Unleashed we went forward, completed the rally and our unit came away with all but one of the

trophies. We were ribbed for the rest of the week but we did not care because we were on cloud nine.

Our battalion formed a Saddle Club and went horse riding on Sundays at Gracedieu Stables in Shepshed. One of the highlights of this was being in the company of Lady Isobel Barnett - who was our Commander in Chief and a great story teller. I remember volunteering to do kitchen duty at an Officers' Mess function she attended. I was very impressed that a Lady of her standing would come to thank us for the work we had put in; sitting on the kitchen table and eating chicken legs with us (no plates or napkins to hand). I was a Private then as I recall but still felt that I belonged.

I eventually reached the giddy height of full corporal - never achieving my ambition to becoming a sergeant like my grandfather - still never mind, I enjoyed what I did. The battalion disbanded in 1966 and I was given the choice of Signals (too much like my day job) and Nursing (not for me) so I reluctantly took my discharge after 12 years of agony and ecstasy. I received my Long Service Medal by post having moved to the Northampton Branch of same unit.

I have moved away now from Leicester/Northampton and live in Skegness, still a life member of the Association but unable mostly to attend the monthly meetings. *Semi-retirement found me doing bed and breakfast in an East Coast resort but again this was not for me so I found a job at the local hospital doing reception work.* I found this especially rewarding for an oldie like me, as when I see the poor dears who attend it makes me feel good and young for my age. The adage "Grow up and you grow old" is certainly true. I still play 'tag' on the beach with an even older friend (when there is no-one around to see the old fools).

My friend and I have taken up dancing - ballroom, sequence, Latin American, formation and line. Having reached Gold Medal standard in most of these we are having a bit of a rest until we find something else to do or progress further on the dance floor.

I say to all members, old and new, ancient and modern, if you want anything in this life - GO FOR IT - you never know what you can do if you never try. Why I'm saying this to you I do not know. I have never met so many "achievers" in my life as the resolute members of the now disbanded Womens Royal Army Corps.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all my friends a Happy and Healthy future.

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"THOSE SMASHING GIRLS I USED TO KNOW"
MY SERVICE IN THE WRAC 1963-67
(W/420251 Pte Sue Waind) now Mrs Sue Hirst

I joined the WRAC in September 63. My Mum cried and bribed me with all sorts to change my mind. My Dad muttered and said "You'll not stick it, you'll be back home within 2 weeks!". I travelled on the train from Blandford down to Hobbs Barracks at Lingfield in Surrey on 7th October. I was 17 ¼ years old. I never felt so alone in all my life and wondered if I was doing the right thing. On the train out of London, I was sat in a compartment opposite a long lanky girl in a white mohair coat. We sized each other up, not saying anything. That girl became my first friend, her name was Dot Wilson and she came from Liverpool. We found ourselves in the same barrack room and we both went on to be Comcen Operators with the Royal Signals.

I was in 2 Company, 5 Platoon and we all wore green flashes. Sgt Williams was our drill instructor and Cpl Gibson our room NCO. It was quite a culture shock to be in a barrack room with 11 other noisy girls all with different accents. There was no privacy. Most of us in our room were all destined for the Signals so we all got pretty friendly. My first night there I decided to go for a bath. Lying there in a very basic bathroom, I espied a pretty floral container at the side of the bath. "Great, they even supply talc!" I thought and so I dried myself off and covered myself in Vim!! Where did I think I was? - The Hilton? Next day we were issued with our kit. Dot and I were the only size 7s and were issued with BROWN shoes. They were obviously ex ATS shoes left over from the 40s! I thought they were ghastly, but over the weeks I began to form quite an affectionate relationship with my "Beetlecrushers" and have never forgotten how to "bull" them. The weeks flew quickly by with drill, PT, classroom lessons and endless jabs! Before we realised it, our passing out parade came and we were on our way to Catterick Camp for our Signals training. Basic Training was something I didn't really enjoy. I suffered terribly from homesickness but Dad was going to eat his words. I was going to stick it out, no way was I going home - I would not give him the satisfaction of being right!

24 Signal Regiment, Catterick Camp was the coldest place I have ever been, but what a social life! The winter of '63 was quite a bad one and I can remember it snowing quite hard. I was at Hooze Lines, Spider 1 Room 1. My NCO was Cpl Angie Fish. My room mates were Joan McCourt and Roz Deakin. I remember the weekly room inspections, standing there with bated breath awaiting the dreaded arrival of SSgt Botham!! I am sure many signals girls will remember her. She once entered the room on inspection and saw, through a tilted dressing table mirror, that I was smirking. To this day I had no idea why I was smirking, probably to take my mind off my knocking knees. She made me stand outside in the corridor like a naughty schoolgirl!

Trade training was interesting. We trained on old teleprinters in draughty pre-war barrack rooms which had black stoves and which had been changed into classrooms. We began our typing training on old black typewriters with shields so we couldn't see the keys. "Wheels Cha Cha" was one of the favourite pieces of music we typed to. Everyone's bell was supposed to ring together, but there were always a few whose bell rang first or miles behind everyone else! Mine used to do it often, which brought me out in hot sweats of embarrassment, I blushed very easily in those days. Then we were put onto teleprinters, The Beatles', "Roll over Beethoven" always brings back memories. We were in mixed classes. We all got on well.

Many romances occurred at Catterick. I had my moments, but nothing serious, I had far too much living to do. I had some good nights in the Roundabout Club, it even had a small bowling alley! In fact I had such a good time at Catterick, that one day I was hauled in front of the CSM for not writing home. Mum got fed up with waiting for a letter and when she didn't receive any, she wrote to the CSM asking after my welfare and had she ever heard of me? Oh the embarrassment - I was mortified. The CSM was so nice and "mumsy" I almost burst into tears. Oh I meant well, I wrote many letters to Mum with all my news, but I just forgot to post them - so much for homesickness, it had soon worn off! After that incident, I never forgot to buy stamps again. I didn't know what Mum would do next, she was capable of anything! In the end she actually sent me some stamps! I remember my first weekend home on leave from Catterick. I walked in the door expecting a huge fuss and there was Mum in tears. "President Kennedy has been shot - poor man" was all she could say to me. We all remember what we were doing on that day.

After my trade training, I was posted to 251 WRAC Signal Squadron at Fugglestone Camp in Wilton near Salisbury. In April '64 I arrived there on a sunny Spring day only to be told not to unpack, I was to spend the night there and then travel next day on detachment to Aldershot "just for two weeks". I ended up staying there for the rest of my UK posting.

What can I say about Aldershot. You either love it or hate it and I loved it. We were billeted at Mandora Hutments on Hope Grants Road. We shared with 10 Independent Coy WRAC. 'Hutments' was a proper description. We slept in wooden huts with a fire escape door at one end. This fire escape door came in very handy on occasions. Many times we used it to sneak out after bed check to go to parties because we knew where the hole in the fence was. One time disaster struck. One of the girls unwittingly locked the door and we couldn't get back in. We had to sneak around looking for an open window. That's when we ended up in the OC's office! I worked in Aldershot Signal Centre. The telephone exchange was upstairs. I began working days and then went on to shifts. I worked with Maxine Turner. We worked days, evenings and night shifts. We used to take hair bleach with us when we worked nights. After all the work was done, we used to colour our hair to change our image. More than once I have gone to work at midnight with brown hair, and come off duty at 8 the following morning a blonde!!! No one used to bother us when we worked nights, but if the work was there it was done. I remember calling a whole battalion of the Parachute Regiment off Christmas block leave to go to Borneo. I had to send a telegram to each one.

I had obviously been noticed for promotion and the OC, Major Ross, sent me on an NCO Cadre Course for 2 weeks in Bicester. Not being a 'regimental' sort of lass, I didn't really want to go. Reluctantly I went, but failed miserably after a catalogue of disasters, which included taking drill. I stopped everyone on the wrong foot and in the end lost them in the early morning fog and found them all marking time in a ditch at the other end of the square! Needless to say, the OC lost faith, my tape went out of the window and I blew it good and proper. However, not being a person to brood about things, I eventually decided that I had outgrown Aldershot and fancied a change. I approached my OC for an overseas posting. She couldn't get rid of me fast enough and I was posted to 235 Signal Squadron (Comcan) in Malta.

Now Malta was a different kettle of fish, I could not believe my luck. We were based at St David's Barracks in Mtarfa and I had my own room. We either worked a morning or an afternoon at the tape relay station, Fort Bingemma. We all went up there in the back of an army truck, it was a 20 minute drive in the warm sunshine with the top down. We never worked a full day or weekends, it was paradise. Later I managed to secure the job as PRI clerk on the camp. I just worked mornings and used to be driven around the outstations on pay day, collecting money from everyone for their Sunday papers etc. Occasionally I was asked to go and do some classified typing for the OC. I enjoyed Malta and the friends I made there. I am still in touch with some of them.

Now I am 50 years old plus VAT - I often sit and think about my happy days in the WRAC and all those smashing girls I used to know. Where are you? If you recognise my name, then please write to me. I am a Gran now and when my little granddaughter is old enough, I will tell her about my life. I was demobbed in May 1967 with an exemplary discharge (surprisingly enough!) and married John Hirst in August 1967. We carried on in the army until 1976, and we were in Berlin for quite a long time. But that's another story!!!!

I've a lot to thank my Dad for. If he hadn't have said "you'll be back home in 2 weeks" I would have gone back home and missed out on a lot of life!!!!

Contact: Mrs Sue Hirst, 1 Moorland Terrace, Thwaites Brow, Keighley, West Yorkshire Tel 01535 681094.

LIFE AFTER WRAC By Kym Regan

Hidden in the depths of the Ministry of Defence's Main Building in Whitehall, are 7 former members of the WRAC who were Data Telegraphists attached to the Royal Signals.

We were all employed as Communication Officers (COs) by the Defence Communication Services Agency (DCSA). The DCA was formed in 1997 and is headed by Maj Gen Tony Raper as Chief Executive. When we all began our careers here it was known as the Defence Communication Centre (DCC) and we were known as Specialist Teleprinter Operators (STO).

Between us we have 38 years combined service, spanning from 1964 to 1997.

Anne Ferrier (nee Fossett, nicknamed Floss) served between 1964 and 1966 at 16 Signal Regiment Krefeld Germany. She is the exception to all of us, having undertaken her basic training at Lingfield; the remainder of us trained at Guildford. However, all of our trade training took place at Catterick. Anne has been a Communications Officer with MOD since 1989.

Sandra (Sadie) Joseph served between 1975 and 1981 at 16 Signal Regiment in Rheindahlen, 239 Signal Squadron York and Queen's Gurkha Signal Squadron Hong Kong. She has been a Communications Officer with MOD as a Duty Communications Manager since leaving the WRAC in 1981.

Kym Regan (nee Cooper) served from 1984 to 1988 at 16 Signal Regiment Bielefeld, 656 Signal Troop Lubbecke and 10 Signal Regiment/243 Signal Squadron Wilton. She has been a Communications Officer in System Support with MOD since leaving the WRAC in 1988.

Ann Todd (also known as Toddy, married name Boylan) served from 1979 to 1986 at 241 Signal Squadron, then based at Donnington, and at 16 Signal Regiment Bielefeld. She has been a Communications Officer with MOD since 1987.

Jackie Adam served from 1975 to 1981 at 10 Signal Regiment Wilton, Searcher duties in Belfast, Queen's Gurkha Signal Squadron Hong Kong and 10 Signal Regiment Aldershot. Jackie was in the very first enrolment of WRAC Junior Leaders. She has been a Communications Officer in System Support with MOD since 1981.

Gill Adcock (Nee Lancaster) served from 1974 to 1978 at 16 Signal Regiment Bielefeld, Searcher duties in Belfast, Queen's Gurkha Signal Squadron Hong Kong and 10 Signal Regiment Aldershot. She has been a Communications Officer with MOD since 1979.

Nikki Hunt (nee Bailey) served from 1988 to 1997 at 16 Signal Regiment Krefeld & Bielefeld, 15 Signal Regiment NI and HQ LANDCENT Heidelberg Germany. She is the newest member here and has been a Communications Officer with MOD since 1998.

So, if there are any readers who would like to renew old friendships as a result of knowing where we are now, we can be contacted:

c/o DCSA London, Room C/13, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Further to LIFE IN THE WRAC in the 1950s by J James (ex-W/387478) By Janet James (ex-W388700)

When I first read the heading of J James's letter in Lioness No. 1 this year, I began to wonder whether I had been leading a double life. Could I really have forgotten the first 6 months service in 1954...or that posting to Egypt etc? Well, perhaps not, but it seemed just too much of a coincidence to let Mrs James's letter go by without following up her plea for more letters from ex-WRAC members.

I arrived at Guildford in January 1955 (anyone else from Cpl Queripel's platoon out there?). After a rather chilly 6 weeks or so spent on basic training (I recall a fair amount of snow that winter) I was posted to Shoeburyness, there to join the 17th Indep Coy WRAC and become, in the fullness of time, an Experimental Assistant Gunnery (EAG).

An extra bonus was the fact that 17 Coy was an all NCO unit. I understood that the reason for this was, in fact, very prosaic...we were always under strength so there were always enough stripes to go around once we had passed our trade test. (Those were the days I think!).

My motives for joining the Army were a little unclear, but certainly travel (preferably of the foreign kind, of course), and having an "outdoor job" were among them. I certainly succeeded in the latter ambition but, alas, not in the former. Never in our wildest dreams could Southend be called 'for-

eign parts', the more especially to one who in any event came from the London area. (Even one trial on Salisbury Plain would be pushing the definition a little). But it really did not matter: I was just so thrilled to be there.

Much of our time at Shoebury was spent working at observation posts along the sea-wall, or at the various batteries from which firing trials were taking place. The hours tended to be irregular depending very often on the state of the tide (firing took place over the sea), or indeed, the state of the weather...sometimes we even needed it to rain!

Our monthly Saturday morning assaults on Regimental Drill training sessions were enough to break the heart of even the most tolerant and understanding CSM, ie we were not exactly the best marching unit in the WRAC. The wire fencing along one side of the Parade ground came under attack on more than one occasion when the front half of the squad did not hear the order to "about-turn" in time to avert close collisions of the marching kind. I recall one Armistice Day parade for which we really had trained most earnestly and did ourselves proud on the march to church, only to be totally confused in the subsequent march past, by the Southend United Football Supporters Band suddenly breaking into a waltz immediately behind us. The ensuing results were really too dreadful to bear thinking about. Our ineptitude at drill was explained away (by us) as being due to the fact that we were a "working unit", and indeed we did receive extra fruit and chocolate bars in our sandwich lunches because of this...so it was said. Thus, (we said), our priorities were on the ranges and not on the drill square, no doubt much to the chagrin of the company admin section.

The EAGs really did seem to lead a separate life from the admin staff, and the latter were, it seemed, rarely able to

venture out to, or be part of, the world of heavy duty gunnery, radar, stop-watch timing and the like. We did not even wear the same working uniform. For practical reasons of safety, khaki would have been self defeating on the ranges so we wore navy blue slacks and jackets in order to be clearly visible.

Sadly, by the time I arrived at Shoeburyness, forage caps had been phased out and the ubiquitous navy blue beret had arrived. Much disappointment all round!

Thanks to the sterling efforts of some of our successors at Shoeburyness, (who I believe by the 80s had the indignity of being known simply as the 'WRAC detachment'), we have had 4 ex-Shoebury re-union week-ends. The most recent took place in October 1999 when we were able to revisit some of the sites of our former glories, including that self same Parade ground, now looking sadly forlorn and abandoned. 40 years on and there had been more than a few changes; the firing ranges now are but a shadow of their former selves and Horseshoe Barracks no longer occupied. But the memories linger on and it was a fascinating visit. It was good to see that from my generation (1955 - 1957), we had managed to track down a dozen or so of us to engage in many reminiscences about those times. (We hope to meet again in 2001).

Well, I may not have enjoyed foreign travel from Shoeburyness, but I would not have missed those three years for anything. I was even able to make good the travel omission after a couple of years in civvy street. I took the ex-services exam and joined the Civil Service and spent the next 30 odd years working and travelling both at home and abroad. But that, as they say, is another story.....!



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Life In The Army Today

THE GAP YEAR COMMISSION (GYC)

By Miss Caroline Orlebar

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This is a scheme run by the Army that gives the opportunity for young people taking a year out between school and university to sample and enjoy Army life and be paid. Recently I came to the end of such a year. It was an incredible experience. One in which I was challenged and rewarded with greater magnitude than I have previously experienced and am unlikely to again. I took part in numerous challenging pursuits, often only acquired in a lifetime of serving in the British Army. I had fantastic fun and have minimal regrets.

In July 1997 I left Roedean School, Brighton with a place at Sandhurst and a deferred place at University. I had four months to recover from the strain of A levels and to get fit. On 31 October, much to everybody's amazement I joined the Army. No one had underestimated the physical and mental stamina that was required throughout a month long Officer Training at Sandhurst. Such intensity made normal life highly pleasurable. Zero previous military knowledge and experience only added to the challenge. I learnt infantry tactics, how to shoot and clean firearms, how to be meticulous and punctual, how to survive with minimal sleep and how to run long distances with excessive weight. It was a challenging course. I left having learnt much more than they thought I had.

By the end of November, rather alarmingly, I was a commissioned officer. Being sponsored by the Royal Signals, I was then off to Blandford for a week long 'Troopies' course. Here the network of comradeship the Army thrives upon became established. I met newly commissioned 'proper' Officers, some of whom I would meet up with later and who would be of unconditional support. I was introduced to the signalling side of the Army and to Mess life. It was great fun. I was extremely lucky to subsequently be posted to 16 Signal Regiment JHQ, Germany. With their unstinting patience and generosity I continued my Army experience. I acted the officer role as any might without the long formal training. It was a challenge to be on the commanding side of the fence having been at school for so long. We would go on 4-mile fun runs, fancy dress runs and have numerous parties. Still constantly mildly challenging. Christmas came as a welcome break.

In January the signal side came into action. I acted as OC MAN Troop and to the best of my ability waded through first sight files in order to put my input into the system. The Ptarmigan Network - the one 16 Signal Regiment operates, was - but for an hour at Blandford - totally unfamiliar. I acquired a shady overall knowledge as I was informed at length about how each vehicle fitted in to the larger communication network.

'Get away as much as possible,' a fellow Second Lieutenant told me on my arrival. Nobody could have anticipated to what extent I would follow this advice.

February saw me in Igls, Austria participating in the unusual sport of Skeleton Bob-sleighbing. I have written a piece on the specific sensations of Bob-sleighbing which was published in *The Wire* (June 1998). They had my sights on the Winter 2002 Olympics. An exciting dream, but I was off to University the following October and the training would have coincided. This sport is to be recommended to those

who can cope with a fast, white, frosty and potentially dangerous ice slide and can give a decent sprint start.

March was punctuated with Basic Winter Training in Bavaria. I learnt lessons in skiing, winter and social survival. I had some spectacular falls and witnessed blissful views. It was a snowy wonderland in southern Germany.

April in its entirety was spent on infantry exercise in Cyprus. Everything I learnt at Sandhurst was reinforced to my great satisfaction. I particularly enjoyed the use of a variety of firearms, live and blank, and the parading along the sandy paths in Cyprus. The people, weather, scenery and exercise made this month highly memorable. I was also able to visit Egypt, on R and R, during my stay.

May and I was floating. First came a fortnight jumping out of an aeroplane at Lippspringe in Germany. This was followed by a further fortnight of paragliding - walking off a mountain. The former was an exhilarating experience, the latter, a relatively peaceful glide down to earth.

End June-early July, I was improving my limited skill at kayaking in the South of France. I spent a stunning three weeks of camping. The weather was unbelievable and the cool, glacial waters were crystal clear. I capsized frequently which was terrifying.

On returning from that trip, I thought it was about time to further my sporting prowess at tennis. I entered the Army Championships at Aldershot from where I was picked to play for the Army at Wimbledon in August. The first day I played on clay, the second on the famous grass courts. It was a great thrill.

I had only one more thing to achieve and that was to organise my own expedition. Scuba diving was an adventure training activity I had not yet attempted, so I chose to take a group of 12 diving off Gibraltar at the end of August. After sporadic weekly training in the Blue Pool at JHQ, Germany, I had acquired BSAC novice level. Gibraltar was an ideal location; superb for diving, steeped in military history and using the pound sterling as currency. We lived aboard a boat and dived at numerous sites of wrecks. All the party came back having achieved at least BSAC Sport.

By mid September, I had two weeks to go before starting at University. After watching the film 'Saving Private Ryan', the Officers and SNCOs of 16 Signal Regiment departed for an educational trip to Normandy to study the 1944 Landings. It was too good an opportunity to miss, so blow the pre-university reading, I was off again. This proved to be an excellent 4-day send off. I learnt loads of very interesting history and it was a highly worthwhile 'resettlement' course back into academic and civilian life.

I am now working very hard studying Chemistry at Somerville College, Oxford and often think back to the fun I had in the Army. I recommend the Gap Year Commission to any fit, enthusiastic person and challenge them to better my experiences. I am grateful to the Army for giving me such a splendid opportunity.

