

LIONESS

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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH 1945



The photograph is reproduced by Gracious Permission of Her Majesty The Queen

*Her Majesty The Queen, our new Patron, served in the ATS
and is a life member of the Association*

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

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HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

PRESIDENT

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT GCVO

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ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds

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Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake AGC (SPS)

Colonel A J Smith

Mrs M E Wroot

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

E-mail: wracassociation@milnet.uk.net

Website: www.wracassociation.co.uk

Cover Photographs

Front Cover

HRH The Princess Elizabeth
1945

Back Cover

ATS Continental Group arriving
in Normandy, July 1944

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second, and sadly for me, last "remote controlled" Lioness. By the time this issue reaches you, I will have passed the editorship back to the General Secretary; those who were able to attend the AGM will know that Jane Freebairn has been appointed to the post from that of Benevolent Fund Case Secretary.

In this edition of Lioness, you will find, as well as the regular sections, a message from the Association Vice President and one from the General Secretary. Also a few articles from members who were involved with the recent D-Day memorials. Plans are going ahead for the next Grand Reunion and more information is published later in the journal. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who responded to my plea for help with the planning of the function. The Grand Reunion Organisation Team (affectionately known to each other as the GROTS!) will meet again in October and I will report back to you in the next Lioness with an update on the plans.

It has been said that our Lioness is a brilliant vehicle for the ex-ATS ladies to keep in touch with each other, but has little to offer ex-WRAC ladies. If that were true, "well done" the ex-ATS ladies who send articles to us, and please, keep them coming! "Thank you" all those ex-WRAC ladies who have sent their contributions. I am assured that there are now over 400 members of the WRAC Dinner Club. All we need is for each member to write a short article; enclose photographs – old-fashioned hard copy photographs are best, especially if you would like them to be enlarged. Do take comfort from the fact that there is now no reason for your snaps to leave the WRAC Association office. Enclose an SAE and we will do our very best to ensure that your photograph(s) are returned to you. The Lioness would be assured of plenty of copy for the next twenty years...Please!

Maggie Purkis

Message from the Vice President



I am going to begin my message with some great news for the Association. You will recall that towards the end of last year I was privileged to be presented twice to HM The Queen; once at the "Women and War" Exhibition in the Imperial War Museum and again when she visited Winchester to open the AGC Museum. During these visits, The Queen met up with former ATS colleagues and saw her provisional Army driving licence from her days in the ATS. Striking while the iron was hot (!), I wrote to Buckingham Palace to ask if HM The Queen would graciously consider succeeding Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother as Patron of our Association. I am delighted to tell you all that she was happy to accept. I am sure you will agree that this is a great honour and will be a tremendous morale booster for the Association. My next mission is therefore to arrange for our new Patron to meet as many members of the Association as possible. So ... try not to miss any of our functions in case you miss the Patron as well!

The AGM was well supported in April and it was good to see so many Secretaries there, representing their Branches. For those of you who were not able to be present, I raised two particular issues, which I will briefly summarise here. Firstly, the Memorial to the Women of World War 2. This Memorial, which has the full support of the Government, House of Lords, MOD and English Heritage and which has received a substantial Lottery Grant, has been approved and will go ahead. It is a "fait accompli". I am aware that many members of the Association would have preferred the memorial to only represent Servicewomen and the WAAF and WRNS Association had also shared that view initially. However, it was subsequently decided that the Memorial would instead reflect the tremendous

contribution made by a huge number of women during the Second World War and that it would be situated in a high profile site in Whitehall near to the Cenotaph. It is hoped that HM The Queen will unveil it sometime in 2005.

The second issue concerns the wearing of Tartan Skirts as an Official Association Uniform. The Association Council has never wished to prescribe or dictate that those representing the Association should wear a uniform and at the AGM in 2003, members voted against the subject being discussed again by Council. The Rules only include details of the uniform to be worn by Standard Bearers. Therefore, Members may wear whatever they wish when they represent the Association including Tartan Skirts! (I have every sympathy with those Scottish Ladies who wish to do so whether living in Scotland or "down south"). However, just because the WAAF Association wear Tartan does not mean we have to follow suit... I would therefore be most grateful if these two subjects can now be considered closed and that they are no longer the subject of official Association business or correspondence.

Turning swiftly to what the Association is really all about, can I say a tremendous 'thank you' to Maureen Deeley who paraded our Association Standard so magnificently at the D-Day Celebrations in Normandy in June. It was wonderful to see her standing beside all the other Association representatives in the Bayeux Cemetery as HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh passed by. Thank you Maureen, not just for the Normandy representation but for all those other occasions throughout the year when you so proudly parade our Standard.

I have continued my travels around the Association 'parish' during the past six months and have been the guest of London, Weymouth and Portland, Cleveland and Plymouth Branches. It is a great privilege to be invited to these gatherings whether they be an Area Reunion or a Branch Meeting – I always get the same warm welcome which is much appreciated. As a Serving Officer, I enjoy talking to you all about the Army today and how it has changed drastically over the years even since I joined (33

years ago now!); it is also fascinating to hear your stories and reminiscences.

I turn now to the "Engine Room" of the Association, Association HQ. Since Lt Col David Dunn left in the mid 1990's, we have had a succession of short term General Secretaries who have not had the time in post or the clerical support to take the Association forward; I am now pleased to say that Major Jane Freebairn has officially been appointed our General Secretary after over a year of 'holding the fort' and double-hatting both the Association and Benevolent Fund jobs. I speak for all of us when I say a very sincere thank you to Jane for her unstinting support, hard work and dedication over this challenging time and I look forward to working with her as we consider the way forward for the Association. We welcome Margaret Wroot as the new Benevolent Fund Case Secretary and hope that she will enjoy her time with us. To Maggie Purkis, who has been our Lioness Editor for two editions, grateful thanks for your significant contribution. Once Maggie has handed 'The Lioness' back to Jane, she will concentrate her efforts on running the 2006 Grand Reunion Committee; indeed she is well down track on this venture already as you will see in the journal. Finally, to Beth Todd, our long suffering Chief Clerk who keeps the Association "ticking over" from day to day and is 'the voice' at the end of the phone – many thanks.

I look forward to meeting more Association Members over the coming months and to hearing your views and suggestions. I will endeavour during my tenure in office to promote the Association to ensure that it continues to go from strength to strength in the future. Conflicting priorities and commitments preclude some of our more junior members from supporting some of our functions – but I am confident their time will come!

Keep writing to us and, if you are able, keep supporting the various social events. You will enjoy yourselves, I promise! Thank you for reading this long missive – my messages will get shorter! My very best wishes to all Association members.

Sue Westlake

Message from the General Secretary

It is a daunting task to be given a blank sheet of paper and asked to write your first letter to the readership of The Lioness! Of course, my first thoughts are to say what a privilege it is to be in such a position. One of the most special moments for me was to open the letter from Buckingham Palace to say that Her Majesty The Queen had agreed to be our Patron. After the AGM, I sent Loyal Greetings and Birthday Greetings to Her Majesty. Subsequently, I had to ask for permission to reprint the photograph on the cover of this edition. I am delighted to tell you that each time I have received a reply from the Palace, Her Majesty has asked that her Best Wishes and thanks be passed on to the whole membership of the Association. I am very proud to be able to do this through the Lioness.

At this time of year, our thoughts begin to focus on Armistice Day and all the ceremonies and services associated with this significant act of remembrance and thanksgiving. The Vice-President and I have the honour of going to the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey. I would be more than happy to plant a cross on your behalf if you would like. You can obtain a small one from your local Poppy seller, write the name of the person you wish to be remembered on the back and send it to me at Winchester. I will then include it in our plot at the Abbey.

My next letter will be as Editor of the Lioness and I would like to thank Maggie Purkis for taking on the Editorship until the manning situation was resolved. It has been a great comfort to me to know that such an important means of communications in the Association was kept going efficiently. Thanks Maggie!

Having been the General Secretary "in waiting" for a year now, I have quite a good idea of the normal turn of events over a twelve-month period. With the arrival of the new Benevolent Fund Case Secretary, I look forward to being more proactive in moving the Association forward.

Jane Freebairn



ATS Reminiscences

Barbara Mottershead, 19 Charts Close, Cranleigh,

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I search every copy of Lioness for a mention of one of the camps in which I served my 6 years in the ATS. In 1939, soon after the outbreak of war, I signed at my local Territorial Drill Room an application to join the ATS. I was sent a blue armband with ATS printed on it and a Railway Ticket and was told to travel to Amesbury on Salisbury Plain.

Travelling from Weston-Super-Mare I met up with other girls who were wearing similar ATS armbands. At Bath Station we were joined by a couple of pre-war ATS who were wearing their uniform.

Arriving at Amesbury Station we were transported in a couple of trucks to Larkhill Camp. I stayed at Larkhill for 3 years, originally with the 122 OCTU and later at the School of Artillery where I became Draughtswoman Assistant to the Chief Draftsman.

In 1943 I needed a change and I applied for a course at the RE Survey Training Centre at Ruabon in North Wales, and trained as a Cartographical Draughtswoman. At the end of the course I was posted to the School of Military Intelligence at Smedleys Hydro, Matlock, Derbyshire. After a few weeks I was posted, once again, to Salisbury Plain. A Draughtswoman was required at The School of Chemical Warfare, Winterbourne Gunner and I was the only ATS available. All my Cartographical Training and the hours spent staggering up the Welsh Mountains carrying Survey equipment a complete waste of time – I was back to Mechanical Drawing.

After D Day I was able to join my RE Survey friends once again, working with an Air Survey Section at Medmenham. From there, as Jay writes in her letters I applied to be sent 'overseas'.

After embarkation leave in March 1945 I was told to report to the Holding Unit, Ashley Down Road, Bristol (Mullers Orphanage). Jay's experiences from then onwards are similar to my own – Drafts A and B – wanderings around Bristol, which I well remembered from before it was so badly bombed – The long journey from Bristol to embarkation from Tilbury Docks.

Here however our experiences differed slightly – we were taken to Southend where we stayed overnight, and to Tilbury the following morning to board our 'Troopship' – which was in fact an old Ferry Boat – 'Ulster Monarch'.

We set off, only to stop again, anchoring off Sheerness until dark. We attempted to sleep, not very successfully, in hammocks, wearing full kit, including a life belt and with a small torchlight clipped to our shoulders in case we ended up in the water.

At Ostende we marched through the streets to the Hotel Bristol where we were billeted overnight. The following day – the awful train journey to Brussels where after

some delay a car and driver were found to take me to my final destination – Keerbergen near Malines, and an Air Survey Drawing Section. I too journeyed to Belgium with friends who I had made at the Holding Unit in Bristol – I met even more friends, from previous postings whilst listening to Prime Minister Churchill's speech on VE Day on the radio at the AEF Club in Brussels.

I cannot remember if Jay was at Ashley Down Road whilst I was there but her letters brought it all so clearly back. I remember the rooms at Ashley Down Road – windows too high for the orphans to see out of – the cold ablution rooms with stone hand basins and cold water to wash in. What a hard life those poor children had.

Thank you Jay, at last I have discovered someone who had been where I had been, twice, firstly The Army School of Chemical Warfare at Winterbourne Gunner and then – The Holding Unit, Ashley Down Road.

40th (INVERNESS) COMPANY, ATS

Mrs C J Morrison, née Chisholm
2 Boyd Terrace, UIG, by Portree, Isle of Skye,
Inverness-shire, IV51 9YQ

Although I spent most of my War Service in Code & Cipher branch, Main Building, War Office, Whitehall, London, I joined the ATS prior to the war and trained at Cameron Barracks, Inverness.

I seldom see anything in the magazine about "the way it was" in this part of the world and I thought readers might be interested in the enclosed two photographs. The one of us sitting round the table in our "tea-hut" (we all lived at home on Local Service to begin with), was taken in June, 1939. The local Cameron Territorials usually went to camp in Summer but we were told that, as Reservists were being called up to the barracks in June, 1939, we would go there instead and do the jobs that we would be allocated if and when war broke out. I worked in the Orderly Room and my friends worked in various other jobs around the barracks, with the result that we slipped



Chris is front row, left

quite easily into our wartime work when called up on 1st September, 1939 (2 days before war broke out). We were wearing issue uniform in the photo but we were all sent to a local tailor to be measured for tartan skirts in Ancient Cameron tartan, which we wore for parades and, later, when off duty. **PDF Compressor Free Version** during those days and I remember trying to keep a straight face when going down to the tube one day to see about a dozen French matelots coming up the escalator, who put up a shout, "Ecosaises!". We were called "Volunteers" to begin with and one of our Officers gave us all Cameron Buttons to sew on our uniforms but, when war broke out, our ranks were changed to the same as the men (ie "Private" for "Volunteer" and "Corporal" for "Sub-Leader") etc. We were told to remove the Cameron Buttons and re-sew the GS buttons to our uniforms, much to our disgust.

The other photograph is of our local Forces Concert Party. The name we adopted was "The ITCATS" to incorporate "Infantry Training Centre" (wartime name of Cameron Barracks) and "ATS". I am at the rear of the Chorus and was asked to do the choreography – so I chose the first item as "I want to be Happy" from "No, No, Nannette" – so we had a grand time imitating the girls in the "Moulin Rouge". When ENSA came into being and started to send professional performers, we disbanded the Concert Party and, by then, I was posted to London anyway.



"The ITCATS"

I have been to several reunions but have never met up with any of my ex-War Office colleagues, although I still keep in touch with a couple who now live abroad. Are there any of the "Belles of C6 Tels" out there? If so I would like to say "Hello".

MEMORIES OF THE ATS

Mrs Joan Hawgood (née Skeen), 20 Ocklynge Close, Little Common, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN39 4PF

I was conscripted into the army a few months after my 21st birthday, kitted out and sent off to Aldermaston for 6 weeks basic training. As I was secretarial material I was sent up to Strathpeffer on an army business course for 8 weeks and was billeted in the Ben Nevis hotel and that was in May.

You would not have thought there was a war on at all, glorious scenery and double summer time. We used to go into Inverness to dances – coming back on a train at midnight when it was still light.

From there I was posted to an AA Battery at Botley, Hants in the middle of nowhere. I was very unhappy there and put my name down to go abroad never thinking there would be a chance. After a month I was called for an interview and was picked to go to Egypt Cairo HQ. I went to Harrow and then got embarkation leave and on to Baker Street to await the call. We embarked at Southampton on the 'Monarch of Bermuda' bound for Port Said via Cape Town. We landed at Cape Town for 3 days. We were met by a VIP and taken to his very palatial house where we were wined and dined in luxury. I always carried my tennis racket around with me consequently; I was invited to play a game with the SA officers and also with the SA women officers at their mess.

We disembarked at Port Said and were taken to a camp in the middle of the desert before going by transport to Cairo where we were dispersed to various departments, mine being 'Q' Launch PA to Brigadier Hatton.

Kasel Nile Barracks being home for the next year. I joined Wilcocks tennis club where I spent nearly all my time and met my future husband who was in the Signals at Maadi OCTU. When they passed out as officers we got married in the Lady Chapel of Cairo Cathedral and had a wonderful honeymoon in Alexandria. He was allocated to the Signals School, as a trainer, at Maadi so we got a flat in Cairo to the end. Sadly he died 5 years ago; it would have been our diamond wedding this year on March 28th.

HOW I REMEMBER VE DAY

Mrs E O'Neill, 33 Bede Burn View, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear NE32 5PQ

I was in 484 AA Bty at Kampenhout, Nr Brussels on VE Day and I had the enclosed snaps in my album.

They are my "hut" mates in their pyjamas celebrating and some of the men had a bonfire with an effigy of Adolf Hitler on the top. I hope these are of interest.

A few days after, our Drum and Bugle Band flew to Luneberg and we toured West Germany (Propaganda!)

I still see four of my Battery friends.





BACK TO MY BILLETT, 7 CHESHIRE CLERICAL COMPANY ATS

Submitted by Miss Edna Margaret Smith,
W28110 and P 306463

I, Edna Margaret Smith (always known as Margaret) enlisted at Manchester on the 12 December 1939 and was called up to report on 19 December. I believe an officer took us to the railway station in Manchester, perhaps six or eight of us. She handed me a railway warrant. I recall saying "why me?". The reply was "You've been a Girl Guide".

We were consigned to a Recruit Depot at Whittington Hospital, Halton, Lancaster, until the war an orphanage. The dormitories held 26 double bunks. There was a black marble slab at the far end with 6 small white basins installed with cold water taps. The War Department were installing lavatories on each floor. I believe I climbed 167 or 169 stone steps to reach the dormitory and carried a bucket of hot water to have a warm wash. Somewhere there was a communal bath which I avoided.

My height was 5'7" tall with a 36 inch bust. They did not have a jacket to fit me, so gave me two khaki pullovers. I was given 2 identity tags a red and a green. I became W28110 Volunteer E M Smith.

Until enlisting I was employed as a Book-Keeper by a local firm so as a recruit I was posted, with 9 others, as a clerk to the 7th Cheshire Clerical Company serving at Western Command Pay Office. West Lancashire District Headquarters, and Western Command Headquarters then newly built, have since been sold to The Royal Bank of Scotland. I recall that there were underground rooms. The Royal Engineers did the tunnelling with some South Africans still at work there.

I believe we were posted on 31 December 1939 to Chester, met by Junior Commander Norah Saxon, who billeted us at The Queen Hotel for the night and told us we could have a bath! Next day we were taken to the Girls' Friendly Society House at the corner of Stanley Place and the City Wall overlooking the River Dee. Subsequently we were moved to different billets. After the conscription of women some were posted to the ATS and we changed from Volunteers to Privates.

23 December 1943 I was commissioned, having done the conga across the Barrack Square at Leicester on the previous night!

Recently I wanted to visit Chester. I looked in the visitor's guide and discovered the Recorder Hotel, 19 City Walls. I knew it as Edgar House, 22 City Walls in or about 1941. It is immediately overlooking the Weir at Handbridge, at the top of the "Recorder Steps" where I went from top to bottom in the deep snow of 1941. The present day Recorder with wall to wall carpeting and an historic 4 poster bed is very different from the bare boards, wooden framed beds with canvas on which to lay one's palliasse which was no more than a canvas bag with a few straws inside. The Recorder makes a good billet in 2004!

Where are you now my friends of the 1940s? Doreen Lever, Bunt Rogers, Lily Ann Whitfield, Mabel Waywell, Pamela Percy, Nan Todd (a Scot) - Joan Robinson, Peggy Jefferson, Bubbles Symes (married at St John's I think).

What about a reunion for the 7th Cheshire Clerical Company?

NB: Remember when we tried to distemper our Mess Room with some men from the Pay Office, using a Stirrup Pump!

**FARNHAM COMMON SEARCHLIGHT SITE,
FULMER.....TROOP HQ
SWAKELEYS HOUSE.....495 BATTERY HQ
RICKMANSWORTH.....3RD REGIMENTAL HQ**

Mrs Nell Armitage, née Smith, W144735
The Palms, 55/112 Dry dock Road, Tweed Heads South
N.S.W. Australia 2486 nellarmitage@hotmail.com

THE DAWN PATROL

100 Girls... part of the first batch of women conscripts in Britain were chosen to be part of an experiment to operate a Searchlight site manned by women only.

Training was at Kimmel Park (Wales) by male Staff Sergeants. The experiment was secret, as we were to use Radar to locate enemy planes location.

After training complete we transferred to 10 sites, situated north, south.. and west of London. We were engaged in the defence of London, and we worked with the RAF and not the guns. At this time, we became part of 495 Battery, 93rd Searchlight Regiment.

I was stationed at Farnham Common, and was the mechanic responsible for the maintenance of an ancient WW I Thornycroft Searchlight truck, which provided the power for the radar and the searchlight. During the time I was there, a newsreel was taken of the girls at Farnham Common and shown at all cinemas in Britain for a week. There were also pictures and articles in all the papers and magazines. We called ourselves The Dawn Patrol, as we rarely went to bed before dawn.

We had to do night guard duty, with only a police baton and a whistle with which to protect the radar, searchlight etc. Girls were not armed in those days.

I remember Dorothy, Joan, Alice, Lily, Grace, Diana, Kathy, Ivy and Joan Craig.

I also recall, quite vividly, our accommodation which was very basic. The ablutions consisted of a shallow, metal sink, with 2 cold water taps and a couple of hooks on the wall. Next door, the latrine was something from the dark ages. Two pans with a board with two holes suspended above. We were told that the boys would carry the pans to a far corner of the site, where we would dig a hole, empty the pans, wash them (Phew) and return them to their resting place.

I also recall; that, whatever we had to do, we gave it our best shot. We were a closely knit group and proud to have been chosen to defend our country in this way.

I was very happy there, but, unfortunately, a driver for the ration truck was needed, and I was transferred to Troop HQ, and then later to Battery HQ. My co-driver was Micky Comont... Mary Peacock, Louise and Vera Ayto were the Q girls... Marjory Smith and Joan, a Scottish lass were drivers also... Gerry was our very glamorous Don.R.

Through the magic of the Internet, I placed a message in Comrades and Colleagues, and got a reply from Jan Peddlesden who was deployed to Fulmer, then the Jordan site. She has been most helpful, and now we correspond regularly via the Internet. Hi there Jan.



I would like to say hello to the following girls:-

Helen Moor... née Pilkington...Kimmel Park and Jordans. She also remembers the fire at Kimmel, and the Sergeant who square bashed us into the ground.

Micky Storie.. née Hutton. Swakeleys House. Micky was instrumental in getting the story of our unique regiment, consisting of 1500 girls, (the first ever all female regiment in Britain) listed in The Imperial War Museum.

Milly Biggins, née Hutton. Swakeleys House.

The Bolton group who have accepted me. Thank you Mary, the president, for writing and keeping in touch, also Kathleen, who has brought back happy memories of my life in Bolton, so long ago. And hello to all the other girls..

Molly Holt..née Costello. Now living on the Gold Coast, Australia, stationed at Jordans.

Emily Bright...of Gosford Australia, who has kept up a lifetime of memories for us all.

Mary Tringham..née Graves. Now living at Cleveland, Australia.

Lastly, Hello to Spike, Adelaide, Australia.. not a searchlight girl, she worked with the gun crews, but she was responsible for introducing me to the Lioness. Hi there Spike.

I hope the pictures I have sent will evoke memories from long ago, for we were Comrades, were we not? I would love to hear from anyone who remembers these days of long ago.

COPY DEADLINE

Articles for inclusion in the next edition of the *Lioness* must be received by

20th December 2004

ONE PAGE FROM THE LIONESSE
VOLUME XXXVI No. 4 ~ Dated November, 1963

Just inside the front cover of The Lioness of November 1963, three messages were printed, one from the Princess Royal and two from Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan. Especially in this year of particular remembrance, they bear re-printing. Ed

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**Special Message From Our President
H.R.H. The Princess Royal**

This twenty-fifth anniversary of the formation of the A.T.S. may have less meaning for those of you who have only a vague remembrance of the last war, and who perhaps regard the first World War as ancient history, but we who served during those anxious days take pride and joy in the fact that the Corps goes on from strength to strength and that it carries with it the traditions and devotion to duty, that were created by Q.M.A.A.C. and handed down to the A.T.S., whose proved value led to the formation of the W.R.A.C.

May the coming years strengthen the bonds between us and bring peace and prosperity to us all.

MARY

Message from Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan

Looking back a quarter of a century, I recall the many difficulties of the early A.T.S. and the courage with which they were overcome. Soon the A.T.S. had proved its worth, it became part of H.M. Forces, its strength rose to a quarter of a million, its members were entrusted with combatant duties.

We learnt much during our service: discipline, comradeship, courage, forbearance, to laugh when we were hurt and carry on. These qualities are needed in civil life, because of them you can the better bring up your children, you can be of value as committee members, you can give help to those in difficulty. You gave your best in war; you have a much needed best to give in peace.

My affectionate respect to the early members, my proud good wishes to them and to their successors.

H.C.I. GWYNNE-VAUGHAN

The Judgement Of Our Allies

Among old Service papers, I have lately found "A Short Guide to Great Britain", issued by the War Department, Washington, U.S.A. for the benefit of American troops proceeding to this country on active service. I read that our people are "plenty tough", that our beer is "warm", that we are "reserved but friendly", and then I came across this statement:

"BRITISH WOMEN AT WAR. A British woman officer or non-commissioned officer can – and often does – give orders to a man private. The men obey smartly and know it is no shame. For British women have proven themselves in this war. They have stuck to their posts near burning ammunition dumps, delivered messages afoot after their motor-cycles have been blasted from under them. They have pulled aviators from burning planes. They have died at the gun posts and as they fell, another girl has stepped directly into the position and 'carried on'. There is not a *single record* in this war of any British woman in uniformed service quitting her post or failing in her duty under fire.

"Now you know why British soldiers respect the women in uniform. They have won the right to the utmost respect. When you see a girl in khaki or Air Force blue with a bit of ribbon on her tunic – remember she didn't get it for knitting more socks than anyone else in Ipswich."

The American outlook about women may differ a little from ours, but this is good reading for the Silver Jubilee of the Auxiliary Territorial Service. May I congratulate every old "A.T." and send her my proud good wishes.

H.C.I. GWYNNE-VAUGHAN

ATS BROOCH FOR SALE

Some time ago, Brigadier John Aggleton bought an ATS brooch for his wife.

The brooch is made of silver and paste and cost £275

Sadly, Mrs Aggleton has passed away and Brigadier Aggleton would like to sell the brooch in aid of the WRAC Association

If you would like to make an offer for the Brooch, please contact

John Aggleton, 7 Clare Mead, Rowledge, Farnham, Surrey GU10 4BJ.

WANTED:

WRAC Corps Beret 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ if possible

Please contact

Mrs L C Browne
7 Old School Close
Pershore
Worcs
WR10 1RG

Tel: 01386 554722

In Memory – 6th June 1944

There are countless days throughout the history of the British Army in which we can look back with immeasurable pride. They are moments which must not be allowed to become forgotten by those who follow after us. One of those days took place just 60 years ago, when amid the tightest security imaginable, the greatest invasion force ever assembled fought its way ashore at Normandy. Earlier this year, the WRAC Association sponsored Maureen Deeley to take our Standard and parade it with the many hundreds of others in memory of all those who lost their lives during D-Day.

MY MEMORIES OF THE D-DAY CELEBRATIONS 2004

By Maureen Deeley

Friday 4th June

As the standard and I were not "on parade" on the Friday, Sue Thomas, a great friend and fellow member of the WRAC Dinner Club Committee, my sister Hyacinth and I decided on a days sightseeing with other members of the Royal British Legion. We left our hotel at 0800hrs for a visit to Cambrai, where the first tank battle was fought and then on to the site of the Battle of Waterloo. Sadly, we took so long to find Cambrai that we had no time to look for Waterloo.

Saturday 5th June

We were up at 0600hrs, had breakfast and boarded the coach for a 0730hrs departure for the journey to Colleville-Montgomery and the parade, which began at 1100hrs. Sadly, the driver lost his way and we missed the parading of the standards. We watched the opening of the British Peace Garden at Caen where our veterans marched so proudly down onto the square to receive their medals. It was a very moving experience, watching the elderly men, their drill still as precise as it must have been 60 years ago. I spoke to several of them and congratulated them on getting their medals. We also met a servicewoman who had served in the WRAC, who came running up to have her photograph taken with the standard and me. She was a sergeant and had served 17 years. She borrowed my beret to show her friends what a WRAC beret looked like.

Sunday 6th June

We had to be up very early ~ 0400hrs ~ and onto the coach for 0545hrs departure for Bayeux Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery. Her Majesty was to take the salute at the parade, which was to start at 1020hrs.

