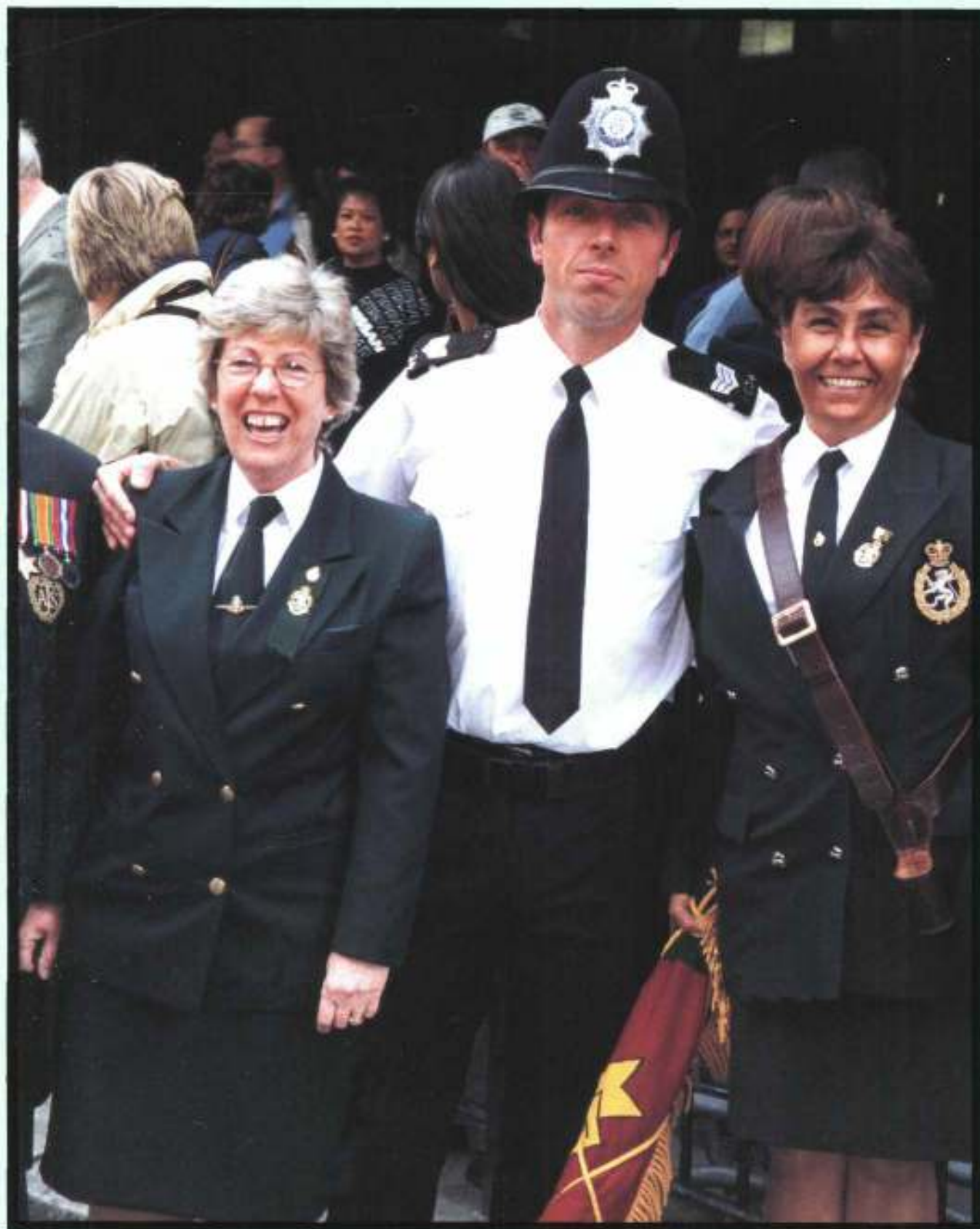


LIONESS

PDF Compressor Free Version



PDF Compressor Free Version



THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

PRESIDENT

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT GCVO

VICE-PRESIDENT

Brigadier S P Nield, CBE

COUNCIL

Chairman:**Vice-Chairman:****Life Vice-Presidents of Council:**

Brigadier S P Nield CBE

Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake

Miss M M Thomson TD

Brigadier E J Nolan CB

Brigadier A Field CB CBE

Lieutenant Colonel The Lady Martha Bruce OBE TD DL

Lieutenant Colonel M W Soames OBE

Brigadier Dame Joanna Kelleher DBE

Brigadier The Honourable Dame Mary Pihl DBE

Brigadier G K Ramsey CBE

General Secretary:**Honorary Treasurer:****Editor of Association Magazine:****Assistant Editors:**

Major D M McElligott

Lieutenant Colonel M J Rook

Major D M McElligott

Mrs L Gilbert

Mrs A Schofield

ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds

Chairman of Trustees:**Chairman of Grants Committee:****Case Secretary:**

Brigadier S P Nield CBE

Colonel A J Smith

Major J Freebairn

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

General Secretary: Direct (01962) 887570 or ATN (94271) 2570

Chief Clerk: Direct (01962) 887478 or ATN (94271) 2478

Fax: (01962) 887478

Benevolent Funds: (01962) 887612 or ATN (94271) 2612

Cover Photographs

Front Cover:

"Safe in the arms of the law"

Maureen Deeley & Anne Deakin
at the Golden Jubilee Parade

Back Cover:

"Raring to Go!!"

The WRAC Association contingent
at the Golden Jubilee Parade

Contributions for next issue by 30 November 2002

CONTENTS

Letter from the Chairman	2
Reminiscences of ATS	3
Reminiscences of WRAC	12
Where Are You Now?	14
Gunners Corner	19
Reunions.....	20
Wedding Anniversary	23
Letters.....	24
Articles of Interest	31
Branch News	41
Obituaries.....	59
AGM Minutes	63

EDITORIAL

It has been a very eventful six months for the Association, and one of very mixed emotions. In April we were all saddened by the death of our Patron, HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, but in June had the great fortune to join in the celebrations for the Golden Jubilee of HM The Queen. Naturally, we have contributions in this edition covering both events and both our cover pictures show members attending the Jubilee Parade in London.

Details of the Grand Reunion together with a booking form are enclosed as part of a separate insert. This insert also includes the Standing Order Form referred to in the Chairman's letter to all Life Members, and an appeal on behalf of the new AGC Museum which opens in 2003 and which will contain a permanent display depicting the contribution of women in the QMAAC, ATS and WRAC to the Army. In the next edition, we hope to put all proformae together like this so that you do not have to cut up your Lioness.

Finally, news from HQ with a sense of déjà vu – we have a new Chief Clerk! I think I must have said this in nearly every editorial over the last three years, but I do not intend to repeat it next year. Bethan Todd arrived in April and has settled in very well. Many of you have already spoken with her and she is going to be a great asset to the Association. For a start, she assures me she is going to stay!

GIFT AID DONATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE WRAC ASSOCIATION

(Reg No 206184)

and

THE ATS AND WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND

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

- If you are a UK Taxpayer, you can make a Gift Aid Declaration when you make a donation to charity. By making such a declaration, the receiving charity can reclaim any tax you have paid on your donation. This will give the Association or the Benevolent Fund an extra 28p for every £1 you donate.
- 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.
- You can cancel the declaration at any time simply by notifying us that you wish to do so.
If an oral declaration is cancelled within 30 days from the date on which written confirmation is sent, it will be as if the oral declaration had never been made.
- If you are a higher rate taxpayer, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment Tax Return.
- 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.

Letter from the Chairman

It was good to see so many of you at the AGM in April, although it was at a sad time when our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, had died and was, that very day, Lying in State at Westminster Hall. It was, and still is, difficult to believe that after so many years as our Commandant-in-Chief and, more recently, Patron of the WRAC Association, during which she showed such continuing interest in and unfailing support for the Corps, she is no longer with us. As I made my way to the meeting, it was a heartening sight to see the very long queue stretching from Westminster Hall across Lambeth Bridge and well down the South Bank toward the London Eye. I felt that, in mourning her loss, we were in company with the whole nation and that the sense of belonging, shared values and deep-rooted comradeship, which have borne us through so many difficult times, is still there for us when needed.

I was very proud and honoured to represent the Association at the Funeral Service in Westminster Abbey. On that sad day it was a source of comfort to see the respect and affection quite clearly shown by the huge, patient crowd and of great pride to see the apparently effortless precision of the ceremonial events both inside and outside the Abbey. We are still the best for sure.

Since then, the work of the Association has continued as usual. You may be interested to know that at the most recent Association Council Meeting there was no fewer than five ex-

Directors WRAC present still taking a very active interest in and contributing to the well being of the Association. There are, of course, younger members, both officers and senior ranks still serving, not to mention the Area Chairmen who, rather like policemen, are looking younger to me these days!

The Executive Committee under the chairmanship of my Deputy Chairman, Lt Col Sue Westlake, continues to work very hard. At present they are formulating proposed arrangements for the Grand Reunion in April 2003. Plans are well advanced based on the facilities available at Birmingham University. The aim, both of the committee and the local Area Chairmen and Branches, is to make the event accessible to all, both from the point of view of cost and convenience, particularly transport. I am sure that the suggested programme will maintain the high standards previously set in terms of interest and, above all, enjoyment for everyone.

You will recall that we discussed the problem of Lioness funding at the AGM. I have written a letter to all Life Members which is printed below. Please respond positively if you are able.

In the meantime have a good Summer and Autumn. I look forward to meeting many of you again at the Grand Reunion 2003.

Brig S P Nield
Vice President

Letter To All Life Members Of The Association

Dear Life Member,

Lioness funding has been a continuing worry for many years. Until 1992, each person serving in the WRAC contributed annually to our Association funds in a proportion that sheltered us from reality. Although subsequent piecemeal requests for voluntary donations from members were partially successful these have provided no long term solution against escalating production costs, postage and diminishing investment income.

At the AGM in 2001, a proposal from the floor suggested the decoupling of Lioness financing from subscription to the Association. That is that we pay quite separately for Lioness. I undertook to investigate this point and tasked our Executive Committee of Council to look at the whole subject of Lioness costs and funding.

Annual membership through branches is not the problem; the subscription is adjustable by vote at the AGM and presently pays its way with £4.00 being used for the Lioness and £1.00 being put into general funds. However, the Life Membership fund is diminishing. All life members who joined the Association over 20 years ago now receive their copies of the Lioness at a cost of £4.00 per year to the Association. Indeed, any Life Member who took out membership over 5 years ago is substantially subsidised and, with each passing year, the amount of subsidy from general funds will increase. As the number of Life Members now exceeds Annual Members, the scale of the problem, both now and in the future, is self-evident.

On the face of it therefore, there would appear to be a compelling case for decoupling the Lioness from the general subscription. However, I do not wish to do this because, when you became a Life member, you entered into a contract with the Association which included the provision of the Lioness and I feel it only right to honour that contract.

I am therefore asking all Life Members to make an annual donation of at least £4.00 to the general fund by completing the Standing Order Form which is enclosed with this Lioness. A Gift Aid Declaration form is also attached. If you are a UK Taxpayer, by completing this form **and returning it to WRAC Association HQ**, the Association will receive an extra 28p for every £1.00 that you donate.

I know you all value the Lioness. I am grateful to all those who have responded so readily to previous requests for additional funds in the past. I believe it is now necessary to arrange funding on a more regular basis to meet our commitments.

I am aware that some Life Members may find it difficult to make additional commitments. I confirm that all Life Members will continue to receive the Lioness whatever their decision. To those who are willing and able to help, I commend this scheme to you.

Brig S P Nield
Vice President

ATS Reminiscences

'Y' GROUP GARATS HAY

Mrs Paddy Pope (née Morgan) IW/247961

When war was declared I was 21 years of age, orphaned, and living with my elder sister in Dundee, where I had been born and bred, and from where I had not strayed far. I held a responsible job, classed as a 'reserved' occupation which meant that whilst my friends were called to the forces, one by one, I stood enviously by, confined to a civilian office.

Life was suddenly and violently changed. All windows were blacked out, clothes and food were rationed, fear and sadness pervaded as lists of casualties began to appear in the newspapers. Bombing started, the German pilots navigating along the shining river Tay to find the surrounding airfields. Sirens wailed and people fled to the air raid shelters or hurried on duty in the Home Guard and fire fighting posts. Being a seaport, Dundee was suddenly invaded by foreign sailors in strange uniforms – French, Polish, Belgian and Dutch. Submarines docked in the harbour. It was rumoured that the brave Polish sailors never brought back any prisoners from their operations. The horrors of war, the blitzing of London, the Battle of Britain were made bearable by the inspiring broadcasts of Winston Churchill, avidly listened to by every household. Times were bad.

In 1942 I was released from reserve and, after passing a medical examination, I was drafted into the ATS and sent to Dalkeith Barracks in Edinburgh for basic training – known as 'square bashing'. I was given a number, an ill-fitting uniform, allotted a bed in a large barrack room, vaccinated, inoculated, drilled and tested for ability. Everything was suddenly communal and I was a very raw recruit. But we were all in the same boat and soon made friends. Meals were eaten in a huge mess room, in the corner of which was a huge bucket wherein to scrape the leftover crumbs from one's plate. By the bucket stood a watchful officer and once, when I brought a half-eaten meal for disposal, this officer, clearly outraged, demanded to know 'Why have you not eaten this good food?' I pointed to a large snail on a lettuce leaf. 'You should be ashamed of wasting so much food' was the reprimand. Never again did I complain.

Finally, having been tamed and conditioned for life in the army we were each informed of our fate. I learned I had been chosen for the work of 'special wireless operator' but no one seemed to know what that entailed. So it was with some trepidation that I set off alone for New Brighton where I joined other members of a new squad. In the morning we were issued with tickets marked 'Reykjavik' which caused great consternation until we were told this was to 'fool the enemy' in case of an accident at sea and we were bound for the Isle of Man. I, who had never been far from home, thought this was an overseas posting! After a stormy crossing of the Irish Sea we disembarked looking strangely green and unsteady on our legs. We were billeted in a row of empty hotels along the seafront at Douglas. I was in 'Lancaster' and soon settled down to a course of training for our future task,

that of intercepting wireless communications from the German Army, thus providing vital information to the hallowed Bletchley Park, the secret headquarters of Intelligence. I was thrilled and eager and with the rest of the squad worked and studied with a will to complete the intensive training course set for us. The island was beautiful, set in an emerald sea and we had it all to ourselves – no tourists, no rationing, just the inhabitants and interned Germans and Italians and us. The Germans were hidden away inland and we never saw them but the Italians used to watch us from behind their wire fences as we marched along at 'attention' and with Latin gallantry they called out 'Hello pretty girl'. We dared not laugh or turn to look for we had been drilled to Guards standard by Sergeant Major Paddy Quee with such strictness that, if in the wind a hat blew into the sea, not a muscle moved. We had been trained to wait for the command 'at ease' before daring to show signs of life – or even death!

We spent the next months studying hard and when we passed our exams and were deemed ready I had the offer to stay on in the island as an instructor but, full of ambition to go 'on ops' and win the war single handed, I chose to move on. I was sent to the Y station at Garats Hay in Leicestershire to join the operators at Beaumanor on 'A' Watch'. Then I discovered the fascinating and exciting work of the interceptor. I am to this day grateful for the chance. We worked in eight hour shifts in huts (very draughty round the legs), each of us in front of a huge business-like wireless set, each with a prescribed task but not knowing the location or importance of our quarry. We sat in pairs, listening and taking down German messages sometimes through loud interference designed to thwart us. Our worksheets were collected throughout the shift and spirited along the channels of classification and urgency, eventually to reach Bletchley Park. We could only guess at the value of our work. Thanks to the capture of the famous Enigma machine we were well briefed for the approach of D Day. What excitement when we arrived on duty to be told 'this is it!'. And all happened as predicted as if by magic.

On occasions, one of us would be given the task of 'search', trolling the airways for signals of particular interest, and on such an order I had one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Searching round the dial I recognised a very urgent signal which I reported at once to my superior. Suddenly the room was charged with excitement. 'Hold that signal at all costs' I was instructed and so held on like grim death to enable it to be traced and, to my surprise, I was thanked heartily. When I returned to work the next day I was met by an anxious 'Can you find that station again, it has been lost'. I did have the good luck to find it and everyone seemed pleased and relieved. The result was a summons to the Colonel's Office to be thanked and congratulated on saving many lives. I had found Rommel's headquarters, just outside Paris! I walked on air for days but the frustrating thing was that, because of the vital necessity for secrecy, I was unable to tell anyone of my good luck.

Such was our dedication to our vows of secrecy that not even our families knew what we were doing and not one of us ever broke that vow.

I am an old lady now. Was I ever as slim and trim in my uniform as the PDF Compressor Free Version

I look back with pride on those historic times in Y Group which I would not have missed for anything in the world.

MY WAR YEARS – SPECIAL OPERATOR, B1 WAR OFFICE Y GROUP (WOYG)

Mrs Audrey J Ross (née Wright). Army No. W/138370

At the outbreak of the War in 1939, I was working at the Head Office of the Co-operative Insurance Society in Manchester. Six young ladies started there in 1936 and, working in the same Department, became great friends. In 1942, with our call up becoming imminent and our birthdays being in different months, four of us decided to volunteer together – hoping to stay together. At our medicals one – Gladys – did not pass. She was just getting over pneumonia. They deferred us all for a month, then called her for another medical. Again she did not pass, they would not defer the rest any longer, and so there were three!!!

Three little girls went up to Newbattle Abbey, Dalkeith, Scotland, for our 6 weeks square bashing, kitting out, dental inspections etc (my maiden name was Wright, and they always did things alphabetically. I moved on before they got to the Ws and I never did get my teeth inspected, there or anywhere else. A good thing they were good strong teeth!). We also had aptitude and intelligence tests, and we three found we had been selected for the same career – no one volunteered because it was so secret you did not know it existed, all were hand picked. We had to sign the Official Secrets Act and although it is now 59 years on and some of the secrecy lifted, I find I am still very loath to talk about it. We were posted down to Trowbridge, Wiltshire, to the Special Operators Training Battalion, 14 Squad, but only two little ATS girls found themselves on the train. Marjorie had been kept behind in a Holding Platoon, until the next intake squad at Trowbridge. Even though she was in a different squad, we were able to be together evenings and weekends. However, on leave in the middle of the course, Joyce, who had fallen out with her boy-friend before volunteering, made up with him, got a Special Licence, and married. She left and then there were two.

The course consisted of learning the Morse code, and increasing the speed at which you could take it. Writing it down in 5 letter groups and capitals. To Pass B3, if I remember right, you had to achieve 18 words per minute, 20-wpm running hand. For the B2, which I also passed while still at Trowbridge and had a running battle for over a year to get paid for, 20 wpm in capital letters and 24 in running hand, and for the B1, which I took later at Beaumanor, 24 wpm capital letters and 28 running hand. That was pushing it to the limit. We had to practice speed writing blocks, writing each letter without taking your pencil from the paper. Difficult on A's, B's, F's, G's etc, and as you were working a few letters behind the sound, if you lost the rhythm, you had to miss a few blocks

before you could pick it up again. Then there were Q codes to learn by heart. There were hundreds. Each one meaning a different instruction, so that stations could talk to one another using only 3 letters, Example – QSA – what is my signal strength? Reply QSA 2 QSV (quick send vics). The first one would then send a series of Vics (di di di da, di di di da) while the second one would tune in better. QTC – have you a message for me? QSU – revert to alternative frequency, and if you did not know it, woe betide you, you had lost your group. There was also German Procedure to learn and then the most dreaded Electricity and Magnetism. The work was all done by men up till then, and we had to take their exams. Of course, if they were out in the front line in India, Burma etc, they had to do their own running repairs. It was, and still is, a complete mystery to me. Ohm's Law etc and circuits, but I managed to pass it by learning it word for word, and as we had engineers on site to repair any faults, we were never called upon to put it into practice.

I finished my course first, passing both the B3 and B2 exams and was posted to Beaumanor, and billeted in a requisitioned house called Rose Cottage. I was with another three in the dining room, which had French windows onto the garden, and an open fireplace for which we were always scrounging coal in the winter, there being no other heating. Marjorie came down on the next intake, but was billeted at Garats Hay.

We were intercepting German traffic, a very wearying and nerve wracking job. Your designated group was usually to be found buried under loads of static, loud music and voices. If you were on a group long enough, you got to know his individual style and the rhythm of his sending. Recognising the tone of the morse key was a great help every midnight. They changed their call signs then, and if you recognised your operator with his new call sign, you noted it on your log pad, and the Intelligence Corps could then build up a table of predicted call signs, which lasted for a month, then it all started again.

There was one group, 408kcs, that I was regularly put on. Many groups all operating on the same frequency at the same time. Bedlam. It was covered by four sets, two across the aisle from the other two. You had no time to log the chit-chat between them, just pick out a C barred, da di da di da, (start of the message) from the jumble and, as you were writing, keep an eye on the three other sets, to see if their pencils were making the same strokes as yours. If so, you dropped it and picked up another C barred, and so on ad infinitum.

Not many people liked covering that frequency, but I did because you were kept busy. Night duty was the worst, Germans didn't like working at night, and you were forbidden to knit, read or write letters. You had to keep your hand on the dial, and sweep the frequency all night – for nothing. When VE Day came most of the ATS were posted away to different Army Units, but I and a few others were selected to stay and learn Japanese Morse, a very different kettle of fish!!! Seventy six letters or symbols instead of 26, and a completely new set of hundreds of Q codes to learn. We intercepted this from

Beaumanor, and I thought that it couldn't be very important if we could pick up the signals from half way around the world. I found out from the talks at the re-union weekends at Bedford that it was extremely important. The main cities of Japan communicating with their Foreign Embassies, and obtaining much vital information.

When VJ Day came, no let up for us. It was work as usual, as it had been on VE Day. But four of us decided enough was enough. We hitchhiked down to London, joined in all the celebrations in Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace etc and in the early hours of the morning were picked up by Troop Carriers and taken to Clapham South Tube Station where, deep below, we were given a bunk bed for the princely sum of 1 shilling. I still have the ticket. We hitched back the next day, but were immediately put on a charge, fined one day's pay and 3 days cleaning duties or 'fatigues' for missing one shift at Beaumanor. It was worth it and I still have the Charge Sheet, which I nicked from the notice board before they removed it.

The huts at Beaumanor were built in a rough semi-circle, with the village green and cricket pitch in the centre. Forbidden to use this village green as a short cut to the greenhouse disguised NAAFI, as it would never have done to have made a footpath right across the middle of the cricket pitch, we had to walk the long way round for our breaks. It was very eerie on night duty, with Red Caps and Alsation dogs looming up in the darkness. The huts were all camouflaged outside to represent a village, with barns, cottages, shops and even a cricket pavilion with a dummy clock tower on top. They are still there to this day, kitchens and bathrooms added, and bunk beds, chairs and tables installed. They are used for educational holidays for the schoolchildren of Leicestershire living, as we did in wartime, with rations, sand bag filling, stirrup pumps, gas masks, tin helmets, and of course learning about the Codes. The J is still there on my hut, and WOYG is still to be seen on a door of one of the troop carriers workshops.

The secrecy made us like family, we could only talk about the work to one another and it made us very close, which still persists to this day. Without us Bletchley Park would never have existed. Yet it is Bletchley Park which gets all the credit and publicity. We are now associate members of the Intelligence Corps because we worked closely with them.

Two different verses to finish...

Our dedication plaque at Beaumanor...

Dedicated to the men and women of the War Office Y Group, who served in these grounds during the years of 1941 to 1945. And beyond.

When the house doth sigh and weep
And the world is drowned in sleep
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep
Sweet spirit comfort me.

The dedication plaque at the National Memorial Arboretum reads:-

Dedicated to the Men and Women
Of
THE Y SERVICES.

Who maintain a constant
silent watch on the
enemies of their country.

Their past and continuing
contribution to Britain's operational
success in peace and war
can never be told in full.

This was on the 17th September 1998

A special branch of the Royal British Legion was formed for the Y services and given the Branch Number 007. We are invited to attend the lunches, held 4 times a year in London by the S E Region of the Intelligence Corps. Enigma re-unions are held over a long weekend every September at Bedford. There are talks, visits to Chicksands (our modern day equivalent) and to Bletchley Park, where there is a mock-up of a set room on the Cryptology Trail. We have been granted the Freedom of the Park, and put on a Roll of Honour.

I would not have missed a minute of it, and War Historians have stated that it shortened the war by at least two years.

Ack r Vic ack. Di da di da di da dit. Di di di da di da.

End of transmission

**MORE ON THE SWORD OF
LONDON FLASH**

Mrs M Gates (née Pierssene). Army No. W/17479.
13 Marmion Green, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 3DZ

I refer to the article on page 29 of Lioness No. 1 2002 regarding the Sword of London Flash.

I still have in my possession the swords I wore during the Second World War. Like Penny Riddy, I joined the ATS in 1938. I was a secretary working in Gracechurch Street, London. The firm I worked for allowed a recruitment officer to talk to the girls (I was then 21) and I decided there and then I would like to join and was asked to report to Finsbury Barracks.

The unit formed was "A" Coy, 1st City of London ATS, an all clerical company. We had a Guards' RSM to drill us and officer to instruct us and, as it was known that we would staff a military headquarters in the event of war, we had to learn the seniority of rank and regiments, and which department was responsible for the various aspects of military command from War Office to unit.

Call up papers arrived a week before war was declared (much to the amusement of the men in the office, none of whom had received theirs). We reported to HQ Eastern Command, Hounslow Barracks on 01 September and allotted billets. Next day, we were introduced to the various posts we would occupy. On 03 September 1939, on our arrival, we found only the Chief Clerk in the office, the lads had gone and the girls took over. All Heads of Departments were senior Red Tab officers.

All through the war we wore the red swords on our sleeves above the identifying bulldog of Eastern Command. Later, when the HQ moved out of London to Luton Hoo, the Camp Commandant was very put out that we were given permission to wear the swords in prior position.

PDF Compressor Free Version

I do not know how many City of London companies were formed. The first were not attached to any particular unit nor did any of the original members come from an ATS Training Centre. Girls who joined the HQ staff later did so, but they did not wear the red swords of the City of London.

I have not been lucky enough to meet or hear of any of the girls who worked with me or was at the HQ. Perhaps I may do should you decide this information is worth publishing.

.....AND MORE

Mrs V E Duckett (née "Flip" Phillips). Army No. W/1952
53 Shelley Road, Springfield, Chelmsford, CM2 6ES

In reply to the paragraph on Page 29 of Lioness No.1 2002.

I joined the ATS on 15 November 1938. At the time I worked in King William St House, London Bridge and I went with two other girls from the office to Finsbury Barracks to join the TA. The Regiment was the 11th City of London Yeomanry. We went each week after work for very basic training – drill, first aid etc. We went to TA Camp at Stiffkey in Norfolk and this was my first experience of being under canvas – an eye opener for an 18 year old from a sheltered background, but the men were always gentlemanly.

In September '39 I was on holiday in Bournemouth and received a call up telegram to report to Finsbury Barracks. This I did and, being a junior secretary, I was put in an office. We were billeted in various places – Haven Hotel, Tilbury Hotel and a school in Stanford-le-Hope. We were just three ATS, later five – two in the office, one cook, one orderly and one discharged as unfit.

We were granted the City of London flash in a notice dated 17 November 1939, which I still have. I wore the flash together with A A Command red flash (Key 1a) for the rest of my service.

I was discharged under para 11 in late 1944.

I have only one photo of myself with sleeve showing the flashes.

TRANSFER TO THE MILITARY POLICE

Mrs Amy Maund (née Kemp)

My service life started on 04 December 1942, having reached my 17th birthday the previous March. Typical of the teenagers at that time, I wanted to 'do my bit' for the war effort. Needless to say, my parents were not too happy but I finally persuaded my father to sign the necessary documents for me to join the ATS.

So, on 04 December I duly set off for Glen Parva Barracks at Leicester, never having been away from home on my own before. I met up with girls from all parts of the country and, with them, soon settled into Army life sharing a hut with twenty two others. We had bunk beds with what were referred to as 'biscuits' for mattresses, three square blocks, not very soft, which had to be anchored with the bottom sheet. If this wasn't done correctly they would come apart during the night – not very comfortable! Of course we soon got used to them.

We did our basic training at Glen Parva, drills etc and were kitted out with our uniforms. Everything was off-the-peg, so, as you can guess, lots of alterations were necessary. We must have looked a motley crew going in one side of the building in civilian clothes and coming out the other side in an assortment of ill-fitting uniform and civilian clothes. There were some funny ideas of what fitted; part of our issue were blue striped pyjamas. I was quite tall but, when it came to my turn, I was given the same size as someone about the same height as Pat 5' 3" – and hers fitted! Incidentally, she and I became very good friends. She came originally from London but now lives just outside King's Lynn and we have kept in touch over the past fifty plus years.

During our month of basic training we had interviews to decide what job we would eventually be allotted. I had joined with the idea of becoming a driver, only to discover after having committed myself to service, that I was too young. After various tests it was decided that I would be trained as a telegraphist attached to a Heavy Ack-Ack Battery. Pat was also selected for this and so, after our basic training, we were both sent to Arborfield, just outside London, to commence the second part of our training. Here we had another issue of kit so, having up until then worn my own civilian ones, I got my pyjamas changed. We were issued with trousers, battle dress, boots and gaiters, so we felt we were really in the Army. I was always getting into trouble because I couldn't keep my trousers tucked properly into my gaiters, the reason being that the trousers were not really long enough for me. At Glen Parva I had been provided with a hat that had a wavy brim and no matter what I did with it, pressing it, putting weights on it overnight, it just would not stay straight. I thought at the second kitting out I would be able to change it, but no such luck, I was stuck with it.

The training as a telephonist consisted of learning the Morse Code, both by lamp and key. I never really got the hang of it. We were shown how to take a field telephone to pieces and reassemble it. We were very proud to be able to do this but, when we eventually got to our gun-sites after training, we were absolutely forbidden to tamper in any way with the telephones! We had to call in the Royal Corps of Signals if we had any problems, so, a typical waste of time, that part of the course.

Whilst at Arborfield we were visited by Mary Churchill, the then Prime Minister's daughter. She was an officer in the ATS. This gave us a morale boost as, by then, we were all feeling rather homesick and, speaking for myself, wondering why I had volunteered. Being near London, Pat and I were able to have a couple of weekends at her home which was a very nice break for us.

Somehow I managed to get through my telephonist's course and Pat and I were eventually posted to 632 HAA Battery. The battery was made up of two sections. Our section went to Bude in Cornwall and the other half to Weybourne in Norfolk. These camps were practice firing camps, mainly for the men handling the guns and the girls who operated the range-finding equipment. There were eight of us telephonists, but we did not have a lot of work to do. We were at Bude for a month, during which time another girl and myself were sent to Portsmouth to relieve some ATS on a site where there had been several raids. Consequently they were in need of a rest. The Germans must have got word that we were there because in those two weeks we never had one alert! Then it was back again to Bude where the rest of the battery had completed their training.