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MEMORIES OF KOSOVO

BY WOII LIZ KEMP who is PA to General Jackson (Commander ARRC) and a member of Hereford Branch

Last year was an extremely busy time for the ACE Rapid Reaction Corp (ARRC). I came back from Christmas leave and we started working 7 days a week. I deployed to Skopje Macedonia last April. It was pretty typical, my husband had just returned from Komonova that Friday, and I flew out on Sunday. Still we had a weekend together!! The flight out from Bruggen took almost 24 hours. Our Hercules almost blew up on take-off and we had to make an emergency exit. I was shouted at by the load master for trying to save the box containing the General's teaspoons. A good start.

Our base in Macedonia was an old shoe factory in Skopje. When I arrived it was still being turned into a workable headquarters. It was extremely dusty and hot. We lived in tents set up on the first floor of the factory, squashing people up as we arrived. Returning to your tent at night required a torch and excellent co-ordination and bearings as it was pitch black and there were about 30 large tents quite close together. As you were going to sleep, you could usually hear someone tripping over and cursing. We had no hot water for a while, but at least we had water and the food was excellent. The ablutions were scarce and shared, but you could sling your towel over the door to ensure that no one would walk in. A pair of flip-flops were a must. Walking to the showers in your PJ's became the norm.

We all worked extremely long hours, however we could watch the General's TV when he was out and, most importantly, usually managed to get to the bar before last orders. The local beer was wickedly strong. I had a few headaches.

The one event I shall never forget was the plight of the refugees during the Easter Weekend. The Macedonian border became overwhelmed with refugees from Kosovo, women and children were stranded, exhausted with no food or water. The Army set up refugee camps and provided food. I visited one of these camps, it was huge. One child held my hand, and we handed out sweets.

After about 4 weeks I returned to JHQ and deployed back out to Skopje in May, this time my husband came out too. It seemed as though we would be stuck in Skopje for a long time. Eventually on June the 9th the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) was signed. During this time, I was left to man the office, it was bedlam, all telephones ringing at once. Communication was quite difficult, and there were a few tense moments. As we were watching the General entering the tent on TV, a call came from the office of the Supreme Allied Command Europe (SACEUR) to say that the General must speak to SACEUR before the talks began! Needless to say, all means of communication were engaged. However, we succeeded in getting a message through to the Military Assistant (MA), and I aged about 10 years!!!

On June the 12th Kosovo Force (KFOR) entered Kosovo, it seemed as though all that waiting was now worthwhile and we could get on with our job. I flew out the following evening in a Chinook to the newly situated Tactical Headquarters (TAC) just outside Pristina. This was to ensure the General's communications and our offices (a loose term) were all set up. The flight was an experience, I had all my kit, plus a lap top, which I clung on to as we flew extremely fast in a zig-zag pattern with the tail gate open into Kosovo. When we arrived, it was pitch black, one of the General's bodyguards directed the Chinook with his torch. For some unknown reason we had red tracer being fired at us as we

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landed. My husband was already there, he had been part of the convoy which took almost 24 hours to arrive by road. He had no idea that I was on the flight until he saw me stagger off clutching all my kit. It was lovely to see him.

TAC consisted of a large tented area, and the fresh air was marvellous after being cooped up in the shoe factory. That was however, until it rained a couple of days later, and everything and everybody got drenched and covered in mud. I have a picture of the ADC wringing out the General's smock which accidentally got left outside his wagon. The females' tent floor had a river running through it, and although we had our Gore-Tex liners for our sleeping bags it was quite disconcerting to go to sleep with the rain dripping on you through the canvas. This also made your kit damp in the morning, and uncomfortable to wear for the first few minutes.

The incentive to get up was a big fat girl's breakfast. The field kitchen provided excellent rations, mostly consisting of boil in the bag burger and beans for the first couple of days, then followed by normal food like rhubarb crumble and custard - excellent. We had no shower facilities apart from a segregated female washing area, where you filled up your bowl from the puffing billies, trying to avoid the men shaving, and washed everything from this bowl. I had the advantage of having small feet and being able to stand in the bowl, (unlike Penny, the Chief of Staff's PA), which caused great amusement. The port-a-loos were not particularly pleasant, and I found the trick was to light a cigarette before entering and closing the door. A few people started smoking for this reason!!! It is amazing how long you can hold your breath for. However, although we had electricity, this did not extend to the use of my hairdryer so I just tied my hair back into a tiny pigtail (no time to be vain).

I had to take some documents back to the Shoe Factory. This was an ideal opportunity to have a shower and drop off everyone's washing. We flew by helicopter. We went via all the Brigade areas. It was a really interesting flight, Kosovo is a beautiful country. The pilot flew tactically with the side door open - it was brilliant but what a disappointment later, when the pilots flew at a normal sedate pace.

We were at TAC for about 14 days, before moving to an old film studio in Pristina, which was nicknamed 'Film City'. The novelty of TAC had by this time worn off and it was great to work inside a building with air conditioning and, most importantly, plug sockets for my hairdryer. We still slept in tents, but were given wooden floors which unfortunately attracted mice. It was a must to check your sleeping bag before going to sleep. Our tents were set amongst trees and it was quite picturesque, the cookhouse had tree stumps for seats. Portable shower units were set up and for the first time for over a week I had a hot shower, it was marvellous.

Our office was pretty makeshift to begin with. We had a plasterboard wall, which separated the PA's office from the main KFOR conference Room, which was where all the important meetings were held. We usually had an officer banging on the wall to stop us from laughing too loudly, so had to shush everyone who came into our office. We found it impossible to keep quiet, as our small room was usually filled with the General's bodyguards, signallers and drivers.

I went out with the General's driver on a couple of his recces into Pristina and the surrounding areas. At first Pristina appeared deserted, with some bomb damage, and PARA's patrolling the streets. Only a few shops were open but didn't appear to have any goods for sale. From our office we had

full view of the city and watched as, gradually, more lights came on in the houses as people returned. The picture shows the Front Office staff, and the view of the city from the roof top of Film City. I have been told to add here how good looking my Military Advisor (MA) is, he is the one standing to the right of General Jackson.

We soon settled into a daily routine at Film City and we had many visitors to see the General during this time. I met Prince Charles, Tony Blair and George Robertson amongst others. Most importantly we had a date that we would be coming home. A laundry contract was set up (we had been washing our kit and smalls by hand), we had a tiny shop, (which sold melted chocolate), pay facilities, a decent gym, plus a bar which sold beer. We still worked long hours, but set up our TAC TV and video in the office and swapped films with the Signals. The ADC usually donated a bottle of wine most evenings, and I kept in touch with my friends via the internet. The days seemed to fly by - work and meals broken up by Sunday routines which meant a lie in until 0900 hrs, what a luxury.

The downside to Film City was that the water was intermittent to say the least plus we had many power cuts, due to the damage caused by the bombing raids. I often used my Laptop in candle light. You would walk to the showers in the morning to find the water off again, and have to wash outside the tent with a bottle of water and some "wet wipes". Our office was filled with bottles of water, just in case, and most mornings Mick the driver and I would wash up the cups in a fire bucket as the water was off again. We didn't have the luxury of a Hoover, so we would brush the offices with a broom and make it even more hot and dusty.

At the end of August John and I had 2 weeks Rest and Recuperation (R&R). On our return, KFOR started preparing for the handover to the next Headquarters - LANDCENT. Soon I was making the brews in the morning and saying 10 days and a breakfast to go. The weather thankfully started getting cooler. On the last day, I went with the MA and ADC to the General's final press conference and then we took off by helicopter from Pristina Stadium to Pristina Airport, to fly back on the Queens Flight. I had two glasses of champagne and fell asleep, in fact nearly all of us did!!! It was, of course, brilliant to be going home.

These are my own personal recollections of our deployment. It was, of course, an honour to work for the most famous General since Montgomery. We still reminisce in the office about me blow drying my hair each morning in the office at Film City, and being caught most mornings by the General, who would always make his own brew as he said "a lady should never be interrupted when doing her hair".

(Editor's note: The picture referred to in the text is on the back cover of this edition)

OVERSEAS PAYMENTS

Please note that in future, all payments for subscriptions, postage and memorabilia will only be accepted in Sterling. Please ask your bank for a Money Order or Sterling Cheque.

We regret to have to impose this restriction, but due to the vagaries of exchange rates, the majority of overseas payments fall significantly short of the amount due.

Gunners Corner

WESTMINSTER FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE

Each year at the official opening of the Field of Remembrance by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother a small group of ex-members of 504(M) HAA Bty RA meet.



The first photo shows some of us with other members of Greater London Branch, WRAC Association at the 1999 gathering, and the second shows the way we were!



THE THREE ROOKIES

Joyce Barron, Nina Garnham (née Pitt), Betty Deeny (née Monbrun) taken at Blandford, Dorset 1941-1942

Does anyone remember the bleakness of that cold, windy place? It was so cold I had frostbitten ankles and hands cracked with chilblains. My mother's parcels were full of calcium tablets and chilblain creams, etc.

It was at Blandford that we learned all about the instruments which directed the guns, aircraft recognition, etc and so much marching drill that some wondered of what importance this was to the war effort. Our short, bad tempered (are there any other sort!) drill sergeant (male) wondered if training females was what he had joined up for! However, all this discipline moulded us into 504(M) HAA Bty, 144 Regt RA where we found such great camaraderie that it lasts to this day. We look back to our army days with great pride and warmth.

Mrs E J Deeny (née Monbrun)
9 Flindell Drive, Bramford, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 4ES

GUNNERS IN EUROPE

By Mrs P M Jefferis, 5 Collins Court, Chideock, Bridport, Dorset DT6 6HS

With reference to your appeal in the centre pages of the January edition of *Lioness*, I enclose a newspaper cutting in the hope that somebody may recognise themselves.

As W283063 Private Jolley, I served as a GL girl with 476 Battery 137 Regiment RA. We were stationed at Hendon, North London and then went to Brussels to relieve an all male battery who moved nearer the front line. We then went to Moerbeke, near Antwerp and had two wild days in Ghent on VE Day and VE Day plus one. Then, as the photo shows, we were flown up to Hamburg where we were under canvas and our job was to grease and prepare transport lorries for their shipment back home. Needless to say there was little enthusiasm for the job!

Editors Note: Unfortunately we were unable to print this photograph owing to the quality of the news print.

515 (M) HAA BTY RA

I have enclosed a photograph of 515 (M) HAA Bty RA at the 'Predictor' at Practice Camp in Sherringham, Norfolk 1943-4. We went twice to Sherringham and once to Penarth Camp serving mainly in Bristol and the South East Coast.



This photograph was taken by 'Pathe News' 1943 or 44 in Sherringham. It was shown at all the Cinemas at the time.

We all enjoyed the Cardiff week-end especially the March Past which had shades of a Carry On Film - great fun!

PDF Compressor Free Version
Lily Cropper nee Healey
4 Pleasent Street, Walshaw, Bury, Lancs.

93rd SEARCHLIGHT REGIMENT, RA

Several of the ladies of the 93rd Searchlight Regiment met for our annual re-union in Derby. Staying, by mutual agreement, in the same hotel as last year, we were greeted as friends.

On the Sunday, we had a coach and visited Chatsworth House. What a lovely day that was. The sun shone all the time and it was lovely and warm, almost too good to be true.

Chatsworth House was delightful, with lots of lovely treasures. Very nice gardens but a little too early for them to be at their best.

Whilst I was walking round the house, a gentleman attendant stopped and asked me what the letters on my blazer pocket stood for. When I explained about the "one and only" all female Service, he was overcome and explained he had always wanted to meet an ATS girl. During the war he was piloting a badly damaged Lancaster Bomber, hoping to get back to base without loss of life, when suddenly, a searchlight homing beacon came on and led him safely home. Any searchlight girl reading this will know exactly what this meant to him and to us.

After Chatsworth House, we travelled on to spend a few hours in Bakewell. A very interesting village and also very popular.

We now look forward to our next re-union in 2001. Possibly a bit farther south.

I was an ATS Intercept Operator at Beaumanor Y station in WW2, and I have written a book about it. The book called "England Needs You" the story of Beaumanor Y station WW2, will be out on 10 April 2000. At present it is covered on the Internet: - <http://www.garatshay.org.uk/englandneeds> and I am being interview on 10 April 2000 by Leicester Radio.

This very secret work carried out by specially selected ATS girls has never been covered. The book takes you back to WW1 and how the Y service started and covers the setting up of MI8. It tells how we covered the German networks, our equipment, how we were recruited and how we lived and kept secret our work at the Intercept Station.

Mrs Joan Nicholls, 5 Hilldale Road, Cheam, Surrey SM1 2JA.

England Needs You
The Story of Beaumanor Y Station WW2

ISBN 0-9538186-0-8
Price per book: £17.50 plus £3.00 p&p

I would like to order copies of te book and
enclose a cheque for £

Made payable to 'Joan Nicholls'. (Please note, I can
only accept sterling).

Name:Telephone No:

Address:.....

.....

Mrs Joan Nichols
51 Hilldale Road, Cheam, Surrey SM1 2JA

**GIFT AID DONATIONS IN RESPECT OF
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION
(Reg No 206184)
and
THE ATS AND WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND
(Reg No 247793)**

Since 6 April 2000, Deeds of Covenant have been replaced by Gift Aid as a means of giving to charity.

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- Gift Aid Declarations may be written or given orally over the telephone.
- If your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and/or capital gains at least equal in amount to the tax that the charity reclaims, you should cancel your declaration.
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- If you are unsure whether or not your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, please contact the Association HQ on 01962 887570 or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR 113 Gift Aid.
- Please notify the Association HQ of any change of address.

Where are you now?

Mrs Christine Powell (Née STREET) W/397710

Enlisted Wolverhampton 1957 - 1960

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I have recently joined the WRAC Association, Wolverhampton Branch which is mostly made up of ATS ladies, but they are a lovely group whom I enjoy meeting every month in Wolverhampton.

How I enjoyed reading my first 'Lioness'. To my surprise and delight I found the Vice Chairman of the WRAC Association Council was my former Commanding Officer Colonel Ann Clissett whom I had worked for at CAD Kineton.

My WRAC service started in 1957 on October 23rd training at Queen Elizabeth Camp, Guildford, which I enjoyed very much.

After my basic training I was posted to Wolverly Camp, Kidderminster as a Telephone Orderly. I worked in the Admin office for 10 months.

My next posting was to CAD Kineton in Warwickshire. There I was upgraded to Clerk and worked in the Admin Office. I finished my three years service at this camp. I met my present husband there while he was on National Service and we married in 1961. It will be our Ruby Wedding Anniversary next year.



The Passing Out Parade photograph may bring back a few memories for some of the girls if they are on the photograph.

I would love to hear from anyone who remembers me as I met some wonderful friends while serving in the WRAC.

Contact: Mrs C Powell, 387 Harden Road, Walsall WS3 1RR

JOYCE LIBIAN and DORIS HARDING

Mrs Clare Euston served in the ATS/WRAC from 1946-1950. She was a RAPC Clerk at Leicester and later in London, where she met her husband, a Grenadier. He died young, and she also lost a daughter. She now has only a son, who is blind.

She would very much like to get in touch with two friends from her Army days:

Joyce Libian, then of Woolwich
Doris Harding, then of Cambridge

Her address is: Garside House, 151 Regency Street, London, SW1 4AH

SUSAN WICKERT

I am looking for Susan Wickert who married (Jock) Phillip O'Donnell in Wellington 1969. Father was deceased prior to 1967; mother German; sister Elizabeth worked on the airlines. Last seen 1971 Feb. She had one daughter, known as Tracy and the home address was Ewell Surrey. They went to Celle, I think in the 70s.

I'm also interested to hear from anyone who may recall me from '67-'70 at COD Donnington.

I've found Jennifer Proud who was a Geordie and now settled in Yeovil.

Muriel McJannett (known as Polly Parrett LCpl 432536) Adams Castle, Motts Mill, Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 9PF

WHO REMEMBERS "SHORTY" PARR?

I am hoping that someone out there remembers me from my service days at WRAC Detachment, Wilton Park, Beaconsfield.

I was then Pte W/376448 Jean Parr. I was stationed there from August 1952 to May 1955. My nickname was 'Shorty' being only 4ft 11ins tall. I have a lot of happy memories of my service days and I would love to hear from anyone who was stationed there, also to renew old friendships in particular. Audrey Clewes, Betty Brown, Margaret Quinn, Peggy McNally, just to name a few. I hope that someone recognises my name as I am in touch with one girl Pauline Yeo who lives in New Zealand. Many thanks to Lioness for that. Please carry on your good work, I really look forward to getting it to read.

Jean Davidson (nee Pte Parr)
15 Glenridding Walk, Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 8SJ

WERE YOU IN THE Y SERVICE

After reading the last Lioness I received, I suddenly realised that you may be able to do something for me that I have wanted to do for many years.

I was in the Y Service between 1943 and 1944, trained at Douglas, Isle of Man and was with 92 Squadron with the nicest girls one could ever wish to meet. I am in touch with Iris Passmore but I have lost touch with the others and would dearly love to hear from them.



We were stationed in "Almeda" Hotel at Douglas and this photo was taken on the front steps of it. Sitting on the wall starting from the top is Sheila Adams, who hailed from Buenos Aires, in front of Sheila is Pat. Top Step: Left to Right, Winnie Dowkes, Margaret Lewis, Joan Breed. Next Step Down: (A line) Passmore. Next Step Down: Thelma (Clarke) Snyder. Bottom Step: Barbara (Chapman) Smith and Enid (Jones) Burgess. Sgt Quee taught us how to march and was really our friend!

We were eventually posted to various places on operations. I was sent to Harrogate with Barbara and Enid, and we were there until the end of the war and some time after. I have been to a number of re-unions but did not meet up with anyone from our Squad.

Mrs Thelma SNYDER, 7620 SE 114th Ln. Belleview FL 34420

47 AA BDE SIGNALS - 1942-1945

The photographs were taken in 1942 at Tennycoats, Lavant, Chichester.



Stella Burgess

We were at 47 AA Bde Signals from 1942-1945.

We wondered if anybody might recognise us.

I remember Elizabeth Blowers, Sgt Houston, Ena Campbell, Jo and Margaret cypher clerks, Gladys Hatman, Marian, Do Halden.

Later we were billeted at Weathnoyle, a large house with a butler, cook and maids. We just slept on the top floor. Happy days!



Gladys Thrower and friend

Mrs Gladys Thrower (known as Penny Wakefield)
17 Turner Road, Norwich, NR2 4HD Norfolk

WERE YOU AT GUILDFORD IN MAY 1952?

I would love to hear from anyone who was in 3 Platoon Number 1 Company at WRAC Depot, Queens Camp, Guildford May 1952. I still have the Platoon Photo. I went on to Thieful Barracks, Lisburn, Northern Ireland and would like to hear from anyone who remembers me. I worked in Squadron Office.

M C Liddiard (nee Crissie Power) (W1376129)
1A Nelson Road, Daybrook, Nottingham, NG5 6JE

I DO NOT THINK I HAVE CHANGED!

I have recently joined the Association, and intend to go to the 2000 Re-union in Cardiff.

My service days as plotter and radar operator were spent at Neath, S.Wales, Manorbier, S.Wales, Headquarters Naval Operations Plymouth, North Weald Fighter station, Felixstowe and Taunton between 1942-1946.

I hope someone will recognise me after 55 years, I cannot have changed that much!



Left to Right Back Row: Stella Gasson, Ena Watts, Marjorie Leggett, Clare Hannaford, Joyce Smith, Beryl Williams, Philis Grimshaw

We were a close knit team, lovely companions, and I have many more names collected in my travels.

This is the start of an adventure and I am looking forward to staying at Jury's Hotel 7/8 April.

Mrs Ena Harding (nee Watts)
52 Penrhyn Avenue, Olkington, Middleton, Lancs M24 1EQ

Editor's Note: I hope you found the Re-union enjoyable and you managed to find some old friends.

MTTC ATS CAMBERLEY 1940s



Does anyone recognise herself in the group photograph taken in the early 1940s at the Motor Transport Training Centre ATS Camberley?

The other photo is of myself and my best friend Tessa Richards. I cannot remember why we were not in the group, possibly on leave.

Tessa was a telephonist and I was a pay clerk at Mulroy - Number 3 Coy.

Junior Commander Mildred was my officer, I often wonder about her, Tessa and I were reunited through a request letter to a magazine after 55 years.



I am very much hoping to get a letter from anyone who knew us.

Mrs Barbara Hurford (nee Stanley [Stan])
The Hollies, 49 Park End, Langstone, Newport, S.Wales
NP18 2NA

ANNE C HUGHES (nee TYLER)

Does anybody remember Mrs Anne C Hughes (nee Tyler) who served with FANY as an Ambulance Driver for two years on the South Coast and then in Ack Ack in East London. She was later Commissioned as a Subaltern.

Please contact: Eileen Sullivan, 37 Goodwin Road, Slough
SL2 2ET

Referring to the letter from Grace Shreeve in Katoomba, NSW, Australia: I too spotted the letter from Barbara Michaels/Parks in the 1999/2 issue. She did not give an address, so I wrote to her care of Headquarters who kindly forwarded my missive on to her. We have subsequently exchanged letters and phone calls, and we look forward to meeting again at the Cardiff re-union.

I am in touch with several former members of 4 Independent Company, namely Jodie Renwick from Company Office, "Sherry" Bartlett (who is also in Oz), Daphne Lloyd, Eddie Fridd (married names), Pat Cole and Patsy Craig. In fact we have a small 4 Coy re-union every year at either the UJC or the Victory Club.