One of the Normandy Veterans on the coach, a chap called Harry, needed help to lay his wreath of remembrance so Sue Thomas volunteered. This photograph is of Sue (with Harry's wreath) and the Standard and I.

While we were waiting for the parade to get started, I chatted to the gentleman on my left, an ex-RSM veteran of the Falklands War. As often happens, he started teasing me about the WRAC ~ just joking, but it was overheard by



the ex-Guards officer in front of me. He turned round and said, "Oh, I love that badge". Thinking that he was going to join in the teasing, I said that I didn't want any remarks from him either. "Oh no", he replied, "I'm married to an ex-WRAC girl, just wait till I tell her I've been talking with a real WRAC lady!"

After taking the salute, The Queen spoke to all of us on parade. I was standing in the front row, only about 10 yards away from Her Majesty, so not only did I get a very good view of her, our new patron got a good view of our Standard.



Sunday 6th June 2004 was a long, hot, tiring day. We did not get back to our hotel until 2130hrs. All our trips during the whole weekend took at least 4 hours. It is amazing how tiring it is just sitting on a coach.

Sue Thomas, Hyacinth and I will never forget the weekend. What an experience! I felt 10 feet tall as I so proudly paraded our Standard. And, to be part of such a wonderful, moving weekend is an experience I'll never forget.

Reminiscences of the WRAC

MEMORABLE DAYS

Mrs. M. Knight née Knight W/406123
27 Manby Road, Great Malvern, Worcs WR14 3BD



Going back on a sentimental journey recapturing again those dear halcyon days of my youth, a memorable incident in particular I recall. When I arrived back at Camp after home leave, I discovered 12th Battalion has been descended upon by a film crew who were shooting a film and had turned the entire area into a German Concentration Camp! After meeting up with my then friends and colleagues I was whisked away to view the set.

On the perimeter of our Camp on a sloping hillside a mock-up of a cemetery, presumably for the unfortunate inmates who had passed on, was evident. Behind the perimeter fence in Richmond Park, some local residents who were walking their dogs called to us. They were astonished, because, although they had lived near the 12th Battalion Camp for some years, they didn't realise that "when anyone died we were buried within the grounds". We were happy to alleviate their distress and cheerfully they carried on their way. Although the film title eludes me, the main characters don't. They were Stanley Baker, Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing.

Incidentally, on one occasion whilst pressing a uniform in the Batting Room, I walked Stanley Baker large as life requesting a cup of tea whilst waiting to attend a dinner in the Officers' Mess.

A friend and colleague of mine Irene Wright (maiden name) was an Officer's Mess Cook. Perhaps others who recall this film incident will also recall the film title?

DO YOU REMEMBER CHILWELL BARRACKS?

Mrs June Sutton née Willis (Pte)
38 Palmgrove Court, Thorne, Nr Doncaster,
S Yorkshire DN8 4EB

I read with interest an article from Mrs Crinter Lioness No. 1 2004, page 8 headed 'Chilwell Revisited' and this prompted me to write.



I joined the WRAC in October 1952. After leaving Guildford I went on to 11 Ind Coy 4th Bn WRAC at Chilwell Barracks. I worked in Tech Branch with quite a lot of civilians and WRAC girls. I made lots of friends, one being Pte D L Lane (Daphne). We spent many a weekend at each others homes, she was from Wembley in the south and I was from Doncaster. We were both at Chilwell for 3 years. During that time I got into the Club Swinging Team for the Royal Tournament in Leeds. There were 50 of us and for 3 weeks we were billeted at the York's and Lanc's Barracks at Pontefract, as we rehearsed at Leeds Roundhay Park until we had finished the week's show. We performed every night for some very special guests, one being Princess Margaret. It was a great occasion one I'll never forget. My friend Daphne wasn't in the team unfortunately but she heard plenty about it!



I met my husband at Chilwell Depot, he was in the RAOC. When I was demobbed I married Reg, and Daphne was my Chief Bridesmaid. Sadly Daphne and I have both lost our husbands. We still keep in touch, and it is great to share many happy memories. Oh and incidentally I visit Chilwell often by train. My son and his wife and Granddaughter now live where the tanks used to be stored. Daphne lives about 2½ miles away as she married a local man. The CO was Major G C Fowler I recall.

MEMORIES OF A PTI

Helen J Watt, 200 S Atlantic Avenue, Haddonfield, New Jersey 08033 USA

I was W/399737 Sgt Major Helen J Watt. I spent many happy years in the WRAC between 1958 and 1967 as a PTL. I was fortunate to represent the WRAC and the Combined Services in more than one sport, and the lessons I learnt from those days have stood me in great stead throughout my career.



Pat Davies, Val Laycock, Helen Watt, Carol Webb (1997)

This is one photograph of four of us who managed to get together before I left to live in the USA. The ones below show me as a brand new Sergeant and then WOII.



New Sgt

(Helen provided a few more scanned copies of snaps, which, sadly, we were not able to print. I am sure she would like to hear from all who remember her. Ed.)



New WOII

KIWIS SPLATTER WRAC

Submitted by Avril Williams Secretary of Cambridge Branch

I have never been very sporty, but at various times during my time in the WRAC, I have volunteered to play in a team to make up the numbers. One such occasion was when I played netball against the New Zealand World Champion Ladies Team in Hong Kong in November 1970.

Our OC asked for volunteers to play the ladies of the New Zealand Trade Commission in a friendly match of netball, she must have realised she would have no takers if she had told the truth.

Being a small unit of approximately 50 girls, the majority being Signals, who did shift work, we managed to make up a team, the majority of which had not played since their school days. We had a few practice matches before the big day.

On the day of the match we arrived at the camp's netball court full of enthusiasm, dressed in various forms of sports wear, some in PT kit. We were most surprised when reporters from one of the newspapers turned up, asking if this is where the big match was to take place. It was then we found out our destiny, we were playing against the New Zealand World Champions.

The opposition arrived by mini bus; wearing smart sports kit of black tracksuits and matching skirts with a silver fern motif. After being photographed we were led on to the court, like lambs to the slaughter.



Avril before the match

I have never seen netball played to such a high standard, in the first half they went to a 38 – 1 lead. In the second half they took pity on us and exchanged the defences with us. But they still managed to beat us 53 – 3.

After the match both the local and the WRAC's Mess for refreshments, this was another disaster as the mess had only prepared enough sandwiches for one team. Looking back they were very nice ladies who took it all in good stead.

We were the laughing stock of the Camp, when it was splashed over the sports section of the Hong Kong Star 'KIWIS SPLATTER WRAC'.

(Reproduced below is a copy of the newspaper article to which Avril has referred)

"The world netball champions, New Zealand, made mockery of the WRAC squad in a friendly encounter at Victoria Barracks yesterday, winning 53-3.

In the first half the New Zealand nationals went to a 38-1 lead, mainly through goal-shooter Frances Wiringi and goal-attack Joan Harnett.

Captain Joan Harnett opened with three consecutive goals and in the first half netted ten shots while sharp shooter Frances Wiringi made a fantastic 28 goals without really exerting herself.

The only goal for the local team in the first half was by LCpl Audrey Meynell.

In the second half the New Zealanders decided to even the sides and exchanged the defences with the WRAC girls.

With the New Zealanders defence the local side were able to keep down the scores but Frances Wiringi was too good and still managed to net 13 more to put her tally in the game to 41 while Joan Harnett scored the other two.

LCpl Audrey Meynell netted in another of WRAC's goals while goal shooter Audrey Rowley scored the other."

MY TIME IN THE WRAC – A PERSONAL MEMOIR

Mrs Janet Cameron, née Beer, W/398968 Pte
9 Chicago Avenue, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2DR

Though I signed up in December for the Army I was unable to join straight away due to a large number already for training. I waited till January 24 1958 before going to Guildford for my basic training.

I was posted to Bicester in Oxfordshire into Vehicle Depot servicing vehicles of many sizes. At the time there was not many girls there but as the men's National Service was drawing to a close more joined us at B sites as it was known. During that time we had to clear the backlog of vehicles and had sandwiches sent to us from the cookhouse, which were always sandwich spread. They were really horrible to eat and always with lukewarm tea.

8 Independent Coy was Nissen huts with a pot belly stove to keep us warm with a damp floor that we found hard to polish, especially when the ditches outside flooded. This was known as 4 Camp. We had to take it in turns to black lead the stove and light it, that's if the wind was blowing in the right direction or the room filled up with smoke coming back down the small chimney. Sharing the hut were Brenda Crispin, Norma Summers, Helen Child, Joan Millar, Ena Fleming, Valerie Hill and myself with Margaret Henderson the room Corporal.

I wonder if Norma remembers us going out to the washing line in our undies only to be wolf whistled by the men who unknown to us were using our parade ground for their football tournament!

I did have some fun there but did not realise till I came out how much. Trying to get back in was hard as I now find out 44 years later. I was told the wrong things like it was too late to rejoin after leaving six months on.

Having joined the Association I haven't looked back meeting many lovely people and seeing some wonderful places. I am Secretary to the Medway branch and they are lovely people to be with.



I am in the bottom row, 6th from the right

My time in the Army and the Association are the best things I have ever done and I have no regrets.

I am looking for a platoon photograph taken at Guildford. I was in No 1 Platoon. The room overlooked the cook's training hut. Expenses will be met.

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Branch News

ABERDEEN BRANCH

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Our year started off sadly with the death of Jean Simpson. She had a long battle against cancer but was still talking about her Ack-Ack days up to when she died. She was a great character and we will sorely miss her.

In April seven of us visited the Women and War Exhibition at The Imperial War Museum. Overall, we were disappointed with the lack of information about the ATS and some of the displays were poorly lit. Some of the parts were interesting but we felt let down. However, two of our friends in London joined us so we had good company for the day.

We then had a great treat being taken around the Houses of Parliament by our Aberdeen MP Malcolm Savidge. We visited the Chapel and went up onto the roof where we felt we could almost touch Big Ben. There was a lovely view of all the London rooftops. We also saw the Queen's Changing Room, that was magnificent with all its gold paintwork and furnishings. Needless to say, we managed to fit in a cup of coffee and a visit to the Shop to buy some mementoes of the day. Mr Savidge spent about four and half hours with us so we felt very privileged that he had taken so much trouble on our behalf. We were able to tell him about our Ack-Ack days and he thanked us for keeping the bombs away from the Palace of Westminster.

Whilst we were in London, some went on The London Eye. It was the first time for most of us but we managed! In spite of it being an overcast day, the views were great and it was a good feeling to see so much of London. We also managed to fit in shopping and gallery visits – one person even managed a show. We certainly crammed as much as we could into 6-day break. We stayed at The Victory Services Club and can recommend it. We gave them top marks for food, comfort and company and it is so central just at the back of Marble Arch.

In May we are visiting Stonehaven which is a lovely fishing village. We hope it will be a dry day and we are

looking forward to getting together for our lunch. It makes a change from the normal meeting to have an outing and a change of scenery. We usually number about 11 – 15 at normal meeting but it has been a wet winter. Let's hope that the summer weather will be better and more members will be able to attend.

I am going to Normandy with a friend. It will be the first time I have visited and we are so looking forward to it especially in this 60th Anniversary of the D-Day.

Our next big meeting is the Scottish Area Reunion in Perth in October. As Perth is fairly central and easy to get to, we are hoping for a big turnout.

Aberdeen sends everyone best wishes and hopes that the summer will be a sunny one!

BATH BRANCH

The Bath branch continues to thrive. We have had successful fund raising events, interesting speakers at some of our twice monthly meetings, and particularly from the Gurkha Signals Regiment stationed near Bath. They gave us a most informative talk with slides about Nepal and the commencement of the "Gurkhas". We support the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Two of our members had husbands who were Officers with the Gurkhas.

Sadly one of our most loyal members has died at the age of 93, Miss Hilda Pratt had been a member almost from the founding of our branch, during which time she had served on the Committee and represented the branch at Associations in the city.

We continue to welcome new members but understand that those who live outside the city find it hard to attend the meetings. In order to get round this problem, we organise shopping trips to their areas and get together for lunch. We welcome Betty Haynes, née Fox who lives in Wells. Mrs Joan Law, née Degutis who is now a regular at our meetings, and Mrs Marjorie Marsh, née Small who makes the effort of travelling from Midsomer Norton to the meetings. Mrs Dora Swan who lives at Burnham on Sea and Mrs Muriel Baker, who lives in Swindon are two of our members with whom we hope to meet for lunch outside the city. We do welcome them all and are trying to fulfil Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake's request at the Association's AGM to meet up at least once a year with each other.

The Secretary of this branch together with the Treasurer were present at our AGM and would like to state how impressed we were with the work done by Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake and Major Jane Freebairn.

Finally a "thank you" to Southampton branch for hosting the Area Reunion on Sunday May 23rd.

BEXHILL BRANCH

Six months ago we asked you to "watch this space" and we are glad that you did because we are back to report that we are still here and that we have even increased our numbers by **PDF Compressor: New Version** with the enrolment of a new member who served in the ATS during WW2. That is no mean feat in the year 2004. Hands up any Branch that can do better! Anyway, we welcome Vivienne as a Branch member. We are still here because we are fortunate to have a dynamic Chairman who fills our afternoon meetings with games, competitions and quizzes. We also have a hard-working Secretary/Treasurer who has arranged for some very good speakers to interest us as well as doing all the other jobs that someone holding those two titles would have to do. We are also fortunate to have a Minutes Secretary, Welfare Officer and an uncomplaining tea-making duo. How could we fail? The answer to that is "Very easily without a lot of good will from all involved".

The numbers who attend our meetings are decreasing, and average 20. With 3/5ths of our entrance money being spent on hall rental, we have to raise a few pounds by holding small sales and raffles. To those of you who read this report and who find yourselves in Bexhill on the first Thursday of any month, please come along and join us. We meet at the Red Cross Centre in London Road (opposite Aldi's) at 2 pm. You will be made very welcome.

To the Editor of our magazine, Mrs Purkis, thank you for a very good read. It is a quality magazine and the reproduction of old photographs is excellent.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Our meetings are still held on the first Wednesday of each month. During the winter months many members were unable to attend meetings, but we were pleased to welcome four new members.

Our Christmas Lunch was appreciated by all and our grateful thanks to Vi Horsley, who organised the venue, cost and menu.

Bring and Buy was successful with many unwanted Christmas presents being sold and we were pleased that 30 members attended.

New Year speakers started with 'The Army Today' given by a serving Sergeant with the aid of slides. As expected there was quite a difference from when we enlisted in 1939, but a very worthwhile career today nevertheless.

Alan Cadell, another speaker, collects 'Anecdotes of wartime experiences from civilian and service members'. There were many tales from evacuees and he was hopeful of collecting members' stories. He has given our Chairman a tape he recorded on her time in Germany and we are looking forward to hearing this soon. These experiences are for the Horsforth Museum in Leeds.

Pilgrimage to K2 – another excellent topic and speaker.

Birthday Party – guests – visitors. We were very pleased

to welcome Maggie Purkis and Irene Hall and a good time was had by all.

Two members will be visiting Normandy with the Veterans Association. Maureen will be carrying the National Standard. The Normandy Veterans Association Birmingham has invited our members to join them in a church service and parade in St Paul's Birmingham. They have requested for our standard bearer and, if available, Maureen will be taking the Branch Standard.

We have future dates for our diaries:

Look forward to the Area AGM in Hereford
Veterans Parade in Weymouth
Ack-Ack Parade in York

We received a very full and interesting report from Maureen Peach, who represented our branch at the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph in London. It was most informative.

BLACKPOOL BRANCH

We continue to meet on the third Friday of each month. The venue is Franco's Restaurant, Cleveleys at 1 pm for lunch. This has proved very popular with our members as the meal is good, no steps to climb and very reasonably priced.

Our Chairman attended the AGM in London on 3rd April and was a guest at the Secretary's Lunch. The lunch was delicious and beautifully served in a very relaxed atmosphere.

Kate, our Treasurer, is still in hospital but is making some progress. We all wish her well soon.

Our Berlin Belle, Jean Eastham, is off to Berlin in May to join the 55th celebration of the end of the Blockade. Jean will be the only one there representing the Association this time around.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

We had a topsy-turvy beginning to 2004. In early January, the venue we have been using for many years notified us that it was closing down immediately. Fortunately we had decided not to have January meetings as from this year but our programme cards had been sent out in December.

Thankfully, our social Secretary quickly found another hotel willing to take us; so once we had notified all members (and speakers) we were all set to go into action in February.

We were pleased to welcome two new ladies to the branch, whom we had met by chance, neither of them had heard of the Association previously. Also, two members have transferred to our Branch from Medway Branch, so we gained four new members in quick succession, which was great.

Sadly, however, we lost one of our branch founder

members when the death of Nora Corbett, aged 93, was announced. Nora had regularly attended meetings until her health deteriorated – she will be very much missed, particularly by long serving members of the branch.

We have had a successful Bristol Branch which have added over £55 to funds, (in addition to our income from raffles). Our guest speakers, Alma Bostock (Spitfires and wartime experiences) and Alan Hyde (Light-hearted entertainment) were both interesting and amusing.

We were very proud when Miss Amy Weightman received her Certificate of Appreciation, from Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake at the AGM held at the Victory Services Club. Amy is a very popular member; she was branch Treasurer for many years, rarely misses a meeting or event and, at 86 years young, is wonderfully active. Well done, Amy!! Four of our members enjoyed joining others at an afternoon tea and entertainment given by the Not Forgotten Association.

Lastly, a group of us attended the Southern Area Reunion, hosted this year by Southampton Branch – a pleasant occasion to meet with old friends from Bath, Bristol, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Salisbury, Weymouth, Winchester and Wincanton branches, plus of course our hosts from Southampton.

Our June meeting will be the Annual Garden Party at the home of our Honorary Secretary followed on 20 June with the Annual Veterans' Parade at Weymouth – an occasion not to be missed.

By the time this goes to print, summer will be on the way out; we at Bournemouth trust you will have enjoyed a good summer – maybe some of you will have visited us.

We send greetings to all at HQ and to all branch members.

There is a lovely photo of Sue Westlake and Miss Amy Weightman in the centre, colour section. Ed

BRADFORD BRANCH

Greetings to all members at home and abroad.

My article last year failed to arrive at HQ so this one may be a mismatch. Our branch continues to meet once a month with raffles, tea and chat.

November was busy as always with Festival of Remembrance at St George's Hall a good turn out. It was as we marched from the War Memorial – after a very poignant multi-cultural service that I realised that I must give up carrying the Standard. My spirit is still willing but my knees are protesting. This has been my 22nd year as Standard Bearer and have been proud to do it. But the years creep on – ever faster – and although I hate the thought of never doing it again – reason says I must. I have visited so many places, Dunkirk three times, Glasgow, London, Blackpool, Cardiff, Guildford, York, Harrogate, Leeds to name just a few. I have made many friends and have lost of pictures and memories.



At our May meeting we had a presentation by Mr B Burn, County Field Officer, Royal British Legion. The award was a citation and a brooch for six members, Miss V Holdsworth, Mrs Elsie Lambert, Mrs Eva Kincaid, Mrs Mildred Foster, Mrs Ada Hudson and yours truly Norah Kendall. This was in recognition of us having sold poppies for 25 years. We couldn't believe it had been so many – where do the years go? Afterwards we had a little tea party which was enjoyed by all.

We have had members absent due to illness, holidays etc etc – we wish all a speedy recovery and hope you will be back soon.

Now we look forward to the North East Reunion which is to be held in Doncaster in September.

BRISTOL BRANCH

It's been another busy six months for the branch. Where does time go? Here we are almost into June and holidays to look forward to, but also enjoying and looking forward to various branch activities that are planned for the coming months.

In December 2003 a Christmas Tree Festival of Light was held at our Meeting Place which is in the Local Baptist Church. We had a tree and we were given a carol to decorate the tree. Ours was 'O Holy Night' which turned out to be the carol sang by Pop Idol winner Michelle McManus, so we were hearing it all the time on the radio. January was a quiet month everyone winding down after the Christmas Festivities, but we were busy making arrangements for our Annual Lunch in February. Our theme this year was 'D' Day. Our place cards were 'ration



books', inside was the choice of menu picked by a member. We had paper boats with the names of the ships involved; toy soldiers on the table, and it looked very decorative. Our guests were Val Trout (who is very supportive to Bristol for which we thank her) and a veteran from the Arnhem campaign. We had a very good time, but unfortunately his wife was taken ill, so he was unable to attend. Our Lunch was a great success.

April saw our Secretary attend the AGM in London, our meeting was put back a week so that she could report on what happened. It was good to hear the news that Her Majesty The Queen is now our Patron. Several things happened in May, we attended the Southern Area Reunion organised by Southampton branch, we had a nice day out. Thank you Southampton, we know how much work goes into organising these events.

One of our members Jean James together with her cousin Marion from Australia completed a 102 mile walk to raise funds for a 'Radio Frequency Electro Coagulation Unit'. Their walk finished in Bath at the Abbey. We went to Bath to support them, and cheer them in. Jean will do a report herself for the Lioness (later edition), but she has had a good response from letters that were sent out to branches for which she thanks you all for. Her fundraising will continue until she reaches the magic sum of £16,000+. Jean has been interviewed on TV and Radio and local paper, Jean wearing her Association Badge. Well done Jean!



Her we are at the end of May; we are parading at the Bath and West Show at Shepton Mallet on 5 June and then at local events on the Sunday. We have an afternoon 'D' Day parade and service and then to a different venue for an evening 'D' Day service. We will be attending Weymouth for the Veterans Paraded also in June.

We have many social events to look forward to, so we just hope the weather is kind to us all.

Have a good summer.

BURY BRANCH

Hello again.

In March we celebrated our tenth birthday which a splendid Buffet Lunch at the White Lion Hotel, Bury.

In April, our Secretary and Treasurer attended the AGM in London and we were pleased to learn that Her Majesty The Queen has now become our Patron.

In June we were invited to attend the 'D' Day celebrations with our friends in Wilmslow and in July to join our fellow members for a Strawberry Tea in Chester.



The final Reunion of Ack Ack girls will be held in York in July. Four of our members served with the royal Artillery in mixed Heavy Ack Ack Batteries - Lily with 515 Battery, Florence with 633 Battery, Joyce with 454 Battery and Mary with 562 Battery (Searchlights).

At our May meeting we were pleased to welcome a new member - Betty Navin, née Drummond, who served for eight years with ATS/WRAC in this country and Malaya where she met and married her husband who was also serving.

At our last meeting we had a lively discussion on the National Memorial to honour women in the Second World War. Most of us did not like the design but we are pleased that, after sixty years, their great contribution to the war effort is finally being recognised.

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

We still meet once a month, and it is now 24 years since the formation of the Branch.

Here are some of the activities that have taken place since our branch AGM in April 2003.

- A buffet was held at the secretary's house in August, followed by a video on the closing ceremonies of the WRAC at Aldershot.
- Four of us attended the WRAC Dinner at Stoke-on-Trent in October and had a great time, thanks to all the organisers concerned, we are looking forward to the next time.
- We had our Christmas Dinner at the Gonville Hotel in Cambridge.
- On Saturday 3 April, three members attended the Association AGM at the Victory Services Club, and it was nice to meet up with old friends again.
- Followed by our branch AGM on Monday 5 April.

The photo was taken at our December meeting.



Avril Williams, Peggy Dunlop, Vera Martin, Martine Freestone, Janet Herdman, Fay Warne and Jean Farrington. The photo was taken by Wendy Hootton

CANTERBURY BRANCH

The months fly past and already it is May and time to put together our branch report.

In December we had our Christmas Party with 50 members and guests sitting down to a festive meal followed by an excellent raffle. January is always a quiet month but despite the cold weather our meeting was lively with plenty of tea and chat. In February we discussed the possibility of a trip to the Imperial War Museum to see the "Women at War" exhibition. In March after the official business it was eyes down for a session of bingo, after sorting out if we were playing for a line or house and then a slight hiccup when we mislaid a few of the numbers. (We found them in the bin!).

Our April meeting was busy. Both our Chairman, Kate McGregor and our Vice-Chairman Doreen Dennis were recovering from operations but the rest of us soldiered on. Everyone enjoyed a fish and chip lunch followed by a competition for an Easter Table Decoration, narrowly won by Maisie Halladay, with a wonderful display of daffodils, Easter chicks and eggs in a basket weave teapot!



In May our Chairman presented Kay Perfect our Treasurer and standard bearer and Marge Dagless our Caterer with their Certificates of Appreciation for all their hard work on behalf of the Association. Then a member Toni Atkins, ably assisted by her husband Peter, displayed one of their beautifully made dolls houses and explained the attention to detail which is involved in their creation. Any members visiting Canterbury can be sure of a warm welcome to our meetings which are usually held on the first Wednesday of every month (except August) at 2.00 pm at the Dominican Priory, St Peter's Lane, Canterbury.



CHELMSFORD BRANCH

WELCOME

We have been without an Area Chairman since our last report so we are very pleased to know that Major (Retd) Pat Stevenson is now looking after our branch following the resignation of Lady Valerie Kemball to whom we say a big "Thank you, dear Val".

Our report begins with the New Year and our first meeting of 2004 was held in January where 23 of us met at the RAFA Club in Chelmsford for a "cuppa" and a chat. We held a stall for unwanted Christmas presents which proved popular and enjoyed a card game of Hoy before departing home.

In February we gathered again to listen to a speaker who had served as a railwayman all his life working on steam

trains which included the Royal Scot. This fascinating story of his life which included a tale of how bacon and eggs were cooked on a shovel by placing them over the hot coals kept us completely silent for over 40 minutes, (which is probably in itself a record!) We look forward to hearing from **PDF Compressor. Free Version**

We met again in March and this month welcomed two new members. Our speaker that day was a former contestant of TV competitions "Fifteen-to-One" and "Countdown". The latter was illustrated with a video and gave us information on how the show was put together from the contestants point of view. It was both enlightening and enjoyable and we wondered if some of us had a chance of appearing on the programme in the future!

At our April meeting 26 of us met and we held a quiz which was won by Vi Duckett and Edith Saunders.

Also in April a few of us were able to attend the AGM of the Association and we are delighted to report that two of our members were awarded Certificates of Appreciation. Joan Mackenzie our former Honorary Treasurer who has resigned after 10 years in the job – well done Joan, and Peggy Turner who is a founder member and for a time produced our Newsletter as well as helping to organise competitions, games, take subscriptions to cover costs of the meetings etc. We are grateful to them both for their support over a long period. As they were not able to attend the AGM it is hoped they will receive them later in the year.

We have enclosed some photographs with this report which may interest readers.



A print showing the poppies laid at Westminster Abbey by ATS/WRAC Last November and sent in by Mary Buttlng who has attended this Ceremony regularly.

Josie Chadwick (née Barker) who served in the ATS wrote several poems. Sadly, Josie died some time ago but her daughter sent one of her poems to us. We really enjoyed reading it and have sent it to *Lioness* for inclusion in the Poems section.

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We conclude this report by thanking all our members for the valued support they give to this branch. None of us are getting younger and we do appreciate everyone who comes to meetings – some who travel long journeys by bus or by other ways and makes our time together so worthwhile. We also extend sincere thanks to the staff at Worthy down, especially to Jane who is doing a great job. New members are always welcome – contact Gina Shadrack (Hon Secretary) on Tel: 01245 251088

CLEVELAND BRANCH

2003 went out rather quietly for us, as the Centre where we meet was closed for the Christmas Holidays. So, we decided to have a belated celebration in January. Foiled again! The weather was dreadful so we had to cancel the meeting. February was better, so we hired two of 'Santa's Elves' to distribute late Christmas gifts to members. It was hilarious when the 'senior elf' made everyone sit on her knee and promise to be good!!