Where to next? Well, typical of the Army we were sent to Helensburgh overlooking the Clyde, quite a journey. When we got there, all fired with enthusiasm, our training over at last and ready to really do something to help the war effort, it was to find that it was a non-operational site. In other words, to the outsider it looked like a normal site, but the guns were made of wood. Each day drill went on, normal routine as if we had real guns, but we knew differently. I celebrated, if you could call it that, my 18th birthday there. Remaining there a month we all felt rather fed up, it was March and the weather was so cold. Thankfully, the other girls I was with were a jolly crowd and kept our spirits up.

One day word went round that we were going overseas. No-one seemed to know where to but we had to have our photographs entered in our AB64s – the Army Service pass-book.

It finally transpired we WERE going overseas – but to Northern Ireland. Great secrecy surrounded our move; we were not allowed to write or 'phone home'. Although, thankfully, I was not aware of it at the time, there were German submarines operating in the sea between England and Ireland, hence the secrecy because a whole battery of service personnel were being transferred. So secret was it that the people of Helensburgh went to bed at night with us still at the camp, and got up in the morning to find we had gone. That was the theory at least. We were all lined up at the station in the early hours of the morning waiting to board the train for Stranraer when some bright spark in our group realised that it was April the first and we wondered if we were part of a hoax. Not so; after a very rough crossing when most of the girls, including myself, were sea-sick, we arrived at Larne. We finished up at a camp south of Belfast, an operational site, so some of our training was at last put to use. We were not far from Dundonald where the people made us very welcome and various activities were laid on for our off-duty times.

After a spell there our battery was then moved to McGilligan Point, the northernmost tip of Northern Ireland. The river Foyle separated us from the Irish Free State which was neutral. We on our side of the river had to maintain complete black-out while across the river from us was a blaze of light. I still had my horrible hat and one very windy night while walking through the camp it blew off. I thought – good – now I've lost it and can get a

replacement. No such luck. Someone found it and of course it had my name in it so I was still stuck with it, wavy brim and all.

While in Northern Ireland, I had a sudden urge to change my job and applied for the Military Police. I had to go before a selection board and when asked why I wanted to go into the MP, I said it was because my father was a policeman. They obviously considered this a reasonable answer so I was duly transferred to Belfast and did a month's probation which involved going out on patrol with a fully qualified policewoman, or Redcap as we were known. The life in the police was a complete contrast to Ack-Ack life. We were a unit of girls in a large requisitioned house in a very nice suburb of Belfast off the Antrim Road. I completed the probationary period and, in March 1944, was sent back to England to attend the CMP Provost course at Aycliff in Durham. There were about a dozen girls on the course, together with men. We were taught all kinds of things, traffic control, un-armed defence, how to immobilise vehicles, plus, of course, the inevitable paperwork! The course lasted a month and, if I remember rightly, all but two of the girls passed. The passing-out parade was hilarious. As you may know, a Redcap automatically became a Lance Corporal. We were also issued with different hats, stiff-peaked – hurrah! At last I got rid of my awful hat. They had a removable red top and we also had armbands with 'MP' on. Well, we girls went proudly on parade with our armbands, only for most of them to finish up on the ground – we had not yet learnt the trick of putting a bent pin in the armband and hooking it on to our stripe. I was posted back to Northern Ireland to start life as an MP and it was a very happy time. We were like one big family in that house.

Work in the Police was very varied; we were often sent out on detached duty, two of us for about a week or fortnight to another part of Northern Ireland where there were numerous ATS camps. We usually stayed with a civilian family and were welcomed into their homes as if we were part of the family. Larne was a favourite place of mine. We had to see that the girls arriving by boat got the right trains to their destinations. One of the highlights of my time in Belfast was when the King and Queen and the two Princesses visited. It was a long tiring day for us as we had to be on duty, but I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I was able to see the Royal Family quite close-up. Our final job about midnight was to check that all ATS personnel had got away to their various camps. The iron in our house was constantly in use because we always had to be immaculately turned out, more so that day. Some people thought we had special uniforms but our issue was exactly the same as others, we were constantly pressing uniforms and polishing shoes. We used to send our collars to the Chinese laundry so they were really stiff.

During my time in Belfast I met Ted, my husband. He had been busily chasing Rommel up and down the desert and when he arrived back in the UK he was sent to Belfast. He too was in the Military Police and so occasionally we managed to get special duties together. One such time was when General Alexander came over to Belfast. He attended a performance at the Opera House. After seeing him inside we had free time until he was due out again, so this was one of the occasions when we were able to combine work with pleasure.

The Spiritual side of our service life was not neglected. When in the Ack-Ack battery we were lucky to have a Christian as our Commanding Officer. He set aside part of one of the Nissan huts as a Chapel where we could go for private prayer. In the Police we had a Padre's assistant, a lady, Jesse Sampson. A lovely person, she came from Southern Ireland and her father was at one time the vicar of Bray – but I don't think he was the original one mentioned in song! Whilst in the ATS I was confirmed and Jesse took me for my first communion in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. Jesse and I corresponded although we met up only once since my leaving the services. One Easter, Jesse, two or three of the girls and myself went out and gathered masses of daffodils to decorate the Chapel in the barracks in Belfast. Ted and I always said it would have been nice to have had our wedding there but it would not have been practical, besides it was not licensed for weddings.

It was a time, on looking back, that had its bad moments but these were out-weighted by the comradeship and, being a teenager when I joined up, I think it helped me to grow up. I certainly have no regrets.

I am still in touch with some of the Provost 'girls'. One of them, Alma Jennings (née Taylor) appeared on Cilla Black's television programme some years ago resulting in several of the girls being traced, most of whom we met up with in Chesterfield in 1991 and again in 1994. Alma and I correspond regularly and in March 2001 we were able to attend the Provost Re-union in Colchester.

THE RELUCTANT RECRUIT

Enid M Holmes, 40 Sheperds Hill, Harold Wood,
Essex, RM3 0ND

During the war when Ernest Bevan, Minister of Labour, announced in the House of Commons that women born in certain years would have to register for war work and that single women would be conscripted into essential services, the women's Armed Services, Land Army or Munitions I don't recall giving it much thought. So when the registration for my age group came up I gave the Women's Services as my preference, confident it wouldn't apply to me as I was in a reserved occupation, or so I thought!

Several weeks elapsed but our family's concerns were elsewhere for the Japanese had invaded the Far East and my brother was stationed there. As the weeks passed, the news from that area got worse and worse and on 15 February it was announced that Singapore had fallen. A week or so later we received an official communication from the War Office stating my brother had been posted "missing".

Within the next few days a buff coloured envelope, summoning me to attend a medical at Edgware Health Centre, dropped through our letter box. On a Friday morning, realising what I thought would never happen was now a distinct possibility, I duly attended. On being passed A1, I was informed that I would be conscripted into the Women's Services, a prospect I faced with some dread, for I was shy with strangers, lacked confidence and was torn with doubts on so many things. How I envied those girls who seemed to have plenty of chat, especially

with the opposite sex.

A fortnight later another envelope arrived with my call-up papers, railway warrant etc instructing me to report to Glen Parva Barracks, Leicester on 27 March. I gained some notoriety at the office, being the first girl to be called up, and many girls who had never spoken to me before actually did so.

On a dull March morning off we set. I was miserable, knew I must not cry, although I felt like it, fearing to upset my father and aunt. On approaching the steps to the main line station, a strange sound greeted us and, on arrival at the top, we realised what it was. There were masses of people, mainly women, many of them in tears. It was quite horrendous, for girls in those days did not enjoy the freedoms of today. I boarded the train, found a seat and bid my family goodbye. After all these years I can still see their small figures on the platform smiling and waving.

We gradually began to relax and chat and the crying ceased. We were met at Leicester by ATS personnel and directed to waiting transport. On arrival we were directed to the cookhouse, having been issued with an enamel mug, one knife, one fork and a spoon. We were then ordered to a large hall for the completion of masses of forms. Hours later we arrived at our sleeping quarters, a long barrack room containing 26 two tier bunks for 52 girls. I found I'd been given a top bunk, with a Corporal underneath – not a happy prospect I felt.

Saturday dawned, you queued for everything, to wash, to go to the toilet etc. Ordered into line, we were marched to breakfast where every piece of food was slapped on to the same plate, the cooked items together with butter and jam. By the time you found somewhere to sit the butter and jam had joined together by floating in the eggs and bacon.

We were then marched along to the stores to be issued with our kit, two uniforms, one greatcoat, two pairs of shoes, four shirts, two ties and four sets of underclothes. The knickers – khaki of course – were the type worn by our grannies and were referred to as "passion killers", very voluminous with elastic around the waist and at the end of very long legs! We must have looked a sight, skirts had to be regulation length of 16 inches from the ground, so that when on parade, the skirt lengths were in a straight line, ignoring that the girls were all shapes, sizes and heights. The skirts needed to be altered and we had to wear overalls, again only one size and length, until they were finished.

Back in the hall we were informed we'd be receiving our inoculations that day and would be confined to barracks until Monday evening. Both arms were used for these injections which meant you sometimes could not raise them above your elbows causing much amusement.

Forty eight hours without anything to do. Nothing to read – how I wished I'd brought a book. The awful feeling of homesickness reared its ugly head. A radio continually blared out a favourite song of that time, "I never said thanks for the lovely weekend", which didn't help matters.

Monday afternoon was our first taste of drill. Assembled on the barrack square we could see, in the distance, the

Drill Sergeant Major with the usual ram rod back and cane in hand strutting across his precious square. Barking out commands accompanied by the usual expletives, there was a sudden break in the ranks as three girls unbelievably walked off. Calling us to a halt he marched purposefully at them and giving no explanation was politely informed that they were not going to be sworn at. He took their names and resumed his drill.

The next day another Sergeant, an ATS, appeared. The drilling re-commenced. So continued weeks of PT, drill, marching backwards, forwards, every way and which way, aptitude tests and interviews. Would we like to do ACK ACK? Certain jobs were not available to me for I was too short. Anyway they discovered I was a shorthand typist and that was that.

After the initial three weeks training we were due for 48 hours leave prior to receiving our postings. We were faced with the prospect of being separated from the friends we'd made in these last weeks and of forming others at our new postings.

Assembling in the large drill hall the following Monday, names began to be read out. The process took ages until you began to wonder whether your name was ever going to appear. It did – 151483 Holmes, E M – Strathpeffer. Wales, I thought. Wrong again! Scotland. We were instructed to take down the train times and when and where to change trains. I got as far as Inverness and gave up. On Tuesday morning we collected our sandwiches at breakfast, said our farewells and set off for the station. We tried to swing our kit bags on to our shoulders without success. It was to be a couple of years before we were issued with kit bags with handles and even then the handles were too short. You had to make your kit bag narrower in the middle in order for the handles to meet. We had no alternative but to drag our kit bags along complete with gas masks and tin hats.

The first train change was at Leeds. So began for me a magical journey. It was springtime, the green hills of Yorkshire, the fields with their stone walls and frolicking lambs delighted me. I'd never been north before. This was in the days before television and distance travelling being available to all, so such scenery was new to many of us. We were sitting opposite two Tommies who gallantly looked after us, grabbing cups of tea when the train stopped. Without them we would never have made the tea bar. It was now afternoon and we had eaten our sandwiches. The soldiers were to leave us before we got to our next stop, Glasgow. The lovely scenery continued and reaching Glasgow late in the evening it was still daylight. A lorry awaited the 20 of us, our first experience of trying to board it. With straight skirt and short legs like mine it needed a heave from someone on the vehicle and a push from the rear to enable me to clamber on.

We had had to change stations and were dropped off at the station for the Highlands. We settled down, sitting anywhere to await the train's arrival. We scrambled on and there were the usual drunks about, speaking what seemed to us a foreign language – Scots! Another stop was made at Inverness some hours later and a further wait for the train to Dingwall. The train was unheated and we snuggled together to try and keep warm. Leaving the

train at Dingwall it was now the early hours of Wednesday morning and it was snowing. There was a canteen – what heroines those women were. All these years later I can still recall the lovely warm Scottish voice. "Oh you poor wee lassies, you look so tired and cold".

So we were, but with her motherly care and bowls of soup we soon warmed up. It was a short journey from Dingwall to Strathpeffer and at 6.30 am, in snowy conditions, we dragged our kit bags up the station steps to the path to the Ben Wyvis Hotel where we were to report. We had finally arrived some 20 hours after setting off.

The Commandant of the Clerks School was appalled at the time we'd been travelling and at the lack of rations issued for our journey. We were ordered into breakfast and then informed we were to find our rooms and relax until lunchtime. We were famished and when we finally sat down with our plate of porridge and cooked breakfast, discovered the porridge was made the Scottish way, with salt. I've never eaten it since.

Four of us were to share a room in the attics of the hotel with wonderful views over the valley with the mountains in the distance, at that time covered with snow. It was now April with double summer time, a wartime regulation, it hardly ever got dark in the Highlands during our stay.

We were to undertake a course lasting 10 weeks working from 9 am to 7 pm with Saturday afternoons and Sundays free. We were formed into small squads and ordered to elect our own Squad Leader, all very democratic. Often you find there is one person who may be anxious to assume such a position. We had one, Daphne, she had visions of becoming an Officer, but I don't think she ever managed it.

Each squad marched to the various hotels for the lessons we were to have. After completion of the course you sat an exam, and, if successful, obtained tradeswoman's pay of one guinea a week.

Strathpeffer had at one time been a Spa. It was a lovely place situated midst beautiful scenery, I recall taking myself to task because I felt so miserable with homesickness as I gazed from the attic window watching the snow gradually disappearing from the mountains as the weeks went by.

It was a lovely spring with the Scottish cattle in their long shaggy coats staring at us as we wandered through the fields. Unusual for Scotland there was a drought during our stay. Our weekends were spent walking through the countryside and going into Dingwall, a pretty Highland village. There were the usual Saturday evening dances, with French Canadian and Norwegians who were employed logging in the nearby woods.

Shortly before the end of the course a group of us was informed we were to be posted to Chilwell, an Ordnance Depot outside Nottingham. How we were chosen we never knew. What a rude awakening. It was a huge place, like a town on its own. Discipline was harsh. The vast area was staffed by the military with some hundreds of civilians – not the happiest of environments, especially as they enjoyed many more privileges than we did.

Imagine our horror when we learned we were to go on another course of a few days to recognise various parts of engines, what the heck had we been on a Clerks' Course for? We decided to write to the CO at Strathpeffer acquainting her of our situation. We all signed the letter, subsequently we discovered if there are three signatures or more on a petition it is mutiny! Ignorance is Bliss!

We had a miserable time, having completed the short course of a few days, we had to do night work, copy typing and to endure the unkind comments of some of the civilians who seemed to think they were hard done by because they had to work with us.

My first long leave had been due in June but had been cancelled until later that year. However, I was allowed 48 hours leave in late June. It was apparent to my father and aunt that I was unhappy although I didn't mention it. I remember laughingly asking my aunt if she would hide me if I deserted and they sent the Military Police for me.

Returning to Chilwell on the Monday morning, four of us were informed we were to be sent to HQ Northern Command at York. Had the CO managed to pull strings – we never did find out. I was so worried, as were the others, that the powers that be might change their minds that I didn't write home until I was established at York.

Here we were billeted in requisitioned houses overlooking the Knavesmire (the race course) and so began for me one of the happiest periods of my life.....

RED FACES AS WELL AS RED HATS!

Mrs Betty Campbell (W/99278 McKay 1941-46)
1 Guthrie Place, Rhu, Argyll & Bute, G84 8RF

Watching the Tattoo last year, as I am sure many of you did, either at the event itself or on national television, I was reminded of when we used to perform our drill exercises on the castle esplanade periodically between 1942 and 1945.

Our billet (which is still there today) was directly below the castle and accommodated male RMPs on one side and we ATS on the other. PT was usually done in front of the billet, wearing flattering terracotta coloured T-shirts with V-neck, and brown shorts! I can still remember some of my comrades, Sgt M J Fox, Sgt Bodell, Cpl Cuthbert, LCpl Madge Low, LCpl Madge Bell, LCpl Margaret Earl, LCpl Betty Munro, Babs Beveridge and Frances Adams to mention but a few. Where are you all now!

I also remember very clearly the time when Princess Elizabeth joined the ATS as Second Subaltern. Perhaps it was around March time as it was a very windy day! She duly arrived at the castle, perhaps to see the wounded soldiers who were billeted there at the time. The ATS were given the honour of being the guard at the drawbridge, and as it was a breezy day, the order that chinstraps were to be worn was given. As we were all standing in place waiting for the big moment when the Princess would inspect us, an unexpected strong gust of

wind blew up and duly lifted the hats from several heads, mine included! Being the professionals that we were, nobody flickered an eyelid, but instead of them blowing off and falling to the ground, they took off one after the other rolling the full length of the esplanade! A soldier on duty finally caught up with them and returned them to their rightful heads! Yes faces were as red as the caps themselves that day. I cannot remember the outcome as it was considered an "act of God". No doubt we had a good giggle about it when we got together afterwards, but at the time it was no laughing matter.

I had many very happy days during my duty in Edinburgh, ones that I am sure my family and grandchildren are fed up hearing about. Even today, I still enjoy returning to the city to reminisce about all the times shared with friends in the ATS.

I am researching the history of Intelligence Corps Airborne Sections and the Intelligence Sections of all Parachute and Air Landing units. As part of my research I am trying to compile a list of all Intelligence Officers and personnel who served with an Airborne or Parachute Intelligence Section from the Second World War to the present day. During my research I have discovered that an ATS Officer was assigned as an Intelligence Officer at the Headquarters of the 1st Allied Airborne Army located at Sunninghill Park, Ascot in 1944 and 1945. This unfortunately is all the information I have. I would like to hear from anyone who may have any information as to the identity of this Officer or from anyone of any rank who may have served in the Intelligence Branch at this HQ or at Combined Operations Headquarters.

Thank you very much for your time and I would be very grateful for any information at all.

Sergeant Graeme Deeley
89 (Airborne) Military Intelligence Section
Goojerat Barracks
COLCHESTER
Essex CO2 7SW
or 01206 782827

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.

Poems

AN ODE TO AN ANGEL

PDF Compressor Free Version

Breaking blackout rules at night
In shining such a brilliant light,
Which glows like sunshine in the dark,
Is the halo of Miss Thelma Clarke

It can be seen from any height
It really is a dazzling sight,
It is a lighthouse for the ship
Who off her course should chance to slip.

The Pilots from it, bearings take
Instead of landing in a lake,
In fact, by all who drive at night,
It's termed as "Thelma's guiding light".

But alas! Tis finished now I fear
For battery shortage now is here,
And so this can no longer be
The guiding light of land and sea

And then one day to her surprise,
The government soon did realise,
And sent along to Thelma Clarke
A box of candles "Anti Dark"

This solved her problems for so long,
But now she sings the same old song,
That make all smokers ill at ease,
"Have you any matches please"

Signed GL

My name was Thelma Clarke. I am an ex-ATS "Y" girl who served with the Royal Signals in the Isle of Man where I trained to be an intercept operator. I met a sailor who was also training in another part of the island. He could dance like Fred Astaire and write humorous poetry. His name was George Lines or Lyons, I was never quite sure but I don't think he will object to me passing on this little bit of fun

Thelma Snyder, 7620 SE 114th Ln, Belleview,
FL 34420-4784



Royalty and the Army - a special exhibition at the National Army Museum

This Special Exhibition explores the historic relationship of the British Army with the British Royal Family. From the first formation of a standing army by Charles II in 1660 to the duties undertaken by soldiers on royal occasions today, the Exhibition traces the ties between the monarch and the military.

With the words "Now Boys! Now for the honour of England! Fire and behave brave and the French will run!" George II led his troops into battle in 1743. Members of the Royal Family have since sent gifts to thousands of soldiers on active service, made morale-boosting visits to battlefields, or, like Queen Elizabeth II, have served alongside servicemen and women in the Army. Soldiers on ceremonial duty have attended the Monarch at Coronations, State visits, Royal weddings, birthdays and funerals.

Exhibits range from early medals to a depiction of the first award ceremony for the Victoria Cross, and from a Christmas gift box sent by Princess Mary in 1914 to the vehicle chassis that Princess Elizabeth worked on as part of her ATS training. All are displayed to illustrate and celebrate the bonds that link soldiers with the Crown in this, the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee.

Reminiscences of the WRAC

WRAC – IT WAS AN ENJOYABLE LIFE!

Sue Foulkes (D. Saunders), 111 Newlands Whitfield,
Dover, Kent CT16 3ND

Unlike Margaret Rawles in her letter entitled “Not Such Happy Memories” in *Lioness* 2/2001 I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the WRAC. I enlisted in Brighton in December 1963. I was just 17½ years old, naïve and apprehensive but determined to change my life. Soon I was en-route for Hobbs Barracks, Lingfield, part of the last intake before Christmas. I had wanted to become a Military Policewoman but as I wear glasses I was turned down. I had taken a commercial course at school and so I became a clerk. I did six weeks training at Lingfield followed by 6 weeks clerks’ training at Yeovil.

I was then posted to Kingston Gate Camp, Richmond Park. I can remember our first meeting with our new RSM who impressed upon us the need to treat the deer, which roamed freely in the camp, with great respect and never walk between two stags as you might find out just how fast you can run! The camp consisted of old wooden huts and it was not unusual to be woken up at night by a loud rattling and banging from outside, a deer would be rubbing its head up and down the wooden slats of the building to rid itself of the velvet on its antlers. The camp was in a beautiful setting and we often went for walks in the Park. I was part of the last parade held there in 1964 before we were all transferred to Inglis Barracks at Mill Hill and our new, purpose built quarters.

In 1964 I became part of the Services Typing Pool in MOD Whitehall. I was one of seven typists – 3 WRAC, 2 WRNS and 2 WRAF plus a SNCO. We worked to a shift pattern and were expected to work all night whenever necessary typing reports, usually on to skins to be printed on the old Gestetner duplicating machines. We were all fast typists, accuracy was paramount and we worked as a team. I can remember walking round and round a large table, with Sgt Honeybone at the end furiously stapling the collated reports, we must have walked miles some nights but we kept going by singing the latest pop songs and drinking copious amounts of coffee. Whenever I hear “A Hard Day’s Night” by the Beatles, the memories come flooding back.

My other WRAC colleagues were Wilma Armstrong and Pat Heap (where are you now ladies?) and each day we travelled to work either by coach or on the underground depending on which shift we were on. Although we wore civvies to work we still had to conform, bright colours, mini skirts, stilettos, thick eye makeup and beehive hairstyles (all high fashion at the time) were frowned upon, we were expected to dress discreetly. Each day the SNCOs boarded the coach first followed by the rest of us. As we boarded, we were ‘inspected’ by the WO in Charge and any girl who was considered to be unsuitably dressed was sent back to her room to change.

Living and working in London in the 1960s was exciting. We were never short of something to do. We would go to the Nuffield Club off the Strand on a Saturday, have lunch

then check the noticeboard and hopefully pick up free tickets to a West End show. There were also dances held there every Saturday night but we had to leave early to catch the last train back to Mill Hill.

As we were based in London we were also called upon to carry out ceremonial duties and I was present, dressed in my No. 1 dress, at the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall, Sir Winston Churchill’s funeral (which was on a bitterly cold day in January), the Trooping of the Colour and the parade commemorating the centenary of the Battle of Waterloo.

At the end of 1965 I met my future husband, Reg, who had been posted to Mill Hill for his demob. We married just a few months later in March 1966 and I was discharged from the WRAC on marriage and moved to Birmingham to begin life as a civvy. My husband couldn’t settle and he re-enlisted into the Royal Engineers in 1968, the same year our daughter was born. We then spent many happy years both overseas and in the UK until he finally retired in 1985 and we settled in Kent.

We are both now retired and I enjoy reading my copy of the “*Lioness*” and I wonder how life has treated the girls who were part of my life nearly 40 years ago. So if anyone remembers LCpl Sue Saunders do drop me a line as I would love to hear from you.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A RECRUITER

Jeanne (Johnnie) Kick BEM (W/50802)

Having read the obituary column, to find that I am not there, I search avidly in the *Lioness* for names that I once knew – or even faces!

No one seems to mention RECRUITERS, and I feel that this must be attended to, having spent some twenty three years of my service in the WRAC attached to the Central London Recruiting Depot – service I might add with the same officer – Captain Toni Harrison, which may be a record!

Recruiters are a ‘queer breed’ – enlisted mostly on a Type ‘R’ Restricted engagement, but they were the most dedicated service personnel that I have ever met.

Maybe I was fortunate, because my father served with the Queens Own Oxford Hussars – and was in fact one of the Bearers of the Unknown Warrior in 1921. Mother served as a nurse, also in France, during WWI. Father then served with the War Graves Commission – thus I was born in Paris – and I can recall that most of us were called ‘Army Brats’ in those days. We came to England before the outbreak of WWII, and I joined the ATS as a Volunteer in 1941 and served as a Telephone Operator with No. 8 War Office Signals. I married, and was then discharged on the birth of my son. I re-enlisted in 1950 as a Permanent Staff Instructor with the City of London Bn WRAC/TA, then transferred to Recruiting Staff in 1954, and these ensuing years were the best years of my life.

Perhaps a little regret that my home life suffered a little, but having a military family helped (in fact when I checked, I found that we had a mere ninety five years service between us) I even enlisted my own son into the Scots Guards, and he served for twenty two years – so that made another Army man.

PDF Compressor Free Version

Since retirement in 1977 after some thirty years service, I have been so fortunate to have remained in touch with many ex-Recruiters, some of whom were members of the “Militaires” who were formed by Captain Harrison in an effort ‘to keep the Army in the public eye’ as it were. They were a terrific success – attending the RBL Festival of Remembrance, the Royal Hospital Chelsea, Old Age Pensioners Clubs in the Old Kent Road, and even appearing on ‘Opportunity Knocks’. Hard work at the time, but great fun and for us as Recruiters, a dedication to the job that we so enjoyed – interviewing recruits – duties at Careers Conventions – The Royal Tournament and Exhibitions – visits to units at home and abroad – never a dull moment, and yes, some of us could relate some well chosen stories about some of those potential recruits that “got away” but that is another story

.....

I wonder whether you remember the Recruiter that you met when you first went to enlist it may have been in London.

ATS REGISTER

Mrs Ellen Powis regrets that she has had to give up her connection with the Register because she is too ill to continue. In the absence of anyone else to take it on, the Register has been discontinued. At a final meeting of the committee, it was agreed to donate the funds of the Register to the WRAC Association.

WRAC SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE

Bottle Green Sweatshirts, Polo shirts and T-shirts embroidered with the WRAC badge

Sizes 36-46

Other colours available

Also
Knitted WRAC Dolls

Price list and further information from:

Miss B P Butcher
15 Westwood Drive
Swanpool
Lincoln
Tel: 01522 878413

WRAC STAFF BAND THE MARY NAOMI WALLACE MEMORIAL MEDAL THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF MUSICIANS

To all former Band members – did you receive one of these medals? The medal was first awarded in 1952 and the 50th anniversary of its award falls in October 2002.

A Golden Jubilee lunch to celebrate the 50th anniversary is to be held at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, Twickenham, Middlesex on Saturday 05 October 2002 for all recipients of the Medal. A representative of the Worshipful Company of Musicians will be attending as an official guest.

The cost will be £20.00 per person which includes a two course buffet lunch and coffee.

Admission is by ticket only. Guests are very welcome.

APPLICATION FORM

(Photocopies of this form are acceptable)

From:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone:

I wish to attend the Golden Jubilee Lunch at Kneller Hall on 5 October 2002 and

require Tickets (number of tickets).

I enclose a cheque for £.....
Made payable to the WRAC Association Band Branch.

Please send your application form to:

Mrs P J Smith
7 Grove Road South
Southsea, Hants
PO5 3QR
Tel: 02392 – 873259

Please enclose an SAE for tickets

Where Are You Now?

TIME TO RENEW OLD FRIENDSHIPS

Mrs Frances Munnally, 7139 Cherokee Road,
Richmond, VA 23225, USA

When the "Lioness" arrives at my home, usually in the middle of a busy day of cleaning, cooking and watching the grandchildren, I have a routine. I quickly scan its contents hoping to spy a familiar name or face. Later that night, over a cup of tea, I read the stories and letters that fill the "Lioness". They seem to come from every corner of the Kingdom. But my search for reminiscences written by old comrades is always in vain.

Whatever happened to the girls from "E" Company, at Gibraltar Barracks in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk? Our platoon was unique, perhaps, and different from other ATS units. Most of us were refugees who had escaped the Nazi terrors on the continent. Many of us had come to England as children, leaving behind parents, family, home and friends. Now grown, and in the Army, we were frightfully patriotic, ready to fight to the end. We dreamed of working on Anti-Aircraft guns, decoding secret messages, even returning to the Continent to work underground. The reality, of course, was far different. Because we were "Aliens", only domestic jobs were open to us. So, we worked in Cookhouse and Mess Hall, scrubbing, cleaning, cooking, and feeding thousands of troops.

We girls stuck together through thick and thin. Most of us stayed in Bury-St-Edmunds from 1942 until 1946. Friendships were formed that held promise of lasting for life. But at War's end and demob, we were literally scattered all over the globe. Some, whose parents had survived, joined them in the USA, Canada, Israel, even Hong Kong. Others, alone, and with no family help, scampered to find jobs and earn enough to support themselves. Everyday reality and struggles soon overshadowed promises made while caught up in the Army's camaraderie.

Now, 50 years later, with homes established, children grown, and life's struggles almost over, we ask: "Where are you?" Valerie, Eva, Mary, Pauline, Margaret and so many others with whom we shared the dark wartime years? If you are out there, please write to the "Lioness!"

ELSIE SWIFT

Miss I Burton, 40 Featherstone Drive, Glen Parva,
Leicester LE2 9RD

As some of you may have seen in the 2/2001 edition of the "Lioness", I had a letter published asking if any of you knew my Grandmother, my American Grandfather and the American presence in Leicester during the war. First of all, can I say a big thank you to everyone who responded? Your time writing to me was very much appreciated. My last letter only gave a description of my Grandmother, which probably wasn't much good, but since then I have found a photograph that may jog someone's memory. My Grandmother's name was Elsie Swift, and she enlisted in the ATS in 1941, aged 18. She



Elsie Swift

came from St Anns, Nottingham. She was based on the No. 8 Training and Holding Unit in Glen Parva, Leicester between 29 October 1943 and 5 April 1944. It is most likely that she met my Grandfather in the area in late 1943, to correlate with my mother's birth.