Two people I would love to contact are Beatrice "Johnnie" Walker and Muriel Mulliner, who were both in GHQ Signals. I went out to Singapore with Johnnie and flew back with Muriel - the last time I saw them was at my wedding in October 1953. Where are you girls? I also have a unit photograph of 4 Coy, taken on the side road, down beside the "huts" (our billets). I admit I do not remember it being taken - must have been out on the town the night before, so I have no idea of the date it was taken. Lots of faces are recognisable, Mary Freckleton, Rita MacGill, Peggy Apps, Lillian Brearley and Mim Perriot, from the Channel Islands, to mention just a few. I could probably name more if I put my mind to it.

I agree with your correspondent who says we ex-WRAC must in effect get our act together, to keep the

Association alive. We sadly do not have quite the same incentives as the girls who served during the war, but we still had plenty of comradeship and pride in our Corps. You have only to attend the WRAC Dinner Club functions to be assured of that.

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Madge D Evans (nee Grundy) (W/369015, Clerk GD BII - HQ Eastern Command & GHQ FarELF - 1950-1953)
15 Laburnum Grove, Luton, Beds LU3 2DW

DRIVING AND RIDING

I would very much like to hear from some very good friends I had in the ATS, namely Natalie Arnold, Nina Goodrich and Elizabeth Keys who was at school with me and also at Ossington Hall.

I joined up in December 1939, was sent to train at Saltdean and then posted to Margate where I worked in the Officers' Mess for six months. I was then sent to Hereford Drivers' Training School where I passed the course and was then posted to 932 Coy RASC Winthorpe Hall near Newark. By then I was a Staff Car Driver (1st Class). I was transferred to Ossington Hall, loaned to 932 Bty RA near Leeds, then Claxton Hall and back to Winthorpe. There I had to do convoy driving from Hull to Dover by ambulance, evacuating our troops from Dunkirk. I was discharged from the ATS in 1945 as a result of head injuries sustained in an accident teaching someone to drive.

I have always enjoyed riding and managed to have my horse with me on some postings. I continued riding after I left the ATS, taking part in Point-to-Point and Eventing although I managed to break my back twice. I was also unlucky enough to have my left arm severed by an aircraft propeller blade, but thanks to the care of an outstanding surgeon and some bone grafting it was put back together and I still have a little use in it.

Mrs J Parkinson-Smith (née Scott) 40 Upper Brook Hill,
Woodstock, Oxfordshire, OX20 1UA

W/188000 DORRELL FRATER-McCARTHY

I would like to hear from anyone who might remember me. From the Guildford Training Centre. I went on to train as a radar operator later transferring to the Medical Corps.



The photograph of 3 Platoon shows me first on the right second row down. During my service I was at Oswestry, Nottingham, near Southampton, Botley and other places; prior to release, Middle Wallop.

After my marriage I spent many years in different parts of Africa and it was there that I had my address book stolen and lost touch with Service friends.

Dorrell M Frater-McCarthy, PO Box 35, Seaford, S Australia
5169

MRS MONA HAMER (nee SUART) W/229104

I would love to hear from anyone who remembers me.

I was called up on November 27 1942 to join the ATS and was sent to Knutsford for my "square bashing". After 4 weeks I was posted to Putney, London to be trained as a SBO (Switchboard Operator).

I passed my DIII in March 1943, and was posted to the Royal Signals, attached to the Ack Ack Battery in Ramsgate/Margate.

I still keep in touch with Florrie Howe (nee Whalley), and she is still in touch with Wyn McBride. Some names I can remember are Cpl Kay Hiscox from the Royal Signals and Capt Horton, Gwen Draper, and Sub P Barton, from the Ack Ack Battery.

Your recent Lioness reminded me of my last posting to Uxbridge in 1944. I well remember working underground (Lioness 1/2000) with the Army looking down on the plotters who were plotting the enemy aircraft, the RAF were next to us, then the Navy, we all looked down through a glass screen.

I was 80 years young on March 30th. But look back with affection to my days in the ATS.

Mona Hamer, Flat 4, Edmonton Court, Edmonton Road,
Woodmoor, Stockport
SK2 7BG

CALLING SNOW WHITE, DOC, BASHFUL, HAPPY AND SLEEPY

How sad it is when the first news one has of an old friend of almost 60 years ago is in the obituary column. I served with Margo Furey in the Army Pay Office, Leicester until 1942 when the Pay Office was divided and half of the unit was sent to Oldham to form the SL/RA Pay Office. Margo had shared a flat with me and six others in Stonygate Court and as we were eight we called ourselves Snow White and the seven dwarfs. We had a great time but sadly only two of us are in touch, myself Eva Ellison and Joan Holden (nee Swales) of the York Branch. We would love to know if any of the others are out there and may read this. Here we all are:

Branch News

ACCRINGTON

What a good start to the year 2000 for us, at our first meeting our chairman welcomed five new members to our branch.

On New Year's Eve Masie our member from Northern Ireland attended the official opening of the Dome along with the Queen, Duke of Edinburgh and many celebrities.

Her grandson had entered a competition run by one of the national newspapers. He had to say why he thought his grandma should attend the Dome. She has in the last two years, lost two family members and Masie herself has had a stroke although at this present time she has learned to walk again. Her grandson won the competition much to Masie's surprise.

On February 19th, the wedding took place between one of our founder members, Isbella Torrance, and Mark Conboy. The branch sends best wishes to them both.

In April we were presented with a cheque for £240 from Brother J Howarth of the Cpt J McGonagle Memorial Lodge No. 10619 of the Royal Ante-Deluvian Order of Buffaloes (RAOB). The monies presented were part of a sum of money raised during Brother Howarth's year as Provincial Grand Primo. Our Chairperson, who accepted the cheque on our behalf, thanked Brother Howarth for his kind donation and told him the money would be put to good use and was greatly appreciated.

ALDERSHOT

The past few months have been as usual busy for the Aldershot branch. Our first engagement was with our fellow organisation, the Royal Signals Association Aldershot, who kindly invited us to join in a musical evening at which a variety of wind instruments were demonstrated by a member of staff at the Gordon School -former members of the WRAC Band formed a goodly proportion of the audience. Two teams of "Lionesses" later took part in the Royal Signals annual quiz evening and very much enjoyed the curry supper (cooked by the Gurkhas) in the interval - sadly this year we slipped down the "ratings" with Lioness I masterminded by Colonel Audrey Smith narrowly beating Lioness II led by Gwenda Easton into 6th place - still a respectable score out of 34 teams.

We had a very enjoyable talk about the work of the Basingstoke Canal Restoration Group in the Spring which is to be followed by a supper cruise at the end of June; those of you who have been stationed in Aldershot (ie most readers!) will no doubt remember the derelict state in which the canal once was and would be pleasantly surprised its newly renovated state. The next talk, to which we are all looking forward, is to be a continuation of WO1 Andrea Denham's description of "Life in the Army To-day", scheduled for September.

Those of the branch who attended the Grand Reunion in Cardiff thoroughly enjoyed the occasion, although some members only spotted each other during the conga which rounded off proceedings at the dinner! The cake, which was raffled separately from the Grand Raffle, was never claimed. It therefore found its way back to Association HQ who had

to find a good home for it. The result was that it was presented to one of our oldest members, Major "Dixie" Dixon, to be shared with other residents of her nursing home. Incidentally, it was delicious.



Maj. Eva Dixon and her friend Mrs Esther Shaw enjoying the cake after the Grand Reunion

BATH

The Bath Branch continues to meet twice a month with an average attendance of 25 to 30 members present. It is now in its 53rd year and the Annual General Meeting in March was preceded by a lunch prepared by our Treasurer, Pam Finney. The local paper made a feature of this occasion so we had some publicity with a photograph of the members beside a "write-up". We are working closely with the Bristol Branch and hope to share some events.

We have decided to celebrate the 100th Birthday of our Patron, HM The Queen Mother, with a lunch on Monday August 7th, which is our normal meeting day, at a city restaurant.

We keep in touch with Ex-Service organisations, inviting them to our fund raising Coffee Mornings, and we are invited by the Africa Star Association to their outings and events. Fund raising is getting harder, but we support The Gurkha Trust, Combat Stress, and the Star and Garter Home at Richmond besides our own Benevolent Fund and The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund.

Six of our members attended the Reunion at Cardiff and enjoyed the weekend. We feel the Association is in "safe hands" after hearing Brigadier Nield's address to us at the AGM and thank all those who helped to make the weekend a success. Four of our members have received Certificates of Appreciation. Our Vice-Chairman and myself were honoured to receive them from the Brigadier, whilst our Chairman and Committee member Mrs Ferguson will be presented with theirs at a later date.



We held our 53rd AGM on March 20th. The photograph was taken by the Bath Evening Chronicle outside our meeting room at Fitzroy House. The lady in the front row fifth from the right is our very regular member Miss Hilda Pratt, who is 90 years old.

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BEXHILL

Time has flown by so quickly I cannot believe it is time, once again, for our report to the "Lioness". The past six months have been varied and most enjoyable. We joined the Royal British Legion at the Cenotaph on Armistice Sunday. One of our members laid a wreath on our behalf.

We enjoyed a Christmas Tea arranged by our Social Committee in December and later in the month we met at a restaurant for a Christmas Lunch.

In January we met for a chat and a cup of tea. Then four ladies were invited to Worthing Branch with other Associations for a day which was most enjoyable.

In February we had a fun quiz. We were entertained by one of our members in March with film slides of her holiday in Japan. The photography was brilliant and Joan's account very graphic. We got in the mood for the Spring with an Easter Bonnet Parade and Easter Tea. There certainly is some talent in our branch!

In May we had a local historian to speak to us on the "Women's Movement" and Suffragettes. We did not realise how much was started in this area. We are entertaining ourselves in June "reminiscing", it should be good fun.

We hope to have a summer coach outing soon and we are inviting two members from each of the Local Branches to our Annual Strawberry Tea in July.

A competition in August - 'guessing who's who' and in September another speaker, so you can see we are quite active! We are so lucky in having a happy and caring branch. We hope the attendance will increase soon.

Our very best wish to all other branches.

BIRMINGHAM

I am enclosing two photographs, one taken at our Festival of Remembrance - which is held yearly at the Birmingham Symphony Hall. We had the opportunity of being presented on stage this year to acknowledge 50 years of the WRAC.



The photograph shows three of our WRAC girls and one ATS - Jenny Byrnes, Ann Deakin (Stafford), Maureen Deeley and myself, Gwen Finney ATS.



The second photograph is of Maureen and myself with our Branch Standard on Remembrance Day at our Hall of Memory.

I felt so proud to be privileged to be wearing an ATS uniform again - I felt 10ft tall!!

BOURNEMOUTH

I can hardly believe it is that time of year again - to prepare the Branch report for the Lioness - where does the time go? We, here in Bournemouth, have enjoyed a busy few months and are looking forward to our future plans.

Our December Christmas Lunch was a most happy occasion held at our monthly venue, the Quality Hotel, and all who attended received a gift to mark Christmas and the New Millennium. At our January meeting Mrs Folder gave us an interesting and amusing insight into the history of the Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth. In February Mr Booker held us spellbound with his illustrated talk about the Royal Star and Garter Home - this sounded and looked very attractive and one or two of us contemplated booking our places. At our March meeting we were regaled with stories of the work and bravery of the volunteers of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution with a talk and video film by Mr Twomey. During the April meeting we welcomed PTI Sgt Berry from York Garrison, who gave us an insight into the role of women in the Army of today. That covers our actual meetings to date of going to press.

At the November Remembrance Parades, a group joined the contingent in Whitehall, whilst others attended parades locally. A wreath was laid at the Bournemouth War Memorial on behalf of the Branch by the Honorary Secretary.

At the end of January we were saddened by the sudden death of Georgina Peskett. Georgina had only been a member for a couple of years but we shall miss her none-the-less and we send our condolences to her two daughters and son who have now lost both parents within a year.

We welcomed new members to the Branch, particularly those who had served in the WRAC, and an associate member who had been with the QARANC.

Although we have 81 members on our records, we only average 25 - 35 per meeting. There is a nucleus of members we never see or hear from (mainly life members). In March we sent a special letter to 40 ladies. We have received 21 replies and found out 2 members had moved and one had died. Two letters were returned unopened. The remaining replies were very interesting, some positive thoughts have been received and several ladies are now contemplating coming to the meetings. If you are one of the



Lt Col Sue Westlake and her "Troops" follow the band.



"Can we go yet?"



The Standard Bearers



Janice Robinson, Pat Cooper, Eileen Carter, Liz Robinson await dinner



Lois Gilbert, WOI Andrea Denham, & HQ's Chief Clerk Angie Davey enjoying a glass of wine



"They went that way..."



A very smart "Eyes Right" – it must have been the first time round.



Left to Right WO2 Nancy Thorne, WO2 Karen Baxter, SSgt Jo Twycross, Sgt Leona Goffin

19 who haven't replied yet - the Committee looks forward to hearing from you soon.

We now come to the Grand Reunion in Cardiff. Despite one of two initial hiccups, all went very well indeed and we were certainly given a big welcome to Wales. I found Cardiff a fascinating City, very prosperous and steeped in history. I shall endeavour to return and take a more leisurely look at everything.

The Secretaries meeting was well conducted by Dee McElligott, and it was most pleasant to renew acquaintances over lunch. This was followed by the AGM.

The Gala Dinner was great - how pretty the tables looked and how thoughtful to have a small Welsh love spoon at every place setting - thank you Cardiff - sadly the evening was over all too quickly.

On Sunday morning the Drumhead Service was both moving and exhilarating. What a pity the weather changed so drastically, and how cold we were, waiting for everyone to arrive on the buses for our March Past! Once we were moving, it was fine and we did our old drill sergeants proud with our marching, a smart eyes right and left wheel! What a surprise when we had to march back again.

A good weekend of comradeship - thank you to everyone involved in all the complex arrangements.

Until the next time - au revoir from Bournemouth.

BLACKPOOL

Greetings from the Blackpool Branch.

We are a happy lot who meet once per month, and enjoy the get together. We meet on the third Friday every month. I enclose our new programme so that if any of you wish to join us you will be most welcome. The venue is the Royal British Legion Club in Thornton Cleveleys (opposite the Bus Station). From our programme you will see when we are there or away on one of our outings.

We are four years old in August and have some 50 members, our birthday party will be in the club with a buffet lunch and wine at a reasonable price.

PROGRAMME FOR 2000

17 March	Talk by Frank from Lyon's
April	Good Friday - No Meeting
19 May	Meeting
16 June	Trip to Kendal (Quaker Tapestry)
21 July	Meeting
18 August	Special Birthday Party. As last year but you may bring a friend
15 September	Trip to Oswaldtwistle Mill
20 October	Meeting
17 November	Shopping Trip - To be arranged
15 December	Xmas Lunch at Fulwood Barracks

The costs of the trips are being worked out depending on the number who go as the coach company charge on the size of the coach.

Approximate cost to Kendal - coach only - £6.00 or £7.50
Oswaldtwistle - £11.00 or £12.00 (this trip does include afternoon tea)

All bookings to The Secretary or Treasurer.

BOLTON

Our main event during the last 6 months was in November when the Combined Services organised a Remembrance Concert at Bolton Town Hall. Two of our members were asked to represent the ATS at the concert by joining the standard bearers. While the audience were taking their seats they were greeted by wartime effects such as air raid sirens and gunfire. The standard bearers marched down the hall and onto the stage to join the artistes and bands who were to entertain us. After the performance a remembrance service was held, following which, poppy petals fell onto the stage. It was all very moving and I understand that this is the only concert of its kind outside London. The next day we attended the service at the War Memorial which was followed by a march past. The veterans received a special cheer from the public.

At Christmas we had lunch at a local Coaching Inn, followed by a sing-a-long, all very enjoyable.

Some of our members attended a dedication ceremony, where a bench was unveiled in memory of Capt Harris who died last November. He was described as an inspiring leader in wartime and peacetime and a friend to many. He was a patron of the Combined Services and also a founder member of Bolton Branch Far East Prisoner of War Association. During the war he was captured by the Japanese. He survived the ordeal and returned home to a lifetime of charity work.

Four of our members attended the recent reunion at Cardiff meeting old friends and new. It was amazing how many young members were there which bodes well for the future of our Association.

At the moment there is a debate as to whether we can continue in our present venue. We are fortunate to have a room at a local Community Centre, but Bolton Council is proposing to increase the fees and we may not be able to afford the rise. They have also asked us to change the day on which we meet, this is being discussed.

BRADFORD

November was a busy month with the Annual Festival of Remembrance at the St George's Hall, selling poppies in the city, parade and service at the war memorial for 11th November and a further service in the afternoon at Eccleshill.

Christmas Lunch was once again at the Pine Room. The Dunkirk Veterans Association joined us and everyone enjoyed it.

March 18th was the Golden Wedding of Jack and Nora Houldsworth. Nora is, and has been, Treasurer of the Branch for 34 years. She keeps our finances in very good order and is a very active and conscientious worker who is very much appreciated by everyone. Nora joined up in 1942 along with her twin sister Mary, and they spent the next three years at HQ Northern Command, York as Switchboard Operators.

Four members travelled to Cardiff on 7th April for the Grand Reunion. We were blessed with good weather.

Although we enjoyed the evening on Saturday the meal itself was a bit of a let down and not worth the high amount charged.

The Drumhead Service held in the Conference Centre was wonderful, thanks to the Reverend Wing for making it so.

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The parade afterwards was a bit confused. It took a long time to get everyone who wanted to march organised at the assembly point. We formed up and set off past the Saluting Base only to be halted instead of being dismissed, turned round and marched back again. As the majority of ladies on parade must be in the 70-80 group, a little consideration for these ladies (who had looked forward for so long to march with their comrades) and stayed remarkably cheerful throughout, would not have gone amiss.

Having expressed this little grumble, thanks and congratulations to the ladies of Cardiff and roundabout who manned the stalls and put on such a marvellous array of goods. Hours and hours of work were displayed. We hope you made a good profit - you deserved to.

A visit was also made to Cardiff Castle, another memorable experience.

All in all a wonderful weekend.

BRISTOL

Bristol has had a very successful first 6 months. Our membership is increasing all the time. We have had publicity on local TV and on Channel 4. We are pleased that we are receiving requests for membership from ATS and WRAC and also serving members which is most encouraging.

In February we had our Millennium Lunch at the Marriott. This was attended by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Bristol and we were pleased that Lt Col (Retd) Val Trout was able to accept our invitation to join us.

Last week we attended the Mansion House, had a tour of the house and had tea and cake with the Lady Mayoress and the Lord Mayor. Some of our friends from Bath Branch joined us.



Bristol Branch members at Lord Mayor's May 3rd 2000

We have held Fund Raising activities and will be organising trips and more activities in the forthcoming months.

We are producing a Newsletter to all our members, we hope that they will contribute items for publication.

We enjoyed meeting members at Cardiff. The weather was kind to us. We look forward to the next Reunion.

Best wishes to all.

CANTERBURY

Since our last report we have had excellent talks from 3 of our members, Kate McGregor who regaled us with snippets of her time in Kuwait; Angela Cobb on her trip to China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and a cruise on The South China Seas; and Maria with her whistle stop tour on her round the world cruise. Plenty of eats were available for our WRNS/WAAF Party with an informative talk by Phil Craft on Argentina. This brought us to the end of 1999 when we had our very enjoyable Christmas Lunch at The Dominican Priory. We had a branch outing to Kingsnorth Nature Reserve. As we went along the causeway the wind decided to howl but an enjoyable day was had by all. Members thoroughly enjoyed their last outing to The Royal Tournament, but were very sad that this would be the final one and so the atmosphere was even more poignant than usual (trust Maria to be waiting at the wrong entrance for her ticket). Several members took advantage of The Lord Kitcheners Home in Lowestoft and had a lovely week on holiday in September (the only comment that came back was "did we really have to be locked in by 1030 pm?"). We had our wonderful fish and chips in April and Easter Bonnet Competition. First prize went to Madeleine, second to Maisie and third to Mavis (I think it had something to do with the initial M). An excellent quiz was given by Jenny, our President, at the March meeting which took us back in time to General Montgomery, the Normandy Beaches and 1943 or was it 44, or even 41 (confusion began to reign) but Rosina came out as a winner. At our May Meeting we held a Bring and Buy Sale and raised over £200 - thanks to all members who contributed to this marvellous event. Kay Perfect and Maria have carried The Branch Standard to various events and other Associations appreciate this.

Our Treasurer, Roggie Stinson, decided that it was time to retire from this post in May and when counting back it emerged that she had been Treasurer for 31 years! Is this a record we ask? Thanks must go to Roggie for carrying out this important post and we recognise the excellent job that she has done. Well-done Roggie. Thanks must also go to Kay for stepping in at the last minute to fill these shoes (I am not sure if a bit of arm twisting wasn't used).

We have lost a very good Minute Taking Secretary in Nan Waters and we wish her well in her new home in Lincolnshire.

Kate McGregor has very kindly stepped into The Chairman's shoes and thanks must also go to Doreen for first being Secretary and then Chairman and all the hard work she still puts into the branch.

We all miss Maria at our meetings. Since passing her BA (Ed) she has been employed as a Reception Teacher and can no longer attend our afternoon meetings. She still does a good job of being Secretary however, handling the correspondence and subscriptions. Hurry up back and join us soon.

Members who went to the Reunion reported back that they had a fantastic time and would like to thank all those people involved in a marvellous weekend.