We still get a good attendance at branch meetings (weather and flu virus permitting) one or two are on the sick list at present – by the time this edition goes to print we hope to have a full squad.

In March we had a delayed Annual Auction. Although we were small in number owing, once again to the weather, we still had a fun time, and our members were very generous.

April came in like a lion, but that didn't stop us from making our preparations for Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake's visit in May.

CREWE BRANCH

After the Christmas break in which we held our Christmas Lunch on 18 December at the Crewe Arms Hotel, our first branch meeting this year was in February.



On 31 January Mabel Lightfoot and husband Ronkie celebrated their Ruby Wedding Anniversary at the Crosville Club, Crewe, to which we were all invited. Friends from Birmingham, Cardiff and Swansea branches also attended. Mabel wishes to thank everyone for joining them on this happy occasion. During the evening they held a raffle and the proceeds were divided between Mabel's Special Needs Students Centre and our branch for which we were very grateful and we wish Mabel and Ronkie all the best for the future.

Edith, Betty and Joan went down to London for the AGM on 3 April. We held our spring Dance at the Crosville Club on 8 April which did very well. We have also welcomed a new member Mrs Jeannie Jones. She served with 56 Squadron RCT, Woolwich and has been out of the Army 10 years now.

We have sadly lost a member Mrs Mary Stamp who died in April. She lived in Stoke-on-Trent.

Several of us attended a 'D' Day Celebration Concert organised by the British Legion at the Civic Hall, Nantwich on 25 April.

Edith is going to Normandy for the 'D' Day celebrations on 6 June. She served with 21 Army Group in Brussels from January 1945 then moved with the advanced party to Germany at the end of hostilities.

We will then have a break during June and July due to holidays. Hopefully we will be able to attend the Area Reunion in September, this year at Hereford. At the moment we are having transport difficulties which we hope to sort out eventually.

FIFE & TAYSIDE BRANCH

We have 49 Annual Members and 40 Life Members. Our Branch AGM was well attended in April and closed with a very nice lunch. Our finances are looking better this year, but on the other hand we shall need quite a bit as we are hosts this year to the Scottish AGM which is being held in Perth on 23rd October 2004.

We meet on the last Thursday of each month for a lunch and this is quite well attended, about 20-24 members. One or two of our members met with accidents this year but are well again to join us. Unfortunately we lost one of our stalwarts in March, we shall miss her.

Our members look forward to greeting all the members from the Scottish Branches to the big AGM in October.

GLASGOW BRANCH

Since our last letter, sadly, 4 of our members have died. They are May Ash, Agnes Banford, Netta Broome and Molly Ritson (making 8 since January 2003). Our roll now numbers 81. We had one new member join us, Miss Margaret Irvine.

Our AGM and Bring and Buy sale were well attended. We raised the sum of £250 which we sent to Erskine Hospital for disabled ex-service men and women.

We have been fortunate this session, having interesting speakers and musical entertainers. Our friends from the WAAF joined us when we were entertained by a family group. Three brothers and their sister, who, were instrumentalists and singers.

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From our speakers we now know more about the history of cartoons, the trials and tribulations of a former Casualty Sister in a busy Glasgow City Centre Hospital. The travels and experiences of an Olympic Swimming Umpire who brought along a display of her doll collection from every country she had visited.

Our last speaker in May, when we will be joined by our friends from the WRNS. Promises to be equally interesting and hilarious, "The Experiences of a Tour Guide". Miss Muriel Thomson, our intrepid explorer in her 93rd year, is back safely from her trip to South Africa, and is looking forward to being with us when we meet in May.

We send greetings to everyone for an enjoyable summer.

GREATER LONDON

We continue to meet three times per year at Orange Street Congregational Church in Leicester Square and members loyally support us by attending if they are able and mobile.

We sadly report the death of our life member Miss Laura Biegler on 14 April in the Central Middlesex Hospital, London, following serious illness. Laura joined the ATS with her sister Flora in 1942 and trained at Lancaster, serving until 1947 with the RA and then RAC. In late '47 she was drafted with No. 1 Continental Group ATS for service in HQ BAOR in Bad Oeynhausen. As she was Austrian by birth Laura acted unofficially as an interpreter. She joined our branch in 1973 in its fledgling years and gave devoted service manning the bring and buy table from 1974 until last September; she was rarely absent from her 'post'. For her outstanding service Laura was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by our then Vice-President of the Association Brigadier Anne Field CB CBE at the Association AGM in April 1993. Mrs Eileen Carter our Vice-Chairman represented the branch at her Funeral Service at Golders Green Crematorium on 23 April and met her relatives. Sadly she lost her parents in Auschwitz and her sister died last June.

We continue to support the Army Benevolent Fund at the Chelsea Flower Show, some members accompanied by their husbands who work equally hard. At our Spring Meeting in February we enjoyed talks given by the Fund Welfare Officer Mrs Anne Lloyd and Mrs Jenny Hughes from the Regular Forces Employment Association. Both ladies had served in the Corps in the 60's and had enjoyed the camaraderie of Service life. Mrs Anne Lloyd said she finds great satisfaction in helping Service people and their families and talking to caseworkers to decide how best to help individuals. Mrs Jenny Hughes helps men and women leaving the Service to readjust to civilian life again and find housing and jobs. Interestingly, the Association began in 1885 when soldiers were returning from the Crimean campaign with no means of support at all. Resettlement years ago was not very effective and had to be reorganised. Now officers and other ranks are

helped and the Association has had some fantastic successes; she feels very privileged to be part of this important endeavour. We enjoyed the talks very much.

Twelve members attended the Association AGM at the Victory Services Club on 3 April, seven of whom assisted in the foyer, manning the Sales Table which raised over £100, looking after the Cloakroom which raised £12.62 and manning the Attendance Register, ably assisted by a member of London branch. Our Secretary thanks the Association and Council for a nice luncheon and enjoyed the good company.

Our General Secretary reminded us that the Association had paid £5,000 for our plot in the National memorial Arboretum and so we have donated £75 from branch funds and members donated £25 from the tea fund. We will continue to donate to this worthy cause.

At our Summer Meeting on 24 April Miss Belinda Cuthbert, Fund Raising and Public Relations Co-ordinator from the Royal Star & Garter Home came along to talk to us and was able to meet again some members who had visited the Home, some on two occasions. She explained that to meet the future needs of our disabled and ill Servicemen and Women, it would be necessary to provide three new homes. One to be located in the Richmond area to eventually replace the existing building, a second home in the West Midlands and third in a location yet to be decided, from 2008.

We joined London Branch for the Spring Fayre at the Royal Green Jackets Drill Hall in London which was very enjoyable and was held on 13 May. Thirteen members attended, of whom two were lucky enough to win raffle prizes.

GRIMSBY BRANCH

Greetings to one and all from Grimsby Branch.

We are a fairly large branch with about 35 members attending meetings on a regular basis, we have a good few younger WRAC members but mainly ATS. Unfortunately we have quite a few of the older members having been poorly this winter, I hope they all recover with the good weather. We are the only branch in our very large county, so about half of our members live too far away to attend meetings regularly. However, the secretary keeps in touch with cards at Christmas etc. We are a lively bunch and love our outings, ably organised by our Chairman and Committee.

We enjoyed the North East Area Reunion in York on 13 September 2003 it was lovely meeting old friends again and taking part in the reunion service.

On 11 October we had a Nearly New and Bric a Brac sale, and raised over £100 for branch funds.

In November we had our customary stall in the local Asda store and "sold" poppies for the week leading up to Armistice Sunday, the total collected was £2,100.

Some of our members took a trip to the Tattoo in Birmingham, it was absolutely wonderful!! If you get the chance to go, don't miss it ladies.

Our AGM found all our officers and committee being appointed for another year, and we look forward to another year of meetings and outings.

In November we had some retail therapy at Downtown near Grantham. The shop was well decorated for Christmas. Christmas presents and party outfits were bought at reasonable prices, and a meal was had at Lincoln on the way home.

The December meeting was the Christmas Dinner, prepared and cooked by our own Chef, Ted Davy. We had a thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining afternoon. The next day we held a Christmas Fayre, with cake stall and good quality bric a brac.

In the New Year we visited "Countdown" studio in Leeds, which was very interesting and exciting meeting Carol Vorderman and Richard Whiteley.

In February we held a Jumble Sale, at a different venue, with a tombola and bric a brac, it was a huge success and raised in excess of £300. We plan to hold another one there later in the year.

We have a further shopping outing planned for May, and other outings in the pipeline.

HEREFORD BRANCH

There have been many things happening in the Hereford Branch, sadness, pure enjoyment and preparation for the Wales and West Reunion, which is being held in Hereford this year.

We say goodbye to one of our ladies Jean Robins, née MacKay. Her loss has made an impact on the Branch because she was a staunch supporter and a great believer in *esprit de corp*. Jean will be greatly missed and last year she took the time to write her brief memoirs for the Branch Book. Every time someone reads the book she will be remembered. My special thanks go to her family who supplied photographs to better illustrate her story. Jean's funeral was attended by many members of the Branch and the Standard was paraded in her honour. Goodbye old friend.

Our Christmas dinner was a great success only marred by the fact that they placed us in the room 'upstairs'. Everyone joined in getting our ladies aloft. Next Christmas venue will be downstairs, be reassured.

A chance listening to the radio raised an item that Croft Castle, Leominster were to hold a Second World War event in readiness for the 60th anniversary, prompted me to ring and we were welcomed to run a stall. We took along with us memorabilia, information and our book of memories. The sun was shining the venue was unbelievable and were informed later that the day would not have been so successful if not for our presence. Even the 'Living History' people were talking to our ladies asking many questions. "How did you manage to maintain those curls?" and "Am I dressed correctly?" I did so enjoy our Ena (Boucher) Price, retired CSM looking one lady up and down and then question her on the correctness of her outfit. If they are to be involved in this re-enactment then

they must do it correctly. One chap asked specifically if we knew of any ladies in the ATS who were attached to the Yorks and Lancs Regt and did they wear their collar dog over the breast pocket. **If any one knows the answer** please phone 01432 820403 or e-mail aviatrix@onetel.net.uk and talk to Frankie Green. Children who were doing school projects were asking questions. One child revealed that her teacher was teaching them war songs but only knew the words to two. The child's mother then bought one of our song books and the child was going to take it to school so they could learn 50 more.



Phyllis and Ena having a sneaky well earned break

We managed to make contact with 4 ex-ATS ladies who did not know of the Association. They were encouraged to attend the reunion and maybe make contact with long lost friends. Many of the ladies from the Hereford Branch made the efforts and attended. Thank you to everyone who put in the hard work. The event was missed by Eva and Rosemary who were enjoying themselves in Canada but no doubt we will tell them what they'd missed. Ironically one of our ladies, Una Heap was on duty in the dinning room of the Castle during the event. She took time out to visit us and catch up on the gossip.

A Bingo evening is to be held in June and the proceeds put toward the reunion. Everyone is contributing prizes for the event. I am always humbled by the generosity of the ladies of the Hereford Branch, when they decide to do something they **really do it**.

By the time you read this, the reunion would have taken place and I would like to hope that it went well. Everything is in place and everyone is looking forward to it.

We are having our second August picnic with the kilt competition and our AGM will be held during our October meeting. By then both Joyce and myself will be so tired we will be begging to be released from our positions. Only joking, I think!

Our book of memories is being printed locally and it is hoped that it will raise monies to continue success of the Hereford Branch. Those that have seen it are now thinking of putting in a contribution. Do not fret if you have not contributed yet, we look upon this as a 'living book' that will always continue to be added to.

See you at the Reunion.

HULL BRANCH

Hello from Hull.

We held our meeting at Age Concern this month and 14 members attended. It was a very good lunch there, which doesn't leave us much time for a meeting.

There wasn't time for me to tell them all that happened this month so it was suggested I write this report and get it off to HQ.

Our secretary received from the Hull Civic Office a request on behalf of the Lord Mayor of Hull for one member to attend a luncheon at the Guildhall to mark the anniversary of the D-Day Landings. The names of those wishing to attend went into a hat and I was very pleased when mine came out. When the day arrived I felt honoured to be representing the Women's Royal Army Corps.

I arrived at the Guildhall and saw all the veterans proudly wearing their medals and greeting each other as if it was yesterday, I was proud to be one of them. I, May Kirby, had 24 years service in the ATS/WRAC. I thought I was going to be the only woman there but I went into the reception room with my head held high remembering what I was there for and shook hands with the Lady Mayoress and Lord Mayor.

I was then asked if I would like to sit with the ladies who were difficult to see among so many men. One lady had been in the WRAC recently and the other was an ex-WREN. We had plenty to talk about. A request came from the Lord Mayor for me to be photographed with him.

Apart from the lady Mayoress and us three it was the veterans enjoying themselves with so many stories to tell. I came away with a menu and was asked if I would like the flowers off the table to take home. So altogether it was a wonderful day.

Three of us have just had a fortnight at the Lord Kitchener's Memorial Home which we always enjoy. We have met some very nice folks there.

LEEDS BRANCH

The weather was very good for the time of the year so our Chairman welcomed 15 members to the start of another year. Everyone had thoroughly enjoyed Christmas Lunch at Thomas Danby College so the Secretary agreed to book there again in the summer. In March we enjoyed a talk by Elizabeth Bustard about her visit to Buckingham Palace to see her son awarded the MBE, by Her Majesty The Queen. She is a very proud mum and we all shared her memories. Five members and friends enjoyed 'Hello Dolly' at the Leeds Grand Theatre. Our April meeting was planned to be a celebration Tea Party for our ex-Secretary, Emily Newbould, who was presented with a Certificate of appreciation at the AGM in London. Unfortunately it was marred by the news of the death of Miss Nan Rigby, one of our long serving members who has raised money for the branch by manning the Sales table. In spite of it being the worst day

of the year, 11 members attended her funeral. She will be sorely missed.

A representative from the BBC gave us some information regarding programmes being made about peoples experiences in WWII. These are to be used for education purposes and to remind viewers of the sacrifices made on their behalf. She asked us to contribute our memories and experiences.

In May, 19 members enjoyed an excellent lunch at Thomas Danby College. Four members joined a party of ex-AA personnel for a busy but rewarding holiday at Alveston Hall Hotel. Two members represented Leeds branch at the RA Assembly in Blackpool where we learned lots about the new weapons and their employment in Iraq.

Ten members will be attending the Military Tattoo in Manchester and most of us will be at the AA Reunion in York. By the time the N A Reunion comes round in September we shall be exhausted from an extremely busy year.

There is a lovely photo of Sue Westlake and Miss Emily Newbould in the centre, colour section.

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

Greetings to those of our members unable to get to our meetings, and to those who can, our thanks for soldiering on for another year and making our meetings happy occasions.

We ended 2003 with our Christmas Lunch and were entertained after our meal with a Belly Dancer. There was a mixed reaction from some of our members but it certainly made a change from our usual entertainment. We enjoyed Carousel at the theatre in January, and have listened to speakers on various subjects from 'Housekeeping' by the National Trust (the care and repair of properties and contents), to the humorous memories of a Tiller Girl.

Some of our ladies attended the Combined Ex-Services Weekend at Bridlington last year and are looking forward to attending again this year. We have to go again in order



that Joan Devall can return her crown! She was elected Forces Sweetheart.



We shall also again be attending Whitehall in November and hope our contingent will be a little larger than last year, age and health permitting.

Our Standard continues to be paraded by Vi Rawlins whenever invited by other Associations, with the Paratroop Regiment and Battle of Britain Parades in September.

Two of our ladies have had serious operations this year and we are pleased to have Barbara Castell back with us again and looking more like her old self. Barbara also arranges our events for the year. Unfortunately our other member Vera Machin has had to return to hospital more than once and we wish her well and hope to see her back with us soon and taking our money at the door.

We also lost Blanche Darnton in May. Blanche, a lovely lady, would have had her 90th birthday this year.

Our year will continue with our Harvest Auction to raise funds and a picnic at the Sailing Club, thanks to Doris, Irene, Sandra and helpers. Whatever the weather we enjoy the afternoon. We also have Avril Lennox the Olympic Athlete coming to talk to us which should make for a very interesting meeting.

Our AGM is in October and may I take this opportunity to remind members that Annual Subscriptions should be sent before the end of September.

Our best wishes to all of our members and out thanks for the continued support.

LONDON BRANCH

We were well presented in November at the Field of Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey Thursday 6th and again at the Cenotaph Sunday 9th. More members seem to go into the Abbey these days than march, getting a little too much for us these days. But we do hate to miss it!

We had a bring and buy in November and a glass of wine and mince pies to celebrate Christmas. We had our usual

'get-together' in January when we get to know our new members. (Yes we still have them). A few Wimbledon members have joined us, but it's sad that their own branch had to close. It's great to have new blood in our branch though.

Our February meeting was very interesting. Mr Frost the curator of 56 Davies Street, where our meetings are held, gave us a guided tour of the building and a potted history of The Green jackets. I must say he spoke with great pride.

In March we welcomed Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake and we had a good attendance at the meeting. She charmed us by wishing to meet each and everyone before she gave her interesting talk on her life in the WRAC. What a life! I must confess for the first time in my life I wished I was 50 years younger, I'd join up. Sue gave us a very enjoyable afternoon.

In April we had another interesting afternoon with Mrs Freda Potts who related her experiences when she was trapped in France in 1940, at the age of sixteen, including her escape from internment.

We all enjoyed the AGM at the Victory Services Club. It is good to meet up with other Branch members, once a year.

May we wish you a fine, warm summer for all your outings and garden parties, and all goes well.

LUTON BRANCH

Most of Luton branch had received their "Lioness" before our meeting on Saturday February 21, and I got a real rocket from the members, as it contained no report from Luton. No excuse was acceptable, so, to pre-empt any more 'aggro' I thought I would submit this good and early for the August issue.

What have we done over the last twelve months? Quite a lot, actually; we have had talks by a representative from the Star & Garter Home, St Johns' Ambulance (the oldest charitable organisation in the world). One about sites of special scientific interest in Bedfordshire – a surprising amount of these in a little country like ours. A demonstration from Wiltshire Farm Foods, with free samples – that went down well, and cost us nothing.

We won our annual quiz against Luton Far East Veterans Association, retaining the shield for the second year running, but the inaugural quiz versus Luton Association of WRNS resulted in our losing by one point – we aim to remedy that at the return match. We have built up a very good relationship with the Wrens, sharing ideas and information with them. They invited us to their branch party at Christmas, and some of them came to ours.

Recruiting has gone well recently, 2 new members and one transfer, all of whom are WRAC, so at last they are coming out of the woodwork. We hope this trend will continue, we know they are out there somewhere. A varied programme has been lined up for the rest of 2004, which 'kicked off' on February 21 with a talk by two charming chaps from Camelot – not Arthur or Lancelot,

but Martin and Carl, who told us some very interesting facts and figures about the Lottery.

In March we have a talk by a local historian arranged, and later on a mini "Antiques Roadshow" in conjunction with our WRNS party. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

Keeping the 'girls' amused and interested is our main aim – it is sometimes a bit difficult to find speakers etc, but it is well worth the effort.

MEDWAY BRANCH

The branch has struggled to have their meetings due to illness and other functions to attend.

Four members went to see the Women at War in London and were disappointed not to see more of the Second World War on display though they enjoyed the day out.

The Annual General Meeting was attended by the secretary who received the certificate of appreciation for Nan Ovenden and one herself, a report was sent to those members that are at the branch meetings.

Five members will be at the fun afternoon in May with the London branch and join Canterbury for their tea party in June.

Arrangements are being made for the secretary's strawberry cream tea in July, a good fundraiser.

Queenie Headington will be going to the Ack-Ack Reunion, we don't know of any others from the branch who will be attending.

The WRAC Dinner Club – two members have booked a place, last year, getting in early. They didn't want to miss out.

The Branch Annual General Meeting will be in October and members that cannot attend meetings, could they try to attend this one making it easier to collect annual subscriptions. The date will be 12 October at 1400 hrs.

We do have a small attendance at the monthly meetings and would like to see more, we hold the meeting at the Garrison Hall, Manson Row, Gillingham at 1400 hrs.

Christmas Dinner will again be booked at the St George's Hotel where we are made very welcome.

The Bromley ladies have asked us to their sing along with the pearly queen, if it is like last time I know we will really enjoy it, date not known yet.

Medway branch sends everyone good wishes for the coming Christmas and New Year.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Our attendance's have dropped a little because of members disabilities and illness but we still keep going and enjoy our monthly meetings. Our newly elected

Chairman Mrs Norah Mills has had a stroke, she had to retire and is now in a Nursing Home. She was always very active and we miss her very much. Our Secretary is recovering from an illness, but our members have rallied on.

We have had a social afternoon at the Jesmond British Legion Club, where the staff put on a buffet meal for us. On the 6 May we went to the Cleveland branch at Middlesbrough, along with other members of the North East branches.

Lieutenant Colonel Susan Westlake was the principal guest and we enjoyed her talk and slides of her career. The Cleveland committee worked hard and looked after us well, and we enjoyed a lovely buffet meal. It was a wonderful, jolly afternoon with the "Andrew Sisters", a sing – along, dancing and flag waving!

On June 6 we are joining the Normandy Veterans for the 60th Anniversary Campaign D Day. There will be a March Past and then there will be a reception in the Civic Centre.

Good health and best wishes to all branches.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BRANCH

Another six months of meetings have seen our numbers sadly depleted by the deaths of three of our valued members. We have welcomed three new members who had only recently heard of the Association and wish they had joined earlier. None of these ladies has easy access to Norwich, so although they cannot get to meetings they receive our six-monthly Newsletter and, of course, enjoy reading *Lioness* and 'belonging'.

At our March meeting Mrs Monica Maxwell gave us a spellbinding talk on her work with SOE. We wished it could have gone on much longer. Last month we had a visit from a local gentleman, an 'old Norfolk boy' who had grown up in the forties and fifties and we all had a wonderful time. He started off with an anecdote or a memory about his childhood and we capped it with our own. We could keep pace with him on the way of life in those times and on the wonderfully primitive conditions in which we all existed in the depths of the countryside. An 'inter-active' talk it certainly was and I think Mr Warnes enjoyed himself as much as we did.

On 11 May we visited Great Yarmouth on the anniversary of the deaths of the 26 ATS girls in 1943. For the past nine years we have held a very well-attended memorial service, but sadly those of us who are able to make the journey are getting fewer. This year only five of us from Norwich and one from Yarmouth and two husbands were there to remember and to lay flowers. This will be the pattern from now on. We have also been holding services on Armistice Day, 11 November, but no doubt this too will diminish. But it is good to know that the plaque is there for relatives to visit and the public to be made aware.

Two Diamond Weddings have just been celebrated – in style! Olive Brown, our Chairman and Andrew her husband, and Elsie Debbage and Walter – Olive and Elsie are among our most loyal and long-standing members.

Some of us will be going to Duxford Imperial War Museum for their 'D' Day Anniversary Celebrations on 6 June. So far, no other suggestions for summer outings have been made, but no doubt something will "turn up". I had hoped to arrange a luncheon in Ipswich to meet our Suffolk members but little support so far. Are we losing our adventurous spirit?

It was good to meet and to hear news of other branches at the AGM and Secretaries' meeting in April and to be able to discuss the problems we all have in common. One of which is wishing that we could recruit former members of the WRAC to help us carry on, but we shall battle on – we didn't get where we are today without battling on!

Our members would like to send greetings to all our branches. Our thanks go particularly to the staff at HQ for all the help and advice we receive from them, and certainly to the hard-working editorial staff of *Lioness*, the Journal that gives pleasure to us all.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

It was very pleasing to meet with so many of our members at our Christmas Lunch on the 5 December 2003. Some ladies who are not able to come to the regular meetings as often as they would like to because of the distance, were able to join us. We had a very good lunch, well prepared and served, at the Masonic Hall in Stoke. This was followed by a grand raffle with Eileen very busy calling out the lucky numbers. It was a lovely social afternoon and the gentleman who attended the bar very kindly showed us around the Temple and explained the meaning of some of their rituals. The money raised at our Christmas Card collection was donated to 'Combat Stress'. We have booked the same venue for this year's Christmas Lunch for Friday 3 December. We hope to see many members from out of town this year.

Our thanks to members who sent Christmas cards, donations and stamps to the branch, we are very grateful and all contributions are gratefully accepted.

It is with sadness that we report the death, in January, of our member, Mrs Ruth Joan Gribben. We all liked and respected Joan who regularly came to our meetings, by bus, until quite recently, when she was too poorly to leave home. Six ladies were able to attend the funeral. Uniform was worn, this, Joan would have loved as she enjoyed ceremonial occasions.

Earlier this year we designed and produced 2 advertising posters. These were duly approved by HQ and have now been distributed and placed into all the libraries in Plymouth and a good number in Cornwall too. I'm afraid that we haven't been bowled over in the rush for enquiries, a few mild sparks of interest from ladies who decided they were too old to cope with anything new and one dear old guy who ruefully regretted that he was the wrong sex. Sadly he got away too! It is early days and hope springs eternal and at least we are still hopeful of attracting new members.

In 2002 and 2003, Betty Mitchell very kindly attended the Secretaries meetings and AGMs for me. This year, with

her help and guidance, I was able to attend. We went up from Plymouth by train and thoroughly enjoyed our stay at the Victory Services Club. We can recommend the Grill Room, the Restaurant and the Lounge Bar, with Marco in attendance at the bar!

As I write this report in April we are busy planning for, and looking forward to, hosting our South West Area Reunion on 4 June this year and to meeting members and old friends from all over the South West. By the time it is printed we hope to be basking in the glow of our success. I'll let you know all about it in the next *Lioness*.

Our ATS Memorial Bench on the Hoe is looking rather weathered at the moment so we are planning a picnic/working party during the summer to see if we can tidy it up a bit.

This year the Royal Marines will be staging another very popular "MUSIC OF THE NIGHT" at the Citadel in July. It is a terrific concert and we highly recommend it.

The Festival of Remembrance will be held in the Pavilions, Plymouth, on Friday 12 November 2004. This production from the Federation of Plymouth and District Ex-Services Association is always a great night out. When available, the Band of the Royal Marines plays the music to accompany the Parade of the Standard Bearers and then treats us to a wonderful concert. On the rare occasions that they are not in barracks, other local talent show the audience just how good they are too. The concert is followed by a short service of remembrance.

During the warm summer months we plan to have another river cruise to Saltash from the Barbican and also hope to have a visit to Dartmoor for a lunch or Devonshire Cream Tea.

RHYL BRANCH

On September 15th we joined the North Wales Branch of The Normandy Veterans on a visit to Belgium. We travelled by coach to Dover where we boarded a ferry to Calais. On arrival we boarded our coach to take us to Ostend.

The highlight of our trip was a visit to Ypres and the Menin Gate where a member of the Normandy Veterans laid a wreath in memory of fallen comrades. We ATS girls were proud to be part of the Guard of Honour though the onlookers didn't have a clue who we were. We had to explain that during the War we had served with the British Army. We then had to stand for a photo call.

We then visited the Dunkirk Beaches.

In June we will once more be crossing the Channel when we will be joining the Normandy Veterans for the 50th Anniversary of the D Day Landings. We are looking forward to the trip.

Hope to be able to send in a report on our return.