One thing that I have found out about my Grandfather was what he was wearing. A next-door neighbour of my Grandmother met him when he called round to the wrong house. She seems fairly sure he had a blue uniform (although enthusiasts have told me Canadians could not wear their uniforms off base, so maybe she got the colour wrong?) a "boat" hat on, and an award on his breast pocket; two stars on a "bar". Does anyone recognise my Grandmother? Did anyone serve in her unit during this time and remember going to any dances or helping the American Troops? Does the description of my Grandfather's clothing mean anything? And finally, my Grandfather called round to my Grandmother's home in Nottingham, so presumably she was on leave? Did the ATS go on leave regularly, including at Christmas?

If you can answer any of my questions, I would be most grateful. Thank you for your time.

MITTON HALL

Mrs Elizabeth M Roberts, Garden Flat, 26 Lannoweth
Road, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 3AB

I would like to find someone who was stationed at Mitton Hall, Mitton, Whalley, Lancs, Headquarters Training Regiment Royal Artillery during 1942. A small unit - I was a typist in those days and my name was Betty Sullivan.

YVONNE LAMERTON

Mrs Y M Harris, 622 Grenada Street, Papamoa,
New Zealand.

I would like to contact members who were with me in the
WRAC.

PDF Compressor Free Version

I was Yvonne Mary Lamerton. I enlisted in London 7
November 1950, Regt No. W/361645 – Trade: Cook. I
served in the following units: No. 8 CIC Wing Guildford,
6 Indep Coy RMOS in Wiltshire, ACC Training Wing,
Aldershot, Southern Command Mixed Signals Regt.

Discharged end of engagement 6 November 1954.

JOAN DOUGLAS (née WHITE)

Mrs Enid Latham (née Williams), 370 Burlington
Crescent, London, Ontario, N5Z 3H1

I have been trying to find a lady that I knew. She was in
Southern Command Signals, Salisbury. I cannot
remember the year – possibly 1944-45. Her maiden name
was Joan White and she came from Sunderland. Her
married name is Douglas.

I have attended two reunions, Crawley and Blackpool and
I have yet to meet anyone I was stationed with, but I send
my kindest regards to all my former colleagues.

RECRUIT TRAINING 1950

Mrs Madge D Evans (née Grundy), 15 Laburnum Grove,
Luton, Bedfordshire, LU3 2DW



I have just unearthed the enclosed photograph, taken
whilst doing basic training at Queen Elizabeth Camp,
Guildford, in October/November 1950. Of the ten
“rookies” pictured, I know the whereabouts of just one,
who is Kathleen Hughes (2nd from right, bottom row).
However most of the girls in our billet seem to have
signed it.

They are as follows: Betty Burns, Myrah Gaskell, Stevie
Howard, Barbara Hall, Betty Hickman, Lily Earnshaw,
Marian Graffham, Doreen Galloway, Sheila Hermitage,
Rennie Garnett, Nancy Hogan.

We were in Room 6, block 19; our platoon sergeant was
Ann Trodd, NCO's Cpl Pam Williams and LCpl Betty
Sloan, and we were in No. 3 Training Company, wearing
blue shoulder tabs. Our service numbers began W/369...,
(mine was W/369015 and Kathleen's W/369027). Apart
from Kathleen, who I see quite regularly I have never met
up with anyone who went through training with us. I
would love to hear from them. A high proportion of them
came from the North of England.

LAST WRAC PERSONNEL TO LEAVE GHQ EAST AFRICA

Mrs Hazel Roberts (W383132 Cpl Meads 1953 – 1959),
24A Priory Road, Wombridge, Telford, Shropshire,
TF2 6HU



I have enclosed a photo of the last WRAC personnel to
leave Nairobi, Kenya (GHQ East Africa) taken in June
1957. After the photo was taken, we travelled by train
from Nairobi to Mombassa. There we were piped aboard
the Troopship ‘Dunera’ by the RAF Regiment from Aden,
who were also aboard, relieved to be returning to Britain.
Some members of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry
were also on board. We were the first troopship to go
through the Suez Canal after the Suez crisis.

WRAC personnel in the photo are: Major Jacobs (Beedle),
SSgt Duckworth, WO1 Livestone, Sgt Betty Lewis, Cpl
Vera Hardwick, Cpl Hazel Meads, Cpl Shirley
Wiltshire, Pte Sheila Lansbury, Pte Paddy Gillespie. Also
stationed at GHQ East Africa were: Cpl Peggy Chilcott,
Cpl Joan Bebbington, Pte Imelda Markey.

I would be pleased to hear from any WRAC personnel
who might be on the photo, or who might remember me.

“EILEEN” FROM BELFAST

Mrs Josie Kelly (née Kennedy), 11 Sally Gardens,
The Bungalow, Newtown Abbey, Northern Ireland

I have been trying for some time to trace a friend of mine.
She worked as a stitcher and left work when she became
of age to join the ATS. I cannot remember her second
name but her first was “Eileen” and she lived with her
father in “Templemore Avenue” in Belfast.



PDF Compressor Free Version

I would be very grateful if you could help as I would love to see her again. I think she would be about 70 and have enclosed photographs that she sent me. After I got married we lost touch.

JEAN CLARKE (née PHEE)

Miss Mildred B Veal, 30 Milton Carr, Ridings Park,
York, YO30 5PU

W/134472 Sgt Vera Bartholemew (now Greenhalgh) and
W/51409 Sgt Mildred Veal are very eager to find
W/156974 LSgt Jean Phee now Clarke.

From address books we know that she served in the
following: 480 Battery, Chigwell Rise, London, No. 6
Formation College, Stourport (on a Commercial Course),
in 449 Battery, du Cane Road, Shepherd's Bush, 546
Battery, address unknown and possibly in 618 Battery,
again address unknown.

We would dearly love to find her and hope that one of
your readers will be able to help us.

WRAC ADEN VETERANS

Sheila Ashton, National Secretary, Aden Veterans
Association,

1 Tarn Close, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 0NN

I am trying to trace any member of 28 Independent
Company who served in Aden from 1962 onwards, to the
close down of Aden as a posting. I actually saw one of
them in the last edition; it was Betsy Clewlow who was
our PTL. In those days my name was Sheila Rea and I
worked on Barrack Hill.

As you can see there is now an Aden Veterans Association.
Although we have over 700 members, WRAC are very
thin on the ground, and I thought that it would be lovely
to try to find some of them as we have our annual AGM
and re-union dinner coming up in July. It would be lovely
to have some of them join our Association and attend
future re-unions.

BERYL "KAY" STAG

Winifred E Baker (W/129139), PO Box 403,
Middleton, Nova Scotia, Canada. BOS 1PO
e-mail winifred.baker@ns.sympatico.ca



As a new reader of 'Lioness' (February 2002), it was with
great pleasure that I read Mrs Jessie Stewart's letter
reminiscing about her days in 350 Bty HAA at
Wimbledon. It was also interesting to read in Mr C W
Acres' letter the information regarding the three double
barrelled 5.25 naval guns on the three sites, Primrose
Hill, Wimbledon and Cold Harbour. I served with 'C'
Troop, 350 Bty HAA at Cold Harbour from 1942 - 1945 as
a telespotter. Incidentally our gun barrels were named
Odin and Thor. It would be great to hear from anyone
who was at Cold Harbour at that time.

If anyone knows the whereabouts of Beryl Stag who
grew up in Knowle, Birmingham, I would appreciate
hearing from them. We attended the same elementary
school in Knowle, the same high school in Solihull,
worked in the offices of the same firm and joined the ATS
together in 1942. We were posted to different units after
basic training at Durham. She became a driver and I was
attached to HAA. After coming to Canada in 1946, busy
years followed bringing up 7 children and we lost touch.
We had such good times together and I would like to
know that life has been good to her.

LOOKING FOR JULIE MELVILLE

F C Robson, 11 Longmeadows, East Herrington,
SUNDERLAND, SR3 3RS E-mail
derek@robson1506.fsnet.co.uk

Enid and Robbie Robson would like to contact Julie
Melville. Julie was a Captain in the WRAC serving in HQ
Rhine Army circa 1952/53. They are almost certain that
Julie is now married.

Should anyone know of her whereabouts or her married
name, Enid and Robbie would be very pleased to hear
from you.

ARE YOU JOYCE ROBINSON?

Mr G Richards, 7 Briars Close, Long Lawford,
Rugby, CV23 9DW

My name is Gordon Richards. For several years I have been trying to find a woman in the ATS (then) Joyce Robinson. I met Joyce in late 1946 in Singapore when she was in the ATS posted to the RAPC at 11 CPO Command and we became friends when she joined the section on which I worked. I had been abroad for 3 years at that time and in November 1946 I was repatriated at short notice and we lost contact with each other. I would very much like to renew contact with her again to thank her for that friendship but I do not know her married name or where she lives. Can anyone help me please? Did anyone know Joyce in Singapore or perhaps have news of her now? I have tried several lines of enquiry without success and time is running out. I would be most grateful for any information either by phone 01788 551846 or by letter.

Thankyou.

DO YOU RECOGNISE YOURSELF IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH?

Mrs Marion Stewart (Army No. 121257), 57 John Street,
Cellardyke, Fife, KY10 3BA



L' Coy, RAPC, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow

This photograph was taken on Demob day in Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow where we used to drill before going to the office at RAPC, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.

There was no time to pin up addresses. I lived in St Vincent Street, Glasgow then.

Does anyone recognise any of the girls in the photograph?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Mrs Dot Phillipson, 5 Willaston Road, Moreton,
Wirral, CH46 6AP

As it is the Golden Jubilee of the Queen this year I wondered if these photographs may interest or recall memories for some of the members. They were taken at Peninsula Barracks, Warrington on the day that King

George VI died, when we were all assembled on the parade ground.

Peninsula Barracks was the home of the South Lancashire Regiment. The WRAC unit were 4 AA (M) Signals Group, and consisted mainly of Teleprinter Operators, Clerks, Cooks and Medical Staff.

If anyone out there remembers this occasion I would be pleased to hear from them.



SEEKING JOYCE BUTTERFIELD

Mrs Olive Wilson, 109 Kemball Street, Ipswich, IP4 5EA

Has anyone any information about the whereabouts of Joyce Butterfield. Olive Wilson (née Pittman) and Peggy Henley (née Purkis) would love to meet her again.

Peggy and I have made contact through another person trying to find Joyce but no luck so far. We were all girls together and we would love to hear from her again.

WERE YOU STATIONED AT 194 (M) HAA BTY

Mrs Lilian Boardman (née Vaughn) 17 Ashfields,
Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire TF2 6DT

I would love to hear from any of the girls who were with me at 194 (M) HAA Bty Slough. We were all such good friends, I was a Cook, and in the ATS from 1942 - 1946. My Army No. was W/258429

DO YOU REMEMBER JOAN SECKER?

Mrs Joan Zwicker, née Secker, 499 O'Connell Road,
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 4E1

Last summer, whilst on holiday in Canada, May Jackson of the Bexhill BDE Compressor Free Version of the IV PLDG's in Ontario.

As a result of their meeting, Mrs Zwicker has applied for her medals and joined the WRAC Association. She was attached to the RAOC Greenford, Essex from 1942 to 1945 when her name was Joan Secker.

Joan would like to hear from you, if you remember her, either directly or via May Jackson, 01424 844870

BAD OEYNHAUSEN 1951

Mrs V M Burch (W/339251 Sgt, Aug '46 – Jan '52),
Leigh Croft, Deighton Road, Wetherby, West Yorkshire,
LS22 7QF

This photograph of the WOs and NCOs Mess in HQ BAOR Bad Oeynhausen was taken by a Public Relations photographer in March 1951. I found it recently and thought it would be of interest. Included in the photograph are:

Sgt Val Crawford, WOII Reeves, SSgt Chris Hamilton,
Sgt Jean Viney, Sgt Hodgson, Sgt Amy Swinglehurst,
WO1 Alys Hildyard, Scottie WO1 Brearly, Sgt Sue Lloyd



LOOKING FOR A HAT

Mrs V Shaw, 21 Lime Avenue, Weaverham,
Northwich, Cheshire, KW8 3DF

I was in the ATS from beginning of January 1941 to the end of 1943. I was attached to the KSLI Regiment at Shrewsbury, I mislaid my ATS Cap and Glengary when I left, so I was wondering if any of you readers had a cap or Glengary they could sell me.

D COY RAOC CHILWELL

Mr W I Miller, 26 Wilton Crescent, Bishopdale,
Christchurch 8005, New Zealand

I have been for some time endeavouring to discover whether there is any organisation or group dedicated to the ATS, and more specifically those who served at RAOC Chilwell, particularly in 1945.

I was a serviceman in the RNZNVR in late June of that year, when I met a beautiful ATS girl from Chilwell RAOC Depot, Beeston, Notts. We were married in her hometown of Kirkcudbright, Scotland, she became my War Bride, and we set up home in New Zealand.

Our married life was happy, and we did consider ourselves lucky, but it was terminated in March 1999 by her death. A few months later I decided to write her life story, for our children and grandchildren do not understand. Since that time I have collected a great deal of information, and have begun what is only a small record, and I am still hunting for background material. It occurred to me recently that 'out there' are possibly survivors of D Company, RAOC Depot, Chilwell who knew her, and I should endeavour to reach out to them. They will, of course now be in their late 70s, or 80s, as am I, so time is running short.

WAYN SUCCESS

Mrs J Caines, The Old Cottage, 60 Main Street,
Willoughby Waterleys, Leicester, LE8 6UF



Ex-LCpl Marjorie Watson (left) Ex-Cpl Jean Wesson

We were stationed at 609 Coy RASC, Clifton, York in 1947, in which year we were demobbed. We made contact 52 years later through the "Lioness". I enclose a photograph taken in October 2001 at Pickering, North Yorks NYMR Wartime Weekend. I am on the right with my long lost friend Marjorie Powell (née Watson).

Gunners Corner

PHOTO CALL

Mrs M D Rogers 103 Lion House Park Mill Road
Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 2SE

Lance Corporal Margaret Rogers, Kine (Kine-theodolite Operator, Class 1), with the CAEE (Coastal and Anti-Aircraft Experimental Establishment), Royal Artillery, at Earls Croome Court, Worcs, in July 1943



Kine-theodolite with Kine



Evaluating Room

Application for Membership

To the General Secretary
The WRAC Association
AGC Centre Worthy Down
Winchester Hampshire
SO21 2RG

I wish to join the WRAC Association as a
Life 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 October.

Date Signature

Subscriptions include "LIONESSE"
(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.....

Reunions

SOUTHERN AREA REUNION

PDF Compressor Free Version

Salisbury Chairman, Alyson Ogden, welcomed members from Bath, Bristol, Bournemouth, Aldershot, Weymouth, Southampton and Portsmouth to the Annual Reunion which was hosted by Salisbury Branch. The reunion was held at the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill, by kind permission of the Commandant, Colonel D G Lyon.

Lunch and refreshments were taken in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, the use of which was granted by the Garrison RSM, WO1 S P Andrews. A nostalgic venue for some, but a new one for most.



Salisbury Chairman Alyson Ogden with Captain Colin Chadwick, Royal Artillery

After lunch Maj (Retd) Bill Clarke gave a brief history of the gunners at Larkhill, and Captain Colin Chadwick RA, explained the modern training of recruits. Sgt Lisa McKinney, Army Welfare Services at Larkhill, assisted with the day's activities.



Esther Pring, Weymouth Branch receives her Certificate of Appreciation from Area Chairman Lt Col (Retd) Val Trout

Area Chairman Lt Col (Retd) Val Trout presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Esther Pring of the Weymouth Branch. The raffle, organised by Thirza Sillick, had over 60 prizes, mostly donated by the businesses of Salisbury, and raised £268.00. Margaret Drew, Chairman of Bournemouth Branch, gave a vote of thanks for a most enjoyable day.

WRAC BAND BRANCH REUNION LUNCH AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, LONDON - 20 APRIL 2002

Jane Smith (former Sgt Stark PJ, WRAC Staff Band 1965-1969)

This was the third reunion since the formation of the Band Branch - the other two were in 1996 and 1998 - and was attended by forty-two former Band members and their guests, some of whom had travelled long distances to be there.

It was very pleasant to catch up with all the news of old friends and former Band members. We were particularly pleased to see all the former female Directors of Music, Jean Collyer (née MacDowall), Zara Bowness-Smith, Lynette Hopkin and Ena Forster plus Ethel Wilkie, one of the original members of the Band and the first female Band Sergeant Major.



Jane Smith, Lynette Hoskin and Ethel Wilkie

In addition, we were very pleased to welcome Maj (Retd) Dee McElligott, the WRAC Association General Secretary as our official guest and who gave us a very lively after-dinner speech.

"Tewy" Davis organised the raffle very efficiently as always, with the proceeds going to the Association and as in the past, the Victory Services Club provided an excellent lunch in congenial surroundings.

WRAC BAND REUNION...A FURTHER TALE
Mrs Anne Jones (née Hiscox), 97 Queensdale Crescent,
Knowle Park, Bristol, BS4 2TS



PDF Compressor Free Version

*Carol, Dorothy, Sheila, Mary, Betty, Jill and Ann
looking at the sights of London.*

The Band Reunion held at The Victory Services Club from 19 to 21 April 2002 in London was a huge success and we thoroughly enjoyed it.

Friday had us in the bar, of course, but up and in Hyde Park for a walk on Saturday morning. The lunch was very good and there was plenty of gossip. Seven of us then saw a show, walked back through Soho late at night, but no takers Ha! Ha!

On Sunday morning we were up up and away on the Millennium Wheel in glorious sunshine, so had a super view all round.

Home again tired but happy, we look forward to the next one.

A WONDERFUL FIRST PRIZE

Mrs Anne Jones (née Hiscox), 97 Queensdale Crescent,
Knowle Park, Bristol, BS4 2TS



*Betty Chadwick and Ann Hiscox with Sheila Elliott
and her husband*

At the Dinner Club meeting last October in Birmingham, I was lucky enough to win first prize.

It was for two days Bed and Breakfast at Sheila Elliott's Red Lion in Oakford, near Tiverton, Devon.

Betty Chadwick (née Clark) and I arrived on 26 March in glorious spring weather. We had an extremely enjoyable 2 days, eating too much, Sheila is an excellent cook, and taking wonderful walks on the front at Minehead too.

I would heartily recommend a visit to Sheila's establishment any time.

LONDON GROUP REUNION

SATURDAY 5 OCTOBER 2002

To be held at the Royal Greenjackets Drill Hall, London W1. Tickets must be shown at the door for entry. Names of all those attending must be sent to Eileen Carter in advance for security reasons.

The cost of a ticket for the day will be £18.00 per head, to include Morning Coffee, Lunch and Afternoon Tea.

All ticket money to be forwarded to Eileen Carter by 25 September 2002.

PROGRAMME

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 10:30 – 11:00 | ARRIVAL AND COFFEE |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | SPEAKER – MAJOR PETER HORSFALL
"HUMOUR IN THE ROYAL PALACES" |
| 12:10 – 12:30 | WRAC ASSOCIATION NEWS |
| 12:30 | BAR OPEN |
| 13:00 – 14:15 | LUNCH |
| 14:30 – 15:30 | SPEAKER – MAJOR COLIN BOWES-
CRICK
"GUNS AND ROSES" |
| 15:30 – 16:00 | RAFFLE |
| 16:00 – 16:30 | TEA AND BISCUITS – DEPARTURE |

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE DAY
IT IS LAID ON TO BE YOUR DAY TO ENJOY**



**WOMENS' ROYAL ARMY CORPS
WARRANT OFFICERS' AND SENIOR NON
COMMISSIONED OFFICERS'
REUNION DINNER - SATURDAY 29 MARCH
2003**

PDF Compressor Free Version

The next WRAC WOs' & SNCOs' reunion dinner will be held in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, Wilton Park, Beaconsfield on Saturday 29 March 2003.

The cost of the dinner will be £35 per head. Cheques should be made payable to Central Bank, HQ Beaconsfield Station.

If you are interested in attending, please return a cheque and the tear off slip, to WO2 (SQMS) K Baxter AGC(SPS), RAOWO, Defence School of Languages, Wilton Park, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, HP9 2RP by Friday 10 January 2003.

The Mess can seat a maximum of 60 personnel comfortably. Likewise, DSL has no transit accommodation and bedspaces are limited in the Sergeants' Mess. So if you wish to attend and require accommodation, please return your proforma soonest.

.....
From: Rank / Title _____

Surname: _____

Forename(s): _____

Address: _____

I wish to attend the WRAC WOs' & SNCOs' reunion dinner on Saturday 29 Mar 03.

I * require/* do not require accommodation on the evening of Saturday 29 Mar 03.

My cheque for £35 is enclosed.

Confirmation details will be sent out nearer the time.

* Delete as appropriate

Mil Telephone No: 94255 3260
Civ Telephone No: 01494 683260

Mil Fax No: 94255 3291
Civ Fax No: 01494 683291

**NORTHERN IRELAND WRAC
MEMORIAL DINNER**

On 31 March 1992 the Women's Royal Army Corps was dismissed from parade at Guildford after a short reorganisation. Only child of the ATS and much beloved mother of the AGC she is still sadly missed. To the end she retained her dignity and remained ever Gentle in Manner and Resolute in Deed.

So read the announcement inviting former members of the WRAC who were still serving to a memorial dinner in the Headquarters Northern Ireland Officers' Mess in Lisburn.



WO2 Lyn Moldrik, WO2 Shirley Barrett, WO2 Carol Matten and Sgt Jackie Garnett have an impromptu dental inspection.

On 25 April 2002, 20 ladies gathered at Thiepval Barracks to mourn the passing of our beloved Corps. Originally the plan had been for us to wear any item of WRAC uniform but, after many frantic phone calls, it transpired that all most people had left was their PT clothing. Eventually we decided that modesty should prevail and evening wear should be the dress code. What is it about PT clothing that makes it so durable, the green interlock knickers have lasted long after our waistlines have gone! Maj Kate Broomfield and Maj Lindsay Gowland showed up in their WRAC Mess Kit in a fitting (or should that be fitted?) tribute to Hilliers the Corps Couturiers.

We were a mixed bunch from LCpl to Maj, from 28 years old to "28 and 150 months", now serving with the AGC, Int Corps and RLC. Many ladies had left and re-enlisted and as well as showing pictures of recruit pass outs at Guildford, there were one or two baby photos being passed around too.

The WRAC Association kindly lent us the Association Standard and this festooned the room along with statuettes of servicewomen purloined from the RMP Mess.

The dinner started with a reading of the Corps Collect and then we tucked into a menu which included a starter of "Mushrooms Lioness", "Chicken Richmond Hill" and followed by "Guildford Mousse" topped off with a chocolate capbadge. We had planned cocktails in Corps colours, but decided that might be a bit too much so stuck to red and white wine. Sgt Tracy McDermott was Madam Vice and the

music was kindly supplied by WO2 Kay Hart who brought her WRAC Band LP out of retirement. The cheers and spoon hammering which accompanied the Lass of Richmond Hill were quite deafening.

We caroused in the mess with the old WOs by one or two male officers who were intrigued by the thought of an all female get together and kept peeking round the door to find out what we were up to.

Unsurprisingly we were drinking and chatting – what they thought they might find I have no idea. The night ended (or the following day started) in the WOs' and Sgts' Mess and the "old and bold" were all rather quiet the next day! It was a wonderful evening in tribute to our much beloved Corps and we are already planning another one for 2012!

Wedding

DIAMOND WEDDING SAVAGE – RITCHIE

Present Address: 33 Brebner Terrace, Aberdeen AB16 7HN



Then and Now

On 20 July at Leomagow Parish Church, Lanarkshire. L/Bdr Peter Savage, 538 (M) HAA Battery to L/Cpl Jane Ritchie ATS, 538 (M) HAA Battery.

Peter was transferred after we were married and posted to Palestine with the Gordon Highlanders.



Letters to the Editor

MEMORIAL TO THE WOMEN OF WORLD WAR II

Dear Editor

Having attended the AGM on April 6th, and heard Brigadier Nield explain why the Association cannot influence the format of the above Memorial, I am at a loss to understand why Colchester Branch have requested all branches to voice their opinion on it.

I understand that this enquiry does not have the backing of the Association, and I shall certainly not express an opinion.

However, (and this is my personal feeling) I think *all* women of WW2 deserve a memorial, I was a servicewoman in the early years of the war, and a wife and mother at the end. I know which role I found more difficult, lonelier and more stressful – yes, it was the latter.

Let us settle for the Memorial Window in Guildford Cathedral, and the proposed memorial at the National Arboretum.

Mrs Betty Mitchell, 50 Revell Park Road,
Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4E

Dear Editor

The proposed “clothes rack” statue as the Memorial to the Women of World War II is an insult. To upgrade the cost by £520,000 for structural work to the road in Whitehall is outrageous.

We already have £120,000 out of the original £180,000 and I propose the “cash in hand” be better spent on a living memorial of trees planted in the National Arboretum near Lichfield Staffs with, perhaps, a small plaque in Westminster Abbey that can be dedicated in a special Service while we, who served, can still attend.

Mrs W M Stinson, 5 Evans Gardens, Lodge Hill
Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6NQ

Dear Editor

Re – this memorial may I say in all sincerity I do not and will never belittle the women and girls who worked in factories and munitions, or civilian nurses. BUT – to put civilians before the armed forces is to say the least, the biggest and the worst insult that has ever been – 99% of the girls who served in the Army, Navy and Air Force were all volunteers. They chose to serve King and Country, not work in mills, factories, munitions or the Land Army. Many of these girls paid the supreme sacrifice, as did some of the military nurses of all three services, many being lost at sea or taken prisoner in Singapore and the Far East.

The Committee of this memorial fiasco appears to have no idea of Military expertise, also why is there no representative from one of the services on this so called Memorial Committee, no later than December 18th 2001.

I received a letter from Major (Retd) D M Robertson stating the cost of the monstrosity had risen from £300,000 to £500,000, now in a letter (a duplicate) he states the price is now £700,000. I'm afraid that I, like hundreds of other Ex-Service girls, wonder how prices can rise in such a short period of time.

I'm sure HM Queen Elizabeth would prefer to see Forces in Whitehall – not a second hand shop. Perhaps a word in someone's ear, if the charity wallahs want a civilian memorial somewhere else, Whitehall is for the Army, Navy and Air Force – Men and Girls.

If Major Robertson is so keen to put up his chosen monstrosity, put it up in his back yard.

I would like to suggest that Col The Lady Martha Bruce OBE TD DL and Lt Col Mary Soames OBE who both served during WWII would be ideal and constructive members of such a Committee.

I am as ever a loyal and (at this moment) a very angry and insulted old ex-ATS girl.

Bunty (Beattie) Jones, Caerlee House,
5/1 King Street, Warrawong, NSW 2502

MEMORIAL PANEL, ST MARTIN'S CHURCH, LISKEARD

Dear Editor

In St Martin's Church at Liskeard in Cornwall there is a war memorial in the form of a carved, coloured panel. On the left-hand side are illustrations representing the armed services including WRNS, ATS & WAAF. On the right hand side are a fireman, nurse, housewife, Red-Cross volunteer and a Land Girl. Of the eleven figures, seven are women!

The memorial which was dedicated in 1949 was instigated by the then vicar of Liskeard.

Iris Fenn, 27 Cleveland Court, Grosvenor Place, Exeter, EX1 2HJ

Dear Editor

I cannot help but write to the "Lioness" to show my dismay at the memorial incorporating all women of World War II in the grounds of Whitehall, as there are other appropriate places.

I have just returned from a visit to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, in the grounds of which is a fine memorial to Australian servicewomen, and I feel that we who served in the British Forces deserve no less than to stand alongside the men who served, and claim a place in Whitehall.

I suppose this has become an issue for me as it is obvious the number of servicewomen from the Second World War is diminishing each year, and in another twenty years there will not be the same feeling of what it was like to be part of those Service groups. If we who were in the forces do not take issue now it will be too late.

The British hybrid memorial to all women I am sure is deserving of a place, but I do not think that place is Whitehall. The women's memorial in Whitehall should be to servicewomen.

Mary Webb, 213 St Luke's Village, Dapto, NSW 2530, Australia

Dear Editor

I recently attended the unveiling of a memorial plaque in the Mander Centre, Wolverhampton. This plaque is a tribute to all the women of Wolverhampton who did so much for their city and were, until now, never recognised. I had been trying since the 70s to track down details of women who made sacrifices during the war as I could not understand why there had never been any recognition of women's efforts. Despite several setbacks, I was eventually successful due to a bit of "networking".

I happened to be at a coffee morning, attended by one of our local councillors and mentioned this sad state of affairs to her. She was only too pleased to help - her own mother worked in a munitions factory during the war. She agreed that the countless women who drove buses, trains and ambulances, or who worked in factories all deserved proper thanks. I myself served in the ATS with 93rd Searchlight Regt RA.

So if you are ever in Wolverhampton take a look at the plaque and spare a thought for all the women who kept the country's infrastructure going through those dark and dangerous times.

Mary Beeston, 77 Campion House, Heath Town, Wolverhampton, WV10 0PX



The Mayor of Wolverhampton with (l to r) Mary Beeston, Mary Hodgson and Pauline Jones at the unveiling of the memorial plaque to the women of WWII.

Dear Editor

In the No.1 Issue of "Lioness 2002" is a letter from the Shropshire ladies who thought that the date on the board outside Hut 8, Eden Camp was not the correct one. The board was displayed in Bury Town Centre for six months commemorating the Sixtieth Birthday of the ATS and is therefore the correct date.

Some towns had a floral display, we in Bury had the board beautifully painted by a specialist signwriter. After the display it was presented to Eden Camp.

L Cropper, 4 Pleasant Street, Walshaw, Bury, Lancs.

Dear Editor

Just before Christmas I visited the Royal British Legion Club at Hayling Island and was pleasantly surprised to see a memorial plaque "In Grateful Memory to all Women of Great Britain".

I enclose a copy of the photograph as I thought this might be of interest. The Secretary of the Club was very helpful when I asked permission to take photographs, and was happy for me to pass them on.

I have sent a copy to Miss M B Veal in York, who has been in touch with the Southampton Branch WRAC, about the National Memorial to Women.

Mrs Y J T Kingdon, 123 Cranbury Road, Eastleigh, Hants, SO50 5HH

Dear Editor

It was lovely to see the photograph of Major Christy, Capt Gildea and dogs in the "Lioness 1/2002". Capt Gildea was WRAC School of Instruction, Hindhead and her poodle was called Leo. I don't think the dog, Major Christy was holding, actually belonged to her. She had a dear little whippet, named 'Frither'.