CARDIFF

We still continue to have new members joining the Cardiff Branch and most of them attend all our meetings. Our Christmas Dinner was held in the United Services Club in Cardiff and was enjoyed by all.

In January some members attended the BBC Songs of Praise programme held in the new Cardiff Millennium Stadium.

Since Christmas the branch has been engaged in helping with the organisation of the Grand Reunion which was held in April. On the day of the reunion we had great pleasure in greeting members from Branches all over the UK, also members from far and wide including a contingent from Australia. It was very nice to see so many younger members at the Reunion and to hear about their experiences in modern times. There were stalls from several Branches selling a variety of goods. During the day, members sold raffle tickets, which were drawn after a very informative AGM.

At 1930 hrs dinner was served. Love Spoons donated by HQ, for which we thank them, were given to all diners, a very nice thought. On a very cold Sunday morning a Drumhead Service was held followed by a parade.

We would like to thank HQ for all their co-operation in organising the reunion also thank-you to everyone who travelled to Cardiff to make such a memorable day.

CHELMSFORD

Members of this Branch re-assembled in October for a new session of meetings which are held on the third Tuesday of the month at The British Legion Hall, New London Road, Chelmsford. We continue to enjoy the friendship of former ATS and affiliated members of the WAAF and the WRNS over a cup of tea and a chat. We average 40 people at meetings at which we usually have a speaker. A Raffle and Bring and Buy provides an interest and helps our funds along.

It is with deep regret we report the death of Margaret (Peggie) Gayler. Peggie was a Life Member of the Branch always giving her best of whatever she was asked to do. We remember her as the person who usually provided a vase of flowers for the Committee table. She was a much liked and had many friends. It is sad to think she died so suddenly just two days after our Christmas Lunch which she attended. We will miss her. She served in the ATS from 1942 - 1945 and became a Lance Corporal.

We met in October and held our AGM and re-elected Officers and Committee Members who will serve for the coming year. That meeting concluded with a game of "Call my Bluff" which proved very popular. Thank you Peggy (Turner) for producing it.

In November we visited Canterbury and enjoyed a day browsing round the City. In December we held our Christmas Lunch to which we were very pleased to have as our Guest of Honour Lady Val Kemball. To mark the Millennium each member received a special gift token.

In January some of us went to Corton (Warner's Holiday Centre) for an After Christmas Break. This included a visit to Norwich for shopping and on to a Pantomime which was very good indeed, and once again the ATS did well at Bingo.

Also in January the Branch was represented at a Civic Service held in Chelmsford Cathedral to commemorate the Millennium. This was a particularly inspiring occasion.

Since January we have heard various speakers including a Tudor cook from Kentwell Hall who gave a very interesting illustrated talk on the way food was prepared during that period.

We have also listened to a speaker who is completely deaf. She told us about her dog Jack who accompanied her; and how "Hearing Dogs for the Deaf" are trained and used. Another speaker who gave a particularly amusing account on her experiences of "The Lighter Side of Nursing" was much enjoyed and our sincere thanks go to Joyce Wright for arranging this varied programme for us.

In May we held our usual annual May Fayre. This raises useful funds for the Branch.

If there are any readers who are not able to attend meetings but would like to receive our Newsletter it is now possible. Please send a cheque for £2.50 to the Hon. Secretary to entitle you to 12 copies. (Please enclose your name and address!).

It is realised that at our meetings, there are folk who regularly give help in various ways ensuring the afternoon "ticks over smoothly". Our thanks go to them for everything they do so well.

CHESTER

Another successful year has passed by - but sadly as we get older winter takes its toll on members attending meetings.

Once again in '99 we joined our friends at the Rhyl Branch for yet another happy Social gathering and we met up with other branches in the area. Several members attended the Wales and West Reunion held in Crewe - another day to remember and send thanks and congratulations to our near neighbours.

We tried a new project in September and held a Prize Bingo Session. It was not, however, very well attended and we did not take the "enormous" amount of money we expected. Still, a good evening was thoroughly enjoyed. Had it not been for our Secretary's daughter, who donated wines we would not have been so happy!

Members attended the Armistice Parade in London, Mrs Molly Choppen went on the parade and Mrs Vera Hamblett and Mrs M Gregory attended the service in Westminster Abbey. The service was very moving and we were so lucky to have excellent front seats.

We have sent our usual donations to "The Benevolent Fund" and "The Royal British Legion".

Twenty four members sat down to a very good Christmas Lunch at the Stafford Hotel, Chester and amid the jollity thought of our absent friends and toasted them in the traditional manner.

We have several new members, but regret the absence of new members who served in the WRAC, they do not seem interested. We try to recruit these ladies as they are so badly needed to carry on the tradition of the Association.

The Chairman and several members had a good time at the Cardiff Reunion and send their thanks to the Cardiff Branch and to the members of the Wales and West Area who

worked so hard to make our stay so enjoyable. Four of our branch members are attending the last pilgrimage to be held in France and Belgium by the 1940 Dunkirk Veterans Association. Time does indeed march on - especially when we realise the brave lads we knew are now almost all over 80 years of age. May we have good weather and see the end in our usual style.

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Our Secretary/Treasurer had wonderful reunion with an old colleague who served with her in 488 Hvy A A Battery. They met in October after 54 years and when she and Mrs Hazel Mosley got together the years rolled away.

A grand party was held - a night to remember finishing off with all the old songs - and much as usual in the old days - bad heads in the morning.

We have a full programme to look forward to - Rhyl is again hosting one of their splendid "Do's". The North Wales Royal British Legion is holding a Millennium Parade in Rhyl on Sunday June 18th - there is an excellent programme of events which will be worthwhile attending.

Blackpool branch has a fifth birthday and party coming up on August 18th.

The Stockport Branch are celebrating 16 successful years on 16th September and our North Western Group are holding a Christmas Party in Manchester on the 25th November.

The Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer and all our members send affectionate greetings to all especially several of our unwell members to wish them a speedy recovery. So to Jean Hornby, Mary Kirk and Vera Show of Weaverham and May Lewis of Frodsham - hurry up back.

Greetings to all our comrades wherever you may be.

COLCHESTER

Time for another Report and I will start with our speakers. In November '99 we had the pleasure once again of listening to the Rev Chris Newlands of Shrub End Church who told us of his latest visit to Romania. His Church had collected large sums of money to help re-build a hospital. We were so moved by his talk that we purchased some books he had on the subject - every little helps - and gave a donation.

December '99 meeting was the occasion of our Christmas Party and we had, as our Special Guest, Lady Val Kembell our Area Chairman. The members provided all the food and raffle prizes and one of our younger members, Alison Biegel, Captain in the TA, brought along a Choir from the Colchester Institute who entertained us with some excellent singing and readings - all in all a very happy party. It was also in December that we held our Christmas Dinner. Fifty One of us enjoyed a good meal at the Clacton Golf Club and again the members supplied excellent raffle prizes and were very generous in the purchasing of tickets. We have booked again for this year.

January 2000 meeting was our AGM because we needed a new Treasurer. The overall result was that the main posts remained the same and after a discussion Mrs Beryl Newell offered to become Treasurer and was duly elected so once again all positions were filled, some of us doing 2 or 3 jobs.

February 2000. Like most Branches we had a fair amount of members down with the flu or heavy colds but all

recovered in time. I had to tell the members that we could not go to Mr and Mrs Ricketts' garden in May 2000 as they are having their thatched roof completely renewed. Better luck next year. As we had no Speaker I had made up a quiz on flowers and trees. It went down very well and many members wanted a copy so I had some printed.

At the March meeting we did not have a speaker but there were quite a lot of subjects to discuss. These included the Memorial for Women of World War II, the British Korean Veterans Association forthcoming parade, a letter from Lady Kembell our Area Chairman, about the cost of "Lioness" and Reunion etc and several other topics.

Our April Meeting was in entirely new hands as our Chairman was in Durham, our Deputy Chairman in bed with a very bad back and I, Vera C Cole, Secretary, was in the Colchester General Hospital with severe high blood pressure and out of this world for a few days; and the most important lady - Molly, our tea lady, was away on a day trip. However I am pleased to report that the tea was made, all the money collected, the stalls manned and I really cannot thank the ladies enough. Beryl Newell did a very good job indeed and came to see me in hospital where I was for 17 days forgetting all about meetings and re-unions. However I was pleased to read in Beryl's Newsletter that the 3 Colchester Members who attended same gave a very good report. I'm sure HQ is thankful it all went off well and our congratulations to you all who worked so hard to make it the success it was.

Since our last report we have lost 2 more members but gained one new one and one transfer so our membership stands at 74 annual and 63 life. We sent donations to the Benevolent Fund in memory of the 2 ladies who died. I trust that I shall be well enough to take my place at the next meeting and do the job which I so love. The members sent me some lovely cards and letters which meant a great deal to me but I do realise that I must not be so eager to fill anymore empty gaps, others will have to help. I'll be much better when the sun shines and the grey skies disappear.

Certificate of Appreciation

Miss Myra Tufnall joined the ATS on the 15 August 1941 and was trained as a driver. She served at several locations including K Company ATS HQ, Inglis Road, Colchester. She was demobbed in December 1945 as a Lance Corporal. She is now 85 years old and was presented with a Certification of Appreciation in May by Lady Val Kembell.

God bless you all from the Colchester Branch.

CLEVELAND



Margaret Fick, Chairman; Peggy Smith, Vice-Chairman

Greetings readers from North East of England.

At present, my little back garden is full of daffodils, primroses and bluebells. Isn't it good to know summer is on its way again?

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A service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance of the 60th Anniversary of Declaration of World War II at Eden Camp Modern History Museum, North Yorkshire was held on 12 September 99

Going back to November '99, some of our branch went to London for the Armistice Parade. Our Secretary Gwen Friday proudly marched with her daughter, ex-QARANC, son-in-law, ex-RAMC, and her husband, ex-RAF. Her family had flown over from America for the parade. How proud Gwen was, and rightly so. I also heard the TV commentator mention the ATS Dinner Club, well done Ladies!

Instead of our usual "Knife and Fork" Christmas Dinner, we decided on a Buffet Luncheon at The Royal Navy Association Club in Stockton. We had a great time, and the caterers did us proud.

We started our year off with an auction, our usual auctioneer, Ex-SSgt Marjorie Radcliffe was unavailable as she was on holiday in, would you believe, Cambodia! I wonder what the ATS would have made of that. However, the gavel was ably handled by Dot Marsh and Olive Kinghorn.

In February it was time to think of our summer outings. Since a series had been on TV about stately homes, Castle Howard was on the list. Perhaps we are getting ideas above our station!

March brought our Annual Coffee Morning in Stockton Parish Church. The sunshine brought out the market day shoppers, who always support us, enabling us to send a donation to Association Funds.

Then in April, Cardiff was besieged by ATS and WRAC Badges and Berets. We were blessed by "wall to wall" sunshine the whole weekend. It was lovely to see familiar faces, some of whom have become real pals.

At the Drumhead Service on the Sunday morning, we in Cleveland were very proud to have our Standard draped on the drums, along with the National Association Standard. Well done Ann, our Standard Bearer, you did us proud as usual.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our pal, Edith Seabrook from the Darlington Branch, for driving us in our "People Carrier" - you were brilliant.

About twenty of our members went to lunch at a local cookery college last week. I am informed they had a wonderful meal, so well done the students.

I wonder if the "Yorkshire Puds" came up to the standard of ex-ATS Ivy Rattue. She spent most of her service days at Raby Castle, Co Durham. She tells me she often worked with 10% women, 90% men. WOW!

Keep on enjoying your meetings ladies - I often see Gladys Pope recruiting on Channel Four - see you in Stafford Gladys

CREWE

Our last fund raiser for 1999 was a dance at the Crosville Club, Crewe in November which was a successful evening as always.

Five members went down to London for Remembrance Day two went to the Westminster Abbey Service and three were on the Cenotaph Parade.

In December we had our annual visit to Crewe Theatre with our friends and relatives to see the Pantomime which we all enjoyed very much. Then came our usual Christmas break until February.

In March we had one of our Sunday Lunch outings at the Crewe Arms Hotel with husbands and partners, of course. We then started making plans for our visit to the Grand Reunion at Cardiff.

Because Cardiff is in our Wales and the West Area, our Area Chairman Mrs M Purkis and Area Secretary Mrs E Francis were very much involved. It meant a lot of hard work for Cardiff Branch, who were on the spot, and the other area branches were also asked to help. Crewe were given the thankless job of Registration which most people found rather irksome. We did our best however, and kept cheerful.



Members enjoy themselves in Cardiff

The venue was very successful and it is always very enjoyable to meet up with our friends from all over the country.

At the Dinner I think everyone appreciated the Band but alas just as we all got in the mood and good voice it suddenly came to an end and we did not even get to sing our usual "Auld Lang Syne" so the evening finished off rather disappointingly.

The Service on Sunday morning was lovely and the Standard Bearers were very impressive. One of the most lasting memories of the weekend will be, I am sure, the March Past when we somehow lost the Mayor's representative.



Waiting for the Parade to start

On April 20th we held an Easter Dance at the Crosville Club which started the Easter break off nicely.

Then on May 4th we tried something different, a table top stall in the Civic Hall at Nantwich. It went so well we are going to do another one later in the year.

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Now the summer period is coming up we shall have a break due to holidays etc. We hope to do some social outings, then we look forward to our Area Reunion in September which is hosted this year by Shropshire Branch.

DACORUM

Our first newsletter of the Millennium; we do hope all the branches are still managing to keep going, age and travel become more of a problem for our members, but we are still managing to function.

We started our November meeting with a talk by a lady who was doing a PhD on how Women's lives were changed by the onset of WW2. She asked if any of our members would be willing to write about their experiences. After her talk she managed to coax some of the members to try to record their memories. We followed this with a very successful auction, run as usual by Jean Westrope.

December, we had our usual Christmas Lunch, an enjoyable day for all of us able to attend. It is a pity we are not able to arrange transport for the members who live in areas where public transport is difficult.

January, very few members were able to attend for various reasons, we did not have a speaker, but after the usual formalities we had an informal discussion on our thoughts about the changes in our lives. Our feelings seemed to be much the same, most of us felt that some of the changes in life today were not what we would have chosen.

We had a slide and talk show in February about the Quaker Tapestries, 77 panels about the Quaker life through the centuries, fascinating to see, and so much patience to have produced such beautiful embroidery.

March was a fun day, members brought various games along and it was a very relaxing meeting that brought quite a few laughs. We were also reminded about the Cardiff Reunion in April. Those of us able to go were really looking forward to it.

In April we had a very interesting meeting with a gentleman who runs a bird shelter. He brought along three owls which were so tame we were able to handle them. He also gave us a talk about birds and how to treat them if we found any that were injured.

A few days later, and a few of us were off to Cardiff, thank you Luton branch for arranging transport and accommodation, what a lovely weekend. Thanks also to all the organisation done from Worthy Down, and the hospitality we received at Cardiff. I am sure a lot of other people would agree.

Thank you Dee McElligott for an enjoyable meeting, and thank everyone involved in a very nice lunch at Cardiff.

EDINBURGH

A number of members attended the Scottish Reunion in October. Glasgow Branch did a magnificent job of organisation and the hospitality in the splendid setting of Glasgow's City Chambers was excellent.

In the run-up to Christmas we were, as usual, invited by the WAAF Association to their Annual Carol Concert and Party which is held in the back of St. John's Church, a very jolly occasion with entertainment provided by St. John's choir.

In November Pauline Yeates laid the Edinburgh Branch's poppy wreath at the ceremony at the City Chambers.

We were saddened to receive the news of the death of Miss Jean Cruickshank, a founder member of the Branch who had moved to England.

FIFE AND TAYSIDE

Well! what can be said, first of all to Cardiff. You "kept a welcome", we enjoyed it all, despite one of us finding (having booked one year previously) that there was NO ROOM. However it was finally sorted out and feathers unruffled again. The Welsh fudge and discount on final bill all helped of course! 25 of us travelled by coach to Cardiff. This included members from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dumfries and an ex-pat Scot from Liverpool. The journey was enjoyable as was the companionship. We all appreciated the gift of the hand-carved Welsh Love Spoons awaiting us by our places at dinner on the Saturday evening and I think that says it all, except THANK YOU WALES.

I was very pleased to meet Hazel Wise from London Branch, with whom I have had some correspondence as a result of a letter we had published in the Lioness regarding the Medical Emergency Scheme which operates in Perthshire.

Our branch numbers 85 members at the moment with a possible 8 in the pipeline.

We donated a cheque to the British Legion Club in July amounting to £65 which was used for the Pensioners Christmas event.

We went off to the Scottish AGM in October by minibus - 23 travelling complete with floral displays in the boot - to compete for the Scottish Shield. There were some beautiful displays but Glasgow were the worthy winners. Again we enjoyed the company and the day, thank you Glasgow. Two of our members Mrs Anne Smart and Mrs Helen Taylor took part in the Remembrance Parade in November in London.

We gave £100 to our treasurer from money raised from monthly raffles.



Members of Fife & Tayside enjoy their Christmas meal

December saw us at the Caledonian Hotel which was a changed venue at short notice. However we had an excellent Christmas meal and raffle.

Our first meeting of the Millennium took place on the 27th January.

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The Branch AGM was held on the 27th April at the Grampian Hotel Perth. We were entertained by our member Mrs Tessa Rhynd who sings and brings humour into her music and story telling. We are pleased to say that Tessa was made "Citizen of the Year" by Dundee. She has been organising concerts in the Bonar Hall Dundee since 1981. She has a very able accompanist on the keyboard. We are hoping to travel to Dundee in August for Tessa's concert in the Bonar Hall.

Maureen Lowson, our member who usually runs in the London Marathon, was unable to run this year due to a car accident. She was off work for a while but is on the mend and hoping to run in the New York Marathon if all goes well.

Dumfries Branch donated money to us on the way home from Cardiff and a beautiful pink coloured glass vase was bought and entered as a 'Special Raffle'. This was won by Mrs Helen Taylor and many warm thanks go to Dumfries.

Last but not least - Joan Smith made our special Scottish Thistle badges to wear at Cardiff. Many thanks, 25 were patiently done and we were proud to wear them on such a memorable occasion.

We wish you all Good Health, Good Friends and Good Fortune.

GLASGOW

We start our report by saying how very saddened we all were by the death of RSM McKay one of our oldest members. She had been unable to be with us for some time, but our present President Mrs Rattray visited her, keeping her in touch. We had a very good turnout of ladies to represent the Association at her funeral.

We started off in September in our normal rendezvous with Monday afternoons replacing Tuesday evenings. This move has paid off as quite a few members have returned to the fold.

Everything is so much easier travelwise in the afternoons. Our Annual Bring and Buy for Erskine Hospital benefited too.

This was followed by the Scottish AGM in October. The Buffet Lunch was not so popular but due to the numbers attending we had no choice. Apart from that we had "no complaints" so trust everyone enjoyed themselves.

We attended the Armistice evening in Hamilton and 21 ladies took part in the parade on the Sunday at the Glasgow Cenotaph. This was followed by a welcome "cuppa" in the City Chambers laid on by the City of Glasgow Council.

Our rendezvous for Christmas Lunch was the Grosvenor Hotel. What a happy afternoon and we were delighted to have Colonel Lawson and Major Gordon with us.

Starting off on a "high" in the New Year, we had a visit from the pilot of the Police Helicopter which hovers over our city.

We were amazed to discover from the film just how much and how clearly they see us from above.

Our next guest talked on "Childhood Memories" including a school slate and a scrubbing board etc, it was quite hilarious.

This was followed by a Nursing Sister - her theme was "A Nurse in Stitches". I think it could safely be said that she had us all in stitches and, as we had our WAAF and WRNS friends with us, we reckoned it made for a very happy "Combined Ops".

Twenty one members attended the Reunion in Cardiff. What a lovely city. Some flew and others travelled by coach. The latter, organised by the Fife and Tayside Branch, picking up us and the Dumfries contingent on the way. A most enjoyable experience - well done Perth Branch.

A very happy weekend and many many thanks to Cardiff ladies.

GREATER LONDON

As we don't go into print very often, just a short introduction first. We are a large branch, formed in 1971 and we meet 3 times a year at Orange Street Congregational Church Hall which is near Leicester Square, London.

On 19 February 2000, 51 members enjoyed a luncheon at the Union Jack Club and we held a raffle, raising £77.50 which we donated to the WRAC Benevolent Fund.



L to R: Mrs Sheila Davies, Mrs Joan Lawler, Miss Maud Musselwhite, Mrs Pat Gibson (foreground), Miss Maureen Providence, Miss Edna Down, Mrs Ilfra Mooney.

Thirteen members attended the WRAC Association AGM and Reunion at Cardiff which they enjoyed, five of them winning a raffle prize apiece.

Eight members have again volunteered to collect donations for the Army Benevolent Fund at the Chelsea Flower Show in May.

Six members hope to visit the Royal Star and Garter Home in July and enjoy the company of some of the residents and the magnificent view from the terrace.

WO1 Andrea Denham kindly came along to talk to our meeting on 15 April about life for women in our Army. Members enjoyed this talk immensely. Mrs Denham kindly invited some members to attend the 'Pass-off' Parade, of a Training Company of the AGC Corps on Friday 30 June.

Members will again march at the Cenotaph in the Remembrance Day Parade in November, a great honour for the branch.

GRIMSBY PDF Compressor Free Version



Rev Wendy Isam and members of Grimsby Branch

Greetings to all members.