ROCHDALE BRANCH

Letter time again, and not a great deal to report. We have only managed to get about 14 members at our meetings, but what we lack in numbers we make up for in enthusiasm and have quite lively and happy meetings. Joyce brought us up to date with the news from the HQ AGM, the venue for our 2006 reunion (which we look forward to) and, at last, news of our monument in Whitehall; we trust some of us will live long enough to see the fruition of that date. If someone doesn't get their finger out (as one of our Royals once said), you never know we may well be looking down from God's Garden (if we qualify that is), to watch the proceedings, instead of on the pavement of Whitehall.

We are all looking forward to June 3rd when we will be meeting our friends in Wilmslow and joining in their D-Day celebrations. Following this, two or three of us will be travelling to York in July for the final reunion of the Ack-Ack Association, which although a sad occasion, we will enjoy as usual.

More good news – HM The Queen is to be our Patron – as was The Queen Mother before her. Wouldn't it be lovely to have a full page portrait of The Queen published in the *Lioness* so that those of us who wished could get it framed (as I did with the one you published of The Queen Mother).

What will the summer bring? Spring has been gorgeous, in spite of some heavy downpours, so we live in hope and God's blessing.

SALISBURY BRANCH

Greetings from Salisbury Branch to all our friends. Our meetings continue to be well attended. The Christmas Lunch was rather disappointing – another venue next time. Our speaker did not turn up in January which gave us an opportunity to talk to each other!! The bring and buy sale in February raised a record £112 and members talking about or demonstrating their hobbies and collections in March was most interesting.

Sadly we learned of the death of Jean Robins, one of our founder members. Although Joan had moved from the area she will be fondly remembered. Six members attended her memorial service in Dinton Church.

Five of our members attended the National AGM at the Victory Services Club. Also in April we enjoyed a visit to the Hawk Conservancy near Andover. The weather was very kind and the flying displays quite amazing.

The bald eagle was somewhat camera shy, as you can see below.



Back Row: Jill Trainor, Alyson Ogden, Gladys Webb, Thirza Sillick

Front Row: Joan Middleton, Netta Townend, Dorie Rose, Frances Green

SHIPLEY BRANCH

Time once again to send our report for the *Lioness*. It has been a very sad year for us with so many of our members being too ill to attend our meetings, and especially the sadness of losing our Chairlady, Miss Connie Barsby, who after a long and painful illness passed away on the 30 March at Bradford Royal Infirmary. Connie will be sadly missed by us all being such a worker, she did so much to help with the running of our branch. We will continue to meet and will remember with pride all our members who are no longer with us.

We send our best wishes to the staff and say we always enjoy reading the *Lioness*.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Our branch still meets at the Haywood/Lonsdale Court Residential Lounge, Glebe Street, Wellington, on the first Wednesday of the month at 2 pm except January when there is no meeting.

Last November we attended many Remembrance Services as usual. Hilda Dakin laid the wreath at the Garrison Church, Donnington.

In December we held our Christmas Party, we listened to music from Edna on the organ. At this party one of our 'girls' met ex-Bombardier Tom Tart, who had a request put in "Where Are You Now" in *Lioness*, for anyone who

had served at his unit Royal Military College of Science, Stoke. Our Mabel Thomas replied, she was a Staff Sergeant in the Catering Corps at Bulford Camp and sent to Stoke to check on a missing ATS girl. Mabel was then known as SSgt Peck, W9767, serving 15 years in ATS/WRAC in the 5 years at Lichfield, Bury Vele, Northern Ireland, then to Blacon Camp and Saughton Camp.



During February a donation of £25 collected in lieu of Christmas Cards, was sent to Compton Hospice, Wolverhampton. Another attic sale in March raised £14.75 after deductions.

It was Joan and Jim Purcell's Diamond Wedding Anniversary in April. Congratulations to you both, a great achievement. Did you get a medal too?! We gave them two rose bushes and had a small party, which we combined with Nancy Meredith's 86th birthday.



Recently our Lucy Bowyer was approached by local MP Peter Bradley basically to speak about the memorial to all women in WW2, and the contributions they made during that time. Lucy was on Radio Shropshire twice, and with husband Charles, was interviewed by Central TV, thus appearing on TV and also in the local press.

Lucy spoke about her life as a Sergeant in ATS, Ack Ack, in Belgium and Germany, and the excellent work all service and civilian women did to keep the flag flying for our country.

We have sent a donation of £25 to the Association fund.

Some of our members who usually go to the AGM in London were unable to do so because of illness and awkward train times.

We are looking forward to the Area Reunion at Hereford in September and meeting old friends again.

Another new member has joined us, Doris Shotton, née Beech, who was in the ATS/RAPC at Leeds.

To all members everywhere, best wishes to you and yours, and every success to all branches.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Following our AGM last year we emerged with a new committee, three long term members resigned, including Doreen Pledge, our Secretary. So new members volunteered, although some would not exactly say that!!! However, after some initial teething problems we have all settled down and a very strong committee has emerged, as events will show.

We had a very enjoyable Christmas Party followed by Lunch at Blackfield which was thoroughly enjoyed. No meeting in January so we kicked off with a Skittles evening in February. This was very surprising as potentially we have some very good players. Everyone joined in and the members of the committee who did the scoring, setting up the skittles and all that was associated with it, made the evening such a success that we cannot wait for a repeat performance.

This was followed the following month, by a most interesting talk from Captain Angela Burrow of the TA QA's on her experiences in Iraq. She is going to follow this up with another chat and video show.

We have been fortunate in recruiting four new members and there is every sign they will make a great contribution to the branch.

Due to the club, where we meet, changing their opening hours, we had to change our meeting night from Wednesday to Thursday and further to that, use a room upstairs. Although this is a problem to a few members, the venue is good for us. We must be very thankful to have such a place to meet. Venues are a big problem these days, to many organisations, let alone the cost!!

In between this we had to set about the forthcoming Area Reunion, which at the time of writing was three days ago.

Again, we were fortunate with the help of our new Secretary, to have as our venue Blackfield, or rather Fawley, Royal British Legion club. Do not think anyone found this difficult to get to, despite sounding "out in the sticks" (Army training of years ago?). All arrived well on time and our honoured guest, The Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire was absolutely wonderful, as I am sure all will agree. We hope everyone enjoyed themselves and that all arrived back home safe and well. My committee, I cannot praise enough, for their ideas and work.

Our next branch meeting is our Annual Cheese and Wine function, to which we invite the WRENs and WAAFs.

We also have two dates in July, one being the tea party at the home of member Betty Rush, followed two weeks later with our Lunch at the home of another member Gail Langton.

So it is cheerful and fun until next time.

STAFFORD BRANCH

Stafford branch continues to meet on the third Wednesday of the month. These meetings alternate between a social outing and a meeting at Trinity Church in Stafford. All our members seem to enjoy this format since we started it two years ago. Since February, the meetings have varied quite a bit and we have had a fair share of lunches and carveries! By the time you read this, we will also have had an Afternoon Tea in August and a Quiz with Toasted Teacakes in September.

The Branch also thoroughly enjoyed the Mayor's Parade in May and we look forward to an informative talk from a representative of the Trading Standards Office in July. We hope to see many friends from other branches in the area at the Wales and West Reunion in Hereford in September.

The active members of our Branch, despite being few in number, unanimously voted to keep non-active members informed of all news from HQ and the branch by offering financial backing from the social fund to cover postage etc!.

Visiting members to the Stafford area are more than welcome to join us for our meetings.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH

We enjoyed a very successful Christmas Luncheon Party. Together with friends we had invited, there were almost 50 of us. As the room is not a huge one, it made for a very cosy atmosphere. The buffet was, as ever, very good and we all thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment.



Lyn, our former Chairman finally got settled into her new house at the end of February and has now joined Southampton branch. (If they want to send her back, we'd all be delighted to receive her!). I'm sure it won't be long before she makes her presence felt there as she did with us.

We were delighted to receive an invitation from Cleveland

branch to join them, along with representatives from all the North East Group, to meet Lt Col Westlake who presented Mrs Friday with her Certificate of Merit (which she well deserves). It is the first time I have seen Gwen lost for words! We enjoyed hearing about Col Westlake's experiences in the Army and found her to be a very good speaker. The lunch and entertainment were also excellent, although we had one moment of panic when we had to find a machine that could play tapes so that the "Andrews Sisters" could perform, but Irene turned up trumps and found one. I won't say too much more about the afternoon, as I am sure Cleveland branch will be making a full report. I would, however, on behalf of Sunderland branch like to say a big "Thank you". One of our members, Grace Graham, had made a beautiful pillow doll which she gave for the raffle. She had travelled down with Lottie Hutchings (and the doll). In the raffle, Lottie won the doll, so it travelled back with us sitting next to its creator.

A small number of our members are travelling to France for the Normandy Veterans commemoration. We hope to have more news of their journey for the next newsletter.

All good wishes to all the branches.

SWANSEA BRANCH

We are still soldiering on despite our dwindling numbers. We have lost two of our loyal members just before Christmas, Irene Morgan and Dot Sterry; they will be dearly missed. Dot Sterry missed the Remembrance Service in London as she was too ill to attend, she always attended the service every year.

Two other members have been very ill but are now recovering, we are pleased to say.

In September several members wrote to Westminster regarding the Memorial for WW2.

On a lighter note we have had some very good speakers at our meetings. Mr William Jones a retired warden of Swansea prison gave a talk with slides explaining how methods have changed over the years, especially the restraining devices. Some quite gruesome.

In July a few members visited the Breacon Beacons, which is a well-known beauty spot.

Our August meeting was at Veronica's, also very enjoyable watching the Mumbles Train, not a bit like the original train which is sorely missed.

Teddy Leon gave a short, illustrated talk about her grandson and his service in HMS Invincible, at the same time as Prince Andrew.

Another good entertaining talk was "Humour in Education", given by a speaker with experience.

Several members joined the trip to Sand Bay in September and had an enjoyable time.

We still meet at the Guildhall, first Wednesday in the month at 1.30 pm. All members of the services are welcome.

ULSTER BRANCH

The Chippendales couldn't make it to our annual luncheon so I wondered just how many would accept the usual invitation to the King's Hall, Balmoral, Belfast. Thank goodness I said **PDF Compressor Free Version**

Before the meal I reminded them that while they were eating and chatting they also had to apply the little grey cells and their silver tongues to choosing and persuading someone to take on the post of Honorary Secretary, not forgetting that the present post had been added to. Trudy Watson had been conned into Honorary Sec(k)ing! Apres l'AGM – le déluge!

We're hoping there'll be no deluge on our next get together; the Summer Outing takes place on 22 May. We're off to Enniskillen and it is hoped that they have all taken the preface to that invitation to heart. I advised a recall of New Year resolutions, a short'n'sharp slimming regime as well as atonement for sins and sincere prayer that the sun will shine. Touch wood, it has done for the last two outings.

One of our members, Eileen Pugh, will be sadly missed. Eileen had been in hospital for several weeks and died on the 18 May. She served from 1945 – 1952 as Eileen Mehaffy. Our sympathy goes to her husband and family.

As far as I know nobody has won the Lottery (apart from pathetic £10 blips), nor married a TV star, gained a decoration, or invented the elixir of youth. How would I know, anyway? Nobody ever dares boast a little to me! Not even a man-bites-dog story reaches me. Thank Goodness no one has complained of more than symptoms of TMB. (That's "too many birthdays" for the uninitiated!).

Now – onward and upward towards the AGM in September.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

Greetings to you all from Wilmslow.

The weekend of Remembrance Sunday found a party of us once again in London, on the Saturday morning we followed our usual practice of putting our crosses in the Memorial Gardens by Westminster Abbey, always an emotional time as we remember our friends and loved ones who had served their country well in the time of war. The afternoon was spent at the Imperial War Museum which proved to be very disappointing as there was only a small portion allotted to the ATS, members of which did such valiant work during the war. In the evening some rested and some had tickets for the Royal Albert Hall evening performance, the falling of the poppy petals at the end reminding us of the terrible loss of life which we must never forget. Only two of us were in the Remembrance Parade this year the others attending the Service in Westminster Abbey.

In December we had our Christmas lunch at our usual hotel which we enjoyed as much as ever. At each place was a parcel containing a present which was sent via Lucy

Woodcock from our very kind ex-ATS friend in Australia and which we appreciate very much. Thank you Joan Broadhurst.

In June we are having a party to celebrate our 10th birthday and also the 60th Anniversary of D-Day, to which we have invited members from other Branches in the area, we are hoping to cater for about 80 people so it should be very jolly. It will be in the Wilmslow British Legion where we hold our monthly meetings and we have very kindly been given permission to use the large hall which has a stage. A trio of ladies from the local Choral Society are going to entertain us with music and singing. There will also be a tombola and raffle and we are hoping it will be as successful as our last party.

Our Secretary Lilian was asked by BBC Greater Manchester Radio to write a short article for their D-Day 60th Anniversary Celebrations under the heading 'Stories No One Else Can Tell'. She was asked to go to the BBC and record her own story which, after several trials was reduced to the very short allotted time. Out of the ten people in the programme she was the only lady. Her story was entitled 'And Father said No!' In 1938 when she was 18 she asked her father to sign her application form to join the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service but he said No! A short time afterwards he had a spell in hospital and while he was away she persuaded her mother to sign the form. In July 1939 wearing a shapeless skirt and a jacket that 'fitted where it touched' she found herself living under canvas in a bell tent in the open air. The day war broke out she was given orders to report to a park near Liverpool and her mother was in tears as she thought her daughter was going on a troopship bound for Germany. Lilian achieved the rank of Sergeant Major and when the war ended was posted to the Army Education Corps to help the discharged men to prepare for civilian life and that was where she met her future husband who had just returned from Burma.

On hearing she had joined the ATS after all, her father had said "He hoped they would give her floors to scrub" and though she never did scrub a single floor she thinks her father really was quite proud of her.

We are sorry to say that Eva Gillatt, a refugee from Germany who was in the ATS and whose letter to our secretary was printed in the last issue of Lioness has since died. She was a rather lonely person and we hope she found some degree of warmth and friendship with us at our meeting and outings.

Last year a letter from one of our members apropos the Memorial to Women of World War II was printed in a national daily paper, giving her name and address. Sometime later she received a letter from a lady to say she had some photographs that had belonged to her sister-in-law who had been in the ATS and would she like them. Thinking there must be somebody who would be interested in seeing them she said to post them on. The photos duly arrived and were of members of 618 Bty (M) HAA stationed in Belfast and included a wedding picture of a bride and groom and one with them and their first baby. Enquiries produced no knowledge of anyone connected with this Battery so a letter was sent to Lioness offering them to anyone who was interested and was

printed in the No. 1 2004 edition. A reply was received immediately from a lady who had been in that Battery (and was probably in the group photograph) so the photos were sent to her. Now, the remarkable thing is this ~ the photos had belonged to her old army friend with whom she had to do with the wedding picture and the baby were her own. A few tears were shed that morning I'm sure. The original sender and the final recipient were each given the other's address. I wonder if they got in touch with each other.

We send you all our best wishes and hope you enjoy your meetings as much as we do.

CARDS WITH WRAC ASSOCIATION BADGE

Wilmslow Branch have had some card/notelets printed. They are buff in colour with the Association badge on the front. They are A5 size folded down the middle and cost £3 for 10 cards and envelopes.

Please send cheque with order to:

Lilian Edwards, 17 Covington Place, Broadway,
Wilmslow SK9 1NS.

We received a couple of cards as examples. I have no hesitation in recommending them to all our members. Well done Wilmslow, good luck with the fund raising. Ed.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

What a busy year we have had and its not over. January saw us visiting the Plough in Sparsholt, a new venue for our Christmas Dinner, always a popular get together. It was nice to see Joyce, one of our older members, joining us for the first time, accompanied by her daughter. Despite the weather not being very nice, it was raining hard, and my directions not being understood by some people, everyone made it eventually and a good time was had by all.

The March meeting consisted of a beauty demonstration given by Lesley Mills, the wife of a serving WO. She decided to show how to give a facial, the lucky "volunteer" recipient was Beth. Lesley even managed to give other hints and tips while she was working on Beth. Once again the weather nearly defeated us, as it was snowing this time. Gerry sensibly did not try to drive from Basingstoke, Alma and Lois had a fraught trip to and from Andover and how Jane ever got back to Reading in one piece.....

We had a much better get together in April when a number of the branch decided to go to the Association AGM in London, warm weather and a bit of retail therapy works wonders. Gerry and her daughter managed to get to the Women at War exhibition, Herme and Maggie did the shopping and the rest of the branch were confined to the Victory Services Club on Association business. The May meeting was again a trip out, this time to Coors Brewery in Alton. We just managed to make the required 15 thanks to Gerry's husband stepping in at the last

minute. Beth yet again saved the day by organising a mini bus so she could pick up people on the way to the Brewery, so the majority of us arrived together. Lesley's Mum made a great effort getting round the tour despite all the stairs. The brewery did us proud with a smashing buffet to round off the evening.



With all this going on Beth and Herme managed to run a small raffle at Worthy Down at which £100 was raised, £50 was given to the ABF in this their 60th year and £50 was given to the Association for the Arboretum fund.

20 May 2004 saw us at Aldershot for the Royal Signal's Association Quiz Night. Here we were again in the Garrison Sergeants' mess. Could the Lionesses do it this year? Could they beat last year's performance when they came second amongst 20 teams? Well, Sue Westlake, Alison Schofield, Jane Freebairn and Lyn Marsh were certainly going to give it a go. There were five rounds of 12 questions covering Sport, Media, Personalities, Sound and the final True/False round. We were also given a sheet of 12 anagrams of eight letter words which we attacked in between rounds. The critical decision is when to play your Joker because this gives you double points on the round you play it. Last year we had managed to score 12/12 on the Sound round – radio clips/music/well-known voices etc – so we decided to use our Joker on that round this year.

Well we started horribly on the Sports round. We did know that Federer, last year's Wimbledon Champion was Swiss and we did know that Nick Faldo was the British golfer who had scored the most points ever during Ryder Cup matches. However, the Football and Snooker questions were beyond us. But the anagrams were going well and by the end of the first round of questions we had actually solved 6 of the anagrams. What a pity no points were awarded for how quickly you did them.

Anyway, there is no point giving us a blow by blow account. Suffice to say that by half time we were actually in second place. Good position to go into the second half. However, other teams still had their Joker to play and we had not done too well on the sounds round – we are happy to blame the quality of the sound production. We did recognise the Goons and identified Harry Secombe and Peter Sellers but would you have sussed out Ian Duncan Smith talking about a novel. Also, the True/False round was not our best – Yes Mr Mars did invent the Mars Bar and Vera Lynn was the first British lady to have a hit in America but Arthur Conan Doyle did not invent the first fictional detective (Wilkie Collins did) and Falstaff not Hamlet had the most words of any character in a Shakespeare play.

We did manage to solve all the anagrams but at the end of the day we came SIXTH out of 23 teams. There were only four points between the first team and ourselves so we did not do too badly really.

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YORK BRANCH

I have just been reading back copies of the Lioness and to my horror found that it was 2 years ago that we sent in any news from York. So, my sincere apologies – and I now give you an up-to-date account from the ladies of York.

We still have our monthly meetings in St. Lawrence's Church Hall on the first Wednesday of the month. All our meetings are well attended with members travelling from Leeds, Scarborough, Bridlington and Filey. Anyone visiting York will be most welcome.

Recently we had a talk by Mrs Ann Quick showing us her collection of Tea and Teapots. The following meeting Mr Charles Magginson talked about his long and hardworking career in the family industry and brought along a show of artefacts that he had used. Both meetings were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Since our last Branch News, our long standing Secretary Mrs Pat Carpenter has had to stand down due to the ill health of both herself and her husband David. At the time of going to press David is recovering from his hip operation (having had it replaced after playing badminton) and Pat is making steady progress. We thank Pat for all her hard work and welcome her onto the committee as a member. In Pat's place we were lucky to welcome Mrs Feona Dixon as our new Secretary. Feona has already made herself known throughout the North East by attending the North East Secretaries Meeting and the AGM in London. I'm sure she will become (and has) a valued member

2 members and I were invited by the Cleveland Branch to join them to celebrate the visit by Lt Col Sue Westlake, Vice President of the WRAC Association. What an afternoon it was. I must say those ladies from the North East (including Newcastle and Sunderland) know how to entertain. We started off by welcoming Sue to the strains of the WRAC March (Standard Bearer and escort in full uniform etc). This was followed by a buffet lunch complete with wine, a raffle and entertainment by the Andrews Sisters. The main event of the day was the presentation by "Lt Col Sue" to the North East Secretary Mrs Gwyneth Friday of her Certificate of Appreciation. Gwyneth is not only the Secretary of the North East, but is also the Secretary of the Cleveland Branch. She works tirelessly 12 months of the year and has now been justly rewarded. "Congratulations Gwyneth".

Another exciting event took place on 26 January 2004. Our youngest member Dianne Walsh invited us to her wedding. I was quite amazed at the invitation as I said to her that I thought she was married. She replied that she was, but was celebrating her silver wedding by marrying Peter again, but this time in Church. What a lovely wedding it was, her daughters were bridesmaids, her mum gave her away and another of her daughters was best man. Enclosed photo of Peter and Dianne (née Jones) on their special day.



Recently, 3 members were invited by the "NOT FORGOTTEN" Association to a trip on the River Ouse. We were met on the boat by members who were running the trip and were greeted by many ex-servicemen and women who had also been invited. One can imagine what an afternoon was had by all. I had never heard of the association until the invitation, but will keep in touch with them.

We are joining the WRNS Association in June for another trip on the River Ouse, having coffee on board and then stopping off en route for lunch. We are looking forward to this outing, especially if the weather is like it is today.

On Sunday 6th June 2004 we will be joining the York and District Council of Ex Service Associations at a service in York Minster to commemorate the Normandy Campaign on the 60th Anniversary of D-Day.

On Sunday 18th July 2004 we are at the Minster again to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima. This will be attended by HRH Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh.

Last but not least, we are all looking forward to the North East Reunion at the Danum Hotel in Doncaster. This should take us all back to our youth as we are dancing to the strains of Glen Miller and his Big Band.

May I take this opportunity of wishing Mrs Betty Hudson and Mrs Helen Pfeffer a very happy 80th birthday.

One of our oldest members, Captain Jean Gowans who celebrated her 100th birthday in December 2003 sadly passed away in January 2004. Four of our members attended her funeral. We met her last surviving cousin (4th removed). He was a pleasant young man and during conversation he mentioned that Jean's uniform was still in the wardrobe. It is now hanging in my wardrobe awaiting transport to the Worthy Down Museum. Jean played cricket for the ATS Team and was wicket keeper. She finished her career as a Recruiting Officer.

Mrs Irene Quarrie has just been discharged from hospital having spent 10 days there after collapsing in York with a heart attack. We all wish you a speedy recovery and good health in the future.



WRAC Association Memorabilia

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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



Association
£3.00



ATS
£2.75



WRAC
£2.75



Ladies Hankies
£2.00



Bell & Thimble
£2.50 & £2.00



Key ring
£2.50



Regi-Bears
£8.25 each

Also available:

China Mugs	£4.50 each
Teapot Stand	£3.50 each
Square Tray	£4.40 each
Sandwich Tray	£4.60 each
Leather Bookmark	£1.25 each
Comb in case	£2.00 each
Paperweight in box	£12.00 each

Some of the Photographs taken at the AGM in April 2004

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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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 31st October

Date: Signature:

Please ensure that all cheques are in **sterling** and are made payable to “**The WRAC Association**”
Subscriptions include “Lioness”

Members who live overseas are asked to contribute an extra £3.50 per annum to cover postage of “Lioness”

Please complete this form in **BLOCK LETTERS**

QMAAC/ATS/WRAC/TAVR Army Number: Last Rank Held:
(Present Rank if still serving)

Miss/Mrs/Ms: Surname:

Given Names:

Surname when serving: Date of Birth:

Address for Correspondence:

.....

.....

Post Code: Telephone No: E-mail:

Units during service:

Date of Enrolment:..... Date of Release:

Decorations:



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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
(Incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades Association)
REGISTERED UNDER THE CHARITIES ACT 1960 — No 206184
President: HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT, GCVO

ATS & WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND DONATION

To: The General Secretary
WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester. SO21 2RG

I have forwarded a Banker's Standing Order to my Bank as undernoted:

Name

Address

Bank Name Sort Code

Amount Effective from/...../.....

I am a UK Taxpayer and wish the Charity to treat the donations made by this Banker's Order,
until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. (Please delete if this does not apply)

Signed Date/...../.....



BANKER'S STANDING ORDER

To: The Manager

..... (Bank Name and Address)

Please pay to **The Royal Bank of Scotland (16-34-25), 67-68 High Street, Winchester, Hants. SO23 9DA,**
the sum of on/...../..... (date) as a donation to the
ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund, Account No 10006478, and a like sum on each
succeeding year until otherwise instructed.

Name A/C No

Signed Date/...../.....

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

Application for Membership

	Membership No: DC/
Present Surname:	
(please indicate ~ Miss Ms Mrs or Rank if serving)	
Christian Names:	Known as:
Address:	
Postcode:	Telephone No:
Army Number: P/ W/ WO/	
Surname when serving:	
WRAC/TA Service:	From: To:
Last Rank held/still holding:	
Trade/Job: (whilst serving)	
Decorations:	

Please return to:

WRAC Dinner Club – Membership Secretary
Mrs E Ann Deakin
“Cobblestones”, 14 Ash Rise,
Moss Pitt, Stafford ST17 9HE.
Tel: (01785) 259992

I wish to join the WRAC Dinner Club and enclose:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|---|
| * 1 Years Subscription | £ 4.00 | £ |
| * 3 Years Subscription | £ 7.00 | £ |
| * Life Membership | £12.00 | £ |
| * Delete as appropriate | | |

Cheque/Postal Order to be made payable to: **WRAC Dinner Club**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

A 1st class postage stamp would be appreciated. Thank you.

‘Sauviter in modo, fortiter in re’
‘Gentle in manner, resolute in deed’

APPLICATION TO ATTEND THE WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB DINNER
SATURDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2004 AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB

PDF Compressor Free Version

To: Maj (Retd) Jane Freebairn, General Secretary, WRAC Association,
AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG.

I would like to join the Officers' Dining Club and come to this year's dinner at the Victory Services Club on Saturday 20 November 2004.

I enclose a cheque for £45 (£5 Dining Club Membership and £40 for the Dinner) made payable to WRAC Association.

Mrs/Miss/Ms First Name

Surname Maiden Name

I have special dietary needs as follows:

.....

I would like to sit with

Address

.....

..... Post Code

Tel No Last Rank Held

✂ -----

Wordsearch Just for fun, search the grid to find the words listed. They may be hidden left to right; right to left; upwards; downwards; diagonally from the right or left, upwards or downwards. They're all in there ~ honest!

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A	D	B	R	A	N	C	H	K	G	Y	O	GRAND	WEAPON
P	W	M	L	B	S	E	R	O	T	S	N	GREEN	WRAC



*Two ex-ATS ladies and a chum photographed at Bayeux,
6th June 2004*



Three members of our Association received
Certificates of Appreciation during the AGM
at The Victory Services Club in April

- 1 ~ Mrs Janet Cameron
- 2 ~ Miss Amy Weightman
- 3 ~ Miss Emily Newbould

Reunions

NEWS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Joyce Seward Unit 32 - 6 Sepia Court, Rockingham,
Western Australia 6168

It is some time since you heard from our little group here "Down Under" - yes, at the moment under a hot sky, and here in this corner of the West still very dry and praying for some rain.