Seeing that photograph brought back so many happy memories for me. I served as Major Christy's Batwoman for 2 years (1952-1954). We had four Majors to look after in Hut 16. I worked with a girl called Val Valentine. The officers were lovely ladies and we enjoyed looking after them. We made sure their uniforms, shoes etc were always kept to a very high standard – they were always very smartly turned out. They nearly all had dogs. Major Passingham had a long haired sausage type dog. He was a right little monster. Trying to get him out from under the bed, and taking him along to her office, was pure hell. I lost count of the number of times he bit my ankles and tore my stockings. Val and I used to try and push him out with a broom. He knew we were frightened of him and oh boy how he played us up. The dog in the photograph, with Major Christy, could well be RSM Hadley's dog, Bruce. He was a character and a half, always on the prowl. He seemed to think that all the 'bitches' on camp belonged in his harem. The Officers used to go mad but it was nightmare trying to make sure that all the doors were kept shut to keep him out. He only needed the merest opportunity and he would be in. The result another litter of little Bruce's. Poor Miss Hadley she did her darndest to keep Bruce under lock and key but he always seemed to find a way to escape. Despite his antics he was a lovely dog and a great favourite at Huron Camp. Hindhead was a lovely posting, such a pretty part of the country. So many opportunities to walk and explore. My time spent there was very happy and very enjoyable. I loved the job that I did and I made many friends. I am still in contact with them today. I am very proud that I was a member of the WRAC.

Mrs Betty Freak, 10 Tamar Street, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4E

WRAC SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION 1963

Were you Commissioned (Regular or Short Service) from Hindhead in 1963?

A 40th Anniversary reunion is being planned for 2003. For further information write, enclosing an SAE or E-mail address to:

Joanna Finlay
c/o Headquarters, WRAC Association
AGC Centre
Worthy Down
WINCHESTER SO21 2RG

COLONEL NAOMI CHRISTY'S COMPANION REVEALED

Dear Editor

That is Junior Commander Gildea (the Messing Office at Huron Camp, Hindhead in 1949-50) and her adorable white poodle, Leo with Miss Christy on Page 21 of Lioness 01/2002. I think she was Scottish and she drove a racy open topped red sports car.

I was a Clerk S/T in Officers' Wing and Miss Gildea let Leo sit on my feet when she went to give her lectures! A lovely happy lady as I recall. I moved across to the QARANC later that year and sadly I never met her again.

Mrs Daphne Neech, 58 Cathwait, Paston, Peterborough, Cambs PE4 7BE

Dear Editor

I was most interested to read Penny Riddy's article about the sword of the City of London. In 1956 I joined the 326 City of London Battalion WRAC/TA at Finsbury Barracks, Moorgate. We too wore the City sword flash – although it was sometimes difficult to sew it on straight. Occasionally someone would sew it on upside down!

Apart from Battalion HQ and A Company at Finsbury, we had other companies at Harrow, Tottenham, etc. Our CO was Lady Bowyer Smythe.

Before the war I attended the City of London Day Continuation School in Golden Lane. Once a year the school was invited to the Guildhall where the Lord Mayor of London distributed awards to our prize winners.

Miss May E Moody, Trevothen Farm, Coverack, Cornwall, TR12 6SD

EX-SERVICE HOMES REFERRAL AGENCY (ESHRA)

ESHRA is a new agency that has been funded for a trial period by several ex-Service charities. Due to its success it is to continue as part of The Royal British Legion. The service is provided for older people who served in the armed forces and their dependants.

ESHRA has details of all Care Homes providing residential and nursing care and independent living accommodation managed by ex-Service organisations. Also available are details of homes run by private and voluntary organisations as well as sheltered accommodation, if this is more appropriate for the needs of the individual.

The advisers can provide guidance regarding Social Services assessments/funding; welfare benefits, Service charities and other organisations that provide help for the elderly.

ESHRA has a website: www.eshra.com, e-mail: eshra@britishlegion.org.uk and a telephone helpline: 020 7839 4466 which is staffed from 9.30am to 12.30pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm on working days.

Dear Editor

Having been forced through ill health to finally abandon any hope of attending future meetings at the age of 86 years, I would like to make an appeal to the members of the Wimbledon Branch.

I was a Founder Member of the branch in 1946 when we opened with a membership of around 50 – rising to around 100 within two years. Sadly, the membership has withered away. Despite having 70 still on the books, only around 20 turn up for our Monthly meetings. Age and disability have taken their toll, BUT the hard working Officers of the branch deserve better support than this and will have to have it if the branch is to remain viable. So come on girls, rally round and swell the pitiful numbers attending at present.

I joined the ATS in 1941 and, after a short spell at Aldermaston for training, was posted to Hants Divisional Group A with ATS Record Office in Winchester. With the arrival of the American Forces later that year, the Records Office had to move to King Alfred's College Winchester where I remained until I left the service in 1945.

In 1946 together with two other members, since passed on, we formed the Wimbledon Branch, our first President being Dame Mary Railton OBE whose reputation was well known throughout the ATS.

Having already related the Ups and Downs of the branch, I conclude with a brief resume of various functions I have had the honour to attend:

The Golden Jubilee Reception at the State Rooms, St James Palace in 1969 where I had the pleasure of meeting the late Queen Mother, Queen Elizabeth.

Various functions and celebrations at Westminster Abbey, St Pauls Cathedral, Guildford Cathedral over the years.

The VE Day celebrations at St Pauls Cathedral in 1995 in the presence of both Her Majesty the Queen and the Queen Mother.

Finally, what I consider the highlight, being presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for services to the Association at Guildford University at that years AGM. This coincided with our Diamond Wedding Anniversary, which was attended by a number of branch members as well as family and friends.

Although physically support is no longer possible, morally, I look forward to supporting the branch to my Diamond Jubilee in that sphere also.

Mrs Grace B Mathers, 1 Hutchins Way, Horley, Surrey, RH6 8JN

Dear Editor

Calling all ex-members of the 93rd Search Light Regiment.

The Imperial War Museum have accepted accounts of our unique regiment, safe for all time in the archive. Subaltern Pat Baxter (Mrs Longland) tried for many years to have our regiment recognised; to no avail. Sadly she is no longer with us.

Are there any members out there from my Detachment based in The United Dairies Sports Pavilion Streatham, 495 Search Light Battery, 93rd Search Light Regiment. I would love to hear from them. I was Sgt Maj Micky Hutton

Mrs M Storie, 6 Pheppie Road, Muchalls, Stonehaven, Grampian AB39 3XU

Dear Editor

The "Lioness No. 1 2002" is the best ever yet. After some 56 years I have a contact who actually served in the same place, but I do not think at the same time!

There is an article on Cloth Badges (page 25). I have a small collection. Is there a 'Collector' out there who would like them? I am sure my poor daughter will throw them away when she has to clean up after my death! (I am 81 and in good health).

I joined the TA in 1938 (W/768) and attended a very WET camp at Otterpool, Near Lyme/Hythe Kent in the summer of 1938. We had to fill our mattress bags (pillowcases) with straw to sleep on! We had round Bell Tents. It was very muddy and cold. I worked in the Camp Commandants Office "sorting" attestation papers with The Royal West Kents.

I cannot get to meetings as Hereford is too far. I have plenty to do, "voluntary" car driving for local TOC H "Thumb a Lift", also WI and British Legion. I have settled in my new home near my daughter after the death of my husband at 97! He did 25 years in the Royal Signals. I was a "signaller" and that was how we met. He joined up the year I was born!

The London Corps Signals have a Memorial at the National Arboretum. Robbie was to have planted the tree, but he wasn't well enough, so they had our son do it, a great honour for him.

My first job on call-up was Teleprinting Enigma Code from a D/E station outside Rochester to No. 4 Intelligence School! We did not realise the importance of the work.

Mrs J R Robins MBE, (née MacKay), 1 Cross Street, Tenbury Wells, WR15 8EL

Dear Editor

I am writing to you to say I have visited the "Arboretum" twice and seen its progress over the 2 years. My last visit was on 1st July 2002. It was pouring with rain and everywhere was a mud puddle. The men were advised to take Wellington Boots, and some of the ladies stayed on the coach, as it was so wet.

The weather was so bad they had not finished planting all the trees and bushes in the grounds, but the Restaurant and the Chapel were finished.

My next visit was on 1st February 2002 and I was very pleased to see how things had materialised. Each plot has a low hedge round it with the Memorial stone in the centre; I have enclosed a photo of myself standing by it.

My husband is in the RAF Regiment so we go to quite a few different places. We went to find the Regiment Memorial and were surprised to see the ATS one alongside.

We are going again in July for a Memorial Service and are looking forward to seeing how much further it has been developed, and will take some more photographs.



Mrs Jean Stout - (formerly W/23/879 Pte Nott) beside the memorial to ATS/Ack-Ack at the Arboretum.

Mrs Jean D Stout, 16 Penrith Road, Harold Hill, Romford, Essex, RM3 9NS

WRAC OFFICERS' DINNER CLUB

The next dinner will take place on
Saturday 02 November 2002
at the Army and Navy Club, London.

If you have not received a letter with all the details and wish to attend, please contact
Lt. Col. V.E. Trout, 01980 623692.

Dear Editor

This morning I received my copy of the 'Lioness' and am so pleased after all the years to find out who wrote the poem re the Monstrous 93rd. Yes I still have my booklet, rather worse for wear I'm afraid. One of my sons, when he was small, decided to "decorate" it, with a coloured pencil.

I wonder if any of the girls in 342 Bty, 93rd Searchlight Regt remember being taken by train from Watford to Hever Castle, the home of Lady Astor, it turned out to be quite a day out, it was in May 1945. I still have the group photograph (one of those where you sit in a semi-circle and the cameraman pans round, at least no one did the dash from one end to the other).

Regarding the Arboretum, I visited it last year as a member of the War Widows Association. After the dedication of our Rose Garden I went to find the "plot" dedicated to the ATS who served in the RA, a very gallant gentleman escorted me, took the enclosed photograph and then made my day by saying I didn't look old enough to have served during the war.

Perhaps someone somewhere will recognise the girls in the photograph.

Mrs M Cheeseright (née Lindsay), Army No. W/53421,
5 Pen Tir, Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno, North Wales, LL30 3RH



The ATS Ack Ack Memorial Plot.

INFORMATION PLEASE

Dear Editor

As a mere **PDF Compressor Free Version** contributor to the columns but as the historical archivist for the former 'Experimental Establishment' at Shoeburyness (now known as 'QinetiQ' – pronounced 'Kinetic!'), I wonder if any reader can solve the mystery depicted in the accompanying archive photograph – what is the significance of the two vertical bars on the upper arm of the Experimental Assistant in Gunnery (EAG)?



EAG's at Shoeburyness

The first reaction may be that they depict the rank but another photo includes a Sergeant wearing her strips on her jacket and who in addition sports three bars. I suppose it is just possible that it was a case of 'belt and braces' but this seems unlikely. Another answer might be that the bars denote Trade proficiency but as far as I am aware a Sergeant would have been the higher Class 1. In fact I am not sure that the Sergeant in question was an EAG as she is accompanied by four girls handling 25pr shell prior to firing proof and is presumably the gun No. 1.

There are no dates on these photos, the only clue being that they were taken by the London staff of the 'New York Times' whose stamp also appears on some dozen others – obviously one of the many PR exercises undertaken at Shoeburyness during the war. Help please!

Maj (Retd) A S Hill, Pannels, Roman's Farm Chase, Mill Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8PZ

Dear Editor

I am writing to inform you that I have a website about my experiences in the ATS.

The name of the website is "Memoirs of an Ack-Ack Girl" and can be found at <http://members.aol.com/gmclly>.

I hope this will encourage others to create their own websites so that the history of the ATS will endure.

Mrs Grace M Culley (formerly W/303687 Pte Daly), 6 Library Lane, Gales Ferry, CT 06335, USA

Dear Editor

I am writing a thesis for a Master's degree at Oxford University concerning British service women in the Second World War and their use of arms. My thesis is concerned with the official combat taboo and especially when it was broken.

I wonder if it would be possible for you to ask your members in your next edition of "Lioness" if they were ever given any arms training, or were they aware of the fact that they were not officially allowed to fire weapons? Did they ever fire the gun on an Ack-Ack site? If this were possible I would be very grateful if they could write to me at the address printed below with their recollections.

Thank you very much for any help that you may be able to give.

James Platt, Pembroke College, Oxford, OX1 1DW
Tel: 01865 557684

A Hampshire Tribute in Honour of HM the Queen's Golden Jubilee

The Tribute will be a Concert in **Winchester Cathedral** on **Wednesday 6th November 2002 at 7.30pm**. The Band of the Light Division, the Band of the Adjutant General's Corps with the Pipers of the Scots Guards and the Choir and Organ of the Cathedral will perform a programme of music to reflect the many visits of Her Majesty to the County during her reign.

Staged jointly by the Army Benevolent Fund, Home Counties and South East Region and the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) – Forces Help, Hampshire Branch, we are seeking to promote awareness of our two charities and, of course, raise money for our work and for the British Commonwealth ex-Services League. What may not be generally known is that SSAFA – Forces Help has been honoured by the Queen as one of her nominated Charities in this her Jubilee Year, while the British Commonwealth ex-Services League has been similarly nominated by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

Tickets priced at £20, £15 and £10 can be obtained through:
**Music at Winchester, The Brooks Shopping Centre
Winchester SO23 8QY
Tel: 01962 877977 Fax: 01962 877654**



PDF Compressor Free Version

WRAC Association Memorabilia

All items of memorabilia can be obtained from the Association Headquarters.
Please make cheques or postal orders payable to WRAC Association and forward with your order to WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester, Hants. SO21 2RG.

All prices include postage and packing



Bone China Mugs
£4.50 each



Teapot Stand
£3.50



Square Tray
£4.80

Badges



Association
£2.50



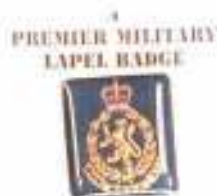
ATS
£2.75



Sandwich Trays
£4.60



WRAC
£2.75



Association
£1.50



Regi-Bears
£7.50 each



Key Fob
£2.50

Articles of Interest

THE LIONESSE RAMPANT

PDF Compressor Free Version



I love the Association badge and was proud to wear a similar design as a cap badge for 12 years. It pains me when I hear members complaining that it is the WRAC badge that is on everything and there is nothing to represent the ATS. Well I can state quite categorically that this is not the case. I will go on to explain why I say this later, but first allow me this, the reason I feel so strongly as to "spurt into ink".

What we do have on most of our memorabilia, our headed paper and of course on our standard is the Association badge. It is not the same thing as the WRAC cap badge. But if it was, should it be an issue? Shouldn't the issue be that we are women who have served our Sovereign and our country? Should not it be that we answered the call and were chosen and that we are servicewomen bonded together by our great act of selflessness? When the need has arisen, were we not, and still are we not, united in our desire to contribute to the defence of this green and pleasant land? Are we not united by the fact that we have written history, that we have set the standards for other nations to follow? Are we not comrades, neigh sisters who truly know the meaning of giving?

Well, let us give now. Let us give up those negative thoughts and comments and remember that we are one. We are not a badge, we are far more than that. Now back to the Association badge and why it should not be seen as purely a WRAC symbol.

Being a servicewoman, and no ordinary woman, I

endeavour to do things properly (a lesson learnt during basic training). I decided to research the origins of the Association badge. At this point I must thank Maj Dee McElligott for her patience and help whilst I ransacked her offices looking for information, and for being the one who actually tracked down the relevant QMAAC and ATS Comrades Association Gazette that has led to me write this article.

Are you sitting comfortably? Then I shall begin. In 1944 a competition was set by the QMAAC and ATS Comrades Association for one of its members to design a new badge to represent the Association. In the March – April Gazette of 1945, the Report of the Annual General Meeting stated that "The meeting then considered the resolution standing in the name of the council THAT THE BADGE OF THE ASSOCIATION BE A WREATH OF LAUREL ENCLOSING A LIONESSE RAMPANT ON A BEECH BROWN BACKGROUND, WITH THE NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION INSCRIBED ON A SCROLL." The Chairman remarked, "Your council have selected this design from those submitted in the recent competition; it seems to them a fitting symbol of the activities and significance of our members in both wars. The lion is one of the best known Army symbols, a lioness is therefore appropriate to QMAAC and ATS. She is rampant, defending her hearth and home, as you have helped defend yours, but no one can say that a lioness is unfeminine!" Chief Controller Whateley then had this to say, "I approve most heartily. I had not seen the badge before and think it extremely good."

So the Association badge came into being in 1945. You do not have to be a mathematician or even an historian to work out that all this preceded the WRAC. On page 9 of that issue of the Gazette it goes on to say, "It will symbolise the unity between all comrades of every age and war." And Andrea Denham, on whatever page of the Lioness this appears, says "Thank you" to the woman who had the idea of a unifying badge for the Association and who served in both the QMAAC and the ATS. Also to the designer, a Miss G A George, an ex WAAF, for a wonderful Association badge that was so beautiful and so meaningful that the WRAC had no choice but to copy most of it, (of course without the scroll, because that IS the Association badge circa 1945!!)

Lest we should forget.

WO1 (SSM) Andrea Denham
Ardent Supporter of
Women in the Army.

GOLDEN JUBILEE MILITARY MEDAL

Mr G E Harris (Ex Royal Engineers), 124 Haven Park Crescent, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, SA61 1DS

British Forces Veterans of the Navy, Army, Airforce and Territorial Forces a Golden Jubilee Military Medal has been struck to recognise your service and it also raises money for SSAFA Forces Help. The Designs of the Medal

were approved by the Lord Chamberlains office in Buckingham Palace. The Medal has a portrait of Her Majesty (of 1955) on its face and her Shield & Arms on the reverse. This Medal has already raised £3,496 Pounds for SSAFA Forces Help and is highly praised by Veterans who already have it.

PDF Compressor Free Version

For further information send a Stamped Address Envelope to the above address or telephone 01437 768668. E-mail: george.e.harris@amserve.net (include Address and Telephone Number on e-mails)

A BIRTHDAY CAKE WITH A DIFFERENCE

Mrs Evelyn O'Neill, 33 Bede Burn View, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear, NE32 5PQ



Mrs O'Neill and the cake

This photograph was taken at my 80th Birthday Party. The cake was made by a friend and what a complete surprise when I saw the ATS model made of icing sugar and carrying a drum! I played a side drum in our Battery Drum and Bugle Band. This made my day and I will treasure the little model.

NEWS FROM THE PAST

Mrs J M C Robinson, 141 Gloucester Terrace, London, W2 6DX

When I was looking for something completely different in the Marylebone Mercury of May/June 1952, I found the attached article which I thought might be of interest in the "Lioness". The Lioness of late 1952 might say if a member of the WRAC was chosen to be Queen Elizabeth I.

"Marylebone Mercury 23 May 1952

Nine girls seek role of Queen Elizabeth I

Which service girl will take the leading part – that of Queen Elizabeth I – in the Searchlight Tattoo at White City in July?

A test to find the most suitable girls to represent the WRAC in the finals at the White City on June 16, was held at St John's Wood Barracks, Ordnance Hill, on Tuesday.

For the first time the Women's Services will be featured in the Tattoo, and one of the most spectacular and dramatic sequences will be that of Queen Elizabeth I inspecting her troops at Tilbury before the battle with the Spanish Armada.

All the Women's Services have entrants and from them one girl will be chosen for the role of Queen Elizabeth and representatives are needed to act as ladies-in-waiting. Already the WRAC have had 30 volunteers from different parts of the country and nine of them took part in the test at St John's Wood.

Horses were loaned by the King's Troop at the Royal Horse Artillery, and the girls had to ride into the paddock, face a selection panel and read Queen Elizabeth's speech.

The judges chose Lieutenant Colonel Margaret Hewitt OBE, 319 (West Lancs Battalion); Major Angela Cecil, WRAC School of Instruction and Lance Corporal Amos, 314 (Scottish Command) Battalion.

They will now appear with three WRNS and three airwomen at the final selection at the White City on June 16."

Ed note: 1952 copies of the Lioness do not reveal whether any of the WRAC were selected – does anybody know?

I also enclose another cutting about the sale of the original ATS poster.

"Daily Telegraph 12 April 2002

A Second World War recruiting poster, withdrawn after criticism in the Commons that the model wore too much bright red lipstick, was sold for £3,350 at Onslows in London yesterday. Join the ATS was printed in 1941."

HONG KONG

Jill Trainor

I was pleased to see Eleanor Fergusons' photo of WRAC in Hong Kong in Lioness 1/2002. I was there in 1963 and spent 27 happy years at Victoria Barracks on the Island. The WRAC accommodation (Colvin House) was situated at the top of the Barracks, about 24 junior ranks were there at the time. Water was rationed (piped in from China) and the supply was turned on for 4 hours every fourth day. Baths were used for storing water. During the 4 hours we all rushed to shower and wash clothes, plus fill baths and buckets. The lack of water didn't seem to bother us unduly – we spent a lot of time in the swimming pool – although coming off a night shift in the Commcen, having been burning the classified waste (pre-shredder days) did cause problems as you could only take a bucket of water to "shower, wash your hair and wash your undies". Local Chinese people, who lived in makeshift shacks on the hillsides, had to go to standpipes in the roads in order to fill their biscuit tins. For them life was hard.

I returned to Hong Kong a couple of years before Britain handed the colony back to China. There was no time during that visit to 'find' the old Barracks. However I did spot what had been 'BMH Bowen Road' up on the hillside. When I reached Bowen Road by taxi there were traffic bollards. PDF Compressor Free Version I did not realise that it was now a residential area and that I would have to walk the rest of the way. As it was getting dusk and there were no other cabs in the area I returned to Central. In September 2001 I returned to Hong Kong for a second time. The first thing that is striking is the International Airport, built on reclaimed land, to the North West of Lantau Island. The airport, opened in 1998, is huge and very hi-tech. Both Lantau and Tsing Vi are no longer 'islands'; they are connected (reclaimed land) to the New Territories by both a rail network and the North Lantau Expressway, which has 2-3 lanes of motor traffic both ways. Gone are the days of a leisurely boat trip to Lantau or pony trekking around the paddy fields in the New Territories. Incidentally, Stonecutters Island is also connected to the 'mainland'.



Former Barrack/Office Block

Victoria Barracks is unrecognisable and is now called Hong Kong Park. The only original buildings I could find were one former barrack block (now a Chinese Education Centre) and Flagstaff House. The latter, completed in 1846, was the residence of Commander British Forces but now houses The Museum of Teaware! The building was closed, but as I had never been inside as a junior rank anyway, I wasn't particularly worried about not seeing it now! Hong Kong Park is full of trees, (as I remembered it) shrubs, walkways and large aviaries. There are ornamental fountains at the entrance (Cotton Tree Drive) together with a play area and a Squash Centre. The Shinto shrine and the archway erected during the Japanese occupation have gone.

Before leaving I was lucky to come across a bronze statue. The plaque read: "WO2 JOHN ROBERT OSBORNE VC Winnipeg Grenadiers and through him all those men and women, Service and civilian, of every race and creed who performed acts of gallantry and self sacrifice in the defence of Hong Kong in December 1941. Erected on this site which was once Victoria Barracks to commemorate the presence of a British Garrison in Hong Kong. In grateful acknowledgement to the Eu family who first presented this statue."



WO2 Osborne VC, Winnipeg Grenadiers.

In conclusion, I walked back to the Star Ferry via Garden Road and St Johns Cathedral. Inside the cathedral I found ex-pats turning up for a choir practice. They were casually dressed in shorts and sandals – and carrying rolled umbrellas. Some things never change.

THE "NOT FORGOTTEN" ASSOCIATION DAY OUT SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY, BRIDGNORTH

Gwen Ryder, Wolverhampton Branch of the
WRAC Association

Our Wolverhampton Branch, WRAC Association received an invitation from the "Not Forgotten Association" for four of our members to go on a day out on the "Severn Valley Railway".



"Red or White Madam?"

Our Chairman, Pat Ash, Secretary, Joan Nicholas, Betty Cline and I were pleased to accept. Upon arriving at Bridgnorth Severn Valley Railway Station we were met by "Rosie" who had organised the trip.

Also at the Station we were met by a number of the country and we were soon reminiscing old Service days. On boarding the train, a dining car had been especially reserved for us all, a good hot lunch plus wine etc was served by the staff of the railway company. We stopped for one hour at Kidderminster and when we returned to the train, the dining coach had been reset for Afternoon Tea.

We would like to thank all who organised this really great day out, especially "Rosie" and enclose photographs of the four of us enjoying the day.

Many thanks again – Rosie.

THE QUEEN MOTHER 1900 – 2002

Jean Farrington (W/4060120 Connell 1960 – 1963)
Southward, 587 Newmarket Road, Cambridge, CB5 8PA

Our patron, HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, was associated with many public bodies and charities, one of those being Queen's College Cambridge. She was our Patroness for 54 years and came to the college on many occasions. I should imagine that all the public bodies and charities she was associated with had a representative in the Abbey for her funeral. I was lucky enough to have had the honour and privilege of being one of those. Queen's College was given two places, the President had one and I was asked, as I was the longest serving female employee, if I'd like to go.

What an honour, especially as I had already taken part in her 100th Birthday celebrations on Horse Guards Parade.

We were very lucky to get a good seat, four rows back and in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. The Abbey seemed solemn and quiet but not sad. It was interesting to see all the dignitaries, politicians and Heads of State arriving and waiting to be escorted to their places.

The sparkling of her jewels lying on the silk cushion being taken up the Nave; her crown lying on her coffin, only a few feet away, as the cortege passed by – but my lasting memory is of the two trumpeters playing the 'Last Post'.

I was then taken to lunch in the House of Lords. When I left there I walked back to the Abbey where, on the lawns, lay the most magnificent sprays and wreaths I have ever seen. One, from all the Armed Forces, must have been all of 4ft in length, lying in between and along side were posies and bunches of flowers from the general public.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE PARADE, 4 JUNE 2002

Gladys W Pope, 11 Lynch Close, Mere,
Wiltshire, BA12 6EL

How privileged I felt marching down the Mall in the Queen's Jubilee Parade. It was a sea of waving union flags and a crescendo of cheering all the way and then we were marching past the Queen and the Royal Family. I am sure

Prince Philip gave us a special wave! How we wished we could wave back!!

It came after a 5-hour wait in a side street! But we were all issued with a lunch bag with such an assortment of food and a "Ribena". Of course we chatted to those around us and we were able to pose for a group photograph.



"What's in yours then?"

That evening some of us were gathered at the Victory Club and were joined by Joe and Carlynn Pierce from Texas who had had such a wonderful day. When I got home there was an e-mail which said "It was so very nice being able to meet and chat with all you wonderful British lady military veterans at the Victoria Services Club. Thank you for your courtesies to us during our visit to London". There are photographs attached but I have to wait for my "guru" to come to unravel them for me!!



Nora Kendall, Joe & Carlynn Pierce, Peggy Kenny

MISS GRACE PARKIN

Mrs Beryl Holder, 10 Dale Road, Dronfield,
Derbyshire, S18 1YG

On 27 February this year I received a phone call from Maj (Retd) David Robertson at York, telling me he'd had a call from a gentleman whose aunt had served in the ATS and had worked for a time on Searchlights. She was approaching her 90th Birthday! He had been enquiring if the Major could suggest a memento which the family

could give "to remind aunty of her Army days"? He was told about the calendar which was on sale and promptly ordered two!! A short while after receiving his calendars, on which he'd seen some of our members in uniforms, he rang York again to ask if it was possible to hire a uniform – hence the **PDF Compressor Free Version** the aforementioned gentleman to say I was willing to help (being a good girl guide!!).

Next morning the registered parcel of my uniform (minus the pair of 'passion killers' which I didn't keep on my discharge!!) was on its way! Niece Wendy "surprised" aunty at her party on 09 March by appearing in the uniform and here is a photo of aunty Grace wearing the cap and tunic! As her nephew said "there wasn't a dry eye in the room!" and "it made aunty's day". (For an ex-ATS RSM she is "improperly dressed" but I think we can overlook that at 90 don't you?!).



Miss Grace Parkin (age 90 years)

The following is a brief description of 'Aunty's' Service.

Grace Elizabeth Parkin born 6 March 1912 in Leamington Spa (often known as "Parky" during her military career). In April 1940 she volunteered for active service in the ATS and undertook initial training of 3 weeks at Aldermaston, Berkshire. She was posted to a Searchlight unit on the South Coast of England during Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain. Promoted to a chief volunteer (one stripe, Lance Corporal equivalent) in July 1940, she received her second stripe a few months later.

Promoted to Sergeant in Spring 1941, she was posted to Leatherhead, Surrey as Admin Sergeant and had her own platoon of Admin ATS girls. She was the only girl living in the Sergeants' Mess – says she was very happy there!!

End of 1941, posted "who knows where?" and sent on a Troop Ship around the Cape, chased by 'U' Boats, and on to Suez. Next came Alexandria. Promoted to CSM and on to Cairo to 510 (GHQ) ATS Company. Promoted to RSM with over 500 girls in her 'command'.

After El Alamein, she was posted back to UK in July 1945 and de-mobbed at the end of WWII in November.

(Makes one breathless just to read this!!).

PRESENTATIONS

Brigadier Nield, Vice President of the WRAC Association made a presentation to Miss Herme Emery at the Association Headquarters to thank her for all her hard work in creating a new membership database for the Association. The old database was very limited in its functions and Herme, the treasurer of the Winchester Branch and a Civil Servant in Worthy Down, volunteered to write a new programme. This programme, which would have been very expensive to buy, is now up and running, making life a lot easier for the Chief Clerk and hopefully helping us give a better service to the membership.



AGC MUSEUM

The new AGC Museum which will include many items relating to the ATS & WRAC will be opened in Winchester next year. Earlier this year Lt. Col. Ruth Allerton visited Worthy Down to present her medals and other items of militaria to Col. Barrie Johnson, RO1 Regimental, for the museum.



(L to R): Maj. McElligott, Lt. Col. Allerton, Col. Johnson.

LEAVING HOME

Name and address supplied

In late 1941, well aware of the demands about to be made on the armed forces, the women's branches of the services, calling for more recruits into the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS). In a short time recruitment into the services, into the Land Army or to work in factories would be compulsory for certain age groups of girls and women. Wishing to escape the indignity of being 'called up' and knowing herself to be physically incapable of the Land Army, and at the same time seizing the opportunity of at last being able to remove herself from the ties of home, Jay took steps to launch herself from domesticity into an unknown and exciting future.

This was not easy; first a certain reluctance on the part of parents contemplating the loss of their ewe lamb, troublesome though she might be, had to be overcome. Their understandable concern was activated by very clear memories of the First World War; the hardships and misery and the loss of loved ones in the battles, memories which still coloured their lives. Only twenty years had passed and the thought of another war was terrible to contemplate. However, it was deemed a wise move on Jay's part, provided she could remain safely somewhere in England doing a sensible indoor job similar to the secretarial one she had been pursuing since she left school.