I'll bet most of us thought we would not see the 21st Century, but here we are with a few more wrinkles, the old bones playing up a bit more and gravity winning the day over our bulges and "spare tyres". Oh well, such is life and we thank God we are still here to enjoy it.

November saw us all on Parade at our adopted church, St Andrews, for our Remembrance Day Parade with our Chaplain the Rev. Wendy Isam conducting the service.

Prior to this, some of our members attended the British Legion Service at St James Church, then paraded down to the Cenotaph where our Chairman, Audrey Porter, laid a wreath on our behalf.

We had spent the previous week doing shift work at our local Asda with our collecting boxes doing our bit for the Poppy Appeal. We found out later that we had passed the magical £1,000. Well done ladies and thank you Asda and your generous customers.

In December we had our Christmas Fair which did quite well. The only trouble is that there are so many fairs these days that we have difficulty selling tickets.

Some of the ladies went to Torquay again in early December for a "Turkey and Tinsel holiday". This is becoming a regular trip. We really enjoy all the outings and entertainment which is provided for us.

After Christmas we ran extra name cards to help the ladies who were going to Cardiff with their bus fares. This was definitely the highlight of our year - our Grand Reunion.

Twenty four of our ladies are still up in the clouds since their visit to Welsh Wales! Grimsby branch made a holiday of it and stayed for 5 days. Our hotel was the Hilton in Newport where we were treated like royalty. Our coach driver, Stuart, arranged it all for us. He taxied us back and forth to the CARDIFF INTERNATIONAL ARENA (CIA) and saw to it that our time in Wales was filled to capacity.

The meal on Saturday night left a lot to be desired. The starter was fine if you liked Melon (which I do) but it is not everyone's "cup of tea", then came the meat which was undercooked and, as we were in Wales, was Welsh Lamb again! But what happened to the vegetables? - by the time they arrived, the plates had gone cold and the meat juices had started to congeal. We had better luck with the roast potatoes which came next - they were the only thing that was hot!

The entertainment from the Regimental Band certainly restored everyone's good humour. The wine also helped. The empty bottles were a lovely souvenir for two people at our table as they had a picture of three ladies in uniform on the label showing how fashion had changed over the years.

Sunday saw us back at the (CIA) for the Drumhead Service. This time everyone had a seat and a good view of everything (not like Blackpool where we were lucky if we got into the church!). We all enjoyed the service and the sermon. Many of our ladies went on the buses afterwards for the March Past. On the whole, it was a wonderful occasion.

After a snack lunch, we all joined our own coach and our driver took us for an enjoyable afternoon at Llanerch Vineyard. We were made very welcome by Peter Andrews and his family. If anyone would like to get away from it all, this is the place to go. There are two lovely cottages to let for your holidays or you can stay B&B at the farmhouse. A beautiful place in the lovely Vale of Glamorgan. We hated leaving but we were sent on our way all merry and bright after tasting several of the wines made there.

Next day we spent the whole day at the Museum of Welsh Life (similar to Beamish). This is at a place called St Fagans, the castle of the same name being its centre piece. We could have done with an extra day to see everything and the weather was absolutely glorious for the whole of our stay. We made our way back to the Newport Hilton a weary tired lot.

After we had eaten our dinner, we all went in the lounge and Audrey Porter, our Chairman, sat at the piano and gave us a lovely recital by Handel. She got up halfway through to replenish her 'Southern Comfort' but the piano kept on playing by itself! Truth is Audrey cannot play a note! We all had a good laugh though.

The next day we packed our bags and, after a hearty breakfast, boarded our coach for our journey back to Grimsby. Everyone agreed it had been a re-union to remember. Thank you Cardiff and Wales for making us so welcome.

We are now looking forward to our one day out at Millstones Restaurant, just outside Harrogate, on May 11th. We have been there before and everyone wanted to go again. We had lunch and then afterwards, entertainment, followed by tea and biscuits and then home again. A lovely day out, no matter what the weather.

Well, on the whole, Grimsby Branch have had a very good year. We all got through the 'flu bug' last winter without any mishaps.

Best wishes to you all until next time - Be Happy!

HEREFORD

We still continue to meet monthly at the Royal British Legion Hall in Belmont Road at 2.30 pm on the last Wednesday of the month but now thankfully in a downstairs room. This was brought about with help from Mrs Eva Burton one of our members and a leading light in the Hereford Royal British Legion. It does enable more of our ladies to come to the meetings now that stairs do not have to be climbed.

Our President, Mrs Ena Price, has not been too well of late, but after a break in Somerset she is feeling stronger. We all wish Ena continued progress to health and strength. To our other members who are not feeling very well, we send out best wishes and ask them to "keep in touch" so that we may help, if needed.

What a wonderful weekend we had in Cardiff. Thank you to all who made it such a success. The wine was a wonderful idea, as were the Welsh Spoons. The weather was kind, especially as the next three weekends were atrocious. We thoroughly enjoyed running the Needlecraft Stall and thanks very much to the Cardiff lady who brought us some articles to sell. We also extend our thanks to the Bolton Branch lady for the lovely dolls, the Fife Branch lady for the Easter Eggs - they were all sold as well, and to all Hereford ladies who contributed to the stall. We were congratulated on such a wonderful display.

The meetings were interesting and in such grand surroundings. Our Secretary Jo Anscombe was proud to receive a Certificate of Appreciation from Brigadier S P Nield CBE at the AGM. We all enjoyed the dinner very much - excellent menu and wine. Great speeches, stirring music from the Band and, as always, the community singing was very much a highlight. The song sheets were a great help too. The conversations with new and old friends were wonderful. Our table mingled with many others and listened to each other's stories of Army life then and now. Altogether a wonderful evening.

The Drumhead Service on Sunday was again moving, and Reverend Sue Wing so sincere, as was The Right Reverend Monsignor Vasey. Again the Band excelled and the chosen hymns and readings were so appropriate. Hereford was especially proud to see our Standard and Bearer Mrs Jackie Neave on Parade. You were so smart Jackie. Well done! and thank you. Then the March Past! Well wasn't that something - two for the price of one eh? It was great and so many still marching. What a credit we are! So with our heartfelt thanks to Mrs Edna Thomas and the Committee of Cardiff Branch, thank you for your hospitality and hard work. Thank you to Council and HQ too. A marvellous reunion 2000, and thank you Maggie and Edith.

To more mundane matters. We enjoyed a Christmas Lunch in November 1999 at a Ross-on-Wye pub restaurant which several members attended. Also Mrs Eva Burton again laid a Poppy Wreath on behalf of our Branch when she and several others joined in the Remembrance Parade by the Royal British Legion. Mrs Jackie Neave was in attendance with the Standard, as she was when a few of us met at the War Memorial for a Civic Service on Armistice Day.

Sadly Mrs Phyllis Martin ex 517(M) HAA Bty lost her fight with cancer on December 19th 1999. She is greatly missed.

We wish Mrs Grace Morphew, our member in Wantage, great happiness in her new home - still at Wantage though. We have had letters from three of our younger members.

Congratulations to Debbie and Martin Casey, a step up the ladder for Martin. Thank you to Liz Kemp for the donation to funds and welcome home from Kosovo where she was PA to General Jackson. We are proud of both girls! Then a letter from member Carol Neil. She is off with her sister on June 1st to cycle from Dulwich College, South London to Brussels in three days to raise funds for the Royal British Legion Poppy Fund. She is being sponsored of course, and we have sent her a Branch donation. Anyone who would like to send a donation please do so. Two hundred and thirty miles in three days is worth all she and her sister can raise. Good Luck Carol and Gill.

We are soon having another Branch raffle to raise funds and this will be drawn at the end of July. Hopefully a car boot sale is in the offing too.

Early in July, we hope to welcome an ex-GI who spent time recuperating from wounds at a nearby hospital during World War 2. He writes from Louisiana that he and wife Marie hope to meet a few of us for a chat. Jo has contacted the local radio station for publicity for our Branch. More on the meeting next time.

Sixteen of us hope to journey to Donnington in September. The menu is very enticing and Shropshire Branch are great hosts. See you there!

ILFORD



80th birthday celebration

Ilford Branch became 80 years old in 1999. To celebrate this event it was decided to have a Buffet Lunch at the branch in December. Nineteen members were present and contributions to the lunch were made by all members.

We were happy to welcome to the lunch Mary Curtis the daughter of one of the original QMAAC members, whose membership lasted over 70 years.

Ilford Branch was formed in 1919 by several ex members of the QMAAC and was joined through the years by ex-ATS. Throughout the whole of this period the branch has continued to hold regular monthly meetings, the last 50 years or so at 40 Argyll Road, Ilford, a house owned by Toc H. We have always been a small branch even though efforts have been made through the years to increase the membership. We have one ex-WRAC member and many of us have been friends to quite a few years.

We have always been a very happy branch with a loyal membership who have helped to maintain the continuation of the branch during its long life.

LEEDS

Two new members have joined our Branch, we hope they will enjoy our monthly meetings.

Our Christmas Party was a huge success, 26 members joining in the Birthday Wishes to our 80 year olds.



In February we finalised arrangements for Cardiff.

In March our Secretary gave us details of the Northern Area reunion to be held again at York racecourse. Most members will attend.

April saw 7 members off to Cardiff which was voted a much better organised Re-Union. In spite of a nasty accident to Mrs Bustard, everybody enjoyed the venue, the meal, the entertainment and the Drumhead Service.



Enjoying the sunshine on Penarth Pier. A.T.S. Reunion Cardiff, April 2000. L to R: Emily Neubould, Celia Thompson, Mary Clements

Our friends from York Branch joined us at our May meeting, where we all enjoyed a sumptuous feast and friendly chatter. Five members joined our Mixed Hy A A Bty friends for a holiday weekend at Nidd Hall. The weather was perfect, the gardens and scenery at their best and our trip in the Yorkshire Dales voted one of the best. The special ice cream rounded off a most enjoyable day. Many thanks to Mrs Clapham for organising it all.

In June some members will be joining Vee Robins at Lichfield for the dedication of our trees at the National Arboretum.

In July York will be the destination for most of the Branch, the Mixed Hy A A Re-union weekend being looked forward to as the highlight of the year.

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM

We have held our usual monthly meetings with an attendance of 25-30 members and no cancellations due to bad weather.

1999 finished with our Christmas Party, which was enjoyed by all and January 2000 should have started this year with a visit to the theatre, but sadly all tickets had been sold.

Our February meeting saw us with our friends from Ashby-de-la-Zouch discussing our plans for the Wales and West Area Reunion which we are hosting in 2001. Full details will be in the next Lioness.

In March we held our Bring and Buy Sale in support of our funds and in April we had a talk and demonstration by St John's Ambulance. Unfortunately, at this meeting one of our members had a bad fall on the stairs, breaking her arm and smashing her shoulder. Fortunately for Vera the St John's people were able to help. Vera now has a bolt in her shoulder and at the time of writing this report is not too well, but we all hope to see her back at our meetings before very long.

Our day out planned for May had to be cancelled due to lack of support, not from our own members but from other Associations whom we hoped would fill the seats. This seems to be a problem for all Associations.

Twelve of our members attended the Cardiff Reunion and had a super weekend, even the weather was kind to us. Our thanks to Cardiff and to all involved in the organisation of the weekend.

Our thanks to all our members for their continued support and our best wishes to those who may be ill or just under the weather - please do let us know if you are in need of help.

LONDON



Cardiff Reunion: Marie Dove, Eva Ellison, Doris Sanders

We ended 1999 with an enjoyable Christmas Tea Party - a departure from our usual lunch because we had already had a lunch in September in celebration of 80 years of the Association and London Branch. It proved a great success. It was much cheaper than lunch, just tea and mince pies with the addition of a splendid Christmas Cake provided by our Vice-President, Evelyn Parks. We held a raffle in aid of the Women's Memorial Fund and raised £170.

At our February meeting we welcomed Georgina Brazier-Potter again who talked about the many musicians who had lived in Camden and Hampstead. She illustrated the talk with tapes of their well-loved music. In March another old friend, E C Brooks, showed us slides of the City of London,

and gave us an insight into corners of the city which are not always well-known, even to Londoners.

More than 30 members of the Branch were in Cardiff for the Grand Reunion 2000 and had a wonderful time. We much appreciated all the hard work which had gone into making it a successful weekend.

LUTON

Cardiff 2000 - what a great time we had! Once again we hired a coach, and with members from Chelmsford, Dacorum, Greater London, London and Wimbledon branches, off we set. Our driver was most considerate, comfort stops en route, but aren't the prices in the motorway services astronomical!

We stayed at the Forté Post House at Pentwyn, very welcoming and comfortable; good food served by excellent staff. On Friday evening we were approached by two ladies, enquiring how we were getting into Cardiff for the jollifications. We explained we had our own coach, at which they asked if we would give them a lift. Brian, our driver was happy to do so, so our numbers increased to 38 for the rest of the weekend.

We all "did our own thing" on Saturday morning - tearing ourselves away from the shops, the Castle etc in time for the AGM. Then the dinner - I walked into the Hall to hear someone enquiring of an usher if she knew me. Then she turned saying "Not to worry, there she is" - a friend from 4 Independent Company, GHQ FARELF, whom I hadn't seen for 47 years! She recognised me straight away - despite the extra weight. Either I was a very elderly looking teenager, or I've worn pretty well - I prefer to think the latter is appropriate. The meal was excellent, the company superb, all in all it was a very memorable evening. Did anyone notice how surprised the young waiters and waitresses were at our antics?

It was surprising that we all managed to get up in time for the Drumhead Service and Parade on Sunday, but we did. The service was very moving and Monsignor Vasey's sermon very fitting. I don't know who selected 'He who would valiant be' for one of the hymns, but the lady next to me was quite impressed because I knew it off by heart - you can't help but do so if you have sung it at least twice a week throughout your schooldays.

Just two small criticisms:

1. Our Secretary had a full list of everyone on our coach, with branches, and we asked her to register us 'en bloc', but this was not permitted. It would save no end of time, if such lists were acceptable at future gatherings.
2. Whatever went awry with the March Past? Was the first one a rehearsal? Also, those of us at the rear of the parade had great difficulty in hearing the orders given at the head.

Nevertheless, the consensus of opinion amongst 'our gang' was that everything went very well - congratulations Cardiff, Wales & West Area, and Headquarters, in the words of young Mr Grace "You've all done very well".

We continue to enjoy our Branch meetings, having had a variety of interesting speakers, particularly "Age Concern" - the scope of their activities surprised us.

Forthcoming attractions include a talk on the history of our local hospital, one by the Pest Control Officer from the Borough Council and a discussion with a lady studying for a PhD, on "Women in the Services during and after the Second World War". We also look forward to a Floral Art demonstration, during the summer.

In closing, may I say on behalf of Luton Branch how good it is to see the barriers between the ATS & WRAC crumbling at long last. About time too!

MIDDLESBOROUGH

We are still soldiering on though we have only 12 members. A lot of our ladies are getting older and housebound, so our meetings only take place every 2 months at the home of one of our members.

We still have our usual Raffle, Bring and Buy and Buy sales and Coffee Mornings although we are not making a lot of money.

We visit our housebound and those in hospital. Most of our members have had the usual flu virus so we weren't able to have our Xmas Lunch until February 2000.

We will be having a day out during the summer and a few members will be attending the Battle of Britain and Remembrance Sunday.

We did consider closing the branch due to dwindling numbers, but on the advice of another Branch Secretary we have been advertising for ex-WRAC girls. Unfortunately we have had no response so we are going to try E-mail and the Internet hoping for better results.

We would like to wish you all the best for year 2000.

NEWCASTLE

Every third Thursday still brings a steady stream of about 35 members to the Companions Club, Newcastle, obviously looking forward to an enjoyable afternoon meeting friends and having happy chats etc. They come from both sides of the Tyne. From Jarrow, Gateshead, Whickham, Chester-le-Street and Durham in the South and from North Shields, Whitley Bay, Gosforth and Wideopen on the North side. I mention these places as they may be of interest to any exiles from this area who would be made welcome should they care to visit! I've always wondered about any ex-ATS and WRAC living in the rural parts of Northumberland who would have difficulty attending meetings in Newcastle. The nearest place to the north which was mentioned in "Lioness" is Glasgow. I don't recall any news from Edinburgh or Carlisle areas.

In November 1999 we attended a ceremony at Tynemouth when their War Memorial was newly updated to include the deaths of known local personnel of the Second World War. Among those names was a Winifred Patterson, known only as an ATS member who had died in 1943. I contacted the Village Project responsible for the occasion but they have nothing other than a notification from the War Graves Commission and no detail other than the name is known. If anyone could throw any light on this lady's history it would be appreciated.

On the social side, we had a Christmas celebration in January with entertainment by our small concert party. In March we had an enjoyable lunch at a small village inn at Dinnington, north of Newcastle. This was achieved at low cost as most got there by public transport on bus passes which saved the high cost of hiring a coach. We enjoyed the bus ride as well as the lunch which was also reasonably priced.

In early June we hope that some of our members will attend the British Legion's big day at Alnwick Castle with other ex-service and serving organisations. Those of our members who attended the Grand Reunion at Cardiff had enjoyed the experience and their appreciative sentiments are expressed in the following comments from Joyce Stephenson, one of our members:-

"WRAC/ATS Association Reunion April 2000

Many thanks for a very successful Reunion at Cardiff - certainly with a difference! We were fortunate enough to spend a few days in Cardiff and how the sun shone for us!! Administration, plus the services provided were very much appreciated - non-stop beverages of all kinds. Yellow and green decked the tables for the evening dinner, like a breath of Spring. The church service was very moving. The march past a little light-hearted, due to difficulty keeping in step!!!

Many thanks to all concerned in making our stay so enjoyable."

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK

Our monthly meetings continue to be well-attended. We have had some enjoyable afternoons with speakers who have variously interested, entertained and educated us with their talks on such diverse topics as the history of music-boxes, the world of singing and opera training and of work among the poverty-stricken children of India. We are now arranging our summer outings and shortly intend to spend a day in Bury St Edmunds and Felixstowe. Some of us are going to the Sandringham Flower Show and, in July, hope to attend the special day being arranged for all former members of the ATS and the WAAF by the administrators of the Flixton Air Museum in Suffolk.

We were sorry to learn that our Great Yarmouth Group, formed in 1992 by Mrs Meg Watson and for the past six years under the secretaryship of Mrs Beryl Cupar, has decided that, with attendance falling through illness and difficulties of transport, they can no longer manage to get together for monthly meetings. We shall of course continue to keep in touch with them.

It was very good to join them at Great Yarmouth on May 11th for our annual commemoration service at the site of the plaque in memory of the 26 ATS girls killed there on May 11th 1943. This year the service was particularly well-attended. One of the ladies present, Mrs Kay Chadwick from Loughton, brought along friends from the Ilford Branch. Mrs Chadwick had been stationed nearby at the time of the fatal raid, had known some of the girls and attended their funerals in the local cemetery. Present too was a gentleman from Northampton who was also stationed nearby in 1943 and helped to rescue the one survivor from the bombed building. Flowers were laid from us all, and flowers sent by Mrs Betty Hunt, one of the ATS members who, as Corporal Norcup, was Commended for Devotion to Duty at the time. Some 45 people were present, including

9 representatives from Branches of men's Associations, 6 of their Standards being paraded. After the service, poppy crosses were laid on the graves of the 2 girls buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery and on the graves in the Great Yarmouth (Caister) cemetery of another 6 girls and the 2 young men who also died in the raid. It was, as always, a very moving occasion.

We extend a warm invitation to all members of the Association who are holidaying in East Anglia to come along to one of our meetings which are held on the first Saturday of each month in the St Luke's Centre, Aylsham Road, Norwich. Telephone Norwich 453075 for details. We would be delighted to see you.

OMAGH

Our Annual Luncheon was in the Silver Birch Hotel on Saturday 16th October 1999. Twenty Two members from the Ulster Branch in Belfast joined us. We had a lovely afternoon and we had our photographs taken. The photo is of three former ATS girls taken at the Luncheon.

Mrs M K Twist MBE is in the centre. She joined the ATS in 1938 and was the first member to join in Northern Ireland. Her number was W/12. She went on to work in the War Office, was promoted to the rank of Senior Commander P244848 and was demobbed in 1945. Hazel Bell is on the right and I (Veronica Muldoon) am on the left. We both served in Omagh, working in the catering department.



Mrs M. K. Twist M.B.E., Miss H. Bell, Mrs V. Muldon

PLYMOUTH

I think I will have to buy myself some Ginkgo Biloba as I have been trying to remember events that we have enjoyed since our last magazine, but sadly, unless I make notes, I tend to forget! In spite of my memory problems, our Branch is still surviving. Sadly however, in November '99 we had to put another entry into our Memorial Book. To balance our loss we have had three new members this year so our membership now is 53 annual and 32 life.

A dozen members from Plymouth invaded Cardiff for the Grand Reunion and, once we got there, it was 'grand'. Our hotels were excellent, we met old friends and made new friends, the weekend went too fast! I can't say the same for the journey up on the train. We booked on a straight through and ended up on 3 trains and an hour late. Our champion letter writer, Betty Mitchell, successfully took on the task of telling the relevant train companies what we thought of the journey. It pays to complain!

Betty has also written letters, two of them in the form of petitions, signed by our group, to our 3 Plymouth MPs about the Memorial to the Service Women in WW2. We have had 2 replies so far, giving their total support to our cause.