Despite 'age' catching up with some, illness and inability to travel on public transport resulting in our group dwindling in numbers, we still meet regularly every three months for our "Coffee/Chat/Luncheon" Get-togethers, averaging about 20+ in number. I know there are many more ex-ATS/WRAC out there who could join us, and before each gathering I do publish details in our ONE West Australian daily paper, and in the Community press, but so far no further people have shown interest - such a pity.

Yesterday (4 February 2004) was our first get-together for this year, and we had a wonderful 'treat' being joined by a visitor from UK - Nina Garnham from Greater London Group. Nina goes home at the end of the month, and it was fortunate she contacted me only last week, else we would have missed out on the pleasure of her company. Unfortunately, for the first time ever, half of our regulars were on the sick list - 12 in fact, which made only 12 in attendance - but it did not stop the wagging of tongues and exchanging of items of interest. Nina was so busy talking that she left us with her camera still in her handbag - and no photo as a memento of the occasion! In fact when I, the last of our group to go, left her she was ordering another 'cup of tea' having talked herself 'dry'!

On November 11th last, one of our girls (Margaret Jones née Lundberg) was instrumental in arranging with the local RSL (Returned Services League - similar to the British Legion) to have - for the first time ever - the ATS/WRAC represented at the Wreath Laying Service of Remembrance at our local War Memorial. It was a success with six members being present, the wreath being laid by Eileen Harris (née Perkins) and Margaret Piper.



l-r Jean Thomson (née Burns), Ella Scott-Key (née Webzell), Eileen, Margaret Jones, Pam Zander (née Brown/ Haven) and Margaret Piper. Ed: note the November weather.

We are always pleased to welcome visitors to Western Australia. Our regular luncheons are held the first Wednesday in February, May, August and November a phone call to 9527 8825 will confirm the venue - that is all that is needed. Anyone whose visit does coincide with our dates, give me a call, as I can always rustle up a few of us and arrange to meet you in Perth for Coffee/Luncheon. It will be our pleasure. To let you know what our group looks like, I also enclose a group photo taken at our last November luncheon - a mad, but happy group.



Thank you for the wonderful magazine.

Best wishes to all.

I READ THE "LIONESSE" AND THOUGHT WHY NOT...

H G Eames, Edificio El Duque, Apt, 4F, Sabinillas 29692
Manilva, Malaga, Spain

Please find enclosed a cutting from a very memorable occasion, which has just taken place here in the Costa Del Sol, Spain, with the help of the "Lioness" magazine. It was Susan who spotted my article in the Lioness last year (Spotlights to Searchlights) which prompted her to contact me here in Spain. Susan was spending a holiday here at the Marbella Playa Hotel in February, she thought it would be nice for us to meet up after 62 years.

We had a wonderful day, the rest you can read from the report in the paper. Susan is back in Stratford-Upon-Avon now but we are going to keep in touch with one another in the future, thanks to the Lioness.

Extract from Costa del Sol "The Euro Weekly News, 19 - 25 February 2004"

"WARS AND THE ROSES"

It's been 62 years and now they are finally re-united - Hetty Eames and Susan Buggins served together in Rhyl's 93rd Regiment in the Second World War, and thanks to 'The Not Forgotten' group, are back together again.

Susan had spotted Hetty's name in 'The Lioness', put pen to

paper, booked her ticket to Spain and arranged a meeting between the two 82 year olds.

The rendezvous was planned in a Marbella hotel and there was an air of tension in the foyer before the ladies finally met.

PDF Compressor Free Version

"I joined up in September 1941," says Susan, "and arrived in Rhyl in the November. There were a thousand of us altogether, mainly women. We were known as the Monstrous Regiment."

"Yes", continued Hetty, "our job was to operate the radar system using searchlights."

"My fiancé went off to war and never came back," said Susan, "and although I vowed never to look at another man, I did marry in 1970."

"My husband was a consultant engineer." Says Hetty. "We met during the war and married in 1944. We had six children – two boys and four girls."

Catching up on the missing years Hetty told Susan about the best year of her life.

"It was undoubtedly two years ago," she said, proudly producing the photographic evidence, "when I was invited to meet the Queen at a Buckingham Palace garden party for the war disabled. It was a wonderful occasion."

Although in fine shape, Hetty did lose the hearing in one ear while in service.

Susan, on the other hand, emerged unscathed from her experiences and has lived a comfortable if busy life in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire.

"I've done many jobs, including working as a civil servant and being a teacher," she says. "My last occupation was marking exam papers."

Today, after years of travelling the world, Hetty has finally settled in the Costa del Sol where she lives with her partner in Coin.

"I came here 20 years ago, initially to Estepona, when a friend told me how wonderful it was" she said.

FIRST REUNION OF 15 IND. COY WRAC –

A short resume of a wonderful weekend

Mrs J V Burchett-Vass (née Veness) Hi – Holmne, Station Road, Old Leake, Boston, Lincolnshire PE22 9QQ

It was a small but happy band that made their way to Bovington Camp on the morning of Friday 26 March 2004. We had met up the previous evening at the Castle Inn, West Lulworth for our 1st reunion, having not seen each other since 1967.

It was a beautiful day, dry and bright if a bit windy, we were greeted at the Guardroom by Captain Rob Strachan, to whom we send our sincere thanks. After arranging to meet at the Officers Mess for lunch we were left to our devices. We wandered at will, visiting old haunts, reliving old memories and creating new ones.



Left to Right, using maiden names: Janet Veness, Sandy Fuller (Standing at back) Lesley Annable, Christine Green and Josie Catherwood.

First, the NAAFI, not much had changed, although the little bar at the end has been amalgamated into the main area and it wasn't open quite as long as it used to. Next our old living quarters, the outside has changed only in as much as there are now fire escapes, a thing we never had. Inside saw most changes, carpet on the floors, smaller rooms and more of them, it was strange to see our old guardroom and television room as living accommodation, so many memories rushing back. Here we were lucky enough to get a friendly Sgt to take photographs of us.

After a very enjoyable lunch with drinks at the Officers Mess we rounded the day off with a visit to "The Tank". Here we would like to add our special thanks to Steve for making it possible for us to climb up, on and in the tank and for all the lads who made us so very welcome and then proceeded to take photographs of us, our own private photo shoot. Sadly, after one more walk around the camp, it was then time to leave and make our way to the local pub. The day was nicely rounded off with dinner, a few drinks and more laughs.

Two of our party had to leave the next day so after a walk around the lovely village of Tyneham we bid them farewell, the rest of us stayed on enjoying the sights of Dorset until Sunday when we made very emotional farewells, vowing to revisit Bovington in 2007 – which will be 40 years since we were all together.

A second reunion is being planned for 2005, so any ex 15 Ind Coy WRAC from Bovington, Dorset, who want to join us, get in touch and come and join the fun. You can also email me if you wish at janburch@modoracle.com.

CLUB ATS COLCHESTER

Mrs B V Newell, Jodes Holly, Aingers Green, Great Bentley, Colchester, Essex CO7 8NG

Following the demise of our Secretary, Vera Cole in October 2002, it was agreed that the Branch would close. In order to maintain the friendship between members, we decided to run a Social Club. A member proposed that it should be called "CLUB ATS" and this was agreed.

Our area covers a large part of North Essex and into Suffolk. We were able to keep to our existing meeting place and day, and any members who have left the area,

are welcome to attend if visiting. Membership attendance has reduced from an average of 40 to 30, which is an achievement.

All members are now attached to HQ and all decisions are made by "show of hands". Very democratic! We attend Funerals, form a Guard of Honour and lay a Poppy Wreath, with an ATS Badge in the centre.

The Branch had kept a Scrapbook of their activities since 1987, and three of these are now in the keeping of the Essex County Archivist, so there is a permanent record of our presence in Colchester.

It was agreed that we hold a Farewell Party and this was attended by the very popular local Radio Station, BBC Essex, who broadcast their afternoon programme from 1 pm to 4 pm with appropriate music and interviews from the Party. A tape was made of the broadcast.

Many willing hands arrange Outings and Speakers, and last year, we were invited to a Buffet Lunch at Dovercourt, courtesy of two members who live there. We visited Landguard Fort in Felixstowe in August and our Christmas Lunch was held in the Garrison Sergeants Mess in Colchester. In March this year, we visited the Women and War Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum. In May, we will be going to our Annual Buffet Lunch and hope to arrange a River Trip in July.

OFFICERS' LUNCH – WORTHY DOWN SATURDAY 22 MAY 2004



The photograph taken by Alison Schofield, shows the following officers at lunch: Daphne Hill, Ann Maskens-McIntyre, Jane Sherwood (Daphne's daughter), Brigid Archdale, Barbara Laverack, Audrey Smith, Edna Dawes, Rowena Patrick, Jackie Walton, Anne Irvine, Maggie Purkis and Helen Haynes. In the background, you can see Brigadier Nolan and Sue Westlake.

Thirty-four ladies attended and we started off at 1130 with coffee. Unfortunately the weather was not quite warm enough to sit out on the patio but there was plenty room in the Ariel Bar for small groups to gather around and catch up on news and gossip! The bar opened at midday and the noise level increased accordingly. The Mess gave us a wonderful lunch of Smoked Salmon Roulade, Baked Ham and then Fruit Tartlet followed by Coffee and Mints. We then had a Loyal Toast – particularly significant

because it was our first Officers' Lunch since Her Majesty had graciously agreed to be The Patron of the WRAC Association. During lunch, we passed around a marvellous album of photographs that Daphne Hill has now presented to Association HQ with many more photographs, scrapbooks and mementoes of her service.

Perhaps this may encourage you to think about coming next year? The cost is £20 and truly, Worthy Down is NOT difficult to get to. We are just off the A34 – the main Oxford-Newbury-Winchester road. A taxi ride from the station takes about 10-15 minutes. An application form will be in Lioness 1/2005 – don't miss it.

A HAPPY REUNION

Mrs Kath Smith, née Hodges, W/332524 LCpl
18 Ryehaugh, Ponteland, Northumberland NE20 9BA

Due to a recent enquiry received by the Newcastle Branch, asking about a Miss Cato, Life Member, I am pleased to inform you that I have met up with Doris, after 54 years. We were stationed together in Singapore 1949/50.

After making numerous phone calls in the Newcastle area, I found out that she was in a Nursing Home.

I have been to visit her twice, and will continue to do so, whenever possible. Needless to say, we both had lots of catching up to do. Our Branch Chairwoman will be forwarding the new address for Doris, and she is looking forward to receiving her Lioness magazine once again.

My sincere thanks to the Lioness, for bringing about this reunion.

THE DAY OUR VICE-PRESIDENT CAME TO VISIT

Submitted by Irene Maclean

When our Branch Secretary, Gwyn Friday was nominated for a Certificate of Appreciation, it was the biggest secret since 'who shot JR' in the TV soap 'Dallas'. Colonel Cook, the North Eastern Chairman got the official wheels in motion, then our branch Committee got down to work.

Lieutenant Colonel Westlake was invited 'up north' to make the presentation, and she very kindly accepted, accompanied by Major Dot Ryder, who lives in Cleveland, so she knew the way!

A special cake was baked, caterer was organised, entertainment booked and guests invited.

On 'the day' we had visitors from Doncaster, Sheffield, Sunderland, Hull, Darlington, York, Newcastle and Harrogate branches, along with our branch. Everyone was so smart in their blazers, proudly showing their ATS and WRAC badges, and their medals polished up to welcome our VIPs.

I have never seen so many cameras flashing – was our new Patron in the area?

The Vice President was followed by our branch Standard,

formalities over, then down to what ladies do best – Lunch. After the presentation, so very well deserved, we were given a snapshot of Lieutenant Colonel Westlake's career and of girls in today's Army, which was excellent. Then we were entertained by Sunderland's own, their very own Andy Sibley, who was a very brilliant. Thank you so very much. Then we had a rather dishy young man who sang some great songs and had everyone dancing in the aisles. For those who know Gwyn Friday, she was, for once "gobsmacked". We all had a fabulous time – thank you to the girls who made a couple of hundred 'cuppa's', and thank you to our 'VIP' for making our Secretary's day so very special.

Thank you all for sharing the day with Cleveland.



Did you know that no piece of paper can be folded in half more than 7 times?

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB SATURDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2004 VICTORY SERVICES CLUB

The WRAC Officers' Dining Club was formed shortly after the demise of the Corps. It has usually met in the Army & Navy Club in Pall Mall. For various reasons, not least the problems with accommodation at the Army & Navy Club, it will be held this year at the Victory Services Club in Seymour Street near Marble Arch.

If you are a member of the Officers' Dining Club, you will know all about it already but what I hope to do is encourage more officers to come along. Perhaps you did not know there was an Officers' Dining Club? Perhaps you thought about joining when it was formed 10 years ago but did not get around to it? This is a quite separate function from the WAC Dinner club, which is an all-ranks function held in Stoke-on-Trent.

PLEASE think about supporting this event. Did you know that it only costs £15 a year to be a member of the Victory Services Club and an en-suite single room with full English breakfast cost £46.50? The telephone number is 0207 223 4474.

The cost of the Dinner will include room hire, pre-dinner drinks, a three-course meal with wine and coffee and Port for the Loyal Toast. There will be a Cash Bar after Dinner until midnight.

If you would like to come along, please fill in the proforma in the centre pull-out section and return it asap.

Did you know that the king of hearts is the only king in a pack of cards without a moustache?

Did you know that a duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why?

Did you know that no word in the English language rhymes with "month"?

Did you know that all polar bears are left-handed?

WRAC INTERNATIONAL REGISTER

Calling all ex-WRAC

Are you interested in contacting old service friends?

Why not join the WRAC International Register?

We now have members in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and more!

Contact: Ann Deakin

Tel: 01785 249992

GRAND REUNION 2006

Maggie Purkis - Chairman of the Executive Committee

You may remember that a questionnaire was published in The Lioness Issue No 2 of 2003 to ascertain what you want from the Grand Reunion. Having studied the replies, we found that:

- 66% preferred a central England venue
- 35% preferred a university as being less expensive than a hotel
- 73% preferred a hotel even though it would be more expensive
- 8% had no preference with regard to expense
- 2% would rather organise their own accommodation
- 83% wanted an organised outing on the Saturday morning

All of the respondents gave several choices of food preference (e.g. "I like beef, chicken and lamb but will never eat fish") some indeed ticked all choices.

We are aware that 3 branches, having been successful in their bid for a "lottery" grant chose to stay at hotels rather than at the Mason Hall in Birmingham. Well, I don't blame them, it was very basic, a real journey back in time to the days of barrack blocks and shared ablutions. Equally, a great many of our members elected to stay at the Copthorne Hotel for the same reason. Consequently, we were extremely close to having to pay a cancellation fee to the University of Birmingham because we did not take up as many rooms as we had booked.

What we are looking for is a venue, which can give us:

- > the equivalent to 5-star en-suite accommodation for 2 nights at £150.00.
- > good, comfortable, standard accommodation for 2 nights at £100.00
- > free supper on Friday, followed by live entertainment
- > provision of a room for the Secretaries meeting at no cost
- > free breakfast and 2-course lunch on Saturday
- > free formal dinner followed by entertainment on Saturday evening
- > free breakfast and 2-course lunch on Sunday
- > free provision of a room which will take at least 400 for the AGM and Drumhead Service, without steep steps to tiered seating
- > all of the above within easy walking distance of each other
- > plenty of interest locally, with somewhere to visit on the Saturday morning

Well, I know a venue which can offer all of that - but **only if our members accept the whole weekend as a package, and only if the Association subsidises each member attending.** That will, of course, mean that we will not be able to afford an organised outing on the Saturday morning. However, this venue which I have in mind is situated a 90p bus ride from the city centre and the buses run every 10 minutes.

We will be holding the next WRAC Association Grand Reunion at the University of Warwick (Conference Park, Central Campus, in Coventry) from 31st March to 2nd April 2006.

Package A £150.00	En-suite room (5 star) for 2 nights. Supper on the Friday, followed by live entertainment. Breakfast, mid morning tea/coffee and biscuits, 2-course lunch, afternoon tea/coffee and chocolate bars, formal dinner followed by entertainment on Saturday. Breakfast and lunch on Sunday
Package B £100.00	Standard room (shared bathrooms and loos) for 2 nights. Supper on the Friday, followed by live entertainment. Breakfast, mid morning tea/coffee and biscuits, 2-course lunch, afternoon tea/coffee and chocolate bars, formal dinner followed by entertainment on Saturday. Breakfast and lunch on Sunday

Decide whether you want to go for Package A or Package B. Start saving NOW! Application forms will be published in The Lioness, Issue No 2, 2005 (this time next year).

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.

DID YOU SERVE IN BAOR OR BFG?

If you would like a shield featuring the formation sign, these are available from

Lirscan Tel: 01214 521 501

Articles of Interest

INITIAL MUSINGS ON THE FUTURE OF THE

PDF COMPRESSOR Free Version

Jane Freebairn ~ Association General Secretary
and Editor Designate of The Lioness

First of all, I will make it absolutely clear that these are my own personal thoughts. I'd like to share them with you to see if you agree or disagree, and to invite your thoughts about where we go from here.

Most of you will know that I have been the Benevolent Fund Case Secretary for just over three years and, for the last year, I have combined that post with the General Secretary's post. I thought long and hard before applying for the General Secretary's Post. I really enjoyed being the Benevolent Fund Case Secretary dealing with some 850 cases a year. With a budget of £150,000 we made significant changes to the lives of ex-ATS and WRAC servicewomen. It was hard work and challenging and it tested all my emotions – trying to be objective while recognising when there was a real need for assistance.

So why apply for the General Secretary's job? Well, I recognise that the Association is at an extremely critical phase in its existence. If we do not get it right in the next few years, the Association will not have the future it – or you – deserves. I also believe it is important that the General Secretary is someone who has served in the Corps so that their experience and background can help to mould the course for the future. We have had some very worthy General Secretaries in the past who have not served in the Corps and their caring and enthusiastic contribution has helped us get where we are today. However, we no longer have a serving Corps or Corps Directorate to support such a person so I thought that the General Secretary needed to have personal experience of what the WRAC and their worthy predecessors, the QMAAC and ATS, had given to the Army.

Now I am not going to be able to do it on my own! I am really looking forward to working with Sue Westlake and I am sure we share the same views about the ethos and purpose of the Association. We worked together in the WRAC Directorate – a few years ago – so we know how we think and operate. I am really grateful to Beth Todd for helping me through the past year whilst we have been one short. She has been a great support and I know that many of you know that anyway through telephone and personal contact. I am delighted to welcome Margaret Wroot to the team. Margaret is the new Benevolent Fund Case Secretary and through my contacts with her at the Rifleman's Aid Society, I know that her compassionate nature and efficient manner will mean that applications for assistance will be dealt with speedily and effectively.

But we are a very small nucleus here in Winchester trying to run an Association with some 5,000 members spread out across the world. I also know there is a potentially greater membership that we have not begun to tap. It seems to me that we really are at a crossroads. My challenge is to merge the past with the future. How?

For many years, the ex-ATS members have provided the nucleus of the Association branch network. They have

been the loyal supporters who have served on the Branch committees and regularly produced reports and accounts as required. They have attended countless AGMs and Reunions. Now many are very frustrated that age has caught up with them. They are no longer as mobile as they would wish to be and find difficulty in travelling any distance. As attendance at Branch meetings falls away, they feel it is no longer worth the effort to keep the Branch active. They feel that they should be getting more interest from ex-WRAC members – after all, it is called the WRAC Association!

On the other hand, it is much more likely in today's world that an ex-WRAC member has to juggle work and family commitments. Many of them are still serving in an Army that today seems more over-stretched and committed throughout the world than the Army to which I belonged. They cannot meet in the afternoons. Indeed, until they become ladies of "a certain age", they may simply have no interest in reunions. It is much easier for them to search for previous colleagues on one of many websites. They may still prefer to look to the future instead of looking to the past. But I also hear of groups of WRAC meeting up because they were on the same training course or in the same unit or in the same location....and they are not all necessarily members of the Association. It is heartening that they do make the effort to meet up but wouldn't it be great if they were also members of the Association.

Call me simplistic. I know I have generalised the situation. I know it is not as clear-cut as I may have suggested and that many ex-WRAC have been actively involved in Branch business. But, I also know that it is now up to the ex-WRAC to keep this Association going. We are the custodians of an Association that the QMAAC began in 1920. I was in the WRAC Directorate in 1991 and was involved in disbanding the Corps. I have no intention of repeating that with the Association but all of us at Winchester need your support.

Let the debate begin!

MY HOLIDAY

Virginia Hopson, 9 Newton Walk, Edgware,
Middlesex HA8 0BX

"Are you going to have a holiday this year?"

"Yes, I hope to be able to take some time off work"

"Where are you going? Spain, Italy?"

"No, I'm going to Base Camp Mt Everest?"

and then there follows a silence and jaws drop. After a short while I was asked,

"Why?"

"Well I have the greatest respect for the Gurkhas, who fight in a foreign army for somebody else's Queen and country. I would like to visit their country and meet them".

"You would have to get fit"

"Oh yes, but I have a dodgy knee"

"Forgetting your dodgy knee, you should be able to make it"

"Oh yes, but I have a dodgy back"

"Oh yes, but I get blisters very easily"

"Forgetting your dodgy knee dodgy back and dodgy feet, you should be able to make it"

"Oh yes, but everybody gets diarrhoea – the Kathmandu Quickstep"

"Forgetting your dodgy knee, dodgy back, dodgy feet and dodgy tummy, you should be able to make it"

"Oh yes, but everyone gets the Khumbu cough"

"Forgetting your dodgy knee, dodgy back, dodgy feet, dodgy tummy and dodgy throat, you should be able to make it"

"Oh yes, but there are the Maoist terrorists".

Although I had planned to visit Nepal in about 2 years time (2005), I prayed about the possibility of going and my prayers were answered sooner than I had anticipated and two months after praying I was on my way to Nepal. Right from the word "Go" I could feel the presence of The Lord guiding my plans. The power of prayer! When I told colleagues at work, I received tremendous help with kit and words of encouragement.

We were given a kit list and it was recommended that we carry a comprehensive first aid kit. We had to bear in mind that if we needed a blood transfusion we would have to use our own sterile needles. There are only footpaths (no cars nor bicycles) the Yaks are wild, a helicopter costs \$4,000 to rescue people and everything has to be carried so if we got ill it would take us many days to reach Kathmandu or Pheriche and medical help. The air at Base Camp Mt Everest has half the oxygen content that we are used to breathing therefore we had to be aware of altitude sickness.

Would I be fit enough as I just had 2 months to prepare? How do I get rid of leeches? Some of the questions and doubts which I had to start answering.

I started first by toughening up my feet by using Surgical Spirit to prevent blisters. Then I brought the best pair of boots money could buy, as they had to serve me well, plus a 'daysack'. I filled the daysack with 6 kgs of weight and 3 nights a week I went walking for 2 hours and every Saturday and Sunday I walked around Hampstead Heath for 8 hours. (this was over and above going to the gym 3 times a week). I carried a lot of water with me in a Platypus (which is a plastic sack carried in the daysack



Virginia at Pheriche

and with a tube reaching to my mouth) and had to plot my course from public toilet to public toilet (and that was the only time I sat down). Apart from having to be physically fit, the books which I bought on trekking in the Himalayas said that physical fitness is only 8%, mental fitness is 82%, I had to start being mentally tough as well. I also bought books on the Nepalese language and their customs and traditions so whilst walking on the Heath I was talking to myself (learning Nepalese) and sucking on this plastic tube sticking out of my daysack. No wonder I got some strange looks.

I had booked my holiday with a company that prided itself on looking after the Sherpas and porters and that any profit it made from the trek, would be given to the Nepalese for schools and hospitals. Plus it was a green company in that we left every campsite with just our footprints behind. There were going to be 5 people on this trek – a father and his daughter, a father and his son, and me. They would share tents and I would have my own.

We left Heathrow, changed planes at Doha and arrived in Kathmandu 14 hours later. We were taken to our plush Radisson Hotel near the Royal Palace (where the massacres took place) in the north of the city. I was surprised at how big Kathmandu is. It stretches for miles and is very busy, vibrant and noisy. The food in the hotel was delicious and we could eat as much as we wanted for £2.83. Nepal is very security conscious therefore there was a lot of barbed wire, security guards, police and army round the airport, hotel and army lookout posts as well as curfews at Namche Bazaar and Lukla.

On Tuesday 14 October 2003 we started our trek by flying from Kathmandu domestic airport on a little 16 seater propeller plane to Lukla. The weather plays a significant part in whether the planes can fly or not so there was a 2 hour delay waiting for the clouds to disperse. Lukla airport has a very small airstrip built into a mountain and is uphill. Everything which is needed by the Mt Everest expeditions, etc has to be flown in by these hard working planes. The pilots are wonderful, threading their planes through the valleys, over the high mountains and on to this most unusual and famous landing strip. (Thank you Sir Edmund Hilary and the Nepalese). As soon as the plane lands, it is an immediate right turn, jamming on the brakes, everybody disembarks, the propellers are still turning over, more people embark (and equipment) and the plane takes off going downhill. It has to be a very quick turnaround as the next plane is making it's approach during the break in the weather.

At Lukla we met up with our luggage, porters and Sherpas and we were off. Our route would take uphill ('ukalo' in Nepalese) to Phakding, Namche Bazaar, Thanybouche Monastery, Pheriche, Lobuche, Gorak Shep, climb Kala Pattar, walk to Base Camp Mt Everest and back down. In total it would be about 70/80 miles.

The weather going up was glorious – warm sun during the day and the nights were cold. The sky was full of stars and the walk to and from the toilet tent had the best views in the world.

Every morning at about 5.30 or 6 am we would be woken up with a hot mug of tea or coffee and then shortly afterwards with a bowl of boiling hot water for washing.

Life was so simple and easy. I did not have a care in the world. Breakfast was a steaming bowl of porridge with hot milk, or cereal. Then came eggs, bread and a hot drink. Lunch was always fresh produce – the company's ethos was also to buy fresh vegetables from local farmers on the way up the valley. **PDF Compressor Free Version** We did it to support western culture by buying freeze-dried products from the west. When we arrived at our next destination, we would quickly sort out our luggage and count the minutes until supper as we were starving. We were served delicious hot soup, the main course of meat eg sardines, fresh veg and potatoes, and for desert it was tinned fruit. How our chefs managed such hot meals on little kerosene rings was unbelievable.

People tend to think that the countryside is very quiet. Well not in Nepal. The stone masons get up before first light and start chipping at stones so that they fit into a wall which will form part of a new house (is this a smaller version of the Pyramids?), the cows are mooing, the dogs bark all night, we camp next to rivers and they roar constantly, the crows squawk loudly, the cows' bells are clinking all night as they graze, people have the Khumbu cough and snoring is quite common at altitude. SO ALL IN ALL QUITE QUIET !!!!

The Sherpa in charge of a trek is called a Sirdar. Ang Phurba Sherpa (or AP for short) was our sirdar and he had climbed Mt Everest three times and one of those occasions was with Rebecca Stevens, the first British woman to climb Mt Everest. We also had 3 Sherpas who were going to take part in the Everest Marathon on 23 November 2003. It took us 5 days to walk from Namche Bazaar to Gorak Shep – it will take our (note the word 'our') Sherpas 4 hours to run it! We were certainly in the midst of some amazing people. I gave my Platypus to one of the Sherpas, therefore my Platypus ran the Everest Marathon!

On our return journey we had snow and rain but I did not mind as it was downhill – well most of the way. For our final supper together, our chefs made us a sumptuous meal and the highlight was a beautifully decorated cake. How they managed that I will never know.