Jay took the first step to independence with a journey to Cambridge by bus, on a wooden seat through every village and hamlet en route. No mean feat with the prospect of a return journey in the blackout, crowded together with workers going home from their day in Pye's aircraft factory on the outskirts of Cambridge. The driver would fortunately know the way inch-by-inch as he drove with filtered headlights and there was no inside lighting for the weary passengers. Not that all were weary; odd noises, scuffles and giggling on the back seats in the dark would entertain or alarm the unseasoned traveller. However, such journeys were good preparation for the varied and rigorous life to be experienced in the following years.

Having given much thought to such weighty matters, it appeared to Jay that she would look her best in the delicate blue of the Royal Air Force uniform. So, first fortifying herself with tomato soup and beans-on-toast at a local café for ninepence, with slight misgivings about the step she was taking into an uncertain future, Jay made her way to the recruitment offices in the Wesleyan Church. Having misjudged the time spent over beans-on-toast, she arrived at the WAAF recruitment desk just in time to see it being locked up for the lunch-break. Determined that the arduous journey should not have been in vain and in case further delay might be fatal to determination, she turned to the next room, still unlocked, and sealed her fate by offering herself to the stoutly determined and forbidding ATS recruitment officer who appeared grateful for the offer but surprisingly dubious that Jay would actually be accepted into this exclusive sisterhood.

Excitement and enthusiasm for this step began to wane as week followed week and no calling-up papers arrived. Finally, on 10 January 1942, having bade farewell to parents and friends, most of whom managed to convey that it would be the last they would ever see of her, Jay set

out for the unknown, a training camp on the one time racecourse at Northampton. Fortunately on board the train from Ely were several other lambs to the slaughter from various parts of East Anglia so the arrival at Talavera Camp was made a little less frightening by the company. Allocated to a bed in a large Nissen hut, with none of the new friends made on the journey, Jay wondered whether the whole thing had been a grave error of judgement on her part. This particular winter was exceptionally cold and Jay being of such mean weight and stature, found it hard enough to cope in the comfort of home when ice and snow lay three feet deep, let alone a hut which was mortuary cold. The sheet was scratchy and the blankets heavy without warmth and the hot water non-existent; in fact at times the cold water was non-existent. Within a few days she learned that snow collected and heated up on the Tortoise stove, which was lit after lectures finished at 5 o'clock and did not give out any heat until at least nine o'clock in the evening, would fill a hot-water-bottle. To bed without washing, curled up in one's pyjamas, woolly socks and greatcoat on top of the blankets, a few disturbed periods of sleep were snatched between the rousing snores of other inhabitants. In the morning the water from the bottle was carefully decanted into a saucepan and warmed slightly on the cooling top of the Tortoise for a very limited amount of washing of skin that showed above the unbecoming khaki shirt and tie. One's complexion quickly merged in with the khaki and it was difficult to distinguish facial features by the time the "shower period" arrived. This was such a difficult, uncomfortable, miserable, freezingly cold and gregarious period of the week that Jay's selective memory has managed to blot it out, but it certainly put her off showers for the rest of her life – even in private!

The first momentous occasion for the new recruits was the issue of uniform. For the first few days all had assembled on the barrack square and in the lecture rooms wearing their civilian clothes, and a motley bunch they were. Uniform is a great leveller and all felt less critical of their fellows once they were collectively clad in the same ill-fitting and unbecoming garments. Issue was very generous in the matter of thick vests, woolly khaki knickers ('passion killers'), sensible thick stockings and stout shoes, topped by that which satisfied the status-seekers by showing that they were in the Army – the uniform jacket and skirt. Frowned upon by Authority, but the more fashion-conscious having some need to prove their identity, one slept at nights with skirts folded into pleats underneath mattresses. Greatcoats, greatly needed in the arctic conditions of the Barrack Square, were, in the main, warm and generous. In Jay's case, of course, generosity was overdone and her first visit to the civilian tailor in camp was not her last. In fact it can be fairly safely said that Jay spent more time with the camp's tailor and the dentist in the first few weeks than was her fair share. Shoes, too, were a problem for a size two foot and for a week or two she stamped about the barrack square obeying commands to 'lef'-right, 'lef'-right, 'right-wheel' and 'about-turn' in her flimsy civilian shoes which did little for her precision marching but much for her chilblains. Fortunately at last, a pair of the right size were procured from some distant stores and the breaking-in of shoes, and of Jay, began.

JAY'S LETTERS HOME

10th January 1942

Talavera Training Camp, Northampton

PDF Compressor Free Version

I am writing this on Friday as faithfully promised but as it is 7.15 pm and the first five minutes we have had to ourselves, the letter will definitely not be posted tonight. I travelled alone to Peterborough and there I picked up with another lonesome looking individual from Gorleston who I guessed by her manner was destined for Northampton. Then another girl who I had met at the medical in Cambridge came along with a pal of hers from Lynn. So we had quite a jolly journey to Northampton and arrived about 1.40. We were met by bus, about 50 of us, and brought to the Camp. During the day another 200 more have come in. So far we have done nothing but queue up, wait, feed (lots of grub), wait, be medically examined for bugs, fleas, lice, and lots more waiting. I have been allotted a bed near the fire (well, near the fireplace would be more exact. There are twenty-seven in our hut. We have no number or uniform yet. One girl is only fifteen and a half – she put up her age to get in. We have to be up at 6.30 am. There is a wireless in our hut and they have provided us with knife, fork, spoon, comb, brushes (hair, shoe, clothes and tooth), needles and cotton, two towels and an enamel mug – a huge one.

I think we finish lectures and things at 4.30. Tonight we hope to go to the town, probably to the pictures. Three or four inoculations are promised and a vaccination next week, then 48 hours leave but we are not allowed to go more than 15 miles away from camp. Will write again soon.

12th January 1942

What a life! I think I have been deported to Siberia; snow, frost, everything frozen up, including the lavatories. I am wearing my own vest, the Army vest, shirt, pullover, cardigan, coat and skirt and I look very fat but I'm still COLD. Last night I slept in pyjamas, wool coat, dressing gown and ankle socks and wrapped in a blanket. The fire wouldn't burn. I tell you we are getting toughened. We have been issued with six pairs of knickers, three wool and three silk. The wool are meant to be worn first (I think) and then the silk so it's a bit scratchy. Just as Betty and I ran across the parade ground this morning her silk ones dropped off so I think I shall reverse mine for safety. The wool ones seem a bit more stable. We went into town last night and had tea. There were long queues for the pictures so we did not go. We are allowed out until 10 every night and midnight on Saturdays and Sundays. I don't know how to occupy all that spare time.

Would you like to know a sample breakfast? This morning's – a huge plate of Cornflakes and hot milk, bacon, potatoes, bread and butter and marmalade. Yesterday's dinner was boiled beef and carrots, potatoes, chocolate pudding and rice. No supper, but we can get a hot meal in the canteen.

14th January 1942

Will you PLEASE send me one or two small dusters, a tea cloth (half a yard of old sheet would do), my little feather pillow and an odd bit of coloured stuff to make a pillow-case (white wouldn't be white for long). Do you think your old bed-socks would fit me? If not, please would you see if you can buy me a pair? I left some cash behind for these emergencies.

Last night three of us got treated to tea and buns in the canteen by a Canadian soldier who was anxious to take us all 'down-town' but it was 8 pm and we had buttons and shoes to clean, we hinted 'another time'

OOOh, PLEASE send me a toilet roll if you can – can't get to see one here and everybody is sending home for one.

We have got to go for an interview this afternoon to say what work we want to do. I've changed my mind about being a driver. I wouldn't LOOK at a car this weather, so no driving for me. If one wants to drive and fails the tests rumour has it that you have to become an orderly. There's an awful lot of rumour about. I shall say I want to do office work. Dull, unambitious but safer and more likely to be in the warm.

You should see me in khaki! Not my best colour. I will send you a photo when the stiffness and newness has worn off then you will be better prepared for when I come home.

To try to keep my clothes dry, in accordance with your strict instructions – I keep my hot water bottle filled two or three times a day WHEN we get any hot, (no, warm) water and wrap my clothes in it. I promise not to put any damp clothes on. Get soaked through with snow on the Barrack Square and can't change wet uniform for hours. But no damp clothes!

When we were in town yesterday we met an officer and as we hadn't the faintest idea how to salute, we turned and stared solemnly into a churchyard while he went past.

Here is a List of Requirements, which no doubt will be added to from time to time. Little pillow (and cover), bedsocks, TOILET ROLL (most essential), one or two small dusters, small tea cloth, face cream, shoe socks, rat poison (for the people who snore).

16th January 1942

Do not be alarmed at getting so many letters from me so quickly, but I haven't much to do. I am alright; I have had a dreadful cough and I'm still going. I'm sure I caught it on the first day, all that stripping and unstripping and standing about in the cold. The weather is still AWFUL, about 3 - 4" snow. Drifts up to our knees. I sleep very well - not the first two nights - but I do now. We always come away from meals busting full. Sunday tea was salmon, beetroot, watercress and, what tickled me, bread and butter and golden syrup. At bit messy. Last night we had herrings on toast, b and b and jam and doughnuts. When I was fitted with my tunic I had the belt on the third hole, now I can only use the first. A remarkable discovery, we've just found out that supper is at 6.30 pm. We didn't know there WAS any supper. We had beefsteak pie

It's the queuing up and waiting that get us down. An inoculation was timed for 5 pm. We marched three-quarters of a mile over the campsite to the hospital and stood out in the snow until 6.15.

18th January 1942

Please pardon the writing but I am reclining full-length recuperating from last night's inoculation for Typhoid. Upon consideration I would rather have this than Typhoid - but I'd rather not have this. My arm has a huge muscle and I feel as if I'd had 'flu for a fortnight'. We were stabbed in alphabetical order so when anybody started groaning during the night I recalled their surnames and thought - well, it hasn't got to the S's yet. But it has now. We were allowed to stay in bed till ten o'clock this morning and needn't start work till Monday. One by one the girls are creeping back to bed. They got up too fiercely this morning. I am going to take it very steady indeed

I got my first week's pay on Friday. We should get 11s 8d, but 5d is deducted for unemployment, 3d is allowed for upkeep of our hair, and 1s 6d is deducted to be saved for us compulsorily. So we get about 10s clear. Whatever shall I do with it all - I haven't used up the £1 I brought with me yet.

21st January 1942

The weather is terrible. We've got another good couple of inches of snow, came down in the night. Every day of this week, with the exception of Thursday, it snowed in the morning, rained in the afternoon and froze at night. There are lots of floods round here and lots of foul language. I have added to the world's misery by having two teeth out.

I'm frightfully proud of the fact that I'm the first one to have the vaccination 'come up'. My left arm is as stiff as a poker and I have to be dressed and undressed. Tomorrow I shall report sick perhaps the MO will dress it and put my arm in a sling for a day or two. I should have gone to see him today but we cannot report sick on a Sunday - Sundays we are not supposed to be ill.

A church parade was on the agenda for today but it is unsafe to go out because of the snow and frosty ground. However, two girls from Cambridge have sneaked out this morning to try to hitchhike home for the day. I might have tried it too if my arm had not been so painful. We are not supposed to go more than 15 miles from camp and have to be in the Army 6 weeks before we can get 48 hours leave. I'm just going to bed with a warm water bottle. The fire won't burn, the coal is damp, there's a 6ft drift of snow outside and everybody feels like deserting.

Monday.. I have just been to the hospital with my arm and the heartless nurse tells me it is a perfectly healthy vaccination. I will write again tomorrow and let you know if I have a plague of boils or anything else.

One girl spilt marking ink all down her legs. When her pal came in and asked what it was, she was told 'vaccination coming out', and the pal was scared stiff. She still doesn't know it's only ink and goes about in fear and trembling that her legs go black.

Will you please send me some more handkerchiefs? I got your letters and the things you sent, thank you very much. No thank you, don't trouble to send cakes or biscuits, we can get various eatables at all times of the day. So far I haven't had to spend any of my week's wages - I don't know what to do with all that money and nothing to spend it on.

We are supposed to wash up our knives, forks, spoons and mugs in a communal bath in the mess-room, but the water gets filthy so I take mine across to the ablutions hut - we are not supposed to do this - but would they rather we were knocked out with disease?

You ask what do I do in the evenings; well, after tea I sit round the fire (if it will burn) write letters, clean buttons, badges and shoes and go to bed at 8. It's just slightly warmer in bed. I am glad I've got a bad arm, our hut was on fatigues this morning and were detailed to scrub out lavatories. What an escape. One of the girls cut my hair last night. I look like a newly shorn sheep.

January 1942

It's snowing again. We have been out on a route march and came back looking like ghosts.

I am standing up to the hardships much better than I expected. I'm getting quite proficient in looking out for, and after, myself. Did I ever tell you about my last meal? When we arrived and had been allocated our beds we were issued with knife, fork, spoon, mug and went to the mess-hut for supper. On the tables were plates of bread, lumps of butter and plates of jam. I sat down with my meal of mince and veg and was eating politely when I realised that those who had sat down before had grabbed ALL the bread and butter and the jam. None left for me. But that was the one and only time. Now, soon as I get to the table I grab everything in sight and nobody remarks on my impoliteness. It's the only way to get things done.

This morning we had gas drill, through a tear-gas chamber with respirators on and then through it again without. They used our drying room for a gas chamber, having previously removed all the washing. Consequently I have lost two pairs of stockings and a pair of pants neatly marked with my name. Needless to say my respirator was too big and I had to be re-issued with a child's size. We have got a girl in our squad who is 5'11"! I try to avoid standing anywhere near her. We have gas lectures by the dozen. Gas is dinned into us day and night.

I am just waiting my turn for the bucket and brush. Some bright officer this morning had the brilliant idea of occupying us scrubbing out our hut. We are taking it in turns to scrub round our beds. Fancy scrubbing on top of corned beef fritters and steamed pudding.

You should see us when the post arrives. It's perfectly sickening when other people get mail and some of us don't. There's a rumour that we have another route march tomorrow, we SHALL enjoy that. Now it's my turn for the pail and scrubbing brush.

2 pm. We've just been on parade again, now we are free until 2.45 when we have got to have a shower; at 3.45 go and be fitted with new uniforms, (we get two complete sets). In the meantime a compulsory lecture – so you can see how fully occupied we are.

8.15 pm. Just got into bed and am waiting for the people who stay out late to bring back fish and chips. I do eat a lot. My skirt is very tight.

The shower this afternoon was unbelievably horrible. We undress in little cubicles, peer out the curtains to see if it's all clear, then dash across the passage in the freezing cold to another cubicle with a 4" deep pan in the bottom. Turn on the cold water spray by mistake and howl with rage. The spray shoots out so that if you are not careful all you get is wet hair while the rest of you is turning purple with cold. It's a dreadful system for getting clean. No privacy and a very draughty business. I can't see a way to avoiding it – yet.

31st January 1942

A head inspection was due this morning. We were marched solemnly left-right, left-right to the inspection hut only to find the Nit-Nurse hadn't arrived, so it was About Turn and left-right, left-right back again to find out where the debugging operations were being carried out. We ran the de-lousing squad to earth in the decontamination chamber, which we thought very appropriate. One of the girls in our hut didn't return from this operation so rumours are very busy. We get a head inspection every week and get scared stiff if one of us is seen surreptitiously scratching about in her hair.

Some girls send their washing home. May I send you some of mine if I find my 'whites' are becoming a funny colour. ("Someone isn't using Persil"). I notice that some of the girls on the permanent staff are wearing buff-coloured vests. Getting things dry is another headache.

Two lectures this morning on 'Waste'. The Messing Officer came to demonstrate his point by bringing with him three buckets of waste from this morning's breakfast. As we had had kippers you can imagine the odour. Most of us weren't able to concentrate on the lecture because of the overpowering pong.

Tomorrow morning another foot inspection. We sit on the ends of our beds and dangle our bare feet over the edge while an officer (I can understand why she carries her gas mask), comes round and looks at feet of all sizes, shapes and descriptions. When she got to me last week I noticed she looked at my eyes to see if there was any further evidence of Chinese origin. Everybody else has got normal sized feet. Everybody else seems normal all over.

We were divided up today, clerks, drivers, telephonist, etc separately, so now I expect we shall get something done. The men who are our Squad Sergeants are great fun. When we are waiting for an officer to come to give us a lecture we are ordered to stand up when he/she enters. The sergeants practice bayoneting while they are waiting! Then they will suddenly bawl out STAND UP – OFFICER and we all get up like sheep, often to find that it is only a Lance Corporal. It makes us wild. They'll do it once too many and when an officer does arrive we shan't stand up to show our respect – or whatever it is – and get jankers for it.

We have had to give up our clothing coupons but I think I can get a chit to buy wool to knit some gloves to wear over my present ones. We have had a fire quite half an hour and there is still ice over the fire buckets behind the stove. Eskimos have nothing on us. I can face anything so long as the dentist keeps his distance. One of the girls had teeth out by gas and said it was quite all right. It will be gas for me next time I think.

Here there is a gap in the letters. After spending the statutory six weeks at Talavera Training Camp, being introduced to the rigours of army life, to the company of a wide selection of contemporaries and getting through the coldest and snowiest month for decades with the maximum of discomfort, getting home for the first exciting 48 hours leave, passing all the required tests in drill, in anti-gas precautions, in shorthand and typing, in fire-drill, in air-raid precautions, in learning how to get the necessary brilliance to buttons, cap badges and shoes, this Private put her name down for a posting to Scotland. There are two reasons for this; her newly acquired bosom pal was asking for a posting to the Highlands and they didn't know how they could bear to be parted and the hope of seeing more of the country at the country's expense seemed alluring. Probably influenced also by the feeling that air raids might not be expected in the far north so that the need to demonstrate one's newly acquired expertise with gas would lessen.

However, in the Army's inimitable way it was decided that she could best serve King and Country with a posting as near to home as they could send her. So, to Cambridge, unwillingly, she went. Twenty miles from home.

Letters for a short while were suspended as most weekends and days off found her hitch-hiking or cycling homewards with the week's washing and the unexpired portion of the day's rations. The first billet was home from home. The landlord and landlady had no children so swooped upon their foundling with all the enthusiasm of adoptive parents. Smothering took place at all levels and made up for six weeks hardships of Northampton. It didn't last long, though, and the Army's sterner presence soon began to make itself felt.



Notice

CHY-1161A

CHARITY: The Women's Royal Army Corps Association (Incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades Association)

REFERENCE: 206184 / 263296

A scheme is a legal document made by the Charity Commission. It is proposed to make a Scheme for this charity which will amend the objects of the charity.

A copy of the draft Scheme can be seen at:

HQ WRAC ASSOCIATION
AGC CENTRE
WORTHY DOWN
WINCHESTER
SO21 2RG

during normal working hours 16 – 20 Sep 02
and 23 – 27 Sep 02

Or a copy can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to:

The Charity Commission, Woodfield House,
Tangier, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4BL

quoting the above reference number or by visiting our website at:

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk>

Comments or representations on these proposals can be made to the Charity Commission within one month from the date of this notice, either by letter or by completing the form on our website.

Date 01 SEP : 02

Branch News

ABERDEEN BRANCH

PDF Compressor Free Version

I'm glad to say that now 17-18 members attend our monthly meetings. We meet in a Travel Lodge Lounge come Breakfast Bar. They make us welcome, but as it is a public place we cannot have speakers, bring and buy etc, but hopefully we will find a room, and get going.

Last year we had a lovely visit to "Baxters" of soup fame. The day was so hot that there was more than the soups cooking, but it was a grand day.

Five of our members went to the Ack Ack Reunion at York. Once more a lovely and happy, friendly weekend. Top marks to all involved for making our weekend perfect.

Four of our ladies also attended the Cenotaph and service at Westminster Abbey.

We had our usual Christmas Lunch and again all went well for a good meeting of friends and a great lunch.

On 28 May we were in Duthie Park for Her Majesty the Queen's walk-about.



Members of Aberdeen Branch meeting the Queen

Lord Provost Margaret Smith, Jessie Stewart, Mary McLeod, Dorothy Anderson Event Organiser, Helen Thomson

It started with a letter to our Lord Provost, Margaret Smith, about a gift to the Queen. The Lord Provost then invited 3 of us to her room for coffee and a chat, out of which came the offer of a stand for our wartime photos, which council provided, all we did was look out photos. I got a couple of Princess Elizabeth in ATS uniform which gave Her Majesty a laugh and her parting words "that was a long time ago". Back to the lead up to the big day.

I was notified that I was to be presented by the Lord Provost to Her Majesty, then I introduced Helen Thomson, then Jean Simpson, who is shaking the

Queen's hand in the photograph, but Helen Thomson is blocked out by the Queen! Nine of us turned out for the day but only two could be presented. The only way I could choose 2 ladies fairly, was to put names in a hat and pull them out, lucky them.

The Queen asked about our Branch and I informed her we had 23 members of which 18 were active and she said that was a good effort. The Queen joked about the weather, more like a November Day. Then I drew her attention to her photograph, inspecting ATS drivers, and she laughed again, and said that was a long time ago. She was still smiling as she walked away. She is so lovely and so friendly, we were stunned at her easy manner. It was a real joy to meet her and a great honour. It's a day we'll keep in our minds for many a year.

Our Lord Provost made it possible for us to have a wonderful day. She even mentioned us on the TV news when asked what moment she found memorable. She said "The ATS ladies standing so happy beside their photo stand, oozing enjoyment and happiness".

Our next big event is our AGM on 26 October. Ladies we've arranged a super day for you, all we need is for you to come and be with us - top hotel, top food, top day out. Why not make a weekend of it as the Station Hotel is giving us "ex Army" girls reduced rates. Mention when booking WRAC's £30 B&B single and £40 B&B double for Friday and Saturday nights if required, or just Friday. The choice is yours. See you then. In fact we had a lovely lunch and extended meeting today and it was at the Station Hotel. The food was perfect as was the service and all made for a super day.

Keep up the good work, it is a great way of keeping in touch with one another, and always interesting.

BEXHILL BRANCH

As usual the deadline is upon us for reports, so what have we been doing in this last six months? If I said "much as before" that would sound very boring and hopefully the verdict is "not so". Our branch has just celebrated its 5th Anniversary. We still have very good numbers attending the meetings, so we must be getting something right! Membership stands at 45, our latest recruit being ex-WRAC, we warmly welcome her and hope for more. We aim to be an interesting, friendly, but most of all, a happy group, having fun, I think we achieve that most of the time.

Thanks go to the many who help out in so many different ways, we extend our sympathy to those who have not been too well and may you get well soon. We are so sorry Worthing branch has folded because we met with them at times, hope you rise from the ashes again, pronto! Yes the Statue is a "no-no" with us!!

Best wishes to you all.

BOLTON BRANCH

Last year the Branch celebrated it's 20th Birthday and we were fortunate that Bolton Combined Services donated £200 to the branch. This donation came with the specific request that it be spent on the needs of the Branch. In September, we used the money for a day out at Fleetwood. It was a cold day but we managed to browse round the large Market for most of the day. With the rest of the money we had lunch at the local college, which was very enjoyable.

We recruited two new members last year but unfortunately lost one of our older members, Mrs Sybil Yates. Sybil had been a member for 19 years, and for many of these had served on the Welfare Committee. Because of illness she missed most of our meetings last year, although she managed the meeting in February when she thought she was getting better; but sadly she died in March. She will be missed by everyone.

On 18 April we joined the Wilmslow branch in their celebrations for the Queen's Golden Jubilee and in May we look forward to joining the Rochdale Branch in their celebrations.

Although our members are getting 'a bit long in the tooth' some of us still manage to attend the various parades; I wonder for how much longer!!!

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

Our AGM in November, saw the retirement of our Chairman, Doreen Snell, and the branch welcomed Mrs Margaret Drew as our new Chairman. The remainder of the Committee remained unchanged.

The Christmas Lunch, held again at the Quality/Cadogan Hotel, was a very happy occasion, enjoyed by over 30 members, five of whom also brought their husbands along (brave souls!). A presentation was made to Doreen Snell in appreciation for her time as Chairman.

The January meeting was time for a Bring and Buy Sale which added £25.55 to branch funds.

In February Mrs Pauline Percival gave us a most interesting talk and demonstration about Aromotherapy. This was followed in April by our guest speaker, Mrs Doswell, giving us an insight into her experiences as a wartime lady brewer at a Reading brewery. This was both interesting and amusing.

Our May meeting was an opportunity to chat with one another under the title of "getting to know you", and also gave time to sort out our various outings etc. May 11th saw a group of 16 members attend the Southern Area Reunion, hosted by Salisbury Branch at Larkhill Barracks. Thank you Salisbury for an interesting day.

Next month, June, will be busy as we look forward to Corps Day at Worthy Down, which twelve of us hope to attend; eighteen members will then attend the Veterans Festival of Remembrance in Weymouth. Also in June will be our Annual Garden Party, which will have a Golden

Jubilee theme as we celebrate Her Majesty's 50th year as our Sovereign.

We have welcomed 3 new members so far this year and between now and the Autumn quite a few of us will be attending various Regimental and Corps Reunions.

Remember if you are coming to this area on holiday, to attend a Conference or to visit friends or relatives, we'd be pleased to welcome you.

BRADFORD BRANCH

Greetings to all members at home and abroad.

We continue to have good meetings with an attendance of around twenty five. November was busy as always – with Poppy selling a priority, followed by Festival of Remembrance Concert and Service at St George's Hall, and Remembrance Sunday with a parade to the War Memorial attended by the Lord Mayor and Councillors. Following the laying of Poppy Wreaths, there seem to be more each year, there was a March Past to City Hall.

I attended a further Service and Parade (with the Standard) in the afternoon. This is my twentieth year as Standard Bearer, and I often wonder if this could be a record? I wonder if someone could enlighten me, it may be worth a thought among the powers that be. I first carried in 1982 but that was the ATS Standard which was purchased in 1947 at the then magnificent sum of £9.10 shillings.

Our Christmas Lunch at the Pine Room was, as always, very enjoyable. The Dunkirk Veterans Association and wives joined us and a good time was had by all.

Violet, our Chairperson, should have been awarded a Certificate of Merit at the Secretary's meeting but unfortunately was taken ill. However, Col Cook came to the May meeting and presented the certificate to Violet. A very worthy award. Afterwards, Col Cook told us some of her experiences in the Army, and in return, some very lively stories were tossed. This was followed by a Faith Tea, a lovely spread, and a very lively afternoon.

BRISTOL BRANCH

Bristol has once again had a most successful 6 months. In October a trip was organised to Salisbury and Wilton, members from Bath Branch joined us; it is to be repeated again this October.

Members of the Branch were present at a Remembrance Service in Bristol where we met with the ladies from Leicester. Our Secretary represented the Branch at the Cenotaph Parade in London; a cross was laid at Westminster Abbey in remembrance of those who died.

We held our meeting in December at the Council House, this was really nice, we had a demonstration on how to make your own personal cards. In February we had our annual lunch, a celebration of the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

At our AGM in March, which was once again held at the Council House, a new committee was formed. At this meeting, a decision was made by members to try, if possible, to meet at our 'old venue' and subsequently we have been able to do so. We paid a visit to the Recruiting Office to tell them of our committee and use the room for our meetings. Fortunately they were most understanding, and said that we are more than welcome to come back if we need to in the future. We have promised to 'keep in touch'. We were always made welcome there and had built a good relationship with the serving members of all the services.

In April our meeting was cancelled, but we had a date with the Police who had organised a talk on various topics. The main items were drug awareness, safety in the home, unwanted callers and security awareness. It was all very interesting and we were treated to tea or coffee and biscuits on arrival and, later, tea coffee and cakes. We were each given a pack which consisted of a low energy light bulb, a bum bag and personal alarm, and there was an added bonus. Whilst we were there, a party of New York Firemen, who were on a visit organised by the Bristol Fire Brigade and were touring the building, stopped and talked to us, and posed for photos.

Our May meeting was most successful, we had chocolate and cakes to sell and also lots of books, and all the money raised is going towards a coach trip in the summer.

We attended the Southern Area Reunion 11 May, this was organised by Salisbury Branch and was held at Larkhill. For some of us it was a trip down memory lane, as we were stationed there back in 1959. We were able to get our bearings on camp although some things had changed, but our Billets were still standing. Our thanks to Salisbury Branch for a most enjoyable day; the food was first class.

In June our meeting falls on 'D' Day. We are making this our Jubilee Celebration and we will have a Jubilee Tea Party.

We are, once again, going to Weymouth for the Veterans Parade in June, this time we will be participating in the Parade, alongside Weymouth Branch.

We hope you have a good summer and the weather is kind to us all.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

It is with regret we report the death of two of our members. Margaret Beaumont née Major and Miss Ena Gilbert, both ATS.

Since our last report our Branch has continued to meet on the third Tuesday of the month but we have now moved premises and receive a warm welcome at the RAFA Club. Their hall is in Hall Street, off Moulsham Street, Chelmsford where 25-30 of us can be found from 1.30 – 3.30 pm. We welcome new members and hope anyone reading this will come and join us if they do not already belong to a branch in this locality. Over the last twelve months our membership has remained more or

less steady. A few left but we have gained 6 new members and some of those attend meetings. Others live too far away to make the journey but we keep in touch with newsletters.

Our programme of events is varied. We have a small committee who help to plan what we do and, as well as holding a stall and raffle, speakers are booked for some of our meetings. They include:

A slide talk of a visit to New Zealand by one of our members, Margaret Klisky, another on "the Customs and Ceremonies of London", and more recently a talk by a lady who has a collection of hats. She demonstrated by wearing 36 of them and explaining the occasions on which they would be worn. Unfortunately for her, none of us were wearing hats, but after her talk it seemed likely one might be tempted to go out and buy one!

At other meetings we entertain ourselves and this gives the opportunity to chat over a cup of tea – though the time never seems long enough. We sometime have a card game of Hoy, which is popular, or have a competition. In a competition for a completed Limerick we had 26 entries. The first line of the limerick was chosen by our chairman, Joan Scrivenor, for a reason known only to herself! The winner was Vi Duckett and her entry read:-

"There was an Old Woman called Joan
Who baked the most beautiful scone
She won many prizes
From Perth to Devizes
Which meant she was never at home"

We continue to take part in short holidays run by Warner's and have visited Corton in Norfolk over the Christmas period and also Cricket St Thomas in Somerset.

A few of us visited the Chapel of the Essex Regiment to hear a lecture on the History of the Chapel by the President of the Essex Regimental Association, Colonel G Morgan OBE DL, and the branch was represented at the War Memorial, Chelmsford in November for the Service of Remembrance.

Christmas Lunch is another highlight of the year and we gathered together at a local hotel in Chelmsford for this.

If you would like to receive a copy of our Newsletter but are not able to attend meetings, please get in touch with the Hon. Secretary who will give you details about it. (Telephone Number 01245 251088).