Now we are picking up, the bad weather, our monthly meetings are picking up. By the time you read this 'news' our first fund raising table top sale of this year will have taken place - as successful as the last one we hope! This is closely followed by our June meeting during which a group of our ATS ladies will be recording on video, details of their work in the army and the difference the army training made to their lives. This is something we have planned for a long time because we think we need a record of these facts for the archives. How else will the children get to know what Granny actually did in the war? As TV documentaries are not going to supply the facts we ought to do it ourselves, how about it ladies? A whole series of videos could be made, one from each Branch to complete the record.

Once the video is over we are looking forward to a June coach trip with the Plymouth WRNS to Exeter where we will join up with Exeter WRNS and some of our Exeter Branch WRAC Association for lunch followed by a shopping trip on the way home.

Our Christmas Lunch is already booked for 28th November. Once again it will be good food in good company and in very pleasant surroundings, if you are in Plymouth for that date and would like to join us let us know.

We are also sorting out our July day trip, we have several options, one of which is a day trip to Worthy Down for a passing out parade but we will have to wait and see which trip gets the majority vote.

Our Standard Bearer has started on the round of memorial parades during the summer which will be rounded off in the Pavilions Plymouth for the Annual Festival of Remembrance on Friday 10th November. On Saturday 11th November Doris will be joined by 5 other gallant ladies of the Plymouth Branch, on the London train to march and pay their respects at the Cenotaph.

By the time you read this report we will be preparing for Christmas. The next report will be in the year 2001 so may we wish all members a warm summer, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Plymouth Branch.

RHYL

We have been having our usual busy time here in Rhyl and the year has flown by. I missed the deadline for our last Lioness and I wish to apologise to my comrades at Rhyl Branch as they do like to keep in touch regularly through the Lioness with all their friends and comrades.

My report must start with the sadness of reporting the loss of Eileen Copeland last year, she was a very active member of this Branch and will be sadly missed by us all.

We have had 8 new members during this last 6 months. There are 3 members who were in the WAAF and they are now very active members of this Branch. We have also had 4 new members who live too far away to come to the monthly meetings but we hope to meet them at our Annual Social Afternoon in June at Rhyl Town Hall.

The ladies are very busy organising the Social Afternoon and we hope that many of our comrades from the Branches in the North are able to attend this again. Last year 8 of our ladies joined the Normandy Veterans on their trip of Normandy. It was a very moving time for us all. We were very proud when our oldest member, Dorothy Medcalf who is 94 years old this April, was given the Normandy Campaign Medal together with the other Veterans in a special service in Normandy. The trip was very tiring for us younger ones but Dorothy seemed to have more energy than I can muster up and just kept on going for the whole week.



60 years of marriage

In March this year a lot of our ladies joined our member Ivy Ruffley and her husband Stanley in celebrating 60 years of marriage

We have had a Bingo Evening and have various coffee mornings arranged for the coming months so it looks as though Christmas will be here before we have time to rest again.

We are going to Bridlington on the 16th June for the Ex-Service Combined Weekend again this year. We all look forward to this as it is a chance for us to relax and enjoy meeting ex-comrades and making new friends each year.

There are 3 of our members who were in the WRAC and who are determined to go to the WRAC Dinner and Weekend this year. They have been hoping to go for the last 2 years and something else has always cropped up and stopped them, but they say nothing will stop them this year.

By the time this report is printed we will have had our Social Afternoon and will be busy preparing for Christmas celebrations, so may I take this opportunity to wish all members of the Association a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Successful 2001. If any members are ever in Rhyl on the 2nd Monday of any month they would be very welcome to join us at The Rhyl Sports and Social Club (formerly Naval Club) Wellington Road, Rhyl at 1.30pm when we hold our monthly meetings.

We have had our Standard for nearly 12 months now and it has been out on many occasions. Jean is getting the hang of carrying it, although she says she has a great deal to re-learn (she is trying to get used to doing the slow march again), age is taking its toll in this respect.

ROCHDALE

On getting back to meetings after the "Millennium", we were wondering how many would turn up, but most did. Like me, quite a lot of our ladies live outside the area and have to travel into Rochdale. On my trip in, I always imagine the lovely Rochdale Town Hall as "Camelot", where we sit round the 'long' (not round) table to enjoy our discussions and good fellowship.

On 3rd March, 15 of us travelled into Yorkshire, to the Millennium Lunch held at the Millstone Restaurant near Harrogate. A lovely lunch and afternoon's entertainment was enjoyed by all - there were several hundred people there.

April 7th, and the big day arrived. We set off by coach to Cardiff and enjoyed a very pleasant drive down. Four of our group stayed in the city at Jurys Hotel, the rest of us journeying on to the Jane Hodge Hotel in the Vale of Glamorgan, about 8 miles out. Here it was very restful and the beautiful surroundings were the perfect setting for a leisurely evening meal.

On Saturday we commuted back to the city for the activities there. An added bonus for most of our group, and 12 members from other branches, was a trip out with our driver to St Fagan's Museum of Welsh Life. With the weather remaining kind it was also a treat driving back to our hotel in time to get ready for the dinner and drive back to the venue. We all agreed that the venue was a big improvement on the last one, as the whole party was seated together. The young people waiting on the tables were really pleasant and nothing was too much trouble for them. The picture on the wine bottles was a nice gesture and the wine was very reasonable. We could even hear the speeches and toast this time, and tables 49 and 50 gave their all when it came to the singing afterwards. Enclosed is a picture of some of the people on our table, "giving it some welly" at the last song. A good time was had by all.



*Some of the Rochdale branch give their all to
"There'll always be an England"*

We had some sad news on our return as our dear friend, Mary Campbell, had had a fall down the stairs, suffering bad bruising and a broken leg. She has been in Rochdale Infirmary ever since, but is now improving slowly. Our prayers are with her, and those of you who know Mary will know that she keeps smiling despite everything. God bless her!

SALISBURY

Eight branch members enjoyed the Grand Reunion and AGM weekend in Cardiff. We thought the Welsh love spoons and the wine labels were excellent. Congratulations to the team of organisers, it was such a friendly gathering. The double parade was good for the video! We also look forward to receiving the promotional leaflet.

Our Christmas Lunch at the Red Lion was a great success but the numbers attending our monthly meetings have been a bit low during these wet winter months. Too many flu bugs around.

February, Thirza Sellick organised a quiz about part of her collection of Royal memorabilia which she brought to the meeting. Many of us had 'senior moments' when dates just eluded us; but it was most enjoyable. As usual there was plenty of choice for the Faith Lunch, and far too much to eat.

Our branch was invited to take part in the April Royal British Legion County Parade in Salisbury Cathedral. We were all proud of our Chairman, Alyson Ogden, as she carried our Standard.

Miss Joan Hughes was our visiting speaker for the April meeting. An illustrated talk on her visit to the Holy Land contained slides of many places mentioned in the Bible.



*Miss Irene Ludlow is presented with her Certificate of
Appreciation by Southern Area Chairman,
Col. Valerie Trout*

Area Chairman Colonel Val Trout then presented the Association Certificate of Appreciation to Irene Ludlow as she had been unable to be in Cardiff. The certificate recognises her active support, rarely missing any meeting, and her constant kindness and cheerfulness makes her a most popular member of our branch.

SHIPLEY

Time for our report from Shipley Branch to say we have had a hard winter and the numbers at our meetings have been less than usual as so many of our members have been ill and unable to attend.

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We were very sorry to lose one of our founder members, Mrs Grace Hardy, who passed away in January after a long stay in hospital. Our hard working chairwoman, Mrs Lois Bullen has had a spell in hospital and is still having treatment, but we all hope she will soon be well enough to join us at our meetings again. Our Secretary, Miss Connie Bardsby, has been in hospital for a knee replacement and we all hope she too will soon be well enough to rejoin us.

The members who were able to attend our meetings enjoyed a bingo session and had a lot of fun at a 'mock auction' to raise money for our funds at another meeting. We had a very interesting slide film show on "The Pharoes", which everyone enjoyed. We also had an Easter Fayre to raise more cash for our funds, so members who have been able to attend have enjoyed our programme so far this year. We hope our sick members will soon recover and be able to join us for the remainder of the year.

SHROPSHIRE

Hello again, here is our Report, continuous from the last one, but maybe shorter.

As usual we attended the 'Battle of Britain' Service. We had another trip to the Houses of Parliament, where we had the opportunity of chatting to our local MPs, Bruce Grocott MP for Telford and Peter Bradley MP for the Wrekin. A very pleasant day, ending with a meal on the way home.

In November we made our annual visits to Remembrance Services.

Once again we enjoyed our Christmas Party, which was made special by celebrating the 50th WRAC, and 80th ATS Anniversaries. 5 WRNS and 1 WLA joined us, and our members all donated food for a delicious buffet. Muriel Willoughby donated two bottles of wine for the Invitation Card Lucky Number Prize, which was won by Beryl and Chris. A special cake was made, and our Local Press Photographer arrived, putting us in the news again.

We had our Annual Dinner in January at the 'Poachers Pocket' Dawley Bank. In February, we catered for Dawley House Members Party, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Our Branch had a Memorial Day at the Grand Reunion Cardiff and we did well on our Bottle Stall.

We send our best wishes to our members who cannot attend our meetings. Some have had operations, Eunice, Terri, and Nancy M, thankfully they are well again and back with us.

Nancy M went up in the world on her 83rd Birthday in May, at RAF Cosford. She flew in a Glider, and with others raised around £3,000 for the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust. Nancy herself raised nearly £200 and is now a member of the Wrekin Glider Club, what you might call a High Flyer!!

Dawley Day, this year is on July 1st.

We give a warm welcome to our three new recruits namely; Irene Beecham, Violet Whitefoot, and Hilda Dakin.

Time is marching on and we are now busy preparing for our Reunion, at Cordingley Hall, Donnington, on September 23rd and looking forward to seeing you all.

Once again, best wishes to you all wherever you are, keep soldiering on.

SOUTHAMPTON

Another 6 months have gone by with our AGM taking place last October, our Standard being paraded at the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph, Southampton, and again at the Festival of Remembrance at Southampton Guildhall. It was also paraded on 27/28 November by Margaret Barham at the Birmingham International Tattoo, which went well but due to distance we were unable to give support. Three of our members again attended the Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey in November.

In December we enjoyed our usual Christmas Party, and again were invited by the Isle of Wight Branch to their Christmas Lunch at Shanklin, always a good day out.

In the latter part of 1999 we sent an information letter, as advised in the "Lioness", about the Memorial to Women of WWII to our local MP urging him to attend and support the Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons, which indeed he did. We also made a £100 donation towards this Memorial.

We started off year 2000 with a special Millennium Lunch prepared by staff at the Ex-Servicemen's Club where we meet on the first Wednesday of each month, either during the day or evening. So far our speakers have been a Financial Advisor, a Local Historian and an Authoress. In April we enjoyed our Annual Dinner which 24 attended, also members went along to a commemorative service for the "Home Front" at Winchester Cathedral.

The Grand Reunion at Cardiff was the highlight of the year to date. It was a great success, an interesting weekend for members, plus our Standard went along too!

To date our last event to be included in this report was another trip to the Isle of Wight on a perfect summer's day to join the branch's Millennium Lunch at Farringford Hotel Tennyson's home on 8th May. Always a good day out but alas only 4 could attend due to illness.

Our membership strength is 45 Annual and 36 Life.

SOUTHPORT & DISTRICT

Our Branch has had quite a busy year. We attended the Normandy Veterans Church Service and a Dedication at the Garden of Remembrance. We were invited to Bowring Park by the Liverpool WRNS and we also supported the Southport WRNS' and WAAF's Association events.

Our own meetings are happy occasions, we have had a speaker from the Salvation Army also a Bring and Buy sale and at Christmas we had a very festive lunch at a local hotel.

During the year one of our members, Nancy, and her husband Tom celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. In September we joined Vicky for a buffet lunch to celebrate her eightieth birthday.



L to R: Jean, Margaret, Irene, Vicky, Peggy, Nancy Maud, Olive

We all look forward to another happy year.

STOCKPORT

Our last meeting in 1999 was a very pleasant tea party in the Armoury where we have our regular meetings. We had voted for an evening out for a Christmas meal but, due to unforeseen circumstances, this had to be cancelled. Instead, we voted to have an evening out and a meal in the New Year. So far this has not been arranged.

Quite a few of our ladies went to the Memorial Service for the crew of SS Stockport, which went down with all hands in 1943. This was a lovely service held in St. Peter's Church followed by a very welcome warming lunch at the Armoury.

We had a Bring and Buy sale after the meeting in April to raise funds for our forthcoming birthday party in September.

Several of our members attended the re-union in Cardiff. It was held in the Cardiff International Arena, a very imposing building. The next Grand Re-union is rumoured to be held in either Birmingham or Manchester. We ladies North of "Watford Gap" await the decision with interest.

STAFFORD

We have been in our new meeting room, at Trinity Church for 9 months now and it is a great improvement - more space, light and airy, and we can now invite speakers once again!

November: Twenty two members enjoyed a very unusual talk by Police Inspector David Baldwin (Ret'd) whose hobby is tracing Officers and OR's who served in the 1914-1918 war starting from their school days, through to their Service life and, in some cases, to their deaths in battle. He concluded his talk by showing us his collection of ATS memorabilia. Three members travelled to London for the Remembrance Sunday Parade in Whitehall and 7 members attended the local service at which a wreath was laid at the War Memorial.

December: Having enjoyed our Anniversary Lunch last April at the Red Lion Bradley, we decided to have our Christmas Lunch there on 14th December. It was the right decision as the meal was excellent and there was a great Christmas atmosphere. We were joined by our newest member, Mrs Gillian Burke, from Lichfield whom we had not met before.

January: As we had various things to discuss for the Grand Reunion and the part Stafford Branch were to play during the weekend, we did not have a speaker so finished with a quiz.

February: We enjoyed an interesting talk, with slides, on our speaker's visit to a small town in America called Minot, North Dakota.

March: Stafford's own poetess, Mrs Aiken, came to entertain us once again with poems that were both humorous and sad including one about the Millennium.

April: The Grand Reunion! Seven members attended from the Stafford Branch and we enjoyed every minute of the weekend. Good accommodation, good food, well organised from start to finish. Well done Major Dee McElligott and Cardiff Branch. We also enjoyed the Drumhead Service and the March Past!!! We are now looking forward to the Wales & West Area Reunion in Donnington on 23rd September.

SUNDERLAND

November 1999 saw two of our members, Mrs M Halliday and Mrs G Atkinson, together with their friend, Mrs M Senior selling poppies at the local supermarket for the 10th year in succession. They began when the supermarket first opened and hope to continue for many more years.



L to R: Mrs M Senior, Mrs Gladys Atkinson, Mrs Martha Halliday

In December we had our Christmas lunch at the Companions Club and were joined by Mrs Gwen Friday, Secretary of the North East Group. The meal, as usual, was excellent and we were then entertained by Vicky and her husband. Almost every Branch member attended and we had a very enjoyable afternoon.

We had a celebration cake made for January 2000 but unfortunately many of our members were unable to attend due to the 'flu epidemic, so our Chairman stored the cake in her freezer and brought it back for the February meeting which was also our 14th birthday. Luckily most of our members had recovered by then so the cake was cut and distributed, and very nice it was too.



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Mrs Vinnie Burgham

Ten of our members, travelling by mini-bus attended the Grand Reunion in Cardiff. We arrived on Friday night and were assured that the CIA was only a "ten-minute walk" down the road. On Saturday morning the weather was glorious and I, in my innocence, asked whether we should walk or take the mini-bus. We decided to walk. 45 minutes and a near heart attack later everyone arrived at the CIA. I, being a mere stripling of 66 years, had hurried on and managed to register all of our group but I had to make profuse apologies. If age is an attitude of mind, then my members are still teenagers. Unfortunately the bodies aren't. So please ladies, if you meet anyone from Sunderland Branch and are asked for directions, DON'T say "It's only a 10 minute walk" as we will probably have hysterics.

The Reunion itself was great, but we were not impressed with the meal or the standard of service. We did realise that the waiting staff consisted mainly of students but we did have to wait quite some time between the meat being served and the vegetables following. We enjoyed the Drumhead Service and the March Past despite one or two hiccups.

Our Branch stayed until Monday, and on Sunday night we were invited to a British Legion Club somewhere on the way to Merthyr Tydfil. We were made most welcome - indeed wherever we went in Cardiff people were very kind and friendly. On the whole, we had a very enjoyable weekend.

SWANSEA

We have had a few busy months meeting up with Cardiff branch regarding the arrangements for the Grand Reunion.

Our stall sold Welsh Memorabilia, which was supplied by Mr Fuller of Mumbles with the assistance of Dorothy Llewellyn and Veronica Barrington. Dorothy Llewellyn QARANC, was in charge of arrangements and our stall looked great with the big Welsh Flag on the front, it really gave a Welsh flavour to it all. Our team of 4 worked hard on the Saturday morning setting up the stall and selling our wares, but we

were rewarded by knowing that we did very well and sold more than we expected, selling out of many items.

We thoroughly enjoyed the reunion, meeting many friends from different parts of the world and our own lovely British Isles. The Military Band was great playing all our favourite songs, even the weather was good although waiting on parade Sunday Morning the wind was cold but the marching soon warmed us up. Congratulations to HQ for the organisation.

Attendances at our meetings have been low owing to members being ill. The meetings are still held at the Guildhall, Swansea, on the first Wednesday in the month. We are busy arranging our outings and speakers for the rest of the year now that the reunion is passed. Our Christmas Lunch at Oxwich Bay Hotel in December was a great success we also had a raffle and all enjoyed a lovely day out. Two of our members attended the Lord Mayor of Swansea's inauguration and had tea after in the Brangwyn Hall.

We send wishes for good health and happiness to all our members.

ULSTER

Our last feature in *Lioness* (1/2000) left us on the brink of our AGM in Bangor, Co. Down. This is held in the local Royal British Legion Hall, a most convenient venue with accessible car parking - and a bar upstairs with Royal British Legion prices. However it was not because of my single glass of red wine that I agreed to become Hon. Sec - I found myself 'under the influence' of our former Secretary's plea for release after years and years on the job. There will never be another secretary like Alison Wamock and she more than deserves our thanks (and my apprehension!).

I enclose a group photograph of some of our Branch on the outing in October to Omagh. This is not only because we haven't had a photograph in *Lioness* for ages, but also because a printing error placed us in the SilverBIRTH Hotel rather than SilverBIRCH! The photo should relieve fears and scotch rumours. We've been there, done that and bought the T-shirts - for the grandchildren! -



Our Annual Luncheon took place in February in the King's Hall function suite as usual. This 8-sided building has always been affectionately nicknamed 'The Threepenny Bit' which is a mystery to the post-decimalisation set. Forty guests enjoyed the excellent lunch, including a new member from England, Mrs Isobel Bromley, and Mrs Mary Heron, ex-TA also 'enlisted' as lunch ended. Welcome! Our best wishes go to those poor

souls who contracted the dreaded 'flu and other afflictions of the flesh'. Until next February - keep taking the tablets.

Preparations are in hand for our Summer Outing on 20 May - just too late to meet your Lioness deadline. We are heading for Enniskillen and afterwards home to explore (by coach) the outstanding lakeland scenery. Pity there won't be time for water-skiing - maybe next year?

WILMSLOW

Thirteen members went to Cardiff in April for the Grand Reunion. We had a wonderful hotel and the weather was good. All the arrangements that had been planned were successful but I will leave it to others to talk about the March Past!!

We have a busy summer ahead in June and July.

June 18th. The Royal British Legion Millennium. Muster in Rhyl with bands, choirs and fly-pasts.

June 24th. Visit to the old Prisoner of War camp at Malton Yorks

July 4th. Llangollen for the International Eisteddfod.

July 6th. Our Birthday Lunch at the Pinewood (Thistle), Martin Bell (our MP) will be there.

July (on a day to be confirmed). The official opening of the Arboretum at Lichfield.

July 20th. The Royal Horticultural Show at Tatton Park, Knutsford.

Our Australian member sent us some gold to us for a gift for 2000. So we have bought a souvenir tray from Cardiff for each of us. Thank you, Joan!! Some of us are having

Computer Sessions at our local Age Concern Office, so 'Bill Gates' had better watch out, the Silver Surfers are about.

In November we shall, as usual, go to London for the Armistice weekend where we have booked at the Savoy for tea, will go to a show or the Albert Hall, then parade as always.

WIMBLEDON

Wimbledon Branch has continued to meet in the Community Centre not far from Wimbledon Station.

We held our Annual Meeting on 15th October at which 20 members were present and apologies received from 8 others.

Our second Bring and Buy sale of the year was in November when £90 including donations was raised. This will help us to pay our room rent and the ever increasing cost of speakers.

We welcomed Mrs Eileen Carter at our Christmas Party in December when the 20 members present exchanged cards and gifts.

There was no meeting in January and in February we were entertained by Mr Hoatch talking about interviewing the famous including the Salvation Army Booth Sisters and Dame Barbara Cartland.

On the 8th March fourteen members met at the YMCA in Wimbledon for a very enjoyable lunch and lots of chatter.

The National Trust manages a large park near Wimbledon and at our March meeting we heard about the history of the park and house and were shown slides of the streams which run through the park, the old snuff mills and the trees and birds which make it their home.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

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YORK

Here we are once again with news from the York Branch. First of all may we extend a hearty welcome to the members who have joined us from the Scarborough Branch, (that Branch having closed its doors for a few months.)