Time and time it kept coming back to me that climbing Kala Pattar and Base Camp Mt Everest was not done without the help of 4 yaks, 5 porters, 3 chefs and 3 Shepar sirdars. I cried when I had to say goodbye to them because they were so cheerful, humble and extraordinary helpful in doing everything they could to make our holiday comfortable. What memories they have left with me.



One of our Sherpas at Base Camp Mount Everest

We arrived back at Heathrow to the clocks having gone back to GMT, tube derailments and postal strikes.

What was the most dangerous part of the holiday? Riding pillion on a motorbike in Kathmandu through the chaotic traffic and fumes. I don't remember seeing much as I had my eyes closed.

Mrs D Woolley, 152 Waterhouse Moor, Harlow, Essex CM18 6BJ

I attend an Art Social Group in Ware at the Age Concern Club, and sitting next to me was a very nice gentleman named Tony, who was also a very good artist. I noticed on his desk, he had a copy of the RAF 1944 Journal. As I used to visit an RAF Station during the war I asked him if I could have a read. Whilst looking through I saw this lovely article and wanted to share with you.

"ATS Officer in a remote district was suddenly presented with the problem of 8,000 men rescued from Dunkirk who had been without food for 5 days.

All she had were billeting forms, she, nothing daunted, requisitioned a field of cabbages, a flock of sheep and the services of a butcher.

She then organised the village housewives under two ATS cooks whom she gave the titles of Sergeant. Next on her calling up list which happened to be waiting for instalment nearby, was an iron bath which she turned into a cauldron having it slung over a vast fire to prepare vast quantities of stew.

The 8,000 men were fed."

Makes you think of the feeding of the 5,000, by Jesus.

GIBRALTAR – A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING AND CELEBRATION – 2 MARCH 2004

M H Suzanne Gordon, 15 St Lawrence Close,
Stratford-Sub-Castle, Salisbury SP1 3LW

Gibraltar owes much of its history to its geographical location. To the Greeks and Romans it was a mythological importance as one of the Pillars of Hercules. It was colonised by Arabs and later captured by Spain. Then on 4 August 1704 an Anglo-Dutch force seized it and Gibraltar was ceded in perpetuity to Britain by treaty in 1713. So it was appropriate to celebrate the tercentenary of the link with Britain by a Service of Thanksgiving at St Clement Dames Church, London.

My association with Gibraltar is a long one. My family lived on the Rock and I was educated at the local Loreto Convent. In 1940 my mother, brother and I were evacuated to Casablanca; other Gibraltarians were evacuated to London, Northern Ireland, Jamaica and Madeira.

At the fall of France, I came to England and joined the ATS. I did my basic training with the royal Scots at Glencorse Barracks. On to Oswestry to train as an OFC and then joined 445 Bty 129 (M) Heavy AA Regiment serving in Scotland and then Kent in doodlebug alley. Then over to Antwerp with 531 Bty 155 (M) Heavy AA Regiment.

By 1946 I was in Brussels serving with the Pay Corps and from there repatriated to Gibraltar for demob. A happy reunion with my family since it was on the Rock I met and married my husband who was serving in the RAF.

Being a member of the Friends of Gibraltar Heritage Society, I received an invitation to the Commemorative events organised for 2 March 2004. A childhood friend Liz McCutchan and I attended the Service of Thanksgiving where we had good seats overlooking the dignitaries in the nave.

The Queen was represented by the Duke of Kent, Baroness Thatcher was present. The Lord Mayor of Westminster Councillor Jan Prendeegast attended plus a whole list of Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Senior Members of the Armed Forces and members of the Diplomatic Corps;

One of the most poignant moments during the Service was when the Union Flag and the Gibraltar Flag were borne by representatives of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, RDGF, received by the resident Chaplain, Chris Houf, and placed on the altar. The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Gibraltar said prayers.

Mr Albert Poggio, UK representative of the Government of Gibraltar, Mr Michael Howard QC MP, Baroness Symons, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, read the lessons. Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, Chief of the air Staff read 'Gibraltar' by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. The Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Mr Peter Caruana QC gave an address.

Before the service, we were able to enjoy music played by the Central band of the Royal Air Force. During the service we were uplifted by the resident choir and two soloists from Gibraltar. The tenor Nathan Payas sang 'Rock of Ages' and the soprano Andrea Martin gave a beautiful rendering of Schubert's Ave Maria.

Blessings were given by the Right Reverend Dr Geoffrey Rowell, Church of England, Bishop of Gibraltar and the Right Reverend Charles Caruana (no relation to the Chief Minister) Roman Catholic Bishop of Gibraltar.

My friend and I were almost last to leave the Church. The two Bishops were still at the entrance shaking hands with us all. I told Bishop Caruana that my husband Roy and I were married in his Cathedral of St Mary the Crowned 51 years ago.

The reception took place at the Savoy which is within reasonable walking distance of the Church. The route was lined by young sea cadets to make sure we knew the way. We were last in the queue to enter the Savoy, with 3 Commissioned officers of the RGDF and the 2 Bishops at the rear. I told them we felt quite safe with the best of both worlds behind us!

By the time we got to the reception, Peter Caruana, the Chief Minister had almost finished his speech. However we were in time to hear him give thanks to the British Armed Forces for their gallantry in defending Gibraltar during WWII.

We had a great time meeting friends from our youth. A jolly band of senior citizens reminiscing over the dim and distant past. A great day of rejoicing and celebration – we would not have missed it for all the world.

THE ASSOCIATION WEB SITE

www.wraccassociation.co.uk

by Hermé Emary

As the current webmaster, that's the "volunteer" who currently helps maintain the site, I would like to explain the site to you the membership.

There is a vast untapped membership pool out there of both ATS and WRAC who know nothing about the Association, its work or its ethos. The production of posters for libraries, and adverts for local papers go some way to telling people that we, as an Association, exist, but their use is limited. In this digital age we have to expand our horizons and look to the World Wide Web to have our voice heard.

There are already a number of both ATS and WRAC sites out there if you care to look for them. Some are packed full of information, but they are not dedicated to both WRAC and ATS and do not promote the Association.

The Association web site contains lots of general news and information that the General Secretary feels that you, the membership, might like to know about. As well as information about the Association, its history and what it does, each branch has its own page. This can be used for general meeting information, pictures of events, contact details, and anything that is branch related. Currently only 17 branches use their pages and even that information has never been updated. They are your pages – use them.

How many of you have information posted on your local council sites? Has it ever been updated? If no one in your branch has access to the Internet, try your local library for access or contact the council direct. These council pages contain names and Addresses of Secretaries and where you meet, so it is important that these are kept up to date. If you do have information on a local council site you can let the Chief Clerk know.

Here's how to send news and reports to us for the web site. First of all let me tell you how to contact us digitally.

If you have a computer, you can email either the Association Chief Clerk on wraccassociation@milnet.uk.net, or the webmaster at wrac.webmaster@milnet.uk.net, with your articles and photos. Which ever address you use, please please include a subject of "Branch Article" so we will not accidentally delete your email because it has an attachment. This method can also be used for articles for the Lioness. **Teccy warning**...If you intend to take and send a digital photo, please try and set your camera photo quality on its highest setting. Digital photos lose quality when printed in the Lioness if they are taken on a low quality setting. The downside of this is that they do take awhile to attach to an email. Lower quality photos are acceptable if they are only required for the web site.

The other method of sending articles is via the tried and tested method of the Royal Mail. (Address at the front of the Lioness). Please ensure though that, if you send a photo for inclusion, it has your details on the reverse so that we can return it if required. It would assist mail sorting if you state on the front of the envelope either "Lioness Article" or "Web Site".

The web site is currently to be found at www.wracassociation.co.uk. If you do have access to the internet either via your own computer or at the library do have a look. Any suggestions to improve the site is always welcome.

**Mrs H D O'Sullivan, née Veal, W/5621 SSgt
3 Widmore Road, Basingstoke, Hants RG22 6LB**

I wish to correct an item published in "Articles of Interest" Page 10 of the "Lioness" No. 1 2004, FIFTY YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE. The FIRST FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE took place on November 6 1948 at the Royal Albert Hall. At the time I was stationed in Sloane Gardens. Four of us took part after practising for a week. It was a marvellous occasion. There were displays by each Service and the ATS gave a "Display of Squad Drill". My programme and a photo of we four on the steps of the Royal Albert Hall are among the treasures of my 20 years plus Service, before, during and after the Second World War.



The photographs enclosed with this article are from our 1st ATS Camp at Tidworth with the 2nd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment in 1939. They have kept very well!!

**Mrs Josephine Shelley, née Hardacre,
W/12933 Ex-CSM, 43 Chauncy Road, New Moston,
Manchester M40 3GG**

In April 2001 I had visitors from Australia, and we travelled up to Edinburgh for a visit. During a tour of the Castle I went into the Scottish National War Museum and, of course, wandered into the women's sector. On casually opening one of the books I found myself looking at the name of my dear friend, Section Leader, E McKnight, who I served with at the E.C.R.D. in Saltdene and Bournemouth. She was buried with full Military Honours at Boscombe Cemetery, Bournemouth. On seeing this I was very upset and one of the men on duty came up to me to see if I was alright. I explained to him and said I would like to take a picture of the entry. He told me that wasn't allowed, but for £5 I could request a copy of the entry, which I did and duly received a lovely certificate which I treasure.

I would like to pass on details of this service to any members who may have lost Scottish comrades and who may wish to apply for copies of entries in the records. The address to write to is: Scottish National War Museum, The Castle, Edinburgh EH2 7T. Telephone 0131 226 7393.

**Mrs Betty France, née Parkinson,
Secretary Leeds Branch**

When I enlisted in 1939 we were attached to the 43rd Searchlight Battalion RE TA which was stationed at The Drill Hall in Huddersfield. This was used as Battalion HQ until late 1941, during which time the HQ Section of the ATS was permanently on duty there. We acted as Clerks, Telephonists, Cooks, Storekeepers, Orderlies and Batwoman. When I was invited to the Centenary Celebrations of said Drill Hall in 1999 I was aware that nowhere was there any indication of any contribution by the ATS to the history of the place and I decided to put that right.



After negotiations with the Trustees, I was granted permission to place some form of recognition of the service contribution by ATS during WWII. Through the Old Comrades Association I have been able to contact two Colonels of the Regiment who were pre-war TA and who remembered the work done by the ATS. They agreed to meet at the Drill Hall to approve the plaque, which I hope will be a reminder to many of the vital contributions made by ATS to the smooth running of the Regiment.



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*l - r: Colonel J Huxley ex-Adjutant
Myself, Colonel W Brook, ex-Company Commander*

OUR GRAND REUNION RAFFLE PRIZE Mrs Pamela Nenck



Pam and Olive at the Arboretum, during the Grand Reunion 2003.

During the Grand Reunion in Birmingham in 2003 we bought raffle tickets, and much to our surprise won second prize, a weekend for two at a Moat House Hotel of our choice. We chose to go to the Moat House near Cambridge, as it was within easy driving distance of London, and because an old friend, another member of our radar team, lives in Ely.

We were very lucky with the weather, and had sunshine all the time. The hotel was very comfortable, and the food was excellent, as was the service. Having gone to bed fairly early on the Friday night, we were woken at 3.30 am on Saturday morning by the fire alarm, and all had to evacuate the hotel. Luckily it was a dry night, and not too cold. The fire engine arrived in about seven minutes, and after looking around inside informed us there was no fire, so, after a hot cup of tea, we went back to bed. It is a no smoking hotel, but they suspected that someone had smoked in a hotel bedroom and set the alarm off. Quite exciting!

We did a bus tour around Cambridge on Saturday, as it is the best way to see the town and all the colleges. On Sunday we went to Ely to see our friend Ina, with whom we served in both England, and then in Belgium in February 1945. We then had lunch and spent a delightful afternoon by the River before returning home. The weekend was a real pleasure, and went all too quickly.

IN MEMORY OF DIANA HOPE ROWDEN, S/O WAAF Alison Schofield

It was in July 1944 that the finale of the events described here took place. The memorial tablet in the church at Tilford, a small village between Farnham and Hindhead states: "In proud and loving memory of Diana Hope Rowden, S/O WAAF killed in Natzweiler concentration camp 6th July 1944 aged 29. Beloved only daughter of Alfred Clement Rowden and Christian Rowden, Lowicks, Tilford. Greater love hath no man that this that a man lay down his life for his friends".

It may seem strange than article about a WAAF officer should have a place in a WRAC Association magazine, but what the memorial tablet did not mention was that Diana Rowden was in fact a member of the FANY and that it was in this role that she carried out the duties which led to her death. There are many former members of the ATS and WRAC who served in the FANY (the initials stand for First Aid Nursing Yeomanry). The FANY, still in existence today and still recruiting, (readers can find out more about them on their website www.fany.org.uk) has a proud history. The point that was important during the Second World War was that members of the FANY were not forbidden to carry or use small arms, as were those serving in the WRNS, ATS and WAAF; thus the obvious solution for those selected for the SOE (Special Operations Executive) was for them to transfer to the FANY. This separated them from other members of the women's services who were, in theory, protected by the Geneva Convention were they to fall into enemy hands. Most of the female agents sent by the SOE to France were FANY's. Thirteen of them died in concentration camps and three won the George Cross, two of which were awarded posthumously. Some two thousand FANY's formed the backbone of the SOE. Diana Rowden, commemorated here, had been awarded the MBE before her death.

Diana Rowden did not come from the village where she is remembered; her grandfather had lived there and her mother chose to settle there immediately after the end of the war, awaiting, with Diana's dog, (a cocker spaniel called Wizard) for her daughter's return. When the facts detailing the manner of the deaths of Diana and her companions were revealed the Judge who presided over the trial ordered that the names of the victims be suppressed - to protect the relatives from the horror of the crimes which had been perpetrated - but Mrs Rowden saw beyond the immediate facts and knew that the example that her daughter had set would live to remind the country of the cost of the freedom they had helped to buy.

Diana Rowden had been brought up in the South of France, was educated in England and had returned to France to live with her mother there. After the fall of France she remained to nurse wounded British soldiers and left in 1941, in danger of arrest, having made contact with French Resistance groups. Back in England she joined the WAAF and it was from this service that she was recruited for fieldwork in France with the SOE.

After a three month training period Diana was landed in France by a British aircraft. Hugh Verity wrote in his book

"We Landed by Moonlight" (1978) "Charles Skepper and three girls, Diana Rowden as well as Cecile Lefort and Noor Inyat Kahn...Looking back to the operational supper at Tangmere (on 16th/17th June 1943) with our cheerful passengers just before take-off, it was almost impossible to imagine that a group of four such as this would all have such terrible fates".

Diana's code-name was "Paulette" and between August and November she acted as a courier for the network to which she had been assigned. One of the Frenchmen who worked with her on many occasions summed it up in a sentence "Paulette was a tireless worker and without fear." In November 1943 the Gestapo infiltrated a French radio post, captured a French agent, interrogated him and substituted for him one of their own French agents, who assumed his identity. It was this substitute agent who betrayed Diana and her Scottish colleague, John Young. (Even as late as 1955 the French authorities were still trying to extradite this man from Canada, but he escaped to South America before the process could be completed. After their capture Diana and John were taken for interrogation in the Avenue Foch in Paris; John was subsequently executed in Austria on September 6th 1944 and Diana was moved to Struthof, near the village of Natzweiler. Believing that she was to be reunited with her friends she put a tartan ribbon in her hair but the meeting was not to be in this life.

Natzweiler was the German name for the French village of Natzwiller; Alsace-Lorraine had been incorporated into Germany after the fall of France in 1940 and an extermination camp had been set up at the Struthof. The camp was used for prisoners from the German - occupied countries of Europe. Prisoners were not necessarily killed outright but were put into the gas chambers to determine human resistance to gas poisoning, so some survived to give evidence at the trial of the staff of the camp in May

1946. The bodies of those who died were sent to the germanised University of Strasbourg for post-mortem examination into the effects of various gases on the human body. On 6th July 1944 officers who were prisoners at the camp saw the party of women arrive and noted that Diana was wearing a tartan ribbon in her hair; other prisoners in the camp were ordered to be in their quarters by 8.30 pm and not to look out of their windows. However, the women *were* seen being taken singly to their execution - they met a terrible death, being burnt in the incinerator of the crematorium; a medical orderly who was a witness at the trial said that they were first given an injection of phenol but that he could not say if they were dead before they were put in the incinerator.

After the end of the war Alsace Lorraine was returned to France. Parts of the camp are still in existence, kept by the French as a permanent memorial to those who suffered and died there. The gas chambers are nearby, as is the tomb of an unknown French deportee. Everything is open to the public and the guides are sensitive and well-informed; there is also a small museum. If you are in the area it is well worth the pilgrimage; it lies some 35 miles south-west of Strasbourg on the D130 (a turning off the main N420, one of the main routes out of the city).

COLLECTING AT THE CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW IN MAY FOR THE ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND

Sister Josephine Jenkins

We were lucky, as the weather was bright and sunny every day and visitors came in their thousands. We did 2-hour shifts, with Generals, Brigadiers and Lady "So and So" on the lists together with common folk like myself!

An ex-Army woman from the South African Army collected, a serving FANY, and many young Irish Guardsmen. I also rubbed shoulders with an interesting young graduate Irish Guards Bandswoman who said that there are now 6 women in the band.

The days were tiring but most enjoyable!



Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit;
Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad



D-Day Memoirs

Mrs Audrey M F Stevens, née Mathers
(Cpl HAA Signals – Switchboard Operator)
Flat 2, 28 Northumbria Drive, Henleaze,
Bristol BS9 4HP

On 6th June 1944, D-Day, I went on duty at 0800 hrs until 1300 hrs in the Portland Gun Operations Room at Upwey, Nr Weymouth. My shift was informed that D-Day had begun. We were highly active all morning as Allied Troops embarked for assault. A strong force of Americans left from Weymouth for Omaha and Utah beaches. At 1700 hrs I returned to duty until 2230 hrs, where again, we were fully operative.

Our young Medical Officer was killed in the first onslaught.

A few days later as we sat on the beach, German POW's were being escorted close to us.

Mrs Molly Acton, née O'Callaghan
81 King George V Drive North, Heath,
Cardiff CF14 4EG



*P 1/6 Section GHQ 2nd Echelon
(Molly is 4th from the right in the front row.
Photograph taken at the 21 Club – Brussels)*

I did not realise that 6th June was D-Day until about 1530 hrs.

I was stationed at 10TB Royal Signals, Vimy Lines, Catterick Camp, and had volunteered for overseas service. My posting came through and I had to report to GHQ 2nd Echelon in London. As fate would have it transport was arranged to take me to the Railway Station at crack of dawn on June 6th 1944.

In Catterick we were billeted in a barrack room in a large Sandhurst block. Our room was divided into two sections – a partition with six girls one side (mine) and twelve girls the other.

Trying not to disturb anyone I dressed quietly – my friend Peggy Robbins, now Collins, was to accompany me to the transport some distance away.

I heard movement the other side of the partition and said 'you don't have to get up now – it is too early' I was told to mind my own business!

On leaving the room I was surprised to see all the girls dressed and ready to give me a special send off.

There were hundreds of men in the other Sandhurst blocks we had to pass on our way to the main road. They were surprised to see a bunch of ATS girls marching along at that time in the morning singing goodbye songs – some of them joined in! It was unreal. Needless to say I was touched – I had mixed feelings about leaving.

It was a long journey. I arrived in London about 1500 hrs. Another girl and myself went into a Salvation Army Centre for a cup of tea and then heard about the landings. I soon found I was very much involved with the records of that operation – another story!

We were billeted in a nice house in Paddington. I couldn't believe my luck – four girls to a room. My bed was alongside French windows leading to a small garden – firmly locked!

A week later I was unceremoniously blown out of bed by a bomb, which had exploded in the garden. The French windows had been open – luckily the mattress had landed on top of me and had collected the shards of glass. Lucky escape.

We were sent to the basement and stayed there all night. Next morning we were told to report that evening with great coats covering pyjamas. We were given army blankets and marched to our new sleeping quarters – a newly opened crypt in a nearby church in Sussex Gardens.

Double bunks had been put in the entrance but when my turn came they were all occupied. I was left with a stone tomb in an alcove. Another girl was supposed to share with me but as she lived in London she was allowed to sleep at home.

It was the most frightening experience of my life. No lights except a green pilot light; there was even half a silver wreath on the wall at the end of the tomb. The smell, dust and atmosphere made sleep almost impossible. My colleagues in work were so sorry for me – they said I looked like a zombie and I did.

If I remember correctly we were there for six weeks, then they found us a place in the corridor of a large house – heaven!

I still visualise that crypt – the hard grey tombstone beneath me – the Spiller family, Sarah, Elizabeth, Caroline and George, 1580 or so. It became a familiar sight every evening, the girls marching along with great coats over pyjamas, steel helmets and carrying blankets. People used to stop to watch us – the American GI's could not understand what was happening.

I would like to visit the church one day – I wonder if the crypt has been closed again. It did shelter us in our time of need. One thing I am sure of – the present day servicewomen would not be put in that situation!

What with Doodle Bugs all day, nightmarish nights, it's a wonder we remained sane!

Molly is now Secretary of the Cardiff Branch and says.....it would give me great pleasure to have news of any or all of those lovely people. After leaving London we went to Oxford and thence to Brussels.

**CHILWELL ORDNANCE DEPOT,
BEESTON, NOTTS**

Mrs M Waggott, née Newbery, W/44953
15 Parkside, Greenways Estate, Spennymoor,
Co Durham DL16 6SA

As we approach the commemoration of the D-Day Landings in Normandy in 1944 I am prompted to view my ATS/WRAC collection of memorabilia including books and many photographs. The following photograph of the Warrant Officers and Sergeants taken in Chilwell Camp in 1944 seems very appropriate for you to see.



Chilwell Ordnance Depot and Dispersal Depots around Chilwell were the work place and home for thousands of ATS girls during the Second World War, some of them far from home. The girls were both volunteers and conscripts from every part of the UK and abroad, working together. They came from Shetland Isles down as far as Isle of Wight and British Guiana, working on tanks and army vehicles and spares of every description, for the world wide war zones.

D-Day will live in my memory as I remember parading the girls 'Up the Hill' after our night shift working in the Depot. We heard the planes returning back home to their air bases.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for next year are due for payment on 01 October 2004

Members of Headquarter Branch should send their subscription together with their membership card and SAE to:

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

WRAC DINNER 2004

**THE WRAC DINNER CLUB
WILL BE HOLDING
THEIR 8th ANNUAL DINNER
IN STOKE ON TRENT
ON SATURDAY 8th OCTOBER 2004**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
ANN DEAKIN ~ 01785 249992

DEADLINE DATE 11th SEPTEMBER 2004

Household hints - Removing candle wax from fabrics: Rub ice cubes over the wax to harden it (or if possible place the fabric in a plastic bag in the freezer). Scrape off the hardened wax. Place white paper towels on either side of the fabric and press with a cool iron. Iron from the reverse side so you don't push the stain further into the fabric. If there is still a mark, use a spot stain remover, such as Dylon No1 (following the manufacturer's instructions. Rinse the item in cool water, then launder.

Important lessons to be learned from the movies:

- Move to New York, as everyone there can afford large apartments, regardless of their income
- A pursuing car will not try to barge you off the road until just after you see it in the mirror
- At least one of a pair of identical twins will be born evil
- Most laptop computers are powerful enough to override the communications systems of any invading alien society
- All grocery shopping bags contain at least one stick of French bread
- You are likely to survive any battle in any war unless you make the mistake of showing someone the picture of your sweetheart
- A man will show no pain while taking the most terrific beating, but will wince when a woman tries to clean his wounds
- Don't worry if you are being chased through a city, you will usually be able to blend into a crowd of carnival revellers

".....trust me, I'm a doctor!" Oh yeah? These are some entries actually found in patients' medical charts:

- Patient has chest pain if she lies on her left side for over a year
- She has no rigors or shaking chills, but her husband states she was very hot in bed last night
- Discharge status: Alive, but without my permission
- Healthy appearing, decrepit 69 year old male, mentally alert but forgetful
- The patient has no previous history of suicides
- Between you and me, we ought to be able to get this lady pregnant
- I saw your patient today, who is still under our car for physical therapy
- The lab test indicated abnormal lover function
- Patient has two teenage children, but no other abnormalities

Letters to the Editor

ONE LETTER IS ALL IT TOOK

Mrs Bea Thomas (W/296829 Pte Bryce B ATS)
5 Newcombe Court, Beech Grove, Sale,
Cheshire M33 6RU

Dear Editor

After having a letter published in the "YOURS" magazine in an attempt to trace Jean Watson, ex WRAC, for my friend in Vancouver, I received two very kind letters from your readers. This led to me making a subscription and receiving my first copy of the "Lioness". It also led to me taking a phone call from Elizabeth Lapham who runs the WRAC Association meetings at your Stockport branch, with an invitation to join them. Family commitments have not allowed me to do this yet but I still hope to accept her kind invitation and look forward to doing so.

Though I have had no luck so far in tracing Jean, who lived in Buckhaven, Fife, when we were all together at GHQ MELF, FAYID, Egypt, and EPISKOPI, Cyprus, I sent on the "Lioness" to my friend Doreen in Vancouver. Our first copy contained a letter about a tragic accident that happened when a vehicle containing a team of hockey players were returning to Moascar after the match. Doreen, was a member of the FAYID team who played in that match. She said, it was something that had lived with her ever since. When seeing them off Doreen had remarked they would feel the cold with no covering over the rear of the vehicle. Of course, she attended the funeral with the other team members.

To be honest, I hadn't remembered Doreen played hockey for the Army! She was so blown away at reading this letter over there in Canada (where she has lived since the 1950's and has her first Great-grandchild there now), that she telephoned me here in Greater Manchester. We write regularly to each other and have met up twice in the past three years in Durham City when she has been over. At these times we were joined by Bobbie, who served with me in the ATS from 1944 to 1946, now we all exchange Calendars each Christmas.

Best wishes for 2004 to all your readers.

COPY DEADLINE

Articles for inclusion in the next edition of the *Lioness* must be received by

20th December 2004

THE GRAND REUNION BIRMINGHAM 2003 - A WARNING NOTE

Mrs S Prior, 26 Lea Road, Weymouth,
Dorset DT4 9HT

Dear Editor

I booked my reservation for accommodation and the extras - Dinner, supper, Coach Trip etc, all in plenty of time **BUT** I was taken ill on the Friday and ended up in Sandwell Hospital, Nil by Mouth for the weekend, so no Grand Dinner and no visitors. On requesting my expenses be refunded I was told I should have given a week's notice and it is too late now. I did lose 8lb in weight and one friend brought me a small box bearing the ATS badge and containing 3 small chocolates.

The warning is:- **TAKE OUT INSURANCE** if going to any ATS Reunion

Of course, the Association would have had to pay the University for the function in advance. We're glad you enjoyed your WRAC Association badged chocolates. Ed

Beryl Middleton (née Hayford)
14 Victoria Scott Court, Perry Street,
Dartford DA1 4SH

Dear Editor,

I wonder if any of Lioness's readers did their driver training at D & TC Horsley Hall, Gresford?



If so would they be curious to know what happened to the place? It was demolished in 1956. All types of uses since have been suggested, a gypsy camp site (vetoed) a prison or private housing. The site still stands empty. That is the way of the world. Such a shame, it was a beautiful place. I certainly remember many good times spent there as a DI, with friends such as Molly Gant, Joan Green and many more.

Cheers everyone!