Our thanks go to the Officers and Committee for all they do on behalf of the Branch; to those who make and serve us tea; and those who do all the unseen jobs so willingly. We appreciate what they do and include in our thanks the support and help from Headquarter Staff at Worthy Down.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

Although I reported that we are no longer in Cleveland, we are still known as 'Cleveland Branch', so hello to you all.

September was our AGM – all committee re-elected so no change there. Some members have been through major surgery of late, and are recovering nicely. At present, its full steam ahead for the Northern Re-union. We can't decide whether to invite Sir Cliff Richard or Daniel O'Donnell as our future fund-raiser. We can't think our finances will stretch that far! Our Christmas Party went down well, knife and fork instead of a buffet. We had quite a few members on sick parade, so we wish them 'speedy recovery'. In January, we had our Annual Auction of "Unwanted Christmas Gifts". Thanks to the bringers and buyers, we were able to send a donation to the 'Arboretum Fund'. Now that our secretary can get her tongue round 'Arboretum' she has suggested we make a visit there in the summer.

As I write today it strikes me that 39 years ago, I was trembling on British Rail on my way to Hobbs Barracks, Lingfield to do my basic training. Now, with one grandchild and another any day now, I can hardly believe it.

In March, we invited the "Body Shop" to our meeting (I mean make up not mechanical). There were a few comments about 'Polyfilla', but in general I think it went down well. In April, we had our Annual Coffee Morning in Stockton Parish Church. We weren't so successful as last year, but at least one of our customers looks like being a potential member as she is ex-ATS, and had never heard of the Association.

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of HM Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, but we all celebrate her wonderful long life.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR – MRS M R FRICK

In the short time since her death on Easter Sunday, so much has been written and said about our wonderful late Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, all so richly deserved. May I, on behalf of the Cleveland Branch, pay a purely personal tribute.

We all fell under her spell when we attended the Guildford Reunion in 1992 – that day of Parades and Ceremonies culminating in a serious decline in the weather. We stood in a rather damp marquee, feeling a little tired and wet, when suddenly Her Majesty appeared in a lovely blue outfit looking like a ray of sunshine, lifting all our spirits. Her wonderful talent for making everyone feel good was evident as she came towards our little group.

Some of us were fortunate enough to have a "little chat" with her, and, if only for a moment in time, were made to feel that we were the VIPs!

A truly wonderful lady.

CREWE BRANCH

This time only four members went down to London for Remembrance Day, Edith, Doris and Molly, Betty was not well enough to go. Only Mabel went on the Cenotaph Parade, the others went to the Westminster Abbey service.

In December we went for our usual Panto outing to Crewe Theatre with our friends and relatives, this is always a happy event.

Then of course we had our customary break until February when we meet up again to plan the rest of the year. We also welcomed two new members.

Our Christmas Lunch has become a standing joke as we never have it till the New Year and this year was no exception, but it did have a distinct Irish flavour. With husbands invited, we held it at the Crewe Arms Hotel on 17 March, St Patrick's Day, which pleased my husband because he hails from the Emerald Isle.

Edith and Betty attended the AGM at the Victory Club in London on 06 April. We held a Spring Dance on 11 April at the Crosville Club where we always enjoy a pleasant and rewarding evening.

On Sunday 28 April, Edith went to the Anzac Memorial Service and Parade at Cannock Chase. She met up with Gwen Finney and Maureen Deeley, who was carrying the Standard, and said it was very impressive. Afterwards they went on to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas but Edith was disappointed to see the WRAC Plot had not been started at that time.

Running into May the Ack Ack girls had a Reunion at Nantwich at Alvaston Hall. Because Betty lives very near there, she did not stay with them, but joined them for Dinner on their last night. They had a jolly evening and she is looking forward to seeing them all again at the Ack Ack Reunion at York in July.

Still in May, we have just had a Table Top Stall at Nantwich which was very successful. We now start our holiday season and will not be doing any more fund raising until the Autumn. We will however be making arrangements to go to the Area Reunion at Birmingham on 7 September which is something we are all looking forward to.

DACORUM

Greetings from Hemel Hempstead, and a look back at 2001. November's meeting was once again a games afternoon, always enjoyed by all.

As always, the Armistice Day Parade was well supported, so many veterans still make the effort, even in wheel chairs. Some of our members managed to get to Westminster Abbey and planted a cross on the memorial plot.

December here so dark and drear, we had a music quiz followed by tea and mince pies. Our raffle prizes were two superb hampers supplied by Kathie Humphries and her son. Our Christmas Lunch will be at the Jarvis Hotel again, hopefully as enjoyable as last year.

We started February with an exercise session, given by an instructor from our local over 60's group, it was excellent and the general feeling was that we should do it more often.

In March Mr Mitchell, who is blind, brought his guide dog Polly and explained to us how the dogs were trained and then matched to their owners. It was interesting to learn about such a wonderful organisation that helps so many people lead an independent life.

PDF Compressor Free Version

April 1st – an unfortunate day! Our speaker did not appear because of a misunderstanding. We also had a new member, welcome Mrs Joan Buttler. Maybe a general chat with tea and biscuits was a better way to settle in, I do hope so.

EDINBURGH BRANCH

What have we been doing since our last report in No. 2/2001. Monthly meetings since last September to May this year have been good with increased attendance, some of our out-of-town friends returning – keep coming! Also we have a few new members which is very gratifying.

The Scots Guards Club still puts up with us – we have never been put on 'a charge' yet!! The venue being central to Haymarket, our out-of-town members come by train – quicker than we city girls on the bus.

September 2001 and we had a good start with a visit from the Area Co-ordinator of the New Erskine Hospital for Ex-Service which is being built on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The talk, together with a video on the facilities which will be provided, made for a most informative afternoon. Erskine was officially opened by The Princess Royal on 01 March and I, as Chairwoman, and another past Chairwoman were presented. The following week, because of our support for Erskine, the Branch were invited to the hospital for an afternoon. We will never forget the welcome and hospitality received both from staff and residents. Erskine deserves the support of us all.

Backtracking to Autumn 2001, our usual afternoon with the WAAF Association for tea was as lively as ever. AGM in November and in December our Christmas Lunch at the Royal British Hotel was a winner. We are booked in again for 05 December 2002 so let us know by 30 November if we can count you in.

In February for our Bring and Buy we had a record turn out resulting in 'increased profits'.

March has already been reported on above, but in April we tried something different – self entertainment with some members bringing an article or experience for which they have a special sentiment. This proved so interesting and varied and we all learned more about each other.

To end the season in May we had what can only be described as a unique experience. Mrs Dorothy Baxter, a lady in great demand, accepted an invitation to speak on her ATS days, which until recently was very much a secret. 'Y' before 'X' the Greatest Spy Story in Military History. This was beyond our imagination. To Dorothy a million thanks for such an informative, as well as a happy, afternoon.

Unfortunately, we have to record the death of Mrs Margaret Edmundston on 27 October last – a past Chairwoman of the Branch, and more recently Mrs Florence Pieterse of Melrose who died on 10 May 2002.

Best wishes to all Branches from Edinburgh.

GLASGOW BRANCH

Our Branch continues to flourish. An increase in membership of 3 has brought our total to 111. Sadly four of our most active members died in the last 12 months. They are greatly missed.

Our syllabus is always varied and interesting. The musical afternoons are very enjoyable and it always amazes us that these senior citizen entertainers are still performing to such a high standard.

There was a high turn out at our Branch AGM. We always have a Bring and Buy table. This year we raised the sum of £163.

2001 was a very special year for one of our members – Miss Muriel M Thomson, Life Vice-President of Council, who celebrated her 90th birthday in November. At our October AGM, Miss Thomson invited as many of our Branch as could make the journey, to visit her home for a pre-birthday lunch on 30 October. On the day, which was very stormy – high winds, lashing rain and ankle deep in fallen leaves, 25 of us arrived by train and car to be met by a smiling Miss Thomson who had prepared a delicious buffet and just to remind us of our service days we were served by Lt Col J Lawson MBE, Mrs Alice Matthews and Major Isobel Gordon (all retired). After a very happy afternoon we made our way home – the storm was still raging but we didn't mind.



Miss M Thomson (centre front seated with poppy), Lt Col Lawson MBE (lower left), May McGavin, Treasurer (upper left), Margaret Rattray, President (upper right), Catherine Lindsay, Secretary (upper right)

The Scottish AGM and Reunion is always high on our agenda. This year our hosts were Stirling Branch. In the chair was Lt Col Lawson MBE who gave the business report, which was of great interest to everyone at the meeting. We look forward to a speedy solution to the Lioness shortage. This was followed by a very enjoyable meal with lots of chatter and laughter with friends we only see once a year. The musical entertainment just suited our age range and when some of the old dance tunes were played, we couldn't resist. It set our old toes a-tapping and, taking our courage in both hands or should I say both feet, we abandoned our walking sticks, took to the dance floor and almost at once were transported back to our misspent youth. Well – for all of five minutes anyway! Then, out of breath and limping, we made our way back to our seats and the walking sticks. Thank you Stirling for a very happy day.

For some years Glasgow Branch have had a standing invitation to join Hamilton British Legion at their Festival of Remembrance on 04 November. Hamilton is 30 miles to the south east of Glasgow. The Remembrance Service held at Glasgow Cenotaph was well attended by our branch. Twenty one of us paraded, after which there was a buffet in the beautiful banqueting hall of Glasgow City Chambers, where the young servicemen and women mixed with us oldies.

Our Christmas Lunch on 13 December was in the Grosvenor Hotel. Our guests were Lt Col Lawson MBE and Major Gordon. This is always a very happy occasion. It gives us a chance to "dress up?" in our party frocks.

In January, when the weather was at its most horrible, we went on a magical journey to the Highlands of Scotland. Mr Keith, a retired Bank Manager who is an expert photographer, had taken slides in the Autumn when the trees were changing colour – red and gold – wonderful sunsets and cascading water falls. We could almost imagine we were there.

At our meeting last September, Mr John Lynch, a Glasgow City Councillor, came to our meeting to tell us how Glasgow Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum came to possess a ghost shirt that had once belonged to a member of the Lakota Sioux Tribe of indigenous American people and how, over 100 years later it was returned to South Dakota.

The Rev. Ada Younger of the Church of Scotland was another of our speakers. She and some of her congregation had visited Cairo to show support for the minority Christians living there and who are unable to worship in their Church building. Undaunted, they have acquired a boat to hold their services and other activities on the river Nile. The Rev. Ada is a very humorous and lively speaker and, since a few of our members had served in Cairo in wartime, there was an interesting discussion comparing the old and modern Cairo.

We are coming to the end of our present session and, despite the never-ending rain, our meetings have been well attended.

We still have two dates left on our syllabus. One is our annual outing when we visit Bonnie Dundee for shopping

and lunch followed by a visit to Coupar Angus for an evening meal. On 13 May our friends from the WRNS Association are joining us for our last meeting.

We wish you all a very happy and healthy summer.

GRIMSBY AND DISTRICT BRANCH

We hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year and that you are all well. After our great reunion in September at the Winter Gardens, Cleethorpes we began our winter activities.

October – We held our AGM and our present Secretary, Eunice Dillerstone, resigned after many years of doing an excellent job as Branch Secretary. Her position was taken by Gail Davy, a founder member at our first 1986 Branch meeting of 21 ladies. Gail is well versed in secretarial duties having served the British Legion in Grimsby as County Secretary for 10 years, Branch Chairperson for 6 years and Branch Secretary for 13 years. The previous committee were asked to stand again with the exception of Eleanor Wilson, Vice Chairperson, and Edna Plaskett. These ladies have served on the committee for 14 years but due to ill health they both found it difficult to serve any longer. Flo Beedy and Doreen Sutcliffe have replaced them.

15 Years Poppy Selling Awarded

November – The branch was again at the ASDA store in Grimsby selling poppies for the week and raising a grand total of £1,157.23. Seventeen branch members received the British Legion 15 Years Poppy Brooch for services rendered. Brigadier R D Plummer, President of the Lincolnshire Royal British Legion, made the presentations at the ASDA store. Our Treasurer, Ruth Jenner, was further honoured by getting the 50 Years Medal and Bar together with the Poppy for Merit award for her many years service to the Poppy Appeal. The Evening Telegraph reported the awards and Ruth was on Radio Humberside. We, the 17 poppy sellers, have a combined total of 290 years service collecting for the Poppy Appeal. On Armistice Sunday wreaths were laid at both Grimsby and Cleethorpe's War Memorials by members, and a service at our St Andrews Church was attended. Carole carried the Standard at both Grimsby services.



Members of Grimsby Branch received their poppy selling award

On 14 December we held our Branch Christmas Party at St Andrews Church Hall with plenty to eat and drink.

Our 15th Anniversary Dinner was held on 18 December at the Littlefield Carvery, Grimsby. A most enjoyable meal and after dinner entertainment. Margaret Sadham and Joyce Leverton, all received British Legion Poppy selling awards for up to 60 years joint poppy selling. What a great honour and a surprise as these three ladies didn't know anything about these awards which were presented by Gail Davy on behalf of the British Legion. That was a grand ending to 2001.

In February we had a jumble sale at the branch to raise money to donate to the National Arboretum Memorial at Lichfield. We managed to raise £100 from the jumble sale which was donated to the memorial appeal. We are hoping to arrange a visit soon.

On 24 March thirty two members set off from Grimsby for a two day outing to Blackpool staying overnight at the Hilton Hotel. The ladies visited the Mecca Bingo (first 6 games free), as usual. One or two lucky members won and everyone enjoyed themselves. A visit to "Rourke's Iron Forge" established 1961 at Burnley, Lancs took place the next day. The ladies saw men forging iron gates, letter openers and swans. Then onto Chorley, Lancs and a visit to "Botany Bay" bygone and memorabilia. Five floors crammed with crafts, outdoor exhibits, bygone times and old furniture. Well worth a visit ladies if you are looking for a day out. The members had a great time and our lottery donation has now all gone, but was well spent. Thanks to our Chair, Audrey Porter, Vice Chair, Carole Tyler and past and present Secretaries, Eunice Dillerstone and Gail Davy.

April - Normal branch activities and future planning for our next jaunt out. Who knows where? I will tell you next time readers, so goodbye for now and be well all of you.

GREATER LONDON

Orange Street Congregational Church 13 Oct 01
Branch AGM and Chair's Retirement

Greetings to you all. The Branch has had a busy year again. Mrs Pat Gibson, who had been our Chairman for 12 years, retired at our AGM on 13 October 2001 and



Mrs Pat Gibson cutting her birthday cake.

Colonel Barbara Laverack presented her with a cheque from the members and wished her a happy retirement. As it would also be Pat's 80th Birthday on 16 October we invited her to cut her birthday cake which was lit with 8 candles and wished her in song, a happy 80th birthday. Our new Chairman is Mrs Beryl Pepper, standing to her right in the photograph and to whom we pledge our support and good wishes.

Mrs Pat Gibson will be presented with her Certificate of Appreciation at the Association AGM on 6 April 2002.

Three ladies were invited to the afternoon performance at the Royal Albert Hall for the Festival of Remembrance - this was through the generosity of the Not Forgotten Association who made us very welcome and, indeed, the performance was excellent. The lucky ladies were Eileen Carter, Marie Wade and Bessie Hall.

Eight branch members then went to Westminster Abbey on the Sunday morning for the very moving Service of Remembrance - this is always very special and poignant.

HEREFORD BRANCH

It is with sadness that we have to let you know that one of our members who had been a strong supporter of the Branch, died suddenly on 16 March 2002. Dorothy Anna Brooks will be sadly missed by all her friends at Hereford. She loved to reminisce about her wartime days and always had a good tale to tell. She will be remembered for her rendering of the 'old song' which we sang on reunion trips. She had an infectious laugh and made every outing something to remember. She will always be remembered fondly and the mouth-watering cream sponges she made for our charity and social functions will, no doubt, also be greatly missed. All in Hereford raise a glass to you old friend.

This sad news was followed by the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, our Patron, so on the day of the AGM six members from Hereford arrived in London. Jo Anscombe has written an account of the adventures of this intrepid sextet.

'Six Hereford members were booked to go to the AGM at the Victory Club on 06 April 2002. We set off at 0630 hours and arrived at the Club just after 1000 hours. After a coffee and 'comfort stop' we left Evelyn, our Secretary, to attend her two meetings and lunch. [At this point all I saw was their rear ends entering a taxi saying we're off to pay our respects; we will be back, wait for us. Evelyn]. We left instructions to tender our apologies if we were late for the AGM. Our cheerful London taxi driver was ordered to take us quickly to the 'back of the queue' for the Lying in State of Her Majesty the Queen Mother. We had met, shaken hands and chatted to our Patron, when Her Majesty opened the ATS/WRAC Museum at Guildford in 1991, so felt a special regard for her and were all very determined to pay out last respects.

The taxi driver sped up and down the busy streets around Westminster, turning twice in the Middle!! Upon asking an equally cheerful London Policeman, where the end of the queue was, we were directed to the London Eye. He wished

us well and off we went to the back of the queue – a further half a mile at least. We met, chatted and took photos of those around us and had a few laughs. Everyone was so cheerful and friendly but that is just how the Queen Mother would have wished it to be. She was always cheerful and friendly herself.

PDF Compressor Free Version

By the time we were crossing Lambeth Bridge it turned very cold and breezy and I think we thought we were almost there. In actual fact we were only half way, as the queue snaked back on itself twice across the green beside Westminster Palace. A notice said 'last toilets' and a WRVS tent served hot tea. We looked at the lovely flowers left on the green and wandered, or shuffled rather, onwards. One burly policeman had a note on his chest 'nearly there' and his mate opposite had one 'he's a liar'. That caused more merriment. We had entered a tent, manned by Scouts, where about thirty books of condolence could be signed, and now we were going through security. The bleep went for two of us but it wasn't the first person, it was the second and turned out to be an inside zip on her coat! More laughter – we had been frisked!!

Then absolute silence as we got to the top of the stairs. Kindly policemen helped mothers with their pushchairs and young children, and we five marvelled at the sight of the light on the glorious crown and the lifeguards at their vigil. So smart and still, highly polished uniforms – they were really 'statues of marble'. We went by in single file and as one we bowed our heads in unison, our respects for a much loved lady. [I was later told that our ladies marched, came to a halt and executed a perfect turn and bowed].

We had been 5½ hours in the queue from 1050 hours to 1620 hours but it had been worth it. We did get to the Victory Club again, but only in time for a chat with a few friends still having tea and biscuits.

Our lasting memories of the day were everyone's cheerful attitude but respect and dignity also. No one but Britain could arrange such spectacular ceremonies. The children especially were so good, no arguing or crying while queuing and also quiet and inquisitive when in Westminster Hall.

We were proud to have taken part in history and bid our farewells to our Wartime Queen, Queen Mother and Patron. We were also proud to see on TV on the day of the funeral, our Brigadier Neild, representing us. She walked into the Abbey just in front of Lord St John Stevas.

It is with great pride that our ladies, who I must mention were not in their early years and some not in good health, achieved this and I feel that they were there representing not only Hereford branch, but, if I could be so bold, all members who could not get there. Well done ladies.

LEEDS BRANCH

In November, whilst most of us were braving cold winds to attend Remembrance Day Parades, our Secretary, Emily, was doing the same in the sun and warmth of Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Ex-Servicemen's Association was formed by the amalgamation of WWII Veterans Association, The

Royal Navy, The Hong Kong Soldiers Association and The Hong Kong Ex-Soldiers Association. It was established in March 1997 to keep in touch with all those who ever served in The British Garrison.

The aim of the Association is to enhance the relationship of the members by a variety of social activities and to provide assistance to those members in difficulty. It also participates fully in all charity activities and is able to gain all manner of charitable support for members.

The actual memorial is a replica of that in Whitehall and the ceremony was carried out with reverence which put our Service in London in the shade. The photo gives some impression of the perfection of the drill.



Remembrance Day in Hong Kong as seen by our Branch Secretary

Our two members, privileged to attend, were most impressed and found it very moving.

Our Christmas Party was a success, as usual, so too was the visit to the Theatre in February to see "Singing in the Rain". Easter saw four members taking a coach tour to Folkestone in order to wish 80th Birthday happiness to Rose, a long time Leeds branch member.

Four members enjoyed a week's holiday at Alvaston Hall with fellow AA and Searchlight friends.

The day in Chester was most interesting. Those members left at home had an outing to Roundhay Park.

Two members attended the Dedication of the Royal Artillery Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum, a truly moving ceremony.

We are now looking forward to our Jubilee Lunch and general celebration complete with flags, balloons and fancy paper hats which will be judged for originality.

LONDON BRANCH

We seem to be having a year of changes. Starting with the election of Officers at our AGM. Mrs Dorothy Foster remains our Chairman but Miss Eva Ellison resigned as secretary (after 17 years dedicated service, who could blame her) leaving a very hard act to follow. Mrs Gladys

Stewart (Treasurer) agreed to at least try, with the help of Mrs Aline Leswell as membership secretary – which then left us without a Treasurer. Loyal to the end, Miss Ellison agreed to fill the post for the coming year, for which we are very grateful and hope she will find, perhaps a change is as good as a PDF Compressor Free Version

Our meetings continue to be held the third Thursday of the month (bar August) but through unforeseen circumstances we have changed our venue. Our Christmas Tea Party had to be our last meeting at the Union Jack Club. Perhaps this knowledge did mar the festivities a little, we had spent many a happy hour at the club. But you can't keep ATS girls down for long can you? By the end of the afternoon we were feverishly discussing the best way to travel to Davies Street, Mayfair, the home of the Royal Green Jackets, for our future meetings.



Mrs Gladys Stewart receiving her certificate of appreciation from Brigadier Nield.

Our usual January 'Get-together' was a good opportunity to feel our way in new surroundings etc, and it must be said we were made very welcome. Our speaker in February was Mr John Carter of TV's 'Wish You Were Here' fame, who related amusing tales of his travels and the weird and wonderful food he had tasted. In March we welcomed back Mrs Peggy Oliver, Pearly Queen of Redbridge London Borough. Looking great in all her regalia, she had us joining in with singing the songs of yesteryear – a great afternoon. In April we were entertained by Mr Ivan Bevan who gave a very interesting talk, with slides on the history of the Crystal Palace and how it was built.

Many branch members attended the AGM at the Victory Club in April and are now looking forward to our Area Reunion in October, to be held in Davies Street. If anyone is coming to London (early Christmas shopping) around the 5th do get in touch, we may have tickets available. Visitors are always welcome at branch meetings just ring 020 8460 5982.



Members enjoy their Christmas at the Union Jack Club, 2001.

LUTON BRANCH

It has been very remiss of me – I've missed not one, but two reports on the trot! No excuses – I missed the deadlines. There isn't really a lot to report this time around; we have sadly lost two of our members, in the same week. Doreen "Bunny" Chilton, and Joan Vass. One obituary notice in a week is quite enough – two is a bit much.

I'm sure most people will have seen the report on the London Area Group Reunion, in *Lioness* 2002/1, which Luton hosted jointly with Dacorum branch. One of our speakers left us in the lurch but Ray Lindsey-Jones (the Owl Man) came up trumps, and filled the breach admirably. He was also very popular with all our guests, as were his beautiful owls.

I don't think Luton will ever be a huge branch, but we seem to jog along quite happily. We are all hoping to descend upon Brighton in September, and hoping for some decent weather when we do. The usual selection of speakers, quizzes, etc., are lined up for the coming months, including a return match with the Far East Vets quiz team – this time we hope to avenge our defeat.

MEDWAY BRANCH

We haven't had a good start to the year with two cancelled meetings and poor attendance at the others, illness and commitments were the cause.

In May we were hoping to go to Margate to see the bench in Trinity Gardens and sun ourselves on the beach but the rain put paid to that.

In June we will join the Canterbury Branch for their cream tea, we always have an enjoyable time there.

The Garrison Church in Gillingham have asked the Branch to do a floral display to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. We hope we can get fresh flowers in the colours of the Association. Requests for dried flowers were also called for. There will be a service on the Sunday in the morning and members will attend.

July, strawberry and cream tea at the Secretary's home. A good fund raiser for the Branch.

August will be the Branch AGM getting the branch accounts ready for September. We hope that members who don't attend during the year will be able to attend this meeting.

A coffee morning and a Fair have already been booked for September, and a Charity Stall at Rochester Market, goods are already going into store. The Bring and Buy brought very little into the funds recently and we hope to do better in the future.

London Branch have invited us to attend their Reunion in October which all members are looking forward to.

Once again we will go to St George's Hotel for Christmas Lunch. We are made very welcome there and they have said how much they enjoy our company. The food is always first class.

In 2003 it will be 21 years since Medway Branch was formed and we hope to mark the occasion with a tea party.

This year we did not hold a combined lunch as this was meant to mark the Millennium. It seems that members from all the Associations want the lunch on a regular basis and one is to be arranged for 2003.

Talks are underway about the Reunion at Birmingham in April 2003. If there are enough members we will book a mini-coach to take us, as London is very busy on the underground and members feel safer by coach.

All members were delighted that Dot Higgins and Kathy Heard received certificates at the AGM meeting in April. Well done.

We wish you all well in the future and look forward to seeing some of you at the Reunions and get togethers.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

In January our members enjoyed a lunch and social afternoon at the Jesmond British Legion Club. In February members went to the Memorial Service at North Shields for Tommy Brown, a local hero of World War II. The service was held at the quayside and then the parade of band, veterans and cadets went to the Civic Hall and a window was dedicated to him.

Members are looking forward to joining Sunderland Branch for a pie and peas lunch, also going to Cleveland for the North East Re-Union. Members have started to save for the Grand Re-Union at Birmingham.

A donation was sent to the Heart Foundation in memory of loyal member Mrs Sadie Simpson. Association member Mrs Ivy Bennet will be sadly missed as she passed away not long after leaving our meeting room. She made marmalade, jams, pies and cakes for our sales table, her work was appreciated by all.

We enjoy the friendship at our meetings and send our greetings to all other Branches.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BRANCH

During the past year we have not been idle and have had a very full programme. Much of the news contained in this report will already be familiar to our members through the twice-yearly Newsletter sent out. With over 130 members spread over the two counties it is impossible for the majority to get to Norwich. Public transport is sparse and unreliable and distances are quite considerable, so that only those within easy reach of the city are able to come to meetings and attendance has dropped to an average of 17 a month. So the Newsletter, which comes out twice a year, does help to keep us in touch. (It rather pales, though, when compared with the monthly Newsletter which Colchester Branch's Secretary sends out!). Talking about the lack of public transport, I was told recently of a new estate of houses built on the site of an old village railway station. It has ironically been named "Beeching Close". Mr Beeching ranks alongside Cromwell and William Dowsing in infamy in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Blood pressure is high in East Anglia, and it's not global warming. Mention the proposed statue to Women of WWII and faces become flushed. But we have to accept that it is a fait accompli and that we were misled in the first place. We are generally not in favour of the proposal but agree that being in the hands of Higher Authority we cannot reverse the decision. No one, however, is willing to contribute further to the considerably higher costs involved.

Last October a small group of us attended the annual service in memory of Nurse Edith Cavell, at her grave alongside the Cathedral. In November we held our usual Remembrance Day Service and the placing of a poppy wreath at the memorial plaque in Great Yarmouth to the 26 ATS girls killed there in 1943. On 11 May, some thirty of us held a service at the site which we have done annually on the date of the tragedy since the plaque was unveiled by Lady Soames in 1994. Next year will be the 60th anniversary of the incident and we hope the service then will be particularly well attended.

On 04 May a group of us attended a service in Norwich City Cemetery to remember the considerable number of civilians who were killed during the 'Baedeker Raids' on Norwich in May 1943 and who are commemorated in a special area of the cemetery. The service was attended by the Lord Mayor and by a representative from Coblenz, with which city Norwich is twinned.

Having done battle with the War Graves Commission and Gt Yarmouth Borough Council on more than one occasion about the neglected state of the two ATS (and three ex-servicemen's) graves in the Roman Catholic Cemetery there, some of our members cleaned up the area in November and returned in April this year to find that, although the surrounding grass had been cut, the area is still sadly neglected and the graves unkempt and full of weeds. Once again we cleaned and weeded and planted spring bulbs and primroses. Another letter to Gt Yarmouth Borough Council will point out that it is their duty and not the responsibility of a group of ladies in their seventies and eighties to maintain these five isolated graves.

After our strenuous efforts there, Mrs Beryl Coupar entertained us with a very welcome lunch at her house on the edge of the sea at Scratby. In May we were welcomed by Mrs Pepi Simpson to her home in Reepham for coffee when she told us of her moving experience of attending the lying-in-state of Her Majesty the Queen Mother after this month, 29 May, and given suitable weather, I am hoping for a good attendance at a coffee morning and sale in my garden to raise funds. On 04 June we are going to Kentwell Hall in Suffolk for a 'World War II' day and in August we have again been invited to a 'Ladies' Day' at Flixton Air Museum, which is becoming an annual event. I am trying to arrange a luncheon in Bury St Edmunds for some of those members who can get there and have expressed a wish to meet. Our Treasurer, Audrey Juby, has invited us again this year to a luncheon party in her village garden in Marlingford. We are finding that attendance at some of these functions is dependent upon lifts given by the very few remaining drivers among us. I expect other Branches are having the same experience. We are fortunate in Norwich in having a good privately run coach service which arranges days out and we take advantage of these as often as we can. Our next, main, outing this year will be on 03 September to the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. For this we shall hire a private coach. If any members would like to join us, bearing in mind that we shall have to make a very early start from Norwich, please contact Joan Aubrey.

Some members, and particularly our chairman, Mrs Olive Brown, who is a wizard with the knitting machine, continue to make garments which are handed over alternately to Oxfam and to the local Ghurkha Children's appeal.

In June our Speaker will be showing slides and describing War Memorials she has visited both in this country and on the Continent. In July we shall be hearing from the American curator about the re-installation, after the disastrous Library fire here, of the American Memorial Room in the new Forum building. One of our members, Mrs Helen Green, will be talking about her experiences living in Nigeria, and a gentleman is coming to entertain and enlighten us on the 'Norfolk Dialect'. He may be able to pick up a few ideas from us!

Finally, greetings to our friends in other Branches; it was good to meet so many from far away places at the AGM in April. If you are on holiday in East Anglia, we'd love to see you at one of our meetings, or meet you somewhere in Norwich. Do get in touch.

PERTH BRANCH

Twenty five of us travelled to Stirling Branch in October 2001 where we were entertained after the AGM and Lunch by a group of fiddlers and a male singer. This was very enjoyable so thank you Stirling.

We had our Christmas Lunch at the Station Hotel on 05 December with our usual raffle and sales tables. The meal was excellent and 40 members attended.