In October we had our AGM - we said a big thank you to Mrs Flo Palphramaud whose service on the committee came to an end after 3 years. Flo put in a lot of hard work even though she was very ill for a time and was in and out of hospital. We do wish you a very speedy recovery Flo. We then welcomed Mrs Fiona Dixon on to the committee and hope she will serve for 3 years.

November - we had a Beetle Drive that was thoroughly enjoyed by all, followed by tea/coffee and biscuits. Also in November, 21 of our members attended the Festival of Remembrance at the Barbican in York. This is a yearly event that is a replica of the service held in the Albert Hall in London and organised by Mr Ted Griffiths the President of the York Branch of the Royal British Legion. If anyone is coming to York in November I would fully recommend that they try and get tickets.

December - we had a lovely afternoon tea party - all the catering and preparations carried out by the committee. The celery and cheese seemed to be the favourite dish of the afternoon.



Colonel Frankie Cook.

January - we changed our usual venue and had a late Christmas Lunch at the Newington Hotel just by the Racecourse. They certainly put on a lovely belated lunch for us. The photos are of the ladies who attended the lunch (taken by Colonel Frankie Cook) and the lady on her own is our own Colonel Frankie taken before she could get down from her vantage point and before she had time to put her shoes on (photo taken by Pam Nisbitt).



On Tuesday 18th January 2000 members of the Branch joined other Service Associations in attending the Cathedral 2000 Millennial Service of the British Army which was held in the York Minster. The Service was one of many taking place simultaneously throughout the world, wherever British Troops are serving.

February - we were entertained by Colonel Hazel Powell and Colonel Frankie Cook to an interesting slide show of their holiday on the Silver Coast in Portugal.

March - a lady from the MacMillan Nurses gave us a talk on the work carried out by these hardworking and most comforting band of nurses.

April - Mr Ted Griffiths the President of the York Branch Royal British Legion gave a talk on how the RBL was formed and the work that is carried out today.

Twelve of our ladies attended the Grand Reunion in Cardiff and really enjoyed themselves. Many thanks to all the organisers and hope to see you all in 2003.

We are now looking forward to the North East Reunion in September; our trip to Leeds in May to be entertained by the Leeds ladies; and the Harrogate ladies are coming to York in August to be entertained by us.

Eightieth birthday wishes go to the following members:

Mrs Mary Rogan	-	Belated wishes Mary
Mrs Betty Willshaw	-	Belated wishes Betty
Mrs Nancy Reed	-	16th May 2000
Mrs Phyl Linsdale	-	13th December 2000

Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go to Ms Vera Culley who has been in hospital and hopefully now on the road to recovery. Our best wishes also go to all members and friends of the WRAC Association.

Japanese, German and British Swords, Daggers and Memorabilia Wanted



I have a special private collection of war time and military memorabilia and would very much appreciate items to increase the collection for which I am pleased to pay.

Almost any items would be very appreciated including war time posters, flags, air force flying equipment, caps, log books, medals etc. will collect anywhere.

Please contact Ron Warner
46 Langdon Road, Southdown, Bath BA2 1LS
or telephone 01225 314353

Weddings

GOLDEN WEDDING (HALL - HERON) On 8th October 1949 at Holy Trinity Church, Folkestone, Kent, Richard Somers HALL, ex-RQMS, 1st Royal Tank Regiment, to Eileen Kennett HERON, ex ATS MT Sergeant No: 1 MTTC Camberley (W/119935).

Present Address: 354 Loose Road
MAIDSTONE
Kent ME15 9TT



On 23rd July, 1949 at St Dunstan's Church, Cheam. SSgt Bernard GOUS RASC to Ex-ATS Joan SPARROW. They met while serving together at No.6 Training Bn RASC Yeovil, Somerset.

Present Address: 98 St Cyrus Road
Colchester
Essex



Mr and Mrs Gous today.

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On 18th March 1950 at St Margaret's Church, Frizinghall, Bradford John E (Jack) HOULDSWORTH ex-Royal Signals married Nora HAY ex-ATS Royal Signals, HQ Northern Command, York.

Present Address: 40 Kingsdale Crescent
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD2 4DA



Mr and Mrs Houldsworth celebrating their Golden Anniversary

VETERANS BOOK

Sir, I have had the recent good fortune, along with other Veterans, to have my story included in BLOODY HELL, a new book published by the Plough Publishing House. BLOODY HELL presents the stories of Veterans from aor conflicts in the 20th Century. Welsh Guardsman Simon Weston's foreword is a fitting prelude to a book which presents Veterans as those who know the reality of conflict, and which gives them a platform to speak of their experiences of war.

Many Veterans feel that only other Veterans understand them. Yet, since we Veterans know the true horror of war, our stories may inform others who haven't experienced war to remember and care for Veterans and victims of conflict, as well as informing our loved ones about what we personally have been through.

BLOODY HELL also drives home the fact that public and state have obligations to Veterans that must go further than the annual purchase of poppies, wreath laying and a two minute silence on Remembrance Day. The Living must be remembered as well as the Dead. Concrete emotional and material support is needed for all Veterans. Otherwise, for many of us, the war will never end.

If you would like to order a copy of BLOODY HELL or if you're interested in quantity discounts call the Plough Publishing House freephone orderline 0800 018 0799 or write to:

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Letters

RA FLASHES

Dear Editor **PDF Compressor Free Version**

To finalise RA flashes - AA had 12 divisional flashes. The Bow and Arrow was AA Command HQ under General Sir Frederick Pile and in late '43 early '44, Divisions were given the choice - South West Div chose to keep the Flaming Dornier - end of subject!

W/72949 Bunty (Beattie) Jones
Caerlee House, 5/1 King St., Warrawong, NSW 2502, Australia

MIDDLE EAST TERRORIST ATTACK

Dear Editor

I have just been handed a copy of LIONESS No 1 and read the interesting facts and stories therein. I myself was in the ATS from 1945-1948. The tales told in your magazine are very interesting. My tale is more so. I was a telephonist stationed in Jerusalem and was on duty in the King David Hotel when the terrorists struck. All hell was let loose and a number of people were killed. I have never forgotten the frightening event and the aftermath, and often wonder how many of my ex-colleagues are still around.

G Ramsay (nee Williamson) 309136
32 Eric Long Ct., Eldene, Swindon, Wilts SN3 6DA

BROMPTON GUN OPERATIONS ROOM

Dear Editor

I was so delighted to open my copy of the Lioness and find an illustration of "Brompton Gun Operations Room". I worked in that very room for nearly four years.

It was one of four rooms built into the Lift Shaft of Brompton Road tube station. It really only had one large plotting table and two smaller ones, four Signal girls plotted on the big table and two Artillery girls on each of the two smaller tables. Artillery girls plotted with counters and they were so quick it was a pleasure to watch them.

Round the wall mere mounted little bits of German planes that the gun-sites had shot down.

When the raids were very bad Sir Freddie Pile would come down and watch the raid, and I remember him broadcasting words of encouragement to a site that had been bombed.

One day in the summer of the doodle bugs he said that as we had worked so hard all those off duty could go on an outing. We went, in lorries somewhere to a site outside London and had a tea party, sandwiches and cakes.

Ivy Duly (182782)
32 Overstrand Rd, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 0DW

ASSOCIATION

Dear Editor

I regret I am unable to get to Cardiff for the Grand Re-union this year! I attended the Blackpool one three years ago, so I shall be thinking of you all, especially the Accrington Branch, who took me under their wing when I arrived in London for the 50th Grand Re-union (not knowing anyone) and they've kept in touch with me ever since!

Even though I've not met up with anyone I served with, the Accrington Branch adopted me and I look forward to my visits, back home, they're such great caring friends.

This may be an idea other branches could adopt for overseas members like me. It's great to think I'm part of a group on these occasions, it makes re-unions so much more exciting.

All best wishes

Eleanor H Maher (K/A Ann)
124 Morden Road, Sunnybank Hills, Qld 4109 Australia

Dear Editor

I would like to tell you how I came to join the WRAC Association.

I was at my husband's Squadron Re-union Dinner in 1998 when I met the wife of one of his colleagues.

We chatted for a while and discovered we were both trained in Edinburgh and then both went to the War Office Signals. In fact we had followed one another on different shifts.

She told me about the WRAC Association and sent me the address to write to to join. I am very appreciative of her doing this as we had just moved house and of course knew very few people. Having joined the Hereford Branch, I enjoy the meetings very much and have made some new friends.

Heather Kemp (nee Furr) (Operator Keyboard and Line ATS)
Summer's Lease, 10 Glyndwr Gardens, Abergavenny, Gwent NP7 9JL

Dear Editor

I have been in the Association for only 18 months and now that I have moved to Hull I have been able at last to attend my first meeting. I was delighted and made most welcome by the members and feel sure that I will enjoy my membership.

My life in the WRAC lasted from September 1952 to September 1955. I qualified as an Ammunition Storewoman and served in two large ammunition depots. I joined in many sporting activities and led a very active life both workwise and socially. It was at one of the depots where I met my soldier husband-to-be and, with him, travelled to many different places where I was fortunate enough to meet

WRAC friends again. One such occasion was in Singapore where a reunion was held which was attended by many serving and ex-members of the WRAC. Whatever happened to Ann Arnold, Ann Mortimer, Jacqui Crotty and all the other members of my 'gang'? How lovely if it were possible to meet or even hear from them through my branch here in Hull.

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J James' letter in Issue No 1 of 2000 speaks of a lack of letters from ex-WRAC members. Could I extend this and say that there appears to be a shortfall of ex-WRAC members within the Association. I was prompted to join through reading an advert in the Royal British Legion magazine. Could not more advertising be carried out? Do we not want to encourage membership? Hopefully this would draw in more members who are ex-WRAC? Like J James I think that if more members ex-WRAC wrote in to the Lioness, which I too enjoy enormously, it would help the situation. Come on girls, lets emulate the ATS ladies, I'm sure they are willing to support us. It is important that the Association is kept going so lets get recruiting!

Mrs J K GREEN (Sue) (née GIBBONS) 50 Aysgarth Avenue, Cottingham Road, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU6 8QU

MEMORABILIA

Dear Editor

This is by way of a follow up to the report on the WRAC Dinner Club Meeting 8-10 Oct 1999 published in Lioness No 1 2000 'Beryl Butcher, Averill Ward and Nora Jones were in the foyer selling WRAC sweatshirts, T/Shirts and WRAC knitted dolls who sported every rank from Private to Brigadier'.

Having been to re-unions and gatherings of ex-ATS and WRAC we were always dismayed at being unable to find much in the way of memorabilia or clothing with the WRAC badge on so we decided to do something about it.

We had to go searching for a firm that made and embroidered badges, and who would hopefully be able to supply the garments as well.

As so often happens we came across what we were looking for when we were doing something else totally unconnected.

We had decided last summer to have a day out in a small market town in the Lincolnshire Wolds. Whilst going round the market we came across an unattended stall displaying all sorts of leaflets and posters for various things and places from Garden Centres to a small firm that embroidered badges of any design you care to order. We rang them and they said that they would be glad to help, if we took them a flat copy of what we wanted and the colours involved. They would also supply the garments we were looking for.

The firm is just a husband and wife team, and they were more than helpful. The master badge was duly made and approved after one small alteration, and we had some T/Shirts and Sweatshirts made up.

We then got in touch with Ann Deakin and sent her a T/Shirt which she was good enough to take round to various meetings, she also, via the Dinner Club Newsletter, spread the word of the availability of the garments.

We received quite a few orders which we took along to the Dinner Club as reported, and we also did a brisk trade in selling WRAC dolls.

If you are interested in purchasing a Sweatshirt, T/Shirt, Polo Shirt or a WRAC doll contact either Beryl or Averill 15 Westwood Drive, Swanpool, Lincoln, LN6 0HL. Tel: 01522 878413.

Miss B P Butcher (Ex W/387745 SSgt B P Butcher)
15 Westwood Drive, Swanpool, Lincoln, LN6 0HL

CARDIFF 2000

Dear Editor

May I personally congratulate you and your stalwart colleagues, for the amazing weekend in Cardiff. It was brilliant, and in my book, it has to be *Blackpool No. 2*. The organisational skills required for such a mammoth task must have been nerve racking but, you created a wonderful atmosphere which was enjoyed by so many - the young, the not so young and those in between.

On Thursday, 6th April, I travelled to Cardiff with 3 friends, Maureen Deeley, Sue Dolphin and Jenny Bryne. I enjoyed a leisurely, picturesque journey, in good company and in high spirits. But, Oh, what a beautiful day and, Oh, what a wonderful weekend!

The hotel accommodation, the food and the city were all I could have hoped for. The Grand Reunion Dinner, and, the Drumhead Service combined to create a really smashing atmosphere.

The March Past was the final seal of approval for many new, young faces. Unsure of what to expect, they are already looking forward to the next one. We all had such a good time and such a good laugh - which is what it's all about. Memories to take home, to make you smile, especially when your feeling down.

As with all good reunions it was the guests who made it extra special. Old friends, new friends, young and old, so many familiar-smiling faces. We talked together and laughed so much it's a wonder lockjaw didn't set in. I was glad to get home to have a rest.

The responsibility for organising this mammoth weekend lay on the epaulets of Major Dee McElligott. Congratulations Major McElligott, the Cardiff Branch and the army of hardworking ladies who, as always, did their bit to make it such a swinging weekend. Roll on April 2003 so we can do it all again.

Worthy Down, and the Cardiff Branch, must have some very good friends, in some very high places, to be able to organise not only a wonderful weekend but sunshine as well.
Mrs A Butler-Deakin, 'Cobblestones' 2 Chesham Road, Stafford ST16 3JP

Dear Editor

I would like to say thank you through the "Lioness" to Edna and the other girls from South Australia, and Muriel and Jenny from Darlington, for sharing their taxis with me from the Lincoln House Hotel over the weekend of the Reunion week-end. Unfortunately I didn't meet anyone from service days but I enjoyed the week-end very much. Perhaps some of your readers will remember me as Joan Knight. I was in the ATS from April 1946 - June 1948.

Mrs Joan Smith, 22 Wellgrove Street, Lochee, Dundee DD2 2QY

FROM DOVER TO DOVERCOURT

Dear Editor

I was very interested in the article about Miss Dorothy Whitmarsh from Dovercourt (Lioness 1/2000 Page 11) as that is my home town. Having lived in the North over 50 years I find that very few people have heard of it up here. That brings me to my little story. During my ATS days 1941-1946, I served mostly in 493 Battery. I had on one occasion to go through the signals room and found much agitation and panic going on round a map. I heard someone say "It's sure to be in the Dover area with name like that", so I asked what the trouble was.

I was told that they had a very important message to send and had no idea of the whereabouts of Dovercourt. Well, I guided them on the map round the coast to Harwich and explained that it joined the port of Harwich.

I still have many relatives in Dovercourt and it's still "home".

M Dowson (Mrs) 15 Gorsedene Ave., Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear, NE26 4AJ

WERE YOU A PIPER OR A DRUMMER?

Dear Editor

I have just received from my daughter, Mrs Linda Collis of Berkshire, England, paper work, an ATS Badge and a book called Lioness, I don't know if there are other books, but reading this one I was unhappy that no mention was made of the official Drum and Bugle Band, I was lucky enough to be the leading side drummer and also the reserve Big Drum person. I was in it for 2 years and enjoyed every moment of it but I had to leave when I was expecting my first child.

Our main job was recruiting women and we were stationed at Bourne and Hollingsworth's in Oxford Street. I could tell you so much of the great women I worked with. Our officer was Mrs Stebbings (we called her 'Stebby'). Some of the girls still write to each other. We started from Droitwich and for a while Brine Baths and Norbery House were our Stations until we moved to London, where we

were trained to march at the Guards' barracks. It was a wonderful 2 years.

E V Powell (Mrs)

4 St Andrews Court, Halls Head 6210, Mandurah W A

Editor Is there anyone else out there who was in the Drum and Bugle Band?

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION RUNATHON 7 MAY 2000

Dear Editor

I write to you to inform you of the participation of some of your members who take part in one of my annual fund-raising events the LEGION RUNATHON 2000. We hold this event at the Royal Show Ground Stoneleigh Park Warwickshire and we cater for all abilities, run, walk, jog or crawl all proceeds go into the Poppy Appeal. For some years now, members of Coventry and Nuneaton ATS have taken part and have raised quite a large sum of money through sponsorship.

This year, I would like to bring to your notice the ongoing sponsorship from MRS L WILCOX, 38 Whittle Close, Rugby, who raised £100, MRS E KERRISON, 19 Priory Close, Daventry, who raised £80 from Coventry ATS and MRS R B POTTER, 22 Dillon Court who raised £200 and MRS E MEASURES, 4 Coventry Road, who raised £29 from Nuneaton ATS. This help in raising money for the Poppy Appeal is very much appreciated.

From: Maj (Retd) A R Mallett, The Royal British Legion, County Field Officer Warwickshire, 1 Amber Business Village, Amber Close, Amington, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 4RP

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Obituary

MARY ELIZABETH WESSON

It was while at school that Mary decided she wanted to be involved with the care of eyes and went on to train as an orthoptist. Her career was interrupted by the war, as she joined the ATS serving with anti-aircraft regiments and also basic training units. She was always keen to point out where, on the famous VE Day photograph of the ATS column as it split to go round the Victoria Memorial, she was marching, proudly, close to the front.

After the war, she joined the TA and formed the WRAC platoon in Carters Green, West Bromwich, which became part of 323 Staffs Battalion. It was there in 1959 that I first met Mary when I visited as a newly appointed TA officer. In the next two years, I gained the values that stayed with me for the whole of my service and Mary played a great part in advising and guiding me. She entrusted her beloved MT Platoon to me after the re-organisation of the TA and so I had mixed feelings when I left to join the Regular Army.

For her whole career, Mary was based at the Children's Hospital in Birmingham. She taught students from all over the world, advised governing bodies on how best to develop the service, lectured at Birmingham University Medical School and developed instruments for measuring defects in eyesight.

She was involved in founding the World Orthoptists' Association and became their first President, which meant that she had to travel widely. Despite her busy life, she visited my step-mother regularly when I was overseas and I always knew I could call on her in an emergency.

Mary died in April. She will be remembered by many for her dedication, wise counsel and high sense of duty; also her kindness, compassion and sense of humour.

Col (Retd) Audrey Smith

MISS CHRISTINA WOOD

It is with regret that we have to announce the death of Sgt Christina Wood.

Chris died quietly at the home of her sister. She served in the ATS during the war as a driver and clerical instructor. Chris left the Army in 1946 but Civvy Street held her attention for only a short while and she re-enlisted in the WRAC 18 months later. As a Recruiting Sergeant Chris was instrumental in enlisting 1000 girls into the Army and she retired when she reached the 22 year point in 1967. She worked for many years at the University of Aberdeen in the library of the Chemistry Department.

Chris was well liked in the Aberdeen Association Group and we can but echo the words from her discharge book - "a woman of the highest calibre, with intelligence, integrity and charm". She will be missed.

J Bartlett

MAY ALLITT (née RAFFERTY)

May Allitt (née Rafferty) Women's Royal Army Corps from 1963 to 1966 was a stewardess serving at Camberley and Hindhead. She met and married Bill Allitt who was serving in the 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment. May originally came from Scotland. She passed away in Barnsley, South Yorkshire on 7th March 2000. I met May while attending a PARA reunion in Aldershot with my husband. She had been intending to join the Association and the WRAC Register and Dinner Club. Unfortunately her illness being sudden prevented this from happening. I feel sure that there could be readers of the Lioness who may well remember her.

Janet Watkins (née Moore) W/414005

MRS WINIFRED MALYON (née CALVERT) W/161433

Winifred joined the ATS in 1942 and she did her training in Durham before being posted to 'G' Coy Hurst Court, Hastings, Sussex. She joined the already established and fast growing numbers who worked at the RASC Record Office at Ore Place.

She met and married Alf Malyon in 1943, he was a Canadian soldier in the Princess Louise Dragoon Guards, stationed in Hastings at the time. She left the ATS and their first daughter was born in England. Win went to Canada as a war bride in 1945 to settle in Cornwall, Ontario where she was very happy and the family grew to five. Win, who originally came from Leeds, died on 21 August 1999. We regret her passing.

May Jackson

MARY CAMILLA WEBB (née O'CONNOR)

Mary and I, then a Staff Sergeant Foreman of Signals, met while serving in Aldershot and married in 1954. She then took her discharge from the WRAC and spent the next 36 years travelling around the world as an army wife.

In 1982, by which time I was a Major, I decided enough was enough and resigned my commission. We then emigrated to Brisbane, Australia where our two sons were already living. There we settled down and had time to take pleasure from perusing the Corps magazines. Mary had enjoyed her time in the ATS/WRAC especially in Moascar, Egypt. Sadly she became ill and died on 30 May 1997.

I have delayed writing about Mary until now that I have managed to obtain a suitable memorial for her.

Understanding her love of army life, I was determined to obtain permission to have a WRAC Badge produced on her memorial stone. After a lot of correspondence with the Director of Australian War Graves, permission was eventually granted and the engraving carried out.

If any of Mary's friends would like to contact me, I would be most happy to hear from them.

Norman Webb.

JUNE RAYNER



It is with deep regret that we announce the death of WO2 June Rayner on 31 May 2000, after a short illness.