**OLGA HERMIONE VIOLET MOSLEY MAYNE
OBE**

Peter Cousins, Chairman, Leicester & Rutland
Family History Society

13 Langthorpe, Wigston, Leicester LE18 2LP
<http://www.lrfhs.org.uk>

Dear Editor

I am writing to see if you could possibly help with an enquiry I have had regarding a former member of the ATS. I was wondering if it would be possible to put a piece in your magazine to see if anyone knows anything about Olga Hermione Violet Mosley Mayne, OBE who was a Chief Commander in the ATS when she died in 1942.

She is buried in a Commonwealth War Graves Commission grave at Great Glen in Leicestershire, and local people and members who have been transcribing and recording the graves have become intrigued about this high ranking officer and why she is buried in this Leicestershire cemetery.

Transcribed below is a copy of her CWGC details as recorded on their website.

"Casualty Details"

Name: MAYNE, OLGA HERMIONE
VIOLET MOSLEY
Initials: O H V M
Nationality: United Kingdom
Rank: Chief Commander
Regiment: Aux. Territorial Service
Date of Death: 29/07/1942
Service No: 192766
Awards: OBE
Additional Information: Daughter of Maj Mosley Mayne,
3rd Bombay Light Cavalry, and of
Anna Maria Mayne (née Wilkinson)
Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead
Cemetery: GREAT GLEN (ST. CUTHBERT)
CHURCHYARD"

Thanking you in anticipation of any help you can give us.

SGT ANNE GOUK ATS

Mr Douglas Abercrombie, 18 Eden Park,
Cupar, Fife, KY15 4HS

Dear Editor

I am an amateur historian, currently assisting "Dalwhinnie Community Council", Inverness-shire, with research into the local history of the village.

One unique episode being examined, is the visit of General B L Montgomery and staff, on board his special train "Rapier", in May 1944. This 4 night stay is recorded in Monty's diary and in some published works e.g. Nigel Hamilton's biography: "Master of the Battlefield".

It would appear, however, that on board the train were 3 ATS staff. The most senior appears to have been Sgt Anne Gouk, who may have belonged to Macduff, Banffshire, born 1908, died 1991.

I am anxious to collate more details of this lady, who was apparently Monty's Mess Steward, on board the train.

The Dalwhinnie Community Council hope to commemorate this visit – this year is the 60th anniversary. Eventually, it is hoped to erect a memorial cairn/plaque, interpretative boards and include in a village heritage trail.

However, although we have some details and photos, more information is needed. Can you assist?

I look forward to hearing from you. You can contact me at Home on 01334 656976, or my mobile 07929 147073, work 01382 313314 (direct dial) or e-mail Dougie5318@yahoo.co.uk

Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, walked barefoot most of the time, which produced an impressive set of calluses on his feet. He also ate very little, which made him rather frail and with his odd diet, he is said to have suffered from bad breath. Would that mean he was

A super callused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis?

SEARCHING FOR INNER PEACE

Lottie Tornsos, c/o Telford, Shropshire

Recently I read an article promising to help me find inner peace. I am passing this on to you because it has definitely worked for me. Now that the nights are beginning to close in, we look forward to winter and the hectic Christmas season, I think we could all use a little calm. The article read: "The way to achieve inner peace is to finish all the things you've started."

So I looked around to find all the things I had started and hadn't finished...and before leaving the house this afternoon I finished off 2 bottles of red wine, a bottle of white wine, the Bailey's, the Kahlua and Wild Turkey, the remains of a frozen Margarita, two valium, some lemon cheesecake and a half box of Milk Tray.

You have no idea how good I feel! The Inner Peace is awesome to say the least. And I needed that.

A SISTER'S VIEW – MISS CONSTANCE MARY SAVAGE MBE

Mrs Geraldine Ashby, 15 Long Acre,
Murton, Swansea SA3 3AX

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Dear Editor

I was told that you like to hear about members of the ATS/WRAC. I am the sister of Miss Constance Mary Savage. She was W/7436 and will be 90 on November 3. She is at "Roxton" Nursing Home, 154 Birmingham Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B72 1DH.

She was 29 years in the WRAC, 1 year in the Territorial's in 1938 then the rest of the time in the Regular Army. She was the 2nd Senior Regimental Sgt Major in the country. Her first posting was to Prestatyn in North Wales under the late Lady Whitten Brown. She served there and many places in England and Wales, the Central Ordnance Depot near Donnington, Nr Wellington, Shropshire. She was awarded the MBE for Merit, twice mentioned in Dispatches, and the first woman to receive the Meritorious Medal. She isn't too well at present. She also served in the Middle East for a good time and loved every moment serving under General Erskin, Major General Sir Brian Robertson and many others. She finished with the Army when Harold Wilson made all the old hands retire. Most were very unhappy. She finished in Birmingham Recruiting Office, setting exams for the new recruits. She was originally from Mumbles in Swansea and was interested in the Guides, the Church and was leader of the Brownies. She also met the King and Queen and the Princess Royal, the then leader of the ATS. After leaving the service she worked at Council House, Sutton Coldfield and was Assistant Housing Manager until her retirement.

Sadly, Miss Savage died on 26th June 2004. Ed.

WRAC BAND

Mrs L C Browne, 7 Old School Close, Pershore,
Worcs WR10 1RG

Dear Editor

I saw recently, on television, the end of the film 'Carry on Sergeant' and there was the WRAC Corps Band – caught for posterity on film. This galvanised me to search for an audio tape or CD of the Band and I found two 'Resolute' and 'Celebrations'. I found them both excellent and I would like to record my thanks for the pride and pleasure that the band gave me over the years. Doubtless many others feel the same. Thank you all ladies – you were the best.

The band was filmed at Whittington Barracks, Litchfield, Staffordshire. Ed

Mrs Muriel Webb (née Durn)
8 Partridge Close, Stonehouse, Glos GL10 2HJ

Dear Editor

My article was published in the last issue and was read by Mrs Gladys Webb (coincidentally the same name) who belongs to the Salisbury branch of the WRAC Association.

She contacted me and offered the information I was seeking and kindly set the wheels in motion for a long awaited visit to Bulford Camp. She asked Lt Col Val Trout where we could apply for permission for myself, my husband, sister and brother-in-law to visit the camp for a nostalgic tour.

After contacting Colonel Bateman, who incidentally lived at one time in the Stroud/Glos area he assigned Sgt Milner, one of his staff, for the task. The tour brought back so many memories for my sister and I, who both served with the 6th Airborne Division Southern Command during the war. The camp had obviously changed a great deal in the 60 years as you can imagine.

Then we went on to Larkhill. After a security check; my brother-in-law attained permission for another visit which was very interesting. After a delightful lunch at the Stonehenge Inn in Durrington it was time for an arranged visit to Gladys. She made us all very welcome with a refreshing cup of tea and her lovely homemade cake was a treat.

The time went so quickly as we had so much in common, finding wartime camaraderie still lives on. We have kept in touch and hope to see her again.

With Gladys' clear direction we made our way to Syrencot House which we remembered so well from our days as Telephonists when it was the busy Headquarters of the Airborne Division, who played a very big part in the D-Day Landings. We were fortunate enough to meet Mrs Fiona Sanders, who is now the owner and her dogs. She kindly asked us in for a cup of tea but unfortunately we had to decline as it had been a long day and time to head home.

What a wonderful day we all had and would like to repeat it again in the near future.

WRAC DINNER CLUB

IF YOU SERVED IN THE WRAC AND WOULD LIKE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET OTHER EX-WRAC MEMBERS SOCIALLY ON AN ANNUAL BASIS WHY NOT JOIN THE WRAC DINNER CLUB

FILL OUT THE APPLICATION FORM IN THE CENTRE PULL-OUT SECTION OR CONTACT
ANN DEAKIN ☎ (01785 249992)

Ruth Jennings, 1 Little Ash Gardens, Saltash
Passage, Plymouth, Devon PL5 1JZ

Dear Editor

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Over recent years there have been queries, and it was mentioned at the AGM this year, as to "Where are the WRAC ladies who are needed to take over in the Association as the ATS ladies are gradually fading away?". A few years ago I wrote in reply to the same question to say that most of us hadn't retired yet. Although I am happily retired and able to give more of my time and energy for the Association, many ladies are still working either in civilian jobs or in the Army.

Another factor is that many ladies are carers for elderly relatives, as indeed was I until recently, or are helping to care for grandchildren and do not feel able to commit to giving time to another cause.

In my capacity as Secretary to Plymouth branch I have had letters from three such ladies recently, either to say that they are, (a) still working, (b) still travelling with their husbands, or (c) working overseas, or indeed, even all three, as is the case with one of our ladies. All express the desire and intention to re-connect with our branch when they are able to do so.

In the meantime we intend to keep our branch up and running, with a newsletter going to all members twice a year. We have had two new ex-WRAC members join us recently so until the balance of gains versus losses improves we plan to continue as well as we can. It has been suggested that our new, unofficial, motto shall be "less work, more fun". Thus we hope to continue but possibly may have to "downsize" a little until we can regain our full momentum once more.

Why does mineral water that has "trickled through mountains for centuries" have a 'use by' date?

SEARCHING FOR COLLEAGUES OF DECEASED RELATIVE (ATS)

Karen Wells, Karen_wells_27@yahoo.co.uk

I would like to contact anyone who knew or served with my great-aunt, Private Daphne Vera 'Mickey' Redgrave, a dispatch rider in the ATS, who was stationed in Derby. She was killed in action on February 27 1945, aged 22, when her motorbike was in a collision with a Post Office van.

Later, a collection raised by her colleagues bought two cots for an infants' ward at the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary, where a plaque was also placed in her memory.

Many thanks.

Mrs A Castle, Stirling Branch
15 Clarendon Place, Stirling, FK8 2QW

Dear Editor

Having just received the latest edition of the *Lioness* as usual, our members were flabbergasted to read that we have 236 annual members. Oh but that it were true. Hope we don't have to send annual subscriptions for that number!

A typographical error I know, but I wonder what the other branches thought of our achievement?

Brenda Hannigan née Wallace
(W/418205 LCpl 1962-65)
19 Windermere Road, Padiham, Nr Burnley,
Lancs BB12 8PD

Dear Editor

I came across this piece in my local paper recently and I wonder if you would like to put it in the next *Lioness*:

***"Turn your face to the sun and let the
shadows fall behind you"***

Good advice for anyone who, whatever the reason, is feeling low.

Mavis A Cotton-Chard
(Sgt ATS Provost Section, Southern Command)
33 Osborne Close, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 5TR

Dear Editor

I am delighted to receive the "*Lioness*" No. 1 2004 today and I shall read it from cover to cover as it is so full of news. Although I have no photos of my own ATS provost Section, Southern Command I like to know what's going on in other areas. The Aldershot Branch long closed but I hope sometime to look in at the Chelmsford one as my grandson and family live in that area.

It's so great to know all those generous people keep our magazine going for the likes of me to sit in the comfort of my armchair to read it. I have all my back copies including the No. 1 1997 where I was interviewed by Imogen Corrigan such a lovely lady. The years have ticked by and I am pleased to say I will be 83 this coming 16 May and still stay active and people still say "she was a Sgt in the ATS during the war" and it makes me feel very proud.

Why is the person who handles your money called your "Broker"?

Where Are You Now?

DID YOU SERVE IN CATTERICK, CHESTER OR BAOR?

Mrs M R Stewart nee Tomlinson (W/371325)
6 School Lane, Walton on the Hill, Tadworth,
Surrey KT20 7SP

I served in the WRAC from 1951 – 1954 and then from 1955 to 1957 as a Clerk. I served in Catterick, Chester and BAOR. I enjoyed the life and took part in sport and unit activities.

I wondered if I could contact any women who were in at the same time, I remember Margaret Milturs, Mabel Renney and Phyllis Retallack married name Gorman.

I am enclosing a recent photograph.



MYSTERY GIRL

Mr Stuart Murdoch, 39 Earl Rise, Castle Grange,
Dundonald, Ayrshire KA2 9JJ
Telephone Number 01563 851448
E-mail: smcornriggs@aol.com

My uncle, David B Murdoch, was killed in November 1942 (aged 20) whilst serving with the Parachute Regiment in Tunisia, North Africa. I possess a photograph of my father, John L Murdoch, with a young lady who was my uncle David's girlfriend. She had visited David's parents in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire (probably early in 1943) in order to offer her sympathy after receiving the news of his death. I don't know her name or where she came from, but Martin Boswell of the Imperial War Museum was able to inform me that she is wearing the uniform of the ATS and displaying the badge of the Royal Regiment of Artillery above her left breast pocket in the photograph. In addition, Mr Boswell advised me that, as he is wearing the white lanyard and Royal Artillery badge this suggest that she belonged to an anti-aircraft unit.



My uncle David underwent Parachute Regiment training at RAF Bulford, near Salisbury, in the summer of 1942. Based on the information provided by Mr Boswell, I wonder whether he met the lady in the photograph at this location whilst she was stationed with an anti-aircraft unit.

If the lady is still alive, I reckon that she will be approximately 80 years old. I would dearly like to trace her if at all possible, or at least someone who knew her. As I don't know her name, I understand that trying to identify her over 60 years after the photograph was taken is a bit of a long shot (to say the least!), however I wonder if your readers can help?

If anyone does recognise her, I'd be obliged if they could contact me at the above.

60's 16er's

Lorraine Moore nee Torrie, Membership Secretary, 60s-16ers, 28 Fore Street, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 8AZ
Email Lorrainew@28fs.fsnet.co.uk

Produced below is a photograph of ex-WRAC who served with 16 Signal Regiment.

We are part of the '60s-16ers' an association for ALL ranks and trades, who served with the regiment through the 1960s into the early 70s. This will include all of the outposts such as Bielefeld and JHQ/Rheindahlen.

Every year we have a reunion which is held anywhere in the country. This photograph was taken at our 2003 reunion held in Torquay. This year we are all making the journey to Loch Lomond and we have been promised a very warm Scottish welcome.

As membership secretary I am responsible for locating all ex-WRAC who are entitled to become one of a smashing

group of women who have a really good time at these reunions – and hey, we are outnumbered by the Signalmen at the moment, so come on girls let's show them! I have a database with 74 WRAC contacts, but I want to make it up with a whole lot more!

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Some of us have had a bit of a 'brain-storming' session and have come up with quite a list of names that we remember from our time at 16 Signal Regiment. They are:

Gill Chamberlain, Beryl Jackson, Sue Riley, Liz Fordyce, Sandy Deakin, Pip Kelly (PTI), Esther Lughran, Lynnette Williams, Di Winters (PTI), Maggie Butler, Capt Pat Crowe, Ali Graves, 'Basil', Jan Roberts, Bev Robb, Elaine Willasy, Helen Chapman, Cass Elliott, Carol Dunn, Jane Turkell, June Hawkshead, Kathy Nixon, Babs Greaves, Pat Grimes, Ike Cameron, Sue Underwood, Roz Proudfoot, Aileen Henderson, Aileen Jones (Switchboard), Lyn Summers, Diane Bradley, Colette McCabe, Gwen Myserscroft, Marie Nelson, Babs Knipe, Corrine Harrison (Medic), Jackie Singh, Sandy Buckley, Anne Campbell, Lynn Lettuce, Sheila Ryan, Joy Hussey, Tann Edwards, Judy Rolfe, Nicky Caplin, Madge Exelby, Pat McNamara, Pauline Weatherall, Jackie Shaunessy, Pat Tickle, Pam Vickerstaff.

So where are you girls? I hope to hear from all of you out there.



(Please note these are maiden names)

Back row l-r: Sandy Hanna, Noreen Byrne, Jenny Sing, Pat Merchant, Jackie Warhurst, Bridget Smith, Carol (Liz) Morris, Joe Watts, Laurie Torrie, Joy Sancto, Rae Stewart, Marlene Coulter, Ann Fossett, Rita Priddle (NAAFI)
Front row l-r: Evelyn Terry, Ann Uprichard, Evelyn Berty, Gwen Smith, Hazel Crockett, Audrey Bradbrook, Sue Gallantree. Absent from the picture Carrie Wilson

DO YOU KNOW ANN (JACKIE) POVEY?

Mrs Sandra Steadman, née White (W/389465 Pte)
 29 Ash Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8RM

I am writing to you in the vain hope that, if you print the enclosed picture, someone will recognise it, or recognise the groom, or his regiment.

I have been trying for about eight years now, to find my ex-WRAC pal, Ann (Jackie) Povey. She worked in A Coy, Stores, 12 Battalion WRAC, Richmond Park, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey in the mid fifties.



She was still there when I left in 1957 to go to Singapore. I saw Jackie in 1959, when she came to Bristol for my 21st birthday party, and again when she was married and living at Aldershot.

I have tried every venue I can think of, with no success whatsoever.

Please someone, help me!!!!!!

JOYCE ROBSON

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

For several years I have been trying to trace ex-ATS colleague Joyce Robson. I was in the RAPC stationed with 11 Command Pay Office in Singapore 1945/6, and Joyce joined our section during the latter part of 1946. Due to my sudden repatriation to UK in November 1946 we lost contact and I have been unable to trace her through available channels. I am sure that some of your readers will remember Joyce, and hopefully able to give me details of her whereabouts now. It would be lovely to renew our acquaintance again, and any information will be much appreciated. Thankyou.

You can telephone me on 01788 551846 (Gordon Richards)

ARE YOU MRS ANN GOULD?

Mr R F Jones, 54 Withybed Lane, Alvechurch,
 Worcs B48 7PJ

I am looking for my friend Mrs Ann Gould and wondered through the pages of your magazine if anyone could help. I have few details to hand but I know Ann trained at Chilwell Beeston about 1942, and was posted to Stafford where she served until being Discharged in 1945.

I would be grateful for any information. Thankyou.

**Mr T Tart, Marnay Old Office Road, Dawley,
Telford, Shropshire TF4 2LF**

Gunner Tom Tart, on the right, would like to hear from anyone on this photo, taken at 50th Anti Tank, RA, The Malthouse, Chalfont St Giles in 1941/2



Names known are, 1st left Pte Booker, 3rd left Sgt Gray

OLWEN JOAN DAVIES

Moir Dadd, 30 Winifred Road, Waterlooville,
Hampshire PO7 7TD



Olwen Joan Davies

I would be most grateful for any information from anyone who might have met or known my mother.

Her name was Olwen Joan Davies, only ever known as Joan. She had Welsh connections on her father's side, but was born in London and attended the Godolphin and Latymer School (I believe in Hammersmith). Her date of birth was 5 December 1920.

We believe that she was a specially trained 'Y' Operator, trained in Douglas, Isle of Man, but I have no idea where she was posted after that. After the war, she married and settled in Harrow, Middlesex until her tragic death in 1954. It would mean such a lot to my sister and I if you could give us any information.

Thank you.

**Mrs Mabel Bolton, 17 Broadway Court, Broadway,
West Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 2NZ**

I've been on a recent visit to Vancouver to see an ATS friend. We met in Radnor Place in London in 1945 when she had returned from Egypt and I from Antwerp. Her name is Mary E Selly and her number is W/4616. This low number is because she joined in 1938 in the 11th County of London Company. In 1942, she went as Sgt to RAOC Coy 505 No. 5 BOD...Here she looked after Palestinian ATS girls at a Supply Base.

Mary has been very ill since early 2003 but has recovered sufficiently to enjoy our short holiday, helped very much by the kindness of mutual friends. I hope some of the photographs will be usable so that if there are any of her ex-ATS friends at this late stage still out there please do contact me.

I am ex-Sgt Mabel Dee of 155/525 (M) AA Bty RA and apart from having had and still have contact with some of our G L (Radar) girls there has been little response from any others. Where did they all go!

Anyone can reply to me at the above address.





l-r: Pam Brown (now in Perth, Australia), ???, Ruby from N.I., Yours Truly, Gloria Mortimer from Charton-cum-Hardy.

DO YOU RECOGNISE YOURSELF?

Madge Evans, 15 Laburnum Grove, Luton,
Beds LU3 2DW

This photograph was taken at the Drivers' and Clerks' Training Centre, at Horsley Hall, Gresford, in North Wales late 1950, early 1951. I recognise a few people and have included the information above. I would love to hear from or have any information about anyone else in the photo.

WERE YOU IN THE ORIGINAL 1ST SUFFOLK ATS

Submitted by Norfolk/Suffolk Branch

Mrs Victoria Johnson (née Balme) would like to know if anyone was in the original 1st Suffolk ATS who were sent to Shoeburyness EXP Garrison "The Day War Broke Out"? Vicky was – and says that her mother got a shock as she didn't even know that her daughter was in the Army? Later on Vicky was a cook with the 23rd Scottish General Hospital just outside Lille, moving up to Germany at the end of the war.

Are there any old friends out there? Vicky lives in Norwich and her 'phone number is 01603 435050.

This is me, Lance Corporal 'Chris'; Horwood.

I was stationed at various places along the East Coast with 518, 483 and 484 HAA Batteries. In 1945 I was posted with 484 Battery to a site near Kampenhout in Belgium and later to Bad Salzungen in Germany.

I would love to hear from anyone who recognises themselves from the photographs

Also does anyone know of Peggy Clarke (she lived in Lisson Grove, London). We were great friends in Bad Salzungen in 1945-46. Also my very good friend Eileen McGowan posted to the Dog Training School in Paderborn?



Where are you all? I am now Mrs Rosina (still 'Chris') George and I look forward to getting telephone calls on 0208 4651 5548.



Those in front of the gun are Nina Benson, Iva Connolly and Wilma Quin who is standing next to myself.



Group Photo. Do you recognise yourself?

Mr Eric Flack, 70 Crawford Drive, Drumchapel, Glasgow G15 6TR

I am seeking to identify any of the "girls" in the enclosed photograph which was taken at Garscadden Mains Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Drumchapel near Bearsden, Glasgow in about September 1941. I do know the identity of the man in the hut doorway is Lt Frank Beard. I understand that this was one of the very first mixed Royal Artillery units serving on a Heavy AA Battery. The white RA lanyard, shoulder flashes and predominantly male uniforms support this statement. Only women serving on heavy Ack Ack sites were allowed to wear trousers. Interestingly I have a number of aerial photos of the

gunsite including a German reconnaissance one dating from October 1939.

I am currently seeking more information, anecdotes etc from anyone who served at this gunsite with the intention of publishing a book on life in this camp.

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We do know that most of the women who served in this camp came from the South of England and found the Scottish Winter of 1941/42 very severe and traditional customs like New Year rather strange!



I am Mrs Joan M Jones nee Gomershall. The picture was taken in May 1942 on Dinedor Hill, behind the barracks at Hereford at the farewell picnic after we passed out as drivers. I am on the far right, bottom row. If anyone remembers me please contact me at 2 Wellesley Way, Churchinford, Somerset TA3 7RB.



Weddings

DIAMOND WEDDING

HALL - GREEN

Sub Lieutenant (A) Edgar Hall RNVR (now Major (Retd)) to Lance Corporal Eve Green, ATS at St Nathaniel's Church, Bristol, 27 May 1944

DIAMOND WEDDING

HOLDER - LEWIS



"The Day" taken with a Brownie Box Camera

Leading Signaller Ken Holder RN to Gunner Beryl (aka Betty) Lewis, ATS at Norwich Register Office, Saturday 24 June 1944.



Happy Couple Sixty Years On

DIAMOND WEDDING

DEBBAGE - PHILLIPS

Water Debbage and Elsie Phillips were married at St Alphage's Church, Hendon, Middlesex, on 9 April 1944.

They met when they were both serving in 469 Battery, 132 London Regiment, in Enfield. Walter was the shoe repairer and Elsie was on the gun site as a spotter, predictor, 60 years later they celebrated their Diamond Wedding in Norwich with a party at which all the family were present.



Wedding Day

A telegram arrived from the Queen to mark their special day. Three of Elsie's four bridesmaids, her husband's sisters, were present at the party but sadly Elsie has never been able to contact the fourth, her great friend Maisie Meldrum. As you will see, they had a very splendid guard of honour from their supporters. Elsie recalls that an air raid was in progress at the time of the wedding ceremony!

Elsie is proud to be known as a Londoner, and Walter equally proud to have been Norwich born and bred.

Elsie is a strong supporter of the Norfolk and Suffolk Branch and regularly attends their meetings.



The Happy Couple Celebrating

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HEMMINGS

Marie (WRAC) and John (RAMC) married on the 3rd June 1954 at St Augustines Church, Preston. They now live in Blackpool.

Poems

A PRIVATE'S PRAYER

Author Unknown

Submitted by Mrs J M Knight (née W/406423 Knight)

The Army is my Shepherd
I shall not desert
It leadeth me past the empty cookhouse
It taketh away my forty eight
Yea! Though I walk past the office of the RSM
I will feel no reprieve, for the Sergeant is with me
Her voice does not comfort me
She prepareth my soul for a court martial
in the presence of the officers
She anointeth my hands with pay reductions
and my credits runneth low
Surely the Army shall follow me all the days of my life
and I will dwell in a Barrack Room forever.

Anon

A selection of poems submitted by Mrs Joan Deakin (W/50577 Private J M Pugh) in memory of her friend W/16562 Sgt Anne Williams ATS (Mrs Anne Sabourin) who served between 1939 and 1947 and sadly died 23 October 2003

In 1938 we treated Nazis as our friends
We unsuspecting British didn't think to look for trends
Of warfare where we certainly never thought to find it.
We were much too fond of peace, and quite content at home to sit
Hoping that such dreadful things as war would never touch us.
So when the Nazis showed their claws at last we made a fuss,
Proclaiming loudly of their sins; decrying them as evil;
Saying that their actions must come from the devil.

And in the years of 1939 to '45
We thanked God every day because we were alive.
For during those six years of war death rained down from the skies
And far away, in lands unknown, our boys were killed like flies.
Others taken prisoner, or badly maimed for life.
Wasn't it the Nazis who had caused us all that strife?
Can it ever be forgotten? Can we forget their many crimes?
I pray that Britons won't forget; maybe there'll come a time

(Through teaching them right ways to live) when they
will see
That wars will never give to them superiority.

Until they've learned their lesson anyone who wants to
be **PDF Compressor Free Version**
Other than a victor to a Nazi family
Has never realised the great extent of suffering
That fascist teachings taught them to unleash on
human beings.
If we too soon forget the troubles caused all over the
world
Those same flags of evil will again become unfurled.

Mrs Anne Sabourin

It came as quite a shock to me
When told that you were leaving.
I didn't grasp what it really meant
My mind just went on weaving
Fanciful thoughts of what we'd do
Next week – maybe the week after.
Of how we'd fill all our free hours so full of love and
laughter.
And then I suddenly seemed to see
My dreams fade into the blue.
And all at once I knew I'd spend
No more happy hours with you.
Oh! Why did this have to happen to us?
Why couldn't they leave us alone?
I'd give all that I have to be sure of having
You always – just for my own
Mrs Anne Sabourin
Japan has fallen! Now at last
We'll have our peace. But not so fast.
Many things must still be done
Before the peace is really won.
But still that evil nation now
Is crawling – and before us bow!
They beg for mercy, once denied
To our dear boys, who out there died.
Charles was there. He too is dead
A foreign field his permanent bed.
No wonder I'm so bitter now
And can't forget, no matter how
I try. Things aren't the same
Without him. His dear name
Appears before my very eyes.
Not his alone – I must agree
There's many others. Now we must see
That such things happen not again
That on this earth true peace will reign.