Our branch AGM took place at the Royal George Hotel, Perth on 18 April. There was a good attendance. We were

entertained by one of our members, Mrs Tessa Rhynd, accompanied by Gillian on the keyboard. Very unfortunately, due to parking problems in the town and our schedule taking longer, the majority of members had to leave while the entertainment was going on, which was a great pity, so many apologies to Tessa and Gillian.

A letter from Buckingham Palace was received from Sir Robin Janvrin, Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen, acknowledging our message of sympathy after the death of her mother Queen Elizabeth.

We look forward to going to the Scottish AGM at Aberdeen in October and from what we've heard beforehand it "seems full of promise". Also plans are being laid for Birmingham 2003.

May I take this opportunity to thank the members who donated the beautiful crystal vases and bouquets of lilies which the Treasurer and myself were gifted with at the April AGM when, with mixed feelings, we stepped down from our posts. Thank you all so much. We have shared events and times with branch colleagues, Scottish Branches and nationwide branch members.

Happy memories and safe journeys.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

I am very sorry to have to start this report with the sad news of the death of our President, Mrs Lenora Hannaford, on 28 March 2002. This was a great shock to everyone because she was making such wonderful progress from her hip operation which had been performed only a few weeks previously. Lenora will be sadly missed by Plymouth Branch for her commitment and knowledge. She had been involved with the beginnings of our branch and served in pretty well every office over many years.

Our Standard Bearer, Mrs Pauline Evans proudly carried our Standard at Lenora's funeral. Other Standards attending were the RBL (2 districts, both men and women), the WRNS, the RNA, the RAA and the Gloucs, Berks and Wilts Association. At this point we congratulate Pauline on her debut as Bearer last November at the Festival of Remembrance in the Pavilions. It was an added bonus that our photo was the main feature in the covering report of the local Evening Herald. Well done Girls!

Our Christmas Lunch was a successful social occasion and we are already anticipating our next one on 07 December.

Quite a lot of us are planning to go the SW Reunion which is being hosted by Wincanton Branch this year.

There is another trip to the Eden Project in June. Also in June we are going to a Queen's Jubilee Concert and will be having our annual Corps service in the chapel of St Catherine in the Citadel. July brings us to the great concert, the Music of the Night, in the Citadel up on Plymouth Hoe.

The branch's greatest excitement this year was winning a

grant from the "Awards for All" scheme. Our portfolio was to purchase a colour photocopier with the aim of facilitating the production of our Branch Newsletter. The really hard work of form filling was performed by our Assistant Secretary, Mrs Betty Mitchell, and how well she carried out the task. **PDF Compressor Free Version** We congratulate Betty on being awarded a Certificate of Appreciation. She was able to receive it from Brigadier Neild at the AGM in April where she went as stand in for the secretary who is recovering from surgery.



Mr Phil Dwyer, Chairman of the Federation of Plymouth & District Ex-Services Association presenting the photocopier

We are always happy to welcome any member who is visiting Plymouth on holiday or business. We meet once a month at the Royal Fleet Club, Devonport, 1.30 – 4.00 pm on the first Monday of the month except in January. If a Bank Holiday falls on the first Monday, the meeting is moved to the second Monday.

Contact Phone Numbers for the branch are:

Ruth Jennings, Secretary 01752 363118
Betty Mitchell, Assistant Secretary 01752 348632

RHYL BRANCH



Rhyll and Chester members in Holland last year

I start this report in November when we were out on parade for Remembrance Day. Eighteen members attended the Service and Parade in Rhyll in the morning,

and six members and the Standard were on parade in the afternoon in Prestatyn.

December – We held our Christmas Dinner on 11 December at The Grange Hotel, Rhyll. On 13 December we were guests of the Normandy Veterans at their Christmas Dinner at the Nova, Prestatyn.

January – We used our meeting to discuss fundraising events for the year as we know that we will be needing money to pay for hiring a coach to take us to the various Branch Social Afternoons. It is getting harder each year to pay the rising costs.

March – We had a successful Bingo Evening, had our monthly meeting and also met for lunch.

April – Fifteen members went to Wilmslow to join them at their Golden Jubilee Social Afternoon, this was really good and the buffet was excellent. On 19 April we were at the Nova Centre at Prestatyn as guests of the Normandy Veterans for a Medal Presentation Banquet. This was a lovely evening where the veterans who were injured in the campaign all received a medal. It may be 50 years on but they were still very well received. We were very honoured to see these men proudly accepting their medals.

May – We went to Rochdale for their 'Social Afternoon'. This again was very good and the buffet was lovely. We all enjoy these events as we meet friends and comrades that some of the ladies actually served with.

June – The Group Reunion is to take place on 13 June and we are looking forward to going to this. I will let you know how we get on in our next report. We are busy organising our Social Afternoon which we are holding on 4 July this year.

Also to come is a 4-day break in Bridlington for ten of us together with two members of the Chester Branch.

Until my next report, may we here at Rhyll send our best wishes to you all for the rest of this year and into next year.

Don't forget, if you do happen to come to Wales and are in the area on the second Monday of any month, do pop in to see us as we will always give you a good welcome. We meet at the Rhyll Sports and Social Club (formerly Naval Club) Welling Road at 1.30 pm.

ROCHDALE BRANCH

As I sit down to write our branch letter, my mind wanders, thinking it is nearly our Queen's Golden Jubilee, and how she was one of us. I was thinking back to February 1939 when two 18 year olds (yours truly, Josephine Hardice, and Clarice Longbottom, my bosom friend), decided to do their bit and walked from choir practice to do just that, with not a clue as to what it would entail. We finally found the Drill Hall, Thorley Street, Failsworth, the HQ for the 71st Searchlight Regt RA, TA, and ended up being part of the 3rd East Lancs ATS TA, attached to that regiment. But that's a long story – now back to the job in hand.



*Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation
Joyce Goddard, Mary Campbell, Joan McClelland Area
Secretary, Mona Schofield*

On 24 October three of our members, Joyce Goddard, Mona Schofield and Mary Campbell, were to be presented with Certificates for Services to the Association. Mary, who was our Chairman, now resides in the Hurstead Nursing Home so we rallied forth for the ceremony, which was carried out by the Area Chairman, Joan McClelland. The staff at the home put on a lovely buffet for us, for which we thanked them in the usual way.

In November our members who are also members of the Women's Section of the British Legion, did their usual stint selling poppies in Rochdale Shopping Centre. This time I believe the total collected was £22,500.

At our November meeting our friend, Marjorie Sutcliffe, told us the sad news that she had cancer, and we were all shocked and saddened when she died on 12 December. As many as were able attended her funeral at St Mary's Church, Prestwich and accorded her the usual honours. We shall all miss her very much.

On 07 March a plaque was presented to our members in appreciation of dedicated services to the Poppy Appeal and this is now displayed at the White Hart Public House, Rochdale, where we hold our meetings.

At a special ceremony on 09 April, our members, along with members of the British Legion, laid a wreath at the Rochdale Cenotaph to honour our dear Queen Mother, our Patron. On 18 April, seventeen of us travelled to Wilmslow to join in their "Queen's Jubilee" celebrations. We arrived a wee bit late, but really enjoyed the party and lovely buffet and quiz. We didn't win, but did manage to secure a few raffle prizes. All in all it was quite a good gathering, and everyone was happy.

On 14 May, ten of our members joined the "Para" ex-service members and their families to journey to Haworth for a 1940 celebratory event. This was a beautiful day, full of nostalgia and such a happy atmosphere. Those hills and cobblestones do nothing for the feet though!!

May 14th was our own day to honour our Queen's Golden Jubilee and our celebrations were held at the Masonic Hall, Rochdale. This was a day we all enjoyed and we

were joined by our friends from Rhyl, Stockport, Bolton and Chester. The Mayor of Rochdale was also in attendance and, this being her last day of office, I know she thoroughly enjoyed herself. The buffet and entertainment was excellent and we had the usual tombola and raffle, which were looked after by our male colleagues, Jack Huntbach, Colin Laverich and Ted Whithorn. May Cockcroft made a cake which she presented and this tasted very good indeed. We were also honoured with the presence of our friends the Landlord and Landlady of the White Hart and the Chairman of the Monte Cassino Veterans Association, Jim Edgar.

The proceedings ended with a gusto rendering of the National Anthem and Land of Hope and Glory. May our "Noble Queen" live long to reign over us.

SALISBURY BRANCH

At the AGM last September, Lt Col Val Trout paid tribute to all the work carried out on behalf of the branch by Joan Morgan and Veronica Dodkins who were both retiring as Secretary and Treasurer after holding office for many years.

Officers elected were Chairman, Alyson Ogden, Secretary Lt Col V Trout, Treasurer Jill Trainer.

A programme of varied events has been enjoyed, including a talk on the life and times of Queen Victoria by Mrs Crowe, an interesting look at collecting antiques by Phillip Rance of Woolley & Wallis, and a most enjoyable visit to RHS Wisley.

Our Branch hosted the Southern Area Reunion in May, held at The Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill (see separate report).

Six members attended the National AGM held at the Victory Club. Many thanks to all those members who supported our Quiz. The winners were Mrs A Leswell, Orpington and Annie Graham, Wincanton. For all those still wondering about any of the answers why not give Jill a call!!

We continue to gain a few members.

Lastly, it was with great sadness we learnt of the sudden death of Irene Ludlow who had been such a loyal member of the branch and the Association. We shall all miss her smiling presence.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

As we write our reports this time, I'm, sure we all feel sad at losing our dear Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, who passed away last March, but we do give thanks for her long and eventful life.

Firstly I want to correct two errors I made in the last report, I unreservedly apologise to the Ladies of "Bury Branch" for stating the dates were wrong on their sign at "Eden Camp", indeed they were correct, 1938-1998 being

the 60th Anniversary of the ATS. The Sign was kindly given to "Eden Camp" by the "Bury Branch", and thank you Mary Gregory for our chat on the phone, when I rang you.

The second error was that I had been at the Original Branch Meeting in 1980, I now understand they were; Terri, Chris, Connie, Ruby, Jean Heath, and others, Mary Beeston chaired this first meeting.

I wonder if I will get CB or Jankers, or maybe the sack!

As part of our Branch 21st Celebrations last year, Flo Poulter bought us a beautiful decorated iced cake, it was delicious, thank you Flo.

In October, a Table Top Sale raised £24.40 for branch funds.

Once again in November, we attended the morning Remembrance Service at the Garrison Church, Donnington, and afterwards had lunch in the Sergeants' Mess.

In the evening, we went to the "Ceremony of Light" at Oakengates Theatre, where the Abraham Darby School Band played and there were numerous Standards present. Candles were lit when 100 names of those who died in the two World Wars, and who were from the surrounding local areas were read out.

Instead of our usual Christmas Party in December, we enjoyed a Lunch at the "Bucks Head", Long Lane. Afterwards two of our girls, Eunice and Rene, discovered their bus could only take them half way home, luckily they were offered a lift the rest of the way by car, they do seem to have some adventures!! But transport is indeed a problem for us.



Members of Shropshire Branch at their Christmas lunch

We sadly report the deaths of two members; Lt Col (Retd) Elizabeth Robinson in December, and Jean Burnett in January.

In lieu of Christmas Cards for each other, we collected, and sent £25 to our Local Hospice.

We had a Celebration Party in March for Lucy and Charles as they achieved an outstanding event, their

Diamond Wedding Anniversary. Well done, they always have their Kit Bags packed, as they are frequently on Manoeuvres! It was also Beryl and Terri's birthdays.

Another Table Top Sale resulted in £25, we are always grateful for any items given to us for these sales, as the money raised helps to boost our funds.

In April, some of us travelled to London for the AGM. Two of us saw the crowds patiently waiting to pay their respects to Her Majesty the Queen Mother, lying in state in Westminster Hall.

Recently a few of our Members went on a day out with the Royal British Legion, to "Turners" at Northampton. We had a great time, singing and dancing to the Wurlitzer Organ, even blithely leaping on the Horses and Cockerels to ride on the Merry Go Round. We've never been the same since!!

One of our girls, Lilian Boardman, recently made the Headlines in our local paper, with a beautiful Poem that she wrote years ago. On sending it to the Queen and Prince Charles, following the death of the Queen Mother, Lilian received very warm appreciative replies from them both.

Here is the poem;

Memories

Memories are like the thread of gold,
They never tarnish and never grow old.
All my life, I shall miss her -
She meant all the world to me.
I have pleasant memories
That others cannot see,
They are mine to treasure
For which I will never part
I shall keep them very close to me
Locked inside my heart.
My heart will always ache with sadness,
Secret tears will always flow,
What it meant losing her
Nobody will ever know.

In June, those of us who can, will attend Corps Day, at AGC Centre, Worthy Down and on 05 June we will be having our Party for the Queens Golden Jubilee.

Two new members have joined us, Irene Docherty and Violet Greenwood, we welcome both to our Branch.

We are looking forward to our Area Reunion on 07 September, at Birmingham. Later in September, members of the ATS Dinner Club are having a four day holiday in Devon and some of our Branch will be there.

To our members who are sick we wish you a speedy recovery, and those who can't travel to our meetings, we do think of you all and send our best wishes. Thank you again for your support, it is really appreciated.

Thank you HQ for our wonderful magazine "Lioness", Keep soldiering on.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Since our last report, our Standard Bearer, Margaret Barham (née Hope), has been very busy. Last November she paraded our Standard at a Remembrance Service in Bristol and again at a Remembrance Service in Southampton. She also paraded the British Legion Standard at the Royal Albert Hall on 10 November. Member Hazel Haycock (née Hutchinson) laid a WRAC Poppy wreath during the Remembrance Service in Southampton on our behalf.

Local Historian, Genevieve Bailey, in giving a talk on Southampton advised us that the Cenotaph in London is a copy of the one in Southampton, and that our Civic Centre, so called, was the first in the country and so, the first in the world!

It is a long time ago now, but our Christmas Party and Christmas Lunch went very well. Activities have included a presentation by an Independent Financial Adviser, a talk with slides on Naomi House, a Children's Hospice, and a Quilting demonstration and talk by one of the members, Jean Houghton (née Apps). We still maintain regular contact with the WRNS and WAAF Associations in Southampton and give and receive various invitations to events. Twenty six members also attended our Annual Dinner at the Ex-Servicemen's Club.

Fourteen members went along and thoroughly enjoyed the South Group Area Re-union at the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill. Being a picturesque time of the year to travel, made it an added bonus. Thank you Salisbury Branch for making it an enjoyable and relaxing day, plus a good lunch and interesting talks by the Royal School of Artillery Officers; also it is always great to meet with friends at least annually.

Since our last report we have visited the Isle of Wight Branch twice to join them in their Christmas and Birthday lunches. Unusually, it was not in good weather, the latter event being on the wettest day of the year to date, but we do not blame the Isle of Wight members for this! Many thanks for your hospitality again.

Four members spent a very interesting and enjoyable day attending the AGM in London in April, finding it worthwhile and stimulating.

Our strength to date is 38 Life members and 39 Annual members, but we are always looking hard for new members, plus associate members, to keep our monthly attendances up.

STAFFORD BRANCH

We continue to meet on the third Wednesday of each month, at Trinity Church, Stafford. Since our last report we have welcomed two new members, Mrs Margaret Molloy (née Newlands) and Mrs Anne Elizabeth Miles (née Broome). Unfortunately, neither live in Stafford but we hope to meet up one of these days. As the attendance at meetings dropped last summer we moved to a smaller room in Trinity Church. Although cheaper, this room is much cosier.

Last June seven of our members were invited to join the

local ARP50 Club on a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum. It was a lovely day. So far we have had two Bring and Buy stalls and been out for our usual Christmas and Birthday lunches. This year we celebrated 37 years as an active Branch. Once again the local WRNS Association invited us to join their Christmas Party. We were made most welcome.

For years Mayor's Sunday has followed the usual pattern - Church Service, wreath laying, a parade through Stafford town centre, followed by a buffet in the Mayor's Parlour. We are usually allocated two tickets. This year was completely different. For a start it has become Mayor's Sunday with a short Service in St Mary's Church followed by the largest parade of RAF, Army Cadets, School Children, dozens of flats, bands etc. Just like Pageant Day.

We are now looking forward to getting together with all the local Branches at the Wales and West Area Reunion in Birmingham on 07 September. Have a good summer.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH

Several of our members attended the Remembrance Day ceremony at Sunderland. We were delighted to see one of our former members, Vi McGinley, who is now unfortunately confined to a wheelchair but who still remains remarkably cheerful. Martha, our previous Treasurer, is now well on the road to recovery as is Esther McGill who, although still receiving hospital treatment, is hoping to come to our next meeting in April.

We had a very nice buffet for Christmas and had Karaoke for entertainment. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves - even though the Secretary tortured them with her rendition of "Leader of the Gang". When she sang 'Come on, Come on' everybody shouted 'Get off, get off' but she ignored them and carried on regardless. It was great to see how much talent we actually did have among our members.



Sunderland Chairwoman urging all members to enjoy themselves at the Christmas Party

We are looking forward to entertaining Newcastle Branch in June, when we have organised a Pie and Peas lunch with entertainment – hope they, and our Branch members like Country & Western!

We organised a display to Gilchrist in July. Once again our Chairman's husband will be our driver, so we must not have been too rough on him last time. I wonder if we will have another display of wrestling from our members?

We have another trip to Eden Camp in September, and the following week we are looking forward to the NE Reunion to be held in Cleveland this year. As it is Jubilee year we know it will be extra special.

Kind regards to all other Branches.

SWANSEA BRANCH

Our meetings continue to be held at Swansea Guildhall, first Wednesday in the month 1.30 – 4.00 pm.

At our October meeting a letter of thanks was received from Maggie Purkis, Area Chairman, following her visit to Swansea. Also Dorothy Llewellyn was welcomed back from her Australian holiday and recounted the highlights of her tour.

In November Jean Long (a retired magistrate) spoke eloquently of her 20 years service as Magistrate in Scunthorpe and it was most interesting.

December was our usual Christmas Lunch at the Oxwich Bay Hotel which was excellent. After lunch we were entertained by Father Christmas on the organ with a sing-a-long, members giving a solo turn, then a visit to Father Christmas's Grotto.

In March we had our St David's Day tea with welsh cakes followed by speaker Mr John Davies whose subject was The Welsh in Patagonia which he and his wife visited recently. A group of Welsh people emigrated in 1865, and he told of their hardships encountered on the voyage and on their arrival. The descendants of those people still practice the Welsh way of life and speak the language of their forefathers.

Our speaker for April was from Age Concern and was very informative. At our May meeting Glynis Phillips gave us a great hour with her Humorous Poetry which we all enjoyed.

We are looking forward to meeting friends in Birmingham in September.

We wish all members of other branches Good Health.

ULSTER BRANCH

Our 2001 AGM was the last to be held in the month of October. Please note in your diary that the AGM will take place on 28 September 2002. It will be in the usual venue: RBL Hall, Hamilton Road, Bangor. Don't worry – the usual reminder will be sent. This year Chairman Ruby Agnew stood down and cheerfully handed over to Molly

Howard; Treasurer Amy Wall resisted our blandishments and Terri Turner was cajoled into becoming the branch's Flexible Financial Friend. For one year only she stated – INFLEXIBLY. Be warned – be ready – believe!

We welcomed three new members to the Ulster branch, all Life Members on transfer: Stella Hill (née Kinchin), ATS and Geraldine Garland, also ATS, both from Dublin. From Ballymena comes Gladys Scully (née Allen) who served in the WRAC. We'll meet for the first time at our AGM (anyone good at sums?) and the following week introduce them to Omagh's delights on our annual visit to Kathleen Twist's Troops. Sadly, we must record the loss of two members: Gertie Corstin, who served from August 1945 until November 1949 and who died 02 September 2001, and Roberta Ewing, TAVR 1957 – 1962, who died 31 December 2001.

Our annual outing is always held in the month of May – which sounds idyllic but which is rarely ideal. It was this year! The sun shone at 10 am in Belfast, still with us up the dramatic Antrim Coast Road to Cushendall; continued as we lunched and shopped in Coleraine. Cameras out for perfect pictures in Portstewart and, to continue the alliteration, the beauty of Bushmills and the bays was breathtaking. A superb meal in the Causeway Hotel rounded up a perfect outing. Isn't it time for tourists?

A very special tourist arrived a few days later – HM The Queen with the Duke of Edinburgh. The Golden Jubilee Tour had reached Northern Ireland but, surprisingly, the powers-that-be had failed to link the Queen's wartime service as a driver in the ATS (surely a significant point in her life) with the existence of the WRAC/ATS Association. No invitation to any function had been received by the Secretary. The latter exercised her ATS-taught tactics: "To resolve communication problems – GO TO THE TOP". A few telephone calls later (and the thought "God helps those who help themselves") resulted in the offer of 6 places in the congregation at the Service of Thanksgiving in St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on Wednesday 15 May. Problem: time was of the essence, names and addresses were vital for security reasons. Solution: frantic phone calls to office-holders (no-reply-pass-on-by); E-mail details...click on 'Send' and pray it gets through. It did. Hatted and suited, 5 ex-ATS and one ex-WRAC were able to be in the presence of the most distinguished Auxiliary of the Service. As we used to say in the war – "Mission Accomplished".

WILMSLOW BRANCH

We held our Christmas Party at our usual venue and had an enjoyable time. At each place was a small parcel sent to us from Joan Broadhurst an ex-ATS who lives in Australia. She used to live in Wilmslow and when our Branch first started 8 years ago there was a photograph in the Lioness and she recognised Lucy Woodcock as a girl she knew at school, so then started a correspondence and every year she sends Lucy a parcel with all these gifts in. Don't you think that is a wonderful and generous thing to do?

We hold our monthly meetings in the Wilmslow Royal British Legion and were very lucky to have the use of the

large hall for our Golden Jubilee Party in April. It was a great success; with a raffle, tombola and a lovely cold buffet. The entertainment was a quiz which got the little grey cells working overtime – so you think you remember all the nursery rhymes do you? – great fun! It was good to see Betty Chapman who was a staunch member until she moved to Wales and who made a special journey to attend the party. To add to the success we were given a grant by Macclesfield Borough Council for Golden Jubilee events.

We have already booked a holiday in Lowestoft for 2003, there are 16 of us going (including three husbands) so that is something to look forward to, all we need next is a week of good weather.

Six of us are planning to go to London for the Remembrance Parade in November, but we won't all be marching as age is taking its toll, so we will either watch the Parade or attend the service in Westminster Abbey.

We are very sorry to lose one of our loyal members who regularly attended meetings until she became too ill to do so. She showed great courage, bravely fighting a number of illnesses without complaining. Her funeral was attended by some of our members.

Our next event is our Birthday Party – lunch at our favourite hotel, and though we haven't yet made any arrangements, a visit to the Arboretum is still on the agenda.

Apropos page 34 Lioness No. 1/2002. We are unanimous in voting against the proposed Monument to Women. We still think there should be a separate monument for the Women in the Armed Forces as we were History in the Making.

WIMBLEDON BRANCH

Our AGM in October got us off to a good start. A Social Secretary was appointed and all officers agreed to continue, with the approval of members.

In November we held another Bring and Buy which produced some very interesting bric-a-brac. This raised a princely sum, providing us with much needed funds for the Branch and charities.

December saw us with our Annual Christmas Party. The food was, as always, exceptional. Much of it was home-made and very tasty. Barbara Young once again sent along a donation to buy some delicacies which were enjoyed by everyone. Thank you Barbara, we really appreciate your generosity.

Our meeting in February was on a more serious note. Sadly both Secretary and Chairman gave notice of their resignations for health and personal reasons. The need for a new Chairman and Secretary is a priority since without them Wimbledon Branch could not continue. We very much need the replacements before September so if anyone reading this is interested we would be pleased to hear from you.

March brought us a musical afternoon which had us in

full voice with our feet tapping. Dance Bands of 1935 – 1945. Such memories were brought back to us of our dancing years with big bands, wonderful music and vocalists we could understand. Those were the days!

At the AGM in April Jean Collyer was presented with a much deserved Certificate of Appreciation. Jean proudly showed it to members at our April meeting before we embarked on the second of another successful Bring and Buy. Also one of our members, Joan Hope, gave a talk on the time she spent in Argentina. She told us of how she met and married an Argentinean in London during the war years and returned home with him where she lived for several years. We heard about their way of life and about his family who made her so very welcome. We also heard a little about the Perons who "reigned" while she was there and she answered the many questions asked of her by the very interested members. Joan had brought along many artefacts, each one having a story of its own. One in particular appeared to have been woven on a loom and depicted some dwellings. It really is a masterpiece. So much interest was shown by members and our thanks go to Joan for making it a very special afternoon.

Hopefully this will not be the last Wimbledon report; who knows there might just be ATS or WRACs looking for a challenge and just a little encouragement to come forward and save the Branch.

WINCANTON BRANCH

We had a very busy year once again with all our meetings well attended and an interesting set of programmes.

Our visiting speakers have been most interesting and varied. Mr Pettit from SAFFA spoke about the financial help they are able to provide for service personnel. Another speaker told us about her amusing exploits and the highs and lows of renovating a run-down cottage in France.

We recently attended the "green" funeral of one of our members. Betty was a committed conservationist and had a particular concern for the preservation of trees. She had requested a "green" funeral and in a moving service the traditional oak coffin was replaced by a woven withy coffin, decorated with sprays of wild flowers.

At our Easter meeting the two members in charge of our Produce Stall donned Easter bonnets, straw boaters decorated with flowers and ribbons and very fetching they looked.

For our Summer outing we took a trip on a narrow boat embarking at Bath and sailing down the canal for 2 hours. A delicious lunch was served on board. It was a most enjoyable day marred a little by torrential rain but as we were all prepared with umbrellas and raincoats, all was well.

In September our Branch will be hosting the South West Area Re-union and we are all involved in the arrangements to make the day a success. We are looking forward to meeting other members from the South West and welcoming old acquaintances.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

The branch is now one year old, and continues to go from strength to strength.

At our first meeting in Christmas Eve, we stated that one of our main aims as a branch was to raise money for the Association, this we have managed to do with the help of the civilians and soldiers of Worthy Down. Last Christmas we held a raffle and managed to raise £200 which was split between the Association and the Army Benevolent Fund. At Easter we held another raffle and raised £100 which will also be split between the two funds.

Our main event so far this year has been Corps Day held at Worthy Down on 08 June. Corps Day this year, for those of you who have not heard, was organised to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the formation of the Adjutant General's Corps, which of course is the 10th Anniversary of the disbanding of the WRAC. The day started dull and wet, but people began arriving early for the Drumhead Service which started promptly at 1130 hrs in the drizzle. Rain and sunshine was the order of the day but fortunately it was never cold, so although people sought the shelter of the tents during the afternoon no one actually left because of the rain. For those members of the Association who had purchased tickets, lunch and later tea was served in the large marquee, for the rest of us the Association Tent provided Hot Soup and rolls kindly donated by the Plug Inn, the Salvation Army Cyber Café based on camp, and ably served by the General Secretary and Andrea (once it was discovered that to make the microwave work it had to be plugged in!!!). As the day continued, however, the weather improved. By 1600 hrs it was announced that the highlight of the day, a display by the RAF Red Arrows, was to go ahead. And what a display, congratulations must go to the pilots for certainly giving us a display to remember.

The weather stayed clear for the rest of the evening, allowing those who partied on to enjoy themselves.

Congratulations must go to Nancy Tipton for correctly guessing the weight of the cake at 4lb 3oz, and we hope that she did not have to travel too far.

The Winchester Branch website is also going strong. It can be viewed at www.geocities.com/VTTBOTS1/index.html. We aim to add an old comrades page soon so if you would like us to add your details then do get in touch. The site can also be found through the new BBC search engine by putting "WRAC Association" - Winchester into the search facility. Our e-mail address was published incorrectly in the Lioness and should have read WRAC_Assn@Hotmail.com.

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

Members continue to meet monthly and, although attendance is erratic due to age, operations and illness, a good spirit is maintained overall. We have a varied programme with speakers interspersed with Bingo and seasonal Fairs.

Members continue to support civic events such as the

Remembrance Parade, Festival of Remembrance and the Mayor's Coffee Mornings. It was one such event that led to the realisation of a dream for one of our members. Mary Beeston has long campaigned for recognition of the work done, and support given, by the women of Wolverhampton during recent wars. This has at last been achieved with the unveiling of a plaque by the Mayor of Wolverhampton on 25 April. It is placed in the Mander Centre and reads as follows:

"This memorial commemorates the service given by the daughters, wives, mothers and women of the Second World War and other conflicts.

In grateful remembrance.

The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."



*Mrs Maggie Purkis and Miss Mary Davies
At the Royal Artillery Plot*

On 15 May we had our annual outing and visited the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas and we were pleased that Mrs Maggie Purkis, our Area Chairman, was able to join us. Upon arrival we had an introductory talk by the Chief Guide who explained the significance of artefacts in the chapel, and where the homage was held. After lunch we had a guided tour of the site which included a look at the WRAC plot. The weather was kind but at times the going was rather rough underfoot. During the year we recorded the death of Betty Homer who, incidentally, made a contribution to the last issue of the Lioness, and we have just welcomed a new member.



Obituaries

LENORA HANNAFORD

Lenora Hannaford - Plymouth Branch



Lenora was a member of the Plymouth Branch since its inception in February 1978. Immediately, she was elected as the Branch Delegate to The Federation of Ex-Services Associations, a post she held for many years. In December 1979 she became Assistant Secretary of the Branch. She was heavily involved in the very successful National WRAC Association Reunion held in Plymouth in 1982 and this Reunion is remembered far and wide for its excellent organisation and friendly atmosphere. In November 1983 she became Social and Transport Officer. Lenora was always concerned for members' welfare and at one time kept a welfare fund which was available to help any member in need. She felt the expense of our Social events should be as realistic as possible thus enabling all members to enjoy social events whatever their circumstances. In November 1984 she took over the role of Treasurer and in the following year, 1985, was elected as Branch Chairman. Lenora's dual role as an Officer of our branch and of the Federation ensured that our members were aware of and took part in the activities of other Arms and Services, Corps and Regiments. Lenora never forgot our widespread membership and was instrumental in organising trips to Truro to show comradeship with our Cornish membership.

By the beginning of 1990, Lenora had seen us through several trials and tribulations and had welded us into a strong Branch. In 1993 and 1994 the branch had no Secretary and she did more than her fair share of the work to ensure its smooth running. A just reward for all her endeavours was an invitation to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party, which she attended in July 1994. She stepped down as Chairman in 1996, but in November 1997 was appointed President of the Branch - a post she held until her death.

A further accolade for her hard work was given in June 1998 when she was presented with the WRAC Association Certificate of Appreciation - the first to be gained by a member of the Plymouth Branch.

One facet of the branch that was close to Lenora's heart was the Ceremonial; she expected it to be conducted with ultra smartness and due dignity.