June joined the WRAC in 1972 as a driver. She served at various locations, including a tour as Training NCO and on completion of her 22 years left the Army in 1994. During her career she guided many young soldiers and was popular with everyone she came in contact with. To her many friends she was an unforgettable character who provided us with hours of entertainment, not least with her rendition of 'Delilah'.

June's funeral took place on 8th June in her home town of Middleton, near Manchester. So many of her friends attended, from all parts of the country, that many had to stand throughout the service. After the funeral everyone was invited to one of June's local pubs and many Becks were drunk in her honour.

Deepest sympathy to all her family and a special thanks to Liz Martin who did so much to make sure everyone possible knew all the arrangements.

Re-united with Kath, Carole, and Sandy, Rest in Peace, Dear June.

Madge Smith

MRS PAULINE ELLIS

Pauline Ellis served in the ATS from 8 February 1944 to 3 June 1947 and at one time was a driver for Field Marshall Montgomery.

She was a founder member when Grimsby branch was formed in 1986. She was also the second Secretary for a time. She was elected to Grimsby Council in the 1960s and served for 17 years being elected Mayor of Grimsby in 1986. She was also a magistrate for about six years.

Although using her wheelchair she was able to attend the reunion in Cardiff.

Col (Retd) F Cook

ACRES Mrs Margaret Acres, née Frost, of Rotherham on 24 November 1999. ATS

ALLEN Mrs Domini Allen, née Haynes, of Sherborne on 07 March 2000. ATS

ALLISON Mrs Gina Allison, née White, of Northallerton on 10 December 1999. ATS/WRAC

ALLITT Mrs May Allitt, née Rafferty, of Barnsley on 07 March 2000. WRAC

ANDREWS Miss Marion Andrews of Sheffield on 27 January 2000. ATS

ARSCOTT Mrs Janet Mary Arscott, née Spiller, of Taunton on 14 February 2000. ATS

ATKINSON Mrs Celia Atkinson, née Hunt, of Toronto, Canada on 24 February 2000. ATS

BLOOD Miss Edith Blood of Bury in September 1999. ATS

BOTTOMLEY Mrs M Bottomley, née Rooke, of Gargrave, North Yorkshire on 16 April 2000. ATS/WRAC

BUDD Mrs Nora Budd, née Cann, on 24 February 2000. ATS

BURGESS Mrs May Burgess, née Curry, of Redcar on 26 March 2000. ATS

CAPELIN Mrs Betty Capelin, née Wise, of Blackheath on 20 April 2000. ATS

CLARK Mrs P M Clark, née Le Brun, of Portsmouth on 29 January 2000. ATS/WRAC

CLAY Miss Mary Arden (Molly) Clay of Somerset on 10 May 2000. ATS

COLLETT Mrs Marjorie Collett, née Jauncey, of Essex on 01 December 1999. ATS

DARRAGH Miss Rene Darragh of Castlederg on 29 April 2000. ATS

DAVIES Mrs Thomasina (Ena) Davies, née Wilson, of Swansea on 23 May 2000. ATS

DEXTER Maj (Retd) G Dexter of Hythe

DOWELL Mrs Cecely Dowell, née Dixon, of Wilmington on 04 February 2000. ATS

EAVES Mrs Jessie Eaves, née Jackson, of Addlestone on 11 May 2000. ATS

ELLIS Mrs Pauline Ellis, née Wade, of Grimsby on 27 May 2000. ATS

FELTHAM Mrs Jessie Feltham of Woking on 08 May 2000. ATS

FILLINGHAM Mrs Jean Fillingham, née Gwilliam, of Surrey on 18 April 2000. ATS

GAYLER Mrs Peggie Gayler, née Raine, on 12 December 1999. ATS

GOWING Mrs A M Gowing of Lancing on 13 October 1999. ATS

HALSEY Maj (Retd) Sally Halsey of Cambridge on 21 April 2000. WRAC

HARDY Mrs Grace Hardy, née Cock, of Bradford on 05 February 2000. ATS

HARDY Mrs Madge Hardy of Surrey on 31 May 2000. ATS

HARRISON Mrs Thelma Doreen Harrison, née Crocker, of Eastbourne in November 1999. ATS

HAYWARD Mrs Joan Evelyn Hayward, née Evans, of Sidcup on 02 April 2000. ATS

HAZELL Mrs Joan Vera Hazell, née Mount, of New South Wales. ATS

HOLBERTON Mrs Peggy Holberton, née MacAllister, of Colchester on 19 December 1999. ATS

HOLT Lt Col Lola Elizabeth Holt on 07 November 1999. ATS/WRAC

INGRAM Mrs Joan Ingram, née Higham, of Edinburgh on 01 June 1999. ATS

JOHNSTON Mrs Jessie Johnston, née Porteous, of Victoria Australia on 03 May 2000. ATS

KERR Mrs Sheila Margaret Kerr of Aberfeldy on 04 May 2000. ATS

LADD Mrs Doris May Ladd, née Toplis, of Radipole on 21 May 2000. ATS

LUMB Miss Norah Lumb of Bradford on 09 June 2000. ATS

MACKAY Miss Marion Mackay of Glasgow on 16 January 2000. ATS/WRAC

MACNAUGHTON Mrs MacNaughton, née Young, of Aldershot

MAIN Mrs Olive Mary Main, née Bushell, of Fakenham on 03 December 1999. ATS

MARTIN Mrs Phyllis Mary Martin, née Hall, of North Wales on 12 December 1999. ATS

MAYNE ELLIOTT Mrs Frances Mayne Elliott, née Mayne, of Newton Ards on 01 September 1999. ATS

MCLAUGHLIN Miss McLaughlin of Peterborough. WRAC

MCLOUGHLIN Mrs Ivy McLoughlin, née Hards, of High Halston on 23 January 2000. ATS

MITCHELL Mrs Janet Duncan Mitchell, née Vass, of New Zealand. ATS

MORRHALL Mrs Thelma Morrhall, née Oxnevad, of Shropshire on 23 January 2000. ATS/WRAC

NEILSON Mrs Jean Neilson, née Cutts, on 23 October 1999.

O'CONNELL Miss Nora O'Connell of Cork on 17 December 1999. ATS/WRAC

OGDEN Mrs Jean Ogden MBE of Norwich on 29 May 2000. ATS

PERCIVAL Isobel Joan Percival MBE of Hyde

PESKITTS Mrs Georgina Peskitts of Oxford on 31 January 2000. ATS

POCOCK Mrs Patricia Elsie May Paddock, née Bird, of Litchfield on 11 November 1999. ATS

POOLE Mrs Eve Poole, née Wiggin, of Cardiff on 16 April 2000. ATS

QUAR Miss Constance Janet (Connie) Quar of Banstead on 04 December 1999.

RAYNER Ms June Rayner of Middleton on 31 May 2000. WRAC

REID Mrs Vera (Peta) Reid, née Rodway, of Newton Abbott on 30 April 2000. ATS

RENNIE Mrs Jean Rennie, née Davies, of Bath on 30 November 1999. ATS

ROBERTSON Miss Christina J Robertson of Stirling on 13 January 2000. ATS

ROMBAUT Mrs Beryl Rombaut of Leigh on Sea on 18 April 2000. ATS

RYDER Miss Nellie Ryder of Birmingham on 19 November 1999. ATS/WRAC

SAUNDERS Mrs Dorothy Elsie Saunders, née Perry, of Thamesmead on 22 May 2000. ATS

SMYTH Mrs Elizabeth Smyth, née Atkinson, of Bruton on 10 March 2000. ATS

STANLEY Mrs May Stanley, née Norkett, of Dalston on 16 March 2000. WRAC

STOKES Mrs Grace Stokes, née Bray, of Westbury on 02 January 2000. ATS

THOMPSON Mrs Joan Evelyn Thompson, née Neve, of Potters Bar on 07 April 2000. ATS

THOMPSON Miss Irene Thompson of Beckenham on 13 November 1999. ATS

WASGSTAFF Mrs Emily Wagstaff, née Cross, of Richmond on 06 September 1999. ATS

WATSON Mrs Mabel Doreen Watson, née Towers, on 01 February 2000.

WEBB Mrs Mary Webb, née O'Connor, of Brisbane, Australia on 30 May 1997. ATS/WRAC

WELCH Mrs Vera Welch of Gloucester on 27 January 2000. ATS

WESSON Miss Mary Wesson of Birmingham on 13 April 2000. ATS/WRAC

WHITTLE Mrs Violet Whittle, née Deeks, of Colchester on 20 January 2000. ATS

WITTS Mrs Ivy Wits, née Shilham, of Hastings on 12 March 2000. ATS

WOOD Miss Christina Wood of Aberdeen on 27 November 1999. ATS/WRAC

WOOD Miss Nellie Phyllis Wood of Hastings on 12 March 2000. ATS

WRIGHT Mrs Sheila Wright, née Timmins, of Freshwater on 06 December 1999. ATS

MEMORIAL TO THE WOMEN OF WORLD WAR 2 (Charity No: 106 9791)

I am sure that many of you will have by now heard that we were not successful in getting the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square for the Memorial and I am sure, like the Trustees, you were also quite disappointed. On the other hand we have received an unconfirmed report that the Government would like to see the Memorial in Whitehall. Bearing in mind the Cenotaph is there as well as Field Marshals Slim, Alanbrooke and Montgomery, some may feel this is an even more appropriate site. I went down with two of the Vice Patrons to have a look at the site. There are some very good potential areas. We have written to the Culture Secretary for confirmation of the report and to ask exactly where we are likely to be allowed to erect the Memorial.

On 23 May, together with our professional sculpture advisers, I went to the Royal Academy of Arts in London to judge the candidates' ideas, which they had submitted as drawings. There were some wonderful ideas and the standard was exceptionally high. After six hours of intense study and debate, we finally managed to select three ideas. Once we have the site confirmed, we will ask the Sculptors to submit macquettes (miniature scale models) from which we will select the most suitable subject.

On the fundraising side we have to revise our target from £60,000 to £100,000 – that was the bad news. The good news is we have already collected £83,000. We have launched our second Corporate Fundraising Tranche and are keeping our profile up by appearing on Radio, Television, in the Press, which all helps to keep the pennies flowing in. All we need is a final BIG PUSH to achieve our goal and with a little bit of help, I know we can achieve it.

Major (Retd) David Robertson

Ed Note:

If you wish to make a donation, please send it to:

Major (Retd) David Robertson
c/o HQ York Garrison
Imphal Barracks
York YO10 4AU.

Cheques made payable to Central Bank York Garrison

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT CARDIFF ON 8 APRIL 2000 AT 1430 HR

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1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Brigadier Nield welcomed members of Cardiff and explained how she had been asked to stand as chairman when Brigadier Meechie had been forced to resign due to ill health. She asked Lt Col Trout to convey the best wishes of the meeting to Brigadier Meechie. The chairman then spoke briefly about the changes in the Headquarters and the fact that all the key posts had changed within a very short span. This, together with the changes in the administration of the two charities, of which she would speak later, meant that the Association had been experiencing a period of extreme turbulence. Everything was now set to move forward.

The chairman was sad to report that Brigadiers Dame Frances Coulshead and Dame Jean Rivett Drake had died during the last 12 months as had Colonel Hammond, a Life Vice President. She was pleased to say that the Association had been able to mark the passing of these senior officers in an appropriate manner, but remarked that this was increasingly difficult without the support of a regular corps. We have been grateful for help from members still serving and the AGC Headquarters.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Council member: Dame Mary Pihl.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and no comments received. It was proposed that the chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Bury Seconded: Cambridge Unanimously agreed.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There was no business arising.

5. REPORT OF COUNCIL

The Chairman reported that the Council had met twice during the previous 12 months and it has been decided that the Executive Committee, which has not met for some time, should be reconvened. An Honorary Legal Advisor had also been appointed.

The Council had been represented at the Field of Remembrance and at Westminster Abbey on Remembrance Sunday by the chairman, Brigadier Nield and Major McElligott, the General Secretary.

Council has approved the opening of a Branch of the Association in Bristol, but, sadly, Scarborough Branch has had to close.

ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds. It has become necessary to rewrite the Trust Deeds which govern these charities. Although separate charities, the two funds have been administered as one since 1964. Ex ATS servicewomen have always had a legitimate call on the WRAC fund, although the reverse was not true. The WRAC fund continued to subsidise the ATS fund until 1998 when the latter's assets amounted to less than £1000. This money was expended on five ATS beneficiaries and subsequently all benevolence has been met by the WRAC Fund. In addition, the disbandment of the WRAC meant that the Trust Deed was no longer current. Following discussions with the Council, Trustees of the Benevolent Funds and the Charity Commissioners, it has been agreed that the two funds combine to be known as the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund. In addition, this fund will be a separate but subsidiary charity of the Association with the members of Council becoming the trustees. This has two advantages. It will simplify administration and the profile of the Council meets the Charity Commission's recommended profile for the trustees. The process of publicising the new Trust Deed is underway and the changes will come into effect within the next few weeks.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

The following report was given by the Honorary Treasurer:

A draft copy of the audited accounts for the financial year ending 31 October 1999 was printed in the Lioness in February. Copies of the finalised audited accounts have been distributed throughout the meeting and are available for your perusal today. The accumulated funds of the Association stand at £339,133. This appears to be an increase of £80,255 over the previous year. However, at the direction of the Charity Commission, Branch funds have been included for the first time this year and their accumulated worth stands at £43,136. The actual increase in value of the funds is therefore more in the region of £37,000. The market value of our investments stands at £234,747,

an increase of £23, 214 over the previous year. Lioness income fell by £5,034 last year while expenditure fell by only £1,547. The resulting deficit of income over expenditure was £13,099. Such losses will be on-going unless ways can be found to increase income. In the short term the funds can bear these losses but the situation will need to be kept under review.

It was proposed that the financial statements be accepted:

Proposed: Chelmsford

Seconded: Bournemouth

Unanimously agreed.

7. REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENT FUNDS GRANTS COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Grants Committee reported that the number of cases received during the year was just over 900, with a significant rise in applications towards the end of the year. The ratio of cases was 608 ATS to 296 WRAC. The total amount spent was £165,486. Grants were topped up by other Service charities including the Royal Navy (RN), Royal Air Force (RAF), Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) and most other Regiments and Corps as well as the Royal British Legion (RBL).

We continue to administer almost 30 annuities of £10 per week from the Princess Royal's Memorial Fund. The ABF continue to grant 52 annuities of £45 a month to our members. One of the projects given to the newly appointed Case Secretary was to research and obtain additional annuities from the ABF and other sources. Since September 1999, 28 annuities valued at £545 per annum have been granted to our beneficiaries plus 4 of £416 from the Women's Section of the RBL. The total amount granted for new annuities to date, is an additional £17,864 per annum. Further grants of £1,940 for general needs have also been awarded to those who did not meet all the criteria to become an annuitant. Grants continue to be made for life's basic essentials as well as wheelchairs and stair lifts which are of course the most costly regular requirement for the elderly.

The WRAC Benevolent Fund Knitting Circle has produced woollen garments for children aged under 11 years for many years. The average number of families helped each year since 1995 is 55.

In conjunction with the ABF, Pontins holidays are provided for worthy cases with children under 16. In 1999, a total of 26 families were given a holiday. Thanks go to Mrs Babs Mitcheson who has co-ordinated both the knitting circle and the Pontins holidays for many years.

The chairman concluded her report by describing a case helped by the Benevolent Fund; thanking everyone in the branches for their support; thanking Ruth Watt for all her hard work and wishing her well in her forthcoming move to Canada.

8. LIONESS REPORT

Lioness No 1 of 2000 was distributed in early February. It was the current editor's first edition and she was pleased to report that on the whole it seemed to have been received well. Much of the credit for this goes to Mrs Lois Gilbert, who performed the role of deputy editor putting many hours of hard work into preparing the journal and whose knowledge of the ATS, the WRAC and the Association was invaluable.

There has been concern in the past about the reduction in size of the magazine. This last edition was even shorter, being only 60 pages. This was not due to over zealous editing or an attempt to reduce costs, but the result of the amount of material received. Everything received, including late submissions, was included, the only contributions omitted being those which could not be prepared prior to the deadline for reaching the printers.

The editor had been asked to revert to the pre 1997 submission dates, ie Mid December and Mid June as opposed to October and May, so that the Branch News in particular is more current. Unfortunately this is not possible at the moment as it takes a minimum of 8–10 weeks from the closing date to completion of printing and a further 2 weeks for distribution. However, these dates will be kept under review.

The cost of producing and distributing the Lioness in the last financial year still shows it to be running at a loss, the expenditure being approximately twice the income. Despite this, there are no plans currently to cut the costs as the Lioness is seen as a vital part of the Association.

The chairman stated that the Lioness was essential to furthering the aims of the Association, namely society, communication and welfare and fully justified a subsidy from funds.

9. RESOLUTIONS

a. Motions of Urgency

Nil.

b. Council Resolutions

It is proposed that the following additions be made to Council – a serving officer who has served in the WRAC; the Chairman of the Grants Committee.

Proposed: Sunderland

Seconded: London

Unanimously agreed.

c. **Branch Resolutions**

Salisbury – It is proposed that a glossy promotional leaflet, to include information about the Association and an application form be designed and printed for use by Branches.

The General Secretary had investigated the cost of this undertaking and it was considered to be affordable. The Chairman commented on the desirability of promoting a “corporate image”.

Proposed: Darlington Seconded: York Unanimously agreed.

10. ELECTIONS

a. **Vice President of Council**

It was proposed that Lt Col V Trout be re-elected as a Vice President.

Proposed: Sunderland Seconded: Hereford Unanimously agreed.

The second Vice President of Council position remains unfilled for the time being.

b. The chairman informed members that 4 previous Directors had been invited to become Life Vice Presidents:

Dame Joanna Kelleher
Dame Mary Pihl
Brigadier Helen Meechie
Brigadier Gael Ramsey

She also thought that it would be in the interests of the Association to harness the talents of other retired officers. Susan Wing was already Honorary Chaplain and Fiona Eddington, a Barrister, had agreed to be Honorary Legal Advisor.

11. PRESENTATIONS

a. The chairman presented Certificates of Appreciation to the following:

Mrs Betty Keating	Bath
Mrs Nancy Tipton	Shropshire
Mrs Jo Anscombe	Hereford
Mrs Sylvia Musgrave	Bath

She also announced the awards of Certificates of Appreciation to:

Mrs Joyce Morris	Bath
Mrs Joan Ferguson	Bath
Miss Kyra Tufnell	Colchester
Mrs Jean Clayton	Birmingham
Mrs Mary Robbins	Isle of Wight
Mrs Beryl Newell	Colchester
Miss Ruby Gray	Dumfries
Mrs Dorothy O’Niell	Shipley
Miss Irene Ludlow	Salisbury
Mrs Isabella Hamilton	Accrington

Brigadier Nield then asked Lt Col V Trout to accept an inscribed silver Armada Dish on behalf of Brigadier Helen Meechie. She expressed the hope that she would take pleasure in this token of the members’ appreciation for all her loyalty and dedication to the Association.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- It was proposed that information regarding the new rules governing charity giving be published in the Lioness.
- In view of the loss incurred through publication of the Lioness, it was suggested that a grant might be sought from the National Lottery Board.
- Concern was expressed by some members that not only had women’s names been omitted from local War Memorials, but that in some cases there was active opposition to any suggestion that the situation be rectified. This will be investigated further.
- The Secretary informed members that the Association had been allotted 40 tickets to attend the Queen Mother’s Centenary Parade on 19 July 2000. Branch Secretaries were invited to bid for tickets by 31 May.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A provisional date was set as Saturday 7 April 2001 at a venue to be decided.

Application for Membership

To the General Secretary
THE WRAC ASSOCIATION
AGC Centre Worthy Down
Winchester Hampshire
SO21 2RG

PDF Compressor Free Version

I wish to join the WRAC Association as a Life Member and enclose £50 cheque

OR

I enclose £5 cheque for Annual membership which is in payment of the first annual subscription up to the 31 December.

Date Signature

Subscriptions include "LIONESS" (Please complete in Block Letters)

QMAAC/ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number

Last Rank held (Present Rank if still serving)

Surname Miss/Mrs/Ms

Christian Names

Surname when serving

Address for Correspondence

.....

.....

..... Post Code

Telephone

Units during service

.....

Date of Enrolment Date of Release

Decorations Date of Birth

WRAC NATIONAL REGISTER

Since the Register first started in 1995 it has gone from strength to strength. On th 15 May 2000 the total number of registrations included enlistment's during the:

40s = 32 50s = 109 60s = 113 70s = 47 80s = 10

Registrations included all ranks and a tremendous variety of trades and postings. Members come from all over England, Wales, Scotland, Isle of Wight, Germany, America and Australia. There have been many long over due reunions. If you are interested then please contact:

Ann Butler-Deakin, WRAC National Register
'Cobblestones', 2 Chesham Road, Stafford ST16 3JP

Tel: 01785 249992

WRAC DINNER CLUB AND WRAC DINNER 2000

The Annual WRAC Dinner is being held at Tillington Hall Hotel, Stafford on the 14 October 2000. Anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the WRAC Dinner club and would like to attend the next Dinner, and/or the weekend, please contact:

Ann Butler-Deakin
Membership Secretary
'Cobblestones'
2 Chesham Road
Stafford ST16 3JP

Tel: 01785 249992

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