Lenora saw many changes in the branch during her various terms of office, but whatever those changes were, Lenora remained constant - her priorities were always the well being of the branch and its individual members. She could chair a meeting like no other, a fact brought home to us all only recently when many new officers and committee members had to be elected.

Lenora, we will always appreciate the care and consideration you showed for all members, and we shall miss you.

Betty Mitchell

LT COL (RETD) ELIZABETH ANN ROBINSON 23 OCT 1942 - 23 DEC 2001

Liz Robinson, who has died aged 59, was an officer of exceptional intellect and ability. Her career of 26 years included many Staff appointments but she also served as a Regimental Officer and was known widely throughout the WRAC and the Army.

Liz, born in Hastings on 23 October 1942, was one of a family of five children whose father, a schoolteacher, was serving in the Royal Army Educational Corps. As an Army child, she moved to various schools and finished her education at Alexandra Grammar School, Singapore. She undertook a secretarial course at Brixton College before deciding to join the Army. After successfully completing Officer Cadet training at WRAC School of Instruction at Huron Camp, Hindhead, she was commissioned on 6 June 1962. Her first posting was to 12 Bn WRAC Kingston Gate Camp in Richmond Park, Surrey. Most of the servicewomen were employed at the War Office and Liz would make a point of seeing members of her Platoon off to work on their coaches early each morning and greeting them when they returned late in the evening. This was typical of her dedication to, and interest in, those with whom she served.

In 1963 Liz returned to Hindhead to serve on the permanent staff of HQ Coy and in 1964 went to Singapore as Platoon Commander with 4 Coy WRAC. Appointments in MOD(A) AG 16 and HQ NW District followed. A tour of duty as Adjutant WRAC Centre and command of 12 Coy WRAC Rheindahlen in 1970 were natural progressions on the career ladder. Liz was selected for training at the Army Staff College, Camberley graduating in October 1976. In 1981 she attended the National Defence College Latimer where she enjoyed the intellectual challenge of the Tri-Service Course.

In 1989 Liz was promoted to Lt Col and appointed Commander WRAC South East District. As Chairman of Army Women's Hockey, she could often be seen in Aldershot on Saturday afternoons encouraging her team from the touch-line. She also supported and enjoyed the "post-match" socialising.

PDF Compressor Free Version

Her final posting was to the staff of DWRAC and in May 1988 Liz retired from the WRAC to return to her home in Newport, Shropshire.



She integrated quickly into the community and joined the local Branch of the Conservative Association. She had a keen and well informed interest in politics at all levels and stood in the local election as Conservative Candidate for the Newport Town Council. She was defeated narrowly

and, given the traditional reserve expressed to "new comers" in this most **conservative** of Shire counties, this was a considerable achievement. She managed the Charity Shop of the Newport Cottage Hospital and became a well known and popular figure in the town, and an active supporter of many local organisations.

In 1989 Liz took part in "Whistle Walk" in Shrewsbury – a military charitable event organised by 5 LI. She led a team of 4 former members of the WRAC, completed the 16 mile walk in style and afterwards met Group Captain Leonard Cheshire VC, for whose charity the event had been staged.

She was an enthusiastic historian, widely read and extremely knowledgeable about military history. She combined this interest with her passion for travel and had visited many historic Battlefield sites worldwide.

A Life member and staunch supporter of the WRAC Association, Liz served on Council as well as supporting local Area and Branch activities and she especially enjoyed attending Reunions. Gregarious and hospitable she held "open house" for the Shropshire Branch of the Association – occasions which were often spontaneous and always fun!

Liz adopted a logical and perceptive approach to many aspects of her life and work. A former colleague remarked "She saw the solution and not just the problem". She was a loyal and generous friend whose self-effacing manner belied a strong and determined character. She was modest of her achievements saying *"Sometimes I surprise even myself"*.

Liz will be missed and remembered with great affection.

Pat Cooper

LANCE CORPORAL IRENE LUDLOW BEM – ATS/WRAC

When 21 year old Irene Ludlow left her home at the Police House, Marten, Wiltshire, to join the ATS in 1941 she never thought it would be over 35 years before she would be demobbed. She liked her life in the Army so much that she decided to make it her career instead of returning home at the end of the war.



Her first posting abroad was in 1947 to Austria where she spent 3 years. She then went to Cyprus during the time of the uprising. There she was employed as a batwoman to the late Colonel L M Davis. Rene, as she was affectionately known by her friends, chose not only to serve her country but also to serve those Senior Officers wearing the same uniform. She spent the next 27 years "batting" for 11 Colonels and 5 Brigadiers, the last being Brigadier E J Nolan CB. By co-incidence, they both retired at the same time.

During her 35 years service, Rene enjoyed some very special and unique events, she was presented to several members of the Royal Family – the late Princess Mary, Princess Royal, the late Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother and the Duchess of Kent. She also, and this must be a record, took part in the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall no less than 29 times.

On retirement in 1977 Rene returned to Wiltshire but maintained contact with her service life by joining the Salisbury Branch of the WRAC Association. Rene's support of the Association was tremendous. She was a popular member of the branch attending almost every branch function, and every National AGM. She was also a member of the ATS Luncheon Club. She died suddenly and unexpectedly on 19 March 2002. She will be sadly missed by all her friends at Salisbury, and her family.

Gladys W Pope

WOII OLIVE MARY POLLEY ATS/WRAC 11 JAN 11 – 27 APR 02

One of seven children, Mary started her working life as a children's nurse. In 1940 she enlisted in the ATS and in 1943 rose to the rank of Sergeant. Following a brief break of service she rejoined as a cook, progressing to Quartermaster Sergeant – Instructor in cookery serving in the WRAC from it's formation until her retirement.

On her discharge in 1964 she had served a total of 22 years and 131 days and she received an exemplary Certificate of Service. She kept in touch with the many friends she had made during her career. A long serving pensioner, she attended WRAC Association meetings and reunions right up to her 91st year.



WOII Olive Mary Polley

On leaving the army she had resumed her career as a Children's Nurse and spent many years working in America continuing to expand her wide circle of friends and "family".

Mary died on 27 April 2002 leaving one sister, Ena, and many nieces and nephews; she will be sadly missed by all her family and friends.

Hilary Churchouse (niece)

MAJOR A M H AGGLETON (née BYERS)

It was as Mary Byers that this highly decorated officer received her awards (both with bars) "for courage and bravery displayed in the glorious battle leading to the liberation of Belgium" and it is as Mary Aggleton that many will remember her as a former secretary of the ATS/WRAC Benevolent Fund.

The details of Mary's wartime service in occupied Europe have never been revealed – this is not surprising because of the nature of her postings both then and subsequently at the Government Codes and Cipher School (now GCHQ) and in other fields of military intelligence; those of us who met her after the war and before her marriage remember her as a very glamorous fun-loving young woman whose presence in the mess was a delight and an inspiration to more junior officers. It was whilst she was commanding 10th Independent Company at Aldershot that her admiring newly-commissioned subaltern informed me that Mary had been dropped by parachute into Belgium during the Occupation – it is typical of Mary's modesty and discretion that even her husband was unaware of this.

Mary enlisted in the ATS in September 1939, was commissioned in 1941 and attended Staff College in 1944. The accompanying photograph was taken in Bad Oeynhausen in early 1945, where she was serving as a Staff Captain processing Displaced Persons; later postings included Berlin, War Office, Aldershot, the Russian language course at the London University, GC&CS (now GCHQ) and CHQ FARELF, Singapore, which is where she met her husband John, on leave from serving with the Gurkhas in Malaya. After their marriage in 1955 she accompanied him on a variety of home and overseas tours until he retired from the Army, which was when she became secretary of the Benevolent Fund, an appointment for which she was well suited by reason of her experience of working with released prisoners-of-war, concentration camp victims and displaced persons at the end of World War II. When John became Mayor of Farnham, Mary, as Lady Mayoress, involved herself in a plethora of local welfare organisations, activities which she carried out for many years despite failing health and the series of operations which spanned the last decade of her life; now once more Mary displayed that bravery, courage and fortitude which characterised her earlier wartime service and which had been recognised in her awards for gallantry.

Mary was a gifted linguist and possessed a penetrating intellect which never faded – even when admitted to hospital, for what was to be the last time, she completed *The Times* crossword daily. She died on Christmas Day, 2001. By all who came in contact with her over a long and varied career, Mary Aggleton is remembered with deep affection and an abiding appreciation of her sense of fun, her loyalty and her well-informed interest in all that was going on in the world.

Alison Schofield



Junior Commander Mary Byers when serving as Staff Captain in GHQ 21 Army Gp Bad Oeynhausen, 1945.

ALDRIDGE Mrs Irene Aldridge of Seaford, East Sussex on 25 January 2002. ATS

ADAMSON Miss Audrey Adamson MBE of Crook in March 2002. WRAC

ASKHAM Mrs Margaret Lucy Askham, née Powell, of Coventry on 15 July 2002. ATS

BACHURZEWSKI Mrs Maria Bachurzevski, née McCoy of Sunderland on 2 April 2002. ATS/WRAC

BALLAM Mrs Irene Ballam, née Hudson of Horsham. ATS

BARHAM Mrs Betty Barham, née Sanderson, of Wincanton, Somerset in January 2002. ATS

BASSETT Miss Eileen Bassett, of Liverpool in March 2002. ATS

BEAMONT Mrs Margaret Beamont, née Major, of Chelmsford. WRAC

BEGLAN Mrs May Beglan, née McGavin, of Glasgow on 11 April 2002.

BELL Miss Florence Bell of Sheffield on 7 June 2002. ATS

BENNET Mrs Ivy Bennet of Newcastle.

BEVAN Mrs Olive B Bevan, née Yearsley, of Andover on 19 March 2002. ATS

BROOKS Mrs Dorothy Anna Brooks, née Evans, or Hereford on 16 March 2002. ATS

BURGESS Mrs Alison Burgess, née Higgins, of Victoria, Australia in March 2002. WRAC

BURNETT Mrs Jean Burnett, née Mottershead, of Telford, Shropshire. ATS

CAIRNS Mrs Maureen Cairns, née King, of Folkestone on 11 January 2002. ATS

CARTER Mrs Brenda Carter, née Baker, of Leicester on 7 April 2002. ATS

CHICK Mrs Dorothy Chick, née Gardner, of Manchester on 31 March 2002. ATS

CHILTON Mrs Doreen 'Bunny' Chilton, née Purnell, of Butlers Cross on 14 April 2002. ATS

CLEAVER Miss Joyce Mary (Jo) Cleaver of South Molton on 13 May 2002. ATS/WRAC

COLES Mrs Vera Ann Coles, née Taylor, of Taunton, on 25 March 2002. ATS/WRAC

COOPER Mrs Ivy Cooper, née Stevenson, of Nottinghamshire on 30 January 2002. ATS

CORNWALL Mrs Lois M Cornwall of Sturry in April 2002. ATS

CORSTIN Mrs Agnes Gertrude Corstin, née McCormick of Killyleagh, Co Down on 2 September 2001. ATS

CROWTHER Miss Edna Crowther Of Hebdon Bridge on 13 June 2002. ATS

CUNNINGHAM Maj (Retd) Kathleen Irene Cunningham of Heversham, Cumbria on 2 February 2002. ATS/WRAC

CUNNINGHAM Miss Anastasia Cunningham of Liverpool. WRAC/ATS

DEAN Marjorie Lucie Dean of St Albans in January 2002. ATS

DERMOTT Miss M E (Peggy) Dermott of Budleigh on 16 May 2002. ATS/WRAC

DICKSON Miss Ella Catherine Sylvia Dickson of Edinburgh on 7 November 2001. ATS

DIXON Maj (Retd) Eveline Beatrice Dixon of Bristol on 25 May 2002. WRAC

DURIE Miss Christina Mary Ena Durie of Edinburgh on 16 January 2002. ATS

EWINGTON Mrs Joan Ewington, née Shanahan, of Barry on 23 June 2002. ATS

FERRIS Mrs Dorothy Ferris, née Gledhill, of Purley in 2000. ATS

GIBSON Col (Rtd) E W Gibson of Fordingbridge on 25 May 2002. ATS/WRAC

GILBERT Miss Edna Gilbert of Chelmsford on 16 March 2002. WAAF

GRAHAM Elizabeth Graham of County Antrim, Northern Ireland on 2 January 2002. ATS

GRANTHAM Mrs Anne Amadea Grantham in the Royal Star and Garter Home on 14 February 2002. ATS

GREEN Capt (Retd) Sheila Green on 25 May 2002

HANNAFORD Mrs Leonora Kate Hannaford, née Moore, of Plymouth on 28 March 2002. ATS

HATCHER Mrs Irene Violet Lilian Hatcher, née Lee, formerly Petrie, of Stanford Le Hope on 18 June 2002. ATS

HEAD Mrs W Head, née Core, of Keighley on 7 March 2002. ATS

HOLDING Mrs Gladys M Holding, née Wolf, of Kings Lynn on 21 May 2002. WRAC

HUGHES Mrs Iris Hughes, née Grannan, of Wrexham on 30 January 2002. ATS

HUNT Mrs Sybil R B Hunt of Exeter on 12 September 2001. ATS

HUTCHINSON Mrs Beatrice Alice Hutchinson, née Wilson, of East Sussex, suddenly on holiday on 20 July 2002. ATS/WRAC

JACKSON Mrs Claire Jackson, née Hampshire of Selby, North Yorkshire in February 2002. ATS

KEEN Mrs Carol Keen, née Sunderland, of Manchester on 30 April 2002.

LAMY Mrs Mary Lamy, née Dunn, in Montreal in May 2001. ATS

LEACH Mrs Gladys Leach, née Walton, of Barnoldswick in June 2001. ATS

LOFTY Ms Alice Loftly of London on 23 March 2002. ATS

LUDLOW Lance Corporal Irene Ludlow BEM on 19 March 2002. ATS/WRAC

MARTIN Mrs M Martin of Little Bentley, Essex in March 2002. ATS

MASSEY Mrs Lily Massey, née Hodgeson, of Lancing on 24 April 2002. ATS

MISEROY Maj (Retd) Enid Mary Miseroiy of Morecombe on 18 July 2002. ATS/WRAC

NODEN Miss Doris Noden of Winsford in July 2002. ATS

PARKER Miss Joan Eileen Parker of Stroud on 25 February 2002. WRAC

PIETERSE Mrs Florence Pieterse, née Dunn, of Edinburgh on 10 May 2002. ATS

PIKE Mrs Margaret (Molly) Pike, née Mapp of Whitchurch. ATS

POLLEY Miss Olive Mary Polley of Weymouth on 27 April 2002. ATS/WRAC

POTTER Miss Dorothy S B Potter of Oxford on 10 January 2002. ATS

PRESTON Mrs Beryl Preston, née Toner, of Plymouth on 9 March 2002. WRAC

RODEN Mrs Mary Ann Roden, née Kerry, of Chester on 9 July 2002. ATS

ROSE Mrs Lily Margaret Rose, née Hickford, of Baldock, Hertfordshire, in February 2002. WRAC

REYNOLDS Maj (Retd) Edith Marjorie (Madge) Reynolds of Pencelli, Brecon on 11 May 2002. ATS

SHARP Maj (Retd) Margaret Sharp MBE of Glasgow on 6 April 2002. ATS

SIMPSON Mrs Betty Simpson, née Gawthorpe of Rockingham, Western Australia in early 2002. ATS

SIMPSON Mrs Sadie Simpson, née Peel of Gateshead on 12 March 2002. ATS

SLOAN Mrs Dilys Sloan née Henings, of Kilwinning, Ayrshire on 19 March 2002. ATS

SMITH Miss Caroline Christine Smith of York in January 2002. WRAC

STEWART Mrs Vickie Stewart, née Green of Toronto, Canada on 4 March 2002. ATS

THIRLWALL Sheila Mary Thirlwall of Oadby, Leicester on 25 January 2002. ATS/WRAC

TRACEY Mrs Helen M Tracey, née Harris, of West Derby, Liverpool. On 21 December 2001. ATS

VASS Mrs Joan Vass, née Cook, of Luton on 17 April 2002. ATS

WALLACE Mrs Gwen Wallace, née Hussey, of Nova Scotia on 2 February 2002. WRAC

WARD Miss Barbara Ward of Burgess Hill on 15 June 2002. ATS.

WARD Mrs Dorothy Margaret Ward, née Hopkinson, of Tamworth, Staffs on 4 February 2002. ATS

WARD Mrs Pollie Ward, née Ibbotson of Hull on 13 July 2002. ATS

WINTER Mrs Olive Winter, née Scarrath, of Clacton on Sea on 27 February 2002. ATS

YATES Mrs Sybil Yates, née Kellie, in Bolton on 14 March 2002. ATS

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, LONDON

PDF Compression From Version 1.0
ON 06 APRIL 2002 AT 1430hr

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by asking members to stand and observe one minute's silence in memory of the Association's Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. She then commented on the visible reaction of the people to the death of the Queen Mother. The willingness of so many to queue for so long expressed the mood of the nation. The Association could and did take pride in the fact that The Queen Mother had chosen to be its Patron.

There was a full agenda to be discussed. A new Executive Committee had been formed with a remit to look at the rule changes and future Lioness funding. Their recommendations had been put before Council and subsequently Council's proposals would be discussed at this meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following:

Brig Dame Joanna Kelleher, Col S P Richards, Col The Lady Martha Bruce, Col F M Hutley, Miss M M Thomson, Lt Col M Rook, Capt P M Cooper, Mrs M Cranmer, Mrs J McLellan, Mrs Lapham, Mrs Doreen Brookes.

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: Leeds Seconded: Portsmouth

Unanimously agreed

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There was no business arising.

5. COUNCIL REPORT

The Council had tasked the Executive Committee to review the Rules. It was necessary from time to time to undertake such an exercise because the Association is a living organisation and as such is always changing. Although it is necessary to ensure that the Association remains familiar and able to meet the needs of the current members, it is also necessary to ensure that there is the opportunity and space for younger members to join in and for the Association to meet their needs. The result has been that the proposed rules have not changed greatly but do meet the changing need.

The Lioness should be self-funding, but has not been so for several years. The review of the funding methods undertaken by the Executive Committee will be discussed later in the agenda.

A number of approaches have been made to the Association for contributions to various projects. The major one being the Adjutant General's Corps Museum. A lot of money had been raised for the museum at Guildford and, on leaving Queen Elizabeth Barracks, much thought had been given as to what should become of that collection. The Council is content that the decision to gift it to the National Army Museum had been the correct one. The new AGC museum will be an amalgam of all the Corps which went to make up the Adjutant General's Corps.

The Association Plot at the National Memorial Arboretum was now under construction. The Association had underwritten the cost of the plot by £5,000 from central funds. To date only a fraction of this money had been recouped.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

"The audited accounts for the Financial Year ending 31 October 2001 were published in the February edition of the Lioness.

It has been an appalling year in the stock market and the Association accounts were compiled at the worst possible time in view of the events of 11 September. If you look at the bottom of the balance sheet, you will see that the total funds of the Association which include the Benevolent Funds were worth £4,408,859 at the end of the year, £310,538 less than the previous year. The actual fall in value of the investments was over half a million pounds – £539,914 to be exact but as you will see when we turn to the statement of financial activities, our income for the year exceeded expenditure.

The latest information that is available does show that the investments have regained approximately £117,000 since November.

Turning now to the statement of financial activities, "Unrestricted funds" refers to the Association and "Restricted funds" to the Benevolent Funds including the PRMF. Designated Funds refers to the Life Subscription Funds.

You will see that the total income for the year exceeded expenditure by £229,376, a considerable increase on the previous year. Much of this is accounted for by the receipt of specific legacies totalling in excess of £200,000 to the Benevolent Fund. These are included in the statement within the donation income which you will see is almost double that of the previous year.

You will see under unrestricted general funds that the Lioness Publication Income appears to have fallen by about £7,000 and further down the page that the Lioness Expenditure costs are non-existent! Oh that the latter were true! The £4,911 that is shown represents specific donations in support of the Lioness. The remainder of the Lioness Income and Expenditure is actually included in the Branch Income and Expenditure and the Management and Administration figures. Although it is therefore not apparent in the statement of financial activities, I can tell you that the deficit on the Lioness last year was reduced to £1860 due partly to cost cutting measures, but largely as a result of the donations of £4,911.

To ensure transparency, our Accountants will include disclosure notes in this year's accounts to clarify the financial state of the Lioness in the year 2001.

Although the Management and Administration Costs of the Benevolent Fund have reduced, you will see that the overall figure has increased. This is accounted for by the inclusion of the AGM, in 2000 these costs were included in the Grand Reunion Expenditure, the purchase of items not available through Service sources, increased accountancy fees and some of the aforesaid Lioness expenditure.

Under Restricted Funds, the Benevolent Fund and the PRMF paid grants and annuities to the sum of 171,912, a similar expenditure to the previous year.

Despite the notional losses resulting from the fall in markets, the overall performance of the funds remain satisfactory, in that the policy to maintain the level of the Benevolent Funds in real terms using the October 1999 value as the benchmark has been achieved. The net deficit of £60,000 is insignificant."

It was proposed that the financial statements be accepted

Proposed: Portsmouth Seconded: Shropshire

Unanimously agreed

7. LIONESS REPORT

"As you will be aware from previous reports, the Lioness has run at a loss for very many years. Following the liquidation in 2000 of Combined Services Publications, our advertising sales agent, the deficit accrued increased even further. Attempts to find another advertising sales agent failed and so other means of cutting production costs had to be found. In August 2001, the Lioness was moved to new printers at a saving of approximately £1500 per edition.

The total deficit on the Lioness in 2001 was reduced to £1859.57. This was achieved not only through the move of printers and other cost cutting measures, but through the receipt of specific donations amounting to £4,910.67. This year, it is forecast that there will be a shortfall of £4,500 in production and distribution costs if there are no changes in the method of funding.

On moving the Lioness to the new printers, we took the opportunity to look at the layout and design of the journal and minor changes in style were introduced. The feedback received so far has been positive.

The editorial team welcome suggestions for ways in which we can continue to improve the journal and indeed we have received one or two ideas which are being considered. However, we do reserve the right of editorial decision! That said, I can assure you that there is no intention to interfere with the overall design, content or ethos of your Lioness. At this point I would like to thank both Mrs Lois Gilbert and Mrs Alison Schofield for their continued support and hard work in putting the journal together. Finally, I would also like to thank you and all the members who contribute to it without whose efforts there would be no Lioness."

Following the editor's report the Chairman reiterated the problem of under-funding. There are 2 choices – to accept the deficit and continue producing the Lioness until the Association runs out of money, or to address the problem and raise the income. There are large numbers of life members who are no longer contributing. The Association does have a commitment to continue supplying the Lioness to these members, but they would be asked to reconsider their position. Annual members pay a general subscription of £1 and journal subscription of £4 each year by which it can be seen that the cover charge is modest. The Chairman will be writing in due course to all life members asking them to make contributions. The Association will honour any life member's rights. However, all members do have a duty to keep the Association viable and the Chairman would be grateful if all would agree to contribute.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Executive Committee Report

"The Executive Committee met in September 2001 with two remits from Council.

- (i) To review the Rules of the Association and to make recommendations for change if this was found to be necessary.
- (ii) To make recommendations regarding the future funding of the Lioness.

The rules were scrutinised closely and a number of changes were subsequently recommended to Council. The majority of these concerned no more than style and grammar and it is hoped that you will agree that the draft published in the recent edition of the Lioness is now a much clearer document.

Our deliberations and subsequent recommendations were based on three criteria. First, on how the Association actually works at ground level – and for this the knowledge of the Area Chairmen on the committee was invaluable. Second, on the need to secure the future of the Association – it is now 10 years since the disbandment of the WRAC, the Army is changing rapidly and personnel and resources are not so readily available as they used to be.

Finally, to ensure that the way in which we conduct our business complies with current charity legislation and accepted administrative procedures.

I will not go into detail about our recommendations here as you have all had the opportunity to read them prior to this meeting and, if necessary, they can be discussed later when the proposal to accept the new rules is put to the floor.

Our second remit, to review the funding of the Lioness and to make recommendations to Council to ensure that the journal remains viable, involved much work by the members, both in and out of committee, and a number of options were identified. Again I will not go into detail here as the Chairman has already done so. Suffice it to say that, at all times, the importance of the Lioness to the membership was uppermost in our minds.

These two important tasks having been completed, the Executive Committee has now been tasked by Council to turn itself into the Grand Reunion Committee. Plans for next year's reunion are well in hand. I will be going to Birmingham in two weeks time, on 18 April, together with the General Secretary, a representative of the AGC Band and, of course, the Area Chairman of Wales and West for another "recce" prior to confirming the provisional arrangements that you will already have seen in the Lioness."

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Council had underwritten the Grand Reunion by £5,000. It was hoped that this money would be recouped through branch fund raising. She reminded members that whereas the Benevolent Fund was in a healthy state, the Association was not well off. There had been a welcome bequest to the Association recently, but more money would be required if the Association wished to undertake any further projects.

b. Benevolent Grants Committee Report

"I am delighted to be addressing our AGM on behalf of the Trustees of the Benevolent Fund. They have, as usual, met twice during the year. The number of cases received was 786, a decrease of 22% on the previous year. The ratio of cases was 656 ATS to 364 WRAC. This decrease was common over all the service charities and no particular reason has been identified. However, we dealt with 87 cases in February which was the highest February figure since 1997. It just shows that there is nothing predictable about the caseload. The total amount spent last year was £159,972. Once again, we rely a great deal on the generosity of other funds to meet the grants needed by some of the more complex cases. These funds include the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, the Army Benevolent Fund & most other Army Regiments and Corps, as well as the Royal British Legion. Civilian funds play their part too and recently we have shared grants with Ben – the motor trade fund and Hospitality Action – previously known as the Catering Trades Benevolent Fund.

We continue to administer annuities, which are now set at £11 per week plus a Christmas bonus of £60, from our own Princess Royal's Memorial Fund to those who are in particularly difficult circumstances – in poor health, alone, elderly and poor. Currently we have 22. The Army Benevolent Fund also continues to grant annuities to our members and these are now set at £50 per month and we have 101 of those. Last year, the total amount granted for all these annuities was over £74,000.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund also now funds the monies we pay towards topping up the shortfall of Nursing Home Fees. We are helping 20 ex-members of the ATS in this way.

Grants continue to be made for essential regular needs, like

gas, electricity and water; clothes, furniture, cookers, fridges and washing machines; dentures, and spectacles are costly regular requirements for the elderly. In addition, there are expensive special needs such as wheelchairs and stair lifts which have to be chosen carefully to meet the particular disability involved. It is very rewarding to be able to improve the quality of life of our former service women, even in a small way, and we frequently receive nice thank you letters from grateful recipients.

In conjunction with the Army Benevolent Fund, Pontins holidays are provided for worthy cases with children under 16. In 2001 a total of 21 families were given a holiday. Our thanks go to Mrs Babs Mitcheson who has co-ordinated the Pontins holidays for many years. We are also grateful to Babs for her great efforts in transferring the information from the original record cards on to the new computer system she has now completed 9,500 records.

The WRAC Benevolent Fund Knitting circle has produced woollen garments for children for many years and we are grateful for the time and effort spent on producing so many wonderful garments. The number of families helped varies from year to year with an average of over 50 cases per year since 1995. Many thanks are due to Brigid Archdale who coordinates the whole operation. In addition to our own woollens, we also receive a donation of knitted garments from The People's Friend magazine each Christmas. Recently, one of their readers left them a legacy to be shared out amongst recipients of the Christmas parcels and I am pleased to report that our Benevolent Fund received a generous part of that legacy. (£5,000)

Jane Freebairn took over from Derek Dallamore as Benevolent Case Secretary in May.

Now I should like to describe a case: – a married lady, aged 76, who served in the ATS from 1943-45 living in Hertfordshire. She suffers from severe rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. These conditions are so painful at night that she has to spend the night in an upright chair. The Committee were pleased to grant £400 to help purchase an electrically operated, adjustable bed. The final cost was shared by her husband's regiment and the British Legion.

There are many such cases worthy of mention and the Committee continues to try and respond as best they can.

Lastly, I want to thank all of you in your branches who have shown so much initiative in raising money for the funds. Thank you again for all your support. It is greatly appreciated.

9. RESOLUTIONS

a. Motions of Urgency

There were no motions of urgency

b. Council Resolutions

That the draft rules of the Association published in the 1/2002 edition of the Lioness be adopted.

The Chairman introduced the resolution, explaining the need for the organisation to thrive, live and grow. There was a need to replace the older members and branches which, through the passage of time, were being lost. The rationale behind the proposed rules on dual membership, the membership year and the submission of accounts was given. With regard to the membership year, following discussion with the Association's accountants, it was recommended that the dates of the main financial year be adopted as opposed to the branch financial year.

The proposal with the amendment outlined above was put to the meeting

Proposed: Salisbury Seconded: Weymouth
Unanimously passed

c. Branch Resolutions

There were no branch resolutions.

d. Election of Vice President of Council

It was proposed that Lt Col A K Brown be elected for a second year in office.

Proposed: Canterbury

Seconded: York

Unanimously agreed

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. Memorial to the Women of World War II

The general feeling of the meeting was one of disappointment and anger about the final design of the proposed memorial. While sympathising with the members, the Chairman pointed out that the sculptor had worked within his brief. Although the expectation had been of a memorial to servicewomen, the object of the Trust Deed, under which the money had been raised, was to erect a memorial to all the women of World War II. The Association had at no time been consulted and she did feel that the original idea was flawed. Much as she appreciated their stance, neither she nor the Association were in a position to help those members who thought that the Appeals Committee should refund their donations.

The meeting was reminded that there were other memorials to servicewomen, namely the Stained Glass Window in Guildford Cathedral and the Association's plot at the National Memorial Arboretum.

b. Members were reminded of the forthcoming AGC Corps Day to take place at Worthy Down on Saturday 08 June 2002.

c. Book of Condolence. A book of Condolence will be sent to Buckingham Palace. Sheets for signatures will be sent to all branches within the next few days. Meanwhile WO1 Denham volunteered to place messages of condolence for members on the web site that had been set up for this purpose.

d. Presentations

Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to the following:

Violet Bates	Swansea
Doreen Brookes	Coventry
Elsie Collyer	Wimbledon
Maureen Deeley	Birmingham
Kathleen Gibson	Gt London
K Heard	Medway
Dorothy Higgins	Medway
Betty Mitchell	Plymouth
Evelyn O'Neill	Newcastle
Muriel Pearce	Weymouth & Portland
Esther Pring	Weymouth & Portland
Gina Shadrack	Chelmsford
Glaysd Stewart	London
Peggy Williams	Colchester
Violet Holdsworth	Bradford
Joan Hare	Colchester
Mabel Twist MBE	Omagh

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place in Birmingham on Saturday 12 April 2003, the time to be confirmed at a later date.

PDF Compressor Free Version