Mrs Anne Sabourin

ATS AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE WORLD WAR II

ATS oh! ATS such memories we can share
Once trained we were on duty, no time to stand and
stare

We were attached to Southern Command Ack-Ack
Those who protected our towns from air attack
In a gunnery operations room we worked at night
For we were ATS Plotters that was our plight
Such companionable ladies assembled in our crew
Vera Taylor, Jean Wilkinson, Ethel Moreton, but a few
How great it would be to hear from them now
Surnames changed, of course, I vow
And now in this fast moving age other memories we
can still share

So let's give three cheers for the khaki-clad girls
The ATS – all of whom were there!

Mrs Edna D Thomas

The following poem was in a notebook belonging to
W/54756 Pte Chadwick J P, ATS (married name Josie
Barker). Josie has sadly died but she served in the Ack-
Ack. The notebook includes notes taken at lectures on
Holmes Colour Theory: Stippling: Painting: Gas and how
it is made, and the Bi-products of coalgas: Electricity:
Soldering: Water Filtration: Household tools and the uses
of saws: Wallpapering and Distemping. *If anyone
reading this can throw any light on this interesting
document please contact Chelmsford Branch Tel: 01245
251088 to whom the notebook has been sent by Josie's
daughter who lives in Devon.*

Other items included a cardboard shield autographed by
the Ack-Ack Detachment she belonged to and this has
been sent to Worthy Down for the AGC Museum.

This poem was written by members of her detachment of
ATS and includes a poem by a Miss Wilson, who may
have been a senior NCO or Officer?

"Now friends if you'll listen I'll sing you a song
Of the Gun girls at Bude and of their "goings on".
They don't have to type and they don't have to work,
But they learn about Kines from a War Office Book
They started near Tenby at the S.A.A. D,
Where they studied mathematics and photo-graph-y.
But now that they've left there they're happy to be
At the Gun Park of Bude – overlooking the sea.

They don't fire torpedoes or lay fields of mines,
But they do all their work far behind the front lines.
Their work is important as Jerry knows well,
For he's made several efforts to blow them to Hell!

They went down to Bournemouth to help ADME,
And of course they took with them their beloved Kin-e,
Yet as long as they stayed there they were wishing to
be
At the Gun Park at Bude, overlooking the sea.

'Tis due to their efforts that Gunners may tell,
How long or how short is the fuse of each shell?
How high is the target that's towed thro' the skys?
And the cause of short misses – for Kines do not lie.
For zeal and for talent they soon won a name,
And Pathetone News Reel has shot them to fame.

But for all this fine glory they'd much rather be
At the gun Park at Bude, overlooking the sea.

This alphabet rhyme was also composed by Miss Wilson.

A is for Adjutant – man of great tact
B is for Brigadier who's got them all whacked
C is for camp where they do all their work,
D is for duty that they never shirk.
E is for engineers – and Mr. Hughes,
F is for mending the lights that we fuse
G is for gunners we're happy to serve and give them the
praise they so richly deserve
H is for Horace who spots all Jerries
I is for I.G.'s who know about sperries
J is for Company (ATS) who are smart
K is for the kittens we never shall hurt
L is for Linesmen who dig lots of holes – and hangs bits

of wire on telegraph poles!
M is for M.O. who tends all our ills
N is for nurses who dole out the pills
O is for Orders that we always read
P is for P.A.D. we hope we won't need
Q is for Queen Bee – the shots never reach!
R is for rounds that go into the breach
S is for sentry with challenge so bold
T is for Tiffy whose time is like gold
U is for uniform issued by Q
W is for wishes, warm and sincere –and
Y is a Happy and Prosperous New Year
(Z is just something that won't fit in here!)

Chorus - Oh! merry, Oh! merry Oh! merry our song
Way up at Cleave where the shooting goes on
Sing high, sing low, we'll never get tired
We'll stick to our guns till the last round is fired

Obituaries – their final salute

JANICE ROBINSON
12th January 1942 – 22nd April 2004



Janice Robinson (née Cobbett) who served from August 1960 to July 1965 and then as a Retired Officer from June 1983 to April 1992

Janice was just 18 years of age when she was commissioned into the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1960, thus beginning over 40 years of dedicated service to the Corps.

Her first posting was to the Central Ammunition Depot at Kineton in Warwickshire as a platoon officer responsible for the welfare of all the WRAC servicewomen who were employed there. A fellow WRAC officer who was serving at Kineton at this time remembers Janice's exuberance – "she was full of life and always out to parties!" From Kineton, Janice moved to HQ Eastern Command at Hounslow as the MT Officer and it was here, in 1964, that she first met Desmond, a serving Royal Naval Officer. Her third and final appointment was as staff captain

"Quartering" in HQ Cyprus, which is where her natural flair for staff work really came to the fore. Her marriage to Desmond in 1965 meant that although she had to leave the Army, she continued "to follow the flag" (or perhaps I should say "the White Ensign") with Desmond.

Fortunately for us, Janice kept her ties with the WRAC after her marriage – becoming a life member of the Association in 1965 and a founder member of the Greater London Branch in 1971. She was a staunch member of this Branch as well as being both Secretary (from '73 – '76) and Chairman (from '81-'84). Subsequent Chairmen and Secretaries all said that Janice was an extremely hard act to follow! In January 2003, Janice was elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the WRAC Association Council – an appointment which she was thrilled to accept. During this period, Janice was the linchpin between the National Army Museum and the curator of the new AGC Museum – ensuring that important ATS and WRAC artefacts and archives were correctly and accurately presented. Very sadly for us, Janice was not able to complete her tenure on Council and we will be the poorer for it.

But it was for her nine years in the WRAC Directorate, where she served as a Retired Officer from 1983 to 1992, that she will be best remembered. She played a pivotal role in that organisation, loyally serving 3 Directors and making a significant contribution to the Corps. Janice was a born researcher and historian with a keen analytical mind; she was widely read, extremely knowledgeable on a variety of subjects and a real expert on the ATS and WRAC. If anyone wanted to know anything about the history of Women in the Army, it was always the same reply "Ask Janice". Now we can't ask Janice and sadly this wealth of knowledge has gone with her. One of her significant achievements in this appointment was to produce and edit "The Corps Today", a publication with news and policy issues about life in the WRAC. Complete sets are now held in the Public Records Office and the National Army Museum, thanks to Janice's foresight when the Corps disbanded.

Janice was the mainstay of the WRAC Directorate throughout those nine years and was highly respected; I was privileged to serve with her there for two of them. She was totally dependable, painstaking in her duties, always fluent and measured in her responses whether written or spoken. **PDF Compressor! Free Version** communicate at all levels. Janice was worldly wise with strong principles, high standards and a great sense of humour and fun. She was always good company and never failed to amuse us with her many anecdotes and stories. Above all, she was a staunch friend and there are many of us who will recall her generosity, thoughtfulness and kindness. She was a great one for keeping in touch and could always be relied upon to ring Association HQ if one of our members' obituaries appeared in 'The Daily Telegraph' – just to make sure that we knew! It was a great tragedy therefore to see Janice's obituary there so prematurely.

Janice's legacy and memory will certainly live on within the WRAC Association. She was an outstanding officer and a very special person – but above all, Janice was a great contributor; she was a woman with a huge personality, enormous energy, warmth and generosity who touched many peoples' lives. The WRAC Corps motto is "Sauviter in Modo, Fortiter in Re" – "Gentle in Manner, Resolute in Deed" – I can't think of a better or more fitting Epitaph for Janice.

Lt Col Sue Westlake

MRS JEAN SIMPSON (née Innes)

It is with great sadness that I write to tell you of the death of Mrs Jean Simpson (Innes) who lost her fight against Cancer. Her last outing was to the AGM at Birmingham, and from then on it has been horrible for her.

Jean was one of our longstanding members. The first meeting she unfortunately missed was after her illness started. Jean also loved the WRAC Association branch meetings and our weekends at York.

Jean served in 478 (M/HAA Bty) 161 Regt from 1942 – 1946 covering all coasts from Lowestoft to very near Lands End and Hastings I recall. Being part of a relief Bty she was always on the move, all those young girls were very brave as they were always in the middle of air raids.

We all miss not only a good member, a very special friend who with her cheery smile always had time to listen to you, everyone always felt better after talking to her.

Mrs Jessie Stewart, Aberdeen Branch

ETHEL ANN WILKIE

Ethel Ann Wilkie was born in Deal, Kent in 1926 and was evacuated during the Second World War. She returned to her family in Deal after the war and made her first career decision by joining the Police Force, being stationed for a time in Sandwich, Kent.

Her sister Eden had been a member of the ATS Band during the war and after the WRAC was formed in 1949, Ethel, already accomplished on the flute, piano and violin,

joined Eden in the Corps Staff Band. She was the second recipient of the Mary Naomi Wallace Bronze Memorial Medal in 1953, which was instituted by William Graham Wallace, a member of the Worshipful company of Musicians, in memory of his dear daughter and is awarded to the best female instrumentalist of the year by the former WRAC Staff Band. Their names are inscribed on a roll of honour in the Museum at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. Ethel possessed a strong sense of the importance of technical skill and musical responsibility. She was the first female Band Sgt Major in the rank of WOII to be appointed.

In 1956 however, she re-mustered to a Clerk GD in the rank of Sgt and was posted to HQ BAOR Rheindahlen for a two year tour. In 1958 Ethel decided to leave the Service and as music remained an extremely important part of her life, she joined the Westminster Choral Society as a singer and a violinist; this happy relationship lasted for 25 years. Latterly, she joined both the Slater and the Sutton Symphony Orchestras and became an indispensable part of the musical life of Sutton. Ethel also found time to run very successful musical ensembles and quartets. She also conducted classes run by the local council for retired people's homes.

Before the Corps disbanded in 1992, Ethel joined 96 other musicians of the Corps Staff Band and the Band 'family' to present a Farewell concert on the 21 March at the Civic Centre, Guildford, and played in the flute section. Her talents as a flautist, violinist, conductor and musical director were well recognised. We will best remember Ethel who died on the 20 March as a kind person who went out of her way to advise and help anyone to solve a problem and who had a terrific sense of humour. We will miss our friend; a light has gone out of our lives.

Lynette Hopkin – Band
Joan Ahrens – Gtr London Branch

SERGEANT AGNES BANFORD, WRAC WHO DIED AT HER HOME ON THE 21ST JANUARY 2004



On a crisp sunny day in January, with snow lingering on the grassy banks around Glasgow cemetery, Colonel Nan Robertson and Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake joined many members of the Glasgow branch, family, and friends, to bid a sad farewell to Agnes Banford, who had lost her long and painful battle with cancer. Agnes Banford, who had lost her long and painful battle with cancer, died on the 10th of November 2002, in 1952, when she joined The Women's Royal Army Corps, Agnes never wavered in her devotion to the army, serving in many branches, as Storewoman, Clerk, and Pay Clerk, before taking on the post of Recruiter, in 1969, in the Glasgow Army Careers Office, responsible for Recruiting in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. As one of the many unsung heroes of Recruiting, she was involved in the life of her city, earning the respect of, among others, local Regiments, and City departments of Police, Parks and Social Services. She was a stalwart member of the office, taking part in countless Army Recruiting shows, and WRAC Association events. On her retirement from the WRAC, with customary *sang-froid*, she merely side-stepped, as a civilian, into another career, with the Lowland TAVR, serving, for another ten years in Administration and the Quartermaster's Department. Here, as before, she became an invaluable member of the team, meeting the numerous everyday crises, with her usual unruffled and good-humoured nature. Regarded with deep respect and affection by her peers and superior Officers, she was unfailingly kind, and her passion for driving, made her a generous and considerate host to many visiting Officers, whom she drove throughout the length and breadth of Scotland. Retiring, finally, in 1996, she was able to devote more time to her family, and to the Glasgow Branch of the Association, responding, willingly, to calls for fund raising, event organising, and visits to sick members. She rarely missed a meeting, despite her suffering over the last two years, and, with her sense of fun, Agnes 'loved a laugh', she was indispensable at any Reunion; her last, the Christmas lunch at The Grosvenor Hotel, in Glasgow, attended by dozens of members, was a very happy occasion, and one, where her cheerfulness and courage will be remembered, by us all. She will be greatly missed.

WO1, MILDRED EMMA NORCOTT ATS/WRAC 1939 - 1961

Mildred Emma Norcott was born 15 June 1910 in Slough, Berkshire. Miss Norcott enlisted in the ATS on the 16 November 1938 and by July 1939 she had been promoted to Corporal. In December 1939 she was posted to Aldermaston where she trained recruits. By the time she left Aldermaston in 1940 she had been promoted to Sergeant. Miss Norcott also played the Base Drum in the ATS Band.

During the war Miss Norcott was stationed at Newton, near Edinburgh and the Isle of Man. By the time war ended in 1945 she had been promoted to Acting Staff Sergeant Major.

On the 1 February 1949 Miss Norcott transferred to the WRAC and enjoyed postings in Egypt and Cyprus as a Company Sergeant Major. Following promotion to Warrant Officer Class 1 she continued her service at Didcot and Bicester. She was awarded the Defence Medal; the War Medal; the Territorial Efficiency Medal and Bar; and the Coronation 1953 Medal.

In 1954 Miss Norcott was posted to WRACTA at Stafford, as a Regular NCO. After serving nearly 23 years she was discharged from the Army on 5 September 1961. Miss Norcott decided to remain in Stafford working for the TA. She formed the Stafford Branch of the Association in April 1965 and was known to the members as Dilly.

Dilly died peacefully on the 30 May 2003 at Brookside Nursing Home, Stafford.

Thanks to Dilly, and all the founder members, the Stafford Branch celebrated their 39th Anniversary on the 21 April 2003 with lunch at Earl's Restaurant.

Daphne Jervis TD

CICELY ELIZABETH CUNDY-COOPER, NÉE KERSHAW 04 December 1910 - 19 August 2003



Four members of London branch attended a Service of Thanksgiving of the life of Mrs Cundy-Cooper in The Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks 6th December 2003.

Elizabeth joined up in 1938. She was called up in 1939 in Slough as CSM. She was commissioned in 1940 and was posted to Ashworth MT Coy and then to Colchester. As Junior Commander i/c Draft to Egypt in December 1942 she sailed on the Queen Mary to Suez and in January 1943 to Kantara. In 1944 she was Senior Commander and in March went to Sarafand. The last 6 months of the war i/c of SSAFA for the Middle East. Posted home in 1945 and demobbed. Joined the WRAC Association in 1945 at their London Branch. What a career!

Elizabeth was a staunch member of the London branch and I am sure nobody there realised her age. She was a very sprightly lady up to the end. She will be missed very much for her enthusiasm and generosity to the Association, and the pleasure of her company at meetings.

ALFORD Mrs Mary Elizabeth Alford, née Williams, of Lamberhurst on 16 September 2003. ATS

AMOS Mrs Marion Amos, née Richardson, of Thornhill on 3 April 2004. ATS

ARTHUR Miss Beatrice Imrie Arthur of Perth on 8 May 2004. ATS/WRAC

ASH Mrs May Ash of Glasgow on 7 April 2004. ATS

BACKLOG Mrs Florence May Backlog, née Hargreaves, of Birchington-on-Sea. ATS

BAILEY Mrs Mary Bailey, née Goodison, of Stockport on 25 April 2004. ATS

BANFORD Miss A M Banford of East Kilbride on 21 January 2004. WRAC

BARSBY Miss Constance Annie Barsby of Shipley on 30 March 2004. ATS

BEARD Ms Joan Beard BEM of Birmingham on 5 April 2004. ATS/WRAC

BERRY Mrs M Berry, née Graham, of Manchester in 1993. ATS

BIEGLER Miss Laura Biegler of London on 14 April 2004. ATS

BLAKE Mrs Marie Teresa Blake, née Cockcroft, of Wembley on 10 December 2003. ATS

BRAMWELL Mrs Ivy Bramwell, née Jenkins, of Dorchester on 16 April 2004. ATS

BROOME Mrs Netta Broome, née Steel, of Glasgow on 30 March 2004. ATS

BURLING Mrs Fernella (Fern) Burling, née Howard, of Worthing on 10 December 2003. ATS

CAFFELL Mrs Doris Irene Caffell, née Birch More, of Cobham on 26 May 2001. ATS

CARR Mrs Isabel Carr of Doncaster. ATS

CARROLL Mrs Irene Carroll, née Mcall, of Shiremoor on 22 May 2004. ATS

CHALMERS Mrs Cynthia Chalmers, née Field, of Fife on 6 January 2004. ATS

CLEMENT Mrs Margaret Jean Clement, née Niven, of Eastbourne on 19 February 2004. ATS

COLLYER Mrs Jean Collyer of Sutton in May 2004. ATS

COLVILLE Lady Meg (Margaret) Colville, née Egerton, in 2004. ATS

CORBETT Miss Nora Corbett of Parkstone, on 2 May 2004. ATS

COUPAR Mrs Beryl Coupar of Great Yarmouth, on 5 March 2004. ATS

CUNNINGHAM Miss Doreen Cunningham of Southend, on 2 November 2003. ATS

DARNTON Mrs Elizabeth Blanche Darnton, née Kelly, of Mansfield on 9 May 2004. ATS

DAVIES Mrs Dorothy Mabel Davies, née Mansfield, of Reading in 2002. ATS

DAVEY Mrs Joan Margaret Davey, née Cranford, of Whitstable in January 2004. ATS

DENNE Mrs Joyce Denne of Canterbury, on 18 December 2003. ATS

DONALDSON Mrs Elizabeth (Beth) Donaldson, née Paul, of Belfast on 19 December 2003. ATS

DORRELL Miss Marjorie C Dorrell of Darsham, on 14 January 2004. ATS

FARR Mrs Dorothy Farr, née Faynes, of Ilford on 15 January 2004. ATS

FYFE Mrs Katherine Jean Fyfe, née Murray, of Peebles on 26 April 2004. ATS

GLADSTONE Miss Violet Gladstone of Gateshead on 12 February 2004. ATS

GLAZE Miss Helen Joan Glaze of Lymington. ATS

GREIG Mrs Edith (Pat) Greig, née McCool, of Glasgow on 21 December 2003. ATS

GRIBBEN Mrs Ruth Joan Gribben of Plymouth on 15 January 2004. ATS

HAMILTON Mrs Janet Rutherford Hamilton, née Simpson, of Inverness on 8 March 2004. ATS

HOCKING Mrs Margaret Hocking, née Loynes, of Dorset on 3 November 2003. ATS

HOLMES Mrs E B J Holmes, née Cheevers, of St Leonards on 26 February 2004. ATS

HORSLEY Mrs Mary Helen Horsley, née Hutton, of Woodford Green. ATS

INGRAM Miss Kathleen Ingram of Westbury in 1999. ATS

JELLEY Mrs Joan Jelley, née Park, of Portsmouth on 15 May 2004. ATS

KERRIDGE Mrs Kathleen Mary Kerridge, née Townsend, of Nottingham. ATS

LUMSDEN Mrs Alice Lumsden, née Glover, of Perth in March 2004. ATS

LUNNISS Mrs Joyce Lunniss on 1 April 2004. ATS

McKNIGHT Mrs Eileen McKnight of Stockport on 17 January 2004. ATS

McKNIGHT Mrs M McKnight of Glasgow on 16 October 2003. ATS

MADILL Mrs Doris E Madill, née Plourde, of Toronto on 27 March 2004. ATS

MAKEMSON Mrs Sylvia Makemson, née Benson, of Dinas Powis on 18 December 2003. ATS

MARSHALL Mrs Vivian Marshall of Potters Bar. ATS

MICKLEBOROUGH Mrs Betty Mickleborough, née Ashford, of Hoveton. ATS

MORGAN Mrs Irene Morgan, née Evans, of Swansea on 29 November 2003. ATS

MORGAN Mrs Joyce Louise Morgan of St Leonards on Sea on 21 November 2003. ATS

MORLEY Mrs Patricia Jean Morley, née Martin, of Northampton in December 2003. ATS

MURPHY Mrs Grace Constance Murphy, née Adams, of Ipswich on 5 March 2004. ATS

NEAL Miss Vera Neal of Maidstone on 5 January 2004. ATS

NICHOLAS Mrs Lilian Mary Nicholas, née Whiteman, of Coventry on 10 June 2004. ATS

PLATTS Mrs Marjorie A L Platts, née Keating, of Grantham. ATS

PRATT Miss Hilda May Pratt, of Bath on 10 March 2004. ATS

PUGH Mrs Eileen V Pugh, née Mehaffy, of Crowfords Burn on 18 May. ATS/WRAC

RAPLEY Mrs Hazel Rapley, née Bramble, of Rainham on 24 January 2004. ATS

RHODES Miss Violet Rhodes of Cambridge on 1 June 2004. ATS

RIGBY Miss Nannie E Rigby of Leeds on 9 March 2004. ATS

RITSON Mrs M Ritson MBE, née Oakley, of Glasgow on 20 February 2004. ATS

ROBERTS Mrs Muriel J Roberts of New Malden in June 2004. ATS

ROBERTSON Miss Margaret Robertson of Edinburgh on 25 April 2004. ATS

ROBINS Mrs Jean R Robins MBE, née Mackay, of Tenbury Wells on 31 January 2004. ATS

ROBINSON Mrs Janice M C Robinson, née Cobbett, of London on 22 April 2004. WRAC

RUDGE Mrs Jean M Rudge of Bath on 29 December 2003. ATS

RYAN Miss E M Ryan of Wallasey on 5 February 2004. ATS

SCOTT-WATSON Mrs Margaret Scott-Watson, née Smith, of Hawick on 19 April 2004. ATS

SHARMAN Miss Vera May Sharman of Ryde on 26 November 2003. ATS

SIMMONS Mrs Enid Simmons, née Bennett, of Middlesbrough on 16 March 2004. ATS

SIMPSON Mrs Barbara H Simpson of Edinburgh in 2004. ATS

SIMPSON Mrs Jean Simpson, née Jones, of Aberdeen on 2 February 2004. ATS

SIMPSON Mrs Lena L Simpson, née Fuller, of Iver on 25 February 2004. ATS

SMITH Miss Nancy Ivy Smith of Frinton-on-Sea on 2 January 2004. ATS

STAMP Mrs Mary Stamp, née Hancock, of Stoke-on-Trent on 10 April 2004. ATS

STERRY Mrs Dorothy Mary Sterry, née Buxcey, of Swansea on 14 December 2003. ATS

STOKES Mrs Olive Stokes of Cambridge on 15 January 2004. ATS

TARRANT Mrs Joan Lena Tarrant, née Tilson, of Worthing on 26 March 2004. ATS

TRACEY Mrs Ethel Irene Tracey, née Briggs, of Chester on 4 April 2004. ATS/WRAC

TUFNELL Miss Kyre Earle Tufnell of Clacton-on-Sea. ATS

VAUTIER Mrs Rosa J Vautier, of Deal on 26 January 2004. ATS

VERHIEST Mrs Vera Evelyn Verhiest, née Lawrence, of Portsmouth on 25 February 2004. ATS

WARREN Mrs Vera May Warren, née Perry, of Bristol on 18 February 2004. ATS

WEBSTER Mrs N D Webster, née Platt, of Cheadle-Hume in 1998. ATS

WEIR Mrs Renee Weir, née Cooley, of Glasgow on 5 March 2004. ATS

WESSENDORFF Mrs Dorothy M (Dinks) Wessendorff, née Hickley, of Stawley on 6 March 2004. ATS/WRAC

WILKIE Miss Ethel Ann Wilkie of Sutton on 20 March 2004. WRAC

WINSLET Miss Joyce Winslet of London in November 2002. ATS

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB ON SATURDAY 3 APRIL 2004

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1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by introducing herself and saying how privileged she was to be Vice-President of the Association and Chairman of Council. She welcomed all those attending especially those who had travelled some distance and thanked both London and Greater London Branches for providing the administrative support for the day.

The Chairman then introduced the team involved in running the Association. Major Jane Freebairn had been Acting General Secretary as well as Benevolent Case Fund Secretary since last July when Major Dee McElligott had resigned. She had recently been appointed as the new General Secretary. Colonel Audrey Smith had been Chairman of the Grants Committee since November 1998. Mrs Maggie Purkis, Vice Chairman of Council, had also taken on the Editorship of The Lioness until the staffing at Association HQ returned to normal. Mrs Beth Todd, the Chief Clerk at Worthy Down had been the main day-to-day point of contact especially in the last few months. Herme Emary, the Webmaster and Alison Schofield, Assistant Editor of The Lioness were also thanked for their contribution.

Appointment of Royal Patron

The Chairman informed the meeting that she had been presented when Her Majesty The Queen had opened the Women and War Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum and the AGC Museum at Winchester. During these visits, Her Majesty had met former ATS colleagues and had seen her provisional Army Driving Licence. Following these events, the Chairman wrote to Buckingham Palace to ask if The Queen would graciously agree to succeed Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother as Patron of the Association. The Chairman was delighted to announce to the meeting that Her Majesty The Queen had agreed. Loyal greetings would be sent.

The Chairman continued by outlining her programme of visits to individual Branches and Area Reunions and emphasised how important this contact was.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from many individuals, branches and the following members of Council:

Brig Dame Mary Pihl, Brig Dame Joanna Kelleher, Brig A. Field, Brig SP Nield, Brig GK Ramsey, Miss M Thompson, Lt Col The Lady Martha Bruce, Mrs JMC Robinson, Lt Col H McMahon, Lt Col NA Murdoch, Mrs A Denham, Mrs K McGregor, Mrs M Purkis and Maj I Gordon.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated in The Lioness 2/2003 and no comments had been received.

It was proposed that the Chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Crewe Seconded: Weymouth
Unanimously agreed

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There was no business arising.

5. REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman said that Council had met twice since the last AGM: firstly in July when Brig Nield handed over the appointment of Vice-President and Chairman and then in January in London. Business had been fairly routine following a couple of years when the financing of The Lioness, the rewriting of the Rules and the organisation of the Grand Reunion in Birmingham had been major items. However, the following items were noted:

- a. **Appointment of Life Vice President.** Brigadier SP Nield had been appointed as a Life Vice President. This reflected her service both as an ex-Director of the WRAC and the previous Vice President.
- b. **Eastern Area.** Lady Val Kemball had stood down as Area Chairman but will continue as President of the WRAC Dinner Club. Mrs Pat Stevenson had taken over as Area Chairman.
- c. **Scotland.** Lt Col Janet Lawson had stood down and Maj Isobel Gordon was now Chairman.
- d. **ATS 65th Anniversary.** Very successful celebrations had taken place in Hastings and Brig Nolan and Lt Col Soames had played an important part in making it a special day.
- e. **Donations.** The Association had received £60,000 and the Benevolent Fund £10,000 from Avril Williams, Secretary of Cambridge Branch, in memory of WO1 DABS Brooks MBE, MSM. This was an extremely generous gesture and some of it would be used to support the next grand Reunion as DABS had always enjoyed those functions.
- f. **Auditors.** Baker Tilly had been re-appointed as Auditors.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

The General Secretary said that the Audited accounts for the year ending 31 October 03 had been published in the last edition of The Lioness and reported that no comments had been received.

Last year, the General Secretary had begun the report saying that investments had fallen by £535,619 in value but that there had been an overall excess of income over expenditure. This year, the General Secretary reported that the total investments were £208,629 in the black and the total worth was £4,143,551 – an increase of just over £200,000 on the previous year's figures.

The Association, excluding the Benevolent Funds, had a net income for the year of £10,358. This was less than last year mainly because donations had been less. However, the Association is now worth £342,492, £30,000 more than at the end of the 2001/2002 financial year.

Unfortunately, the Benevolent Fund had not fared so well. There was an excess of expenditure over income of £15,826. This was mainly due to £15,000 being transferred from the cash deposit to the current account. The Financial Advisor

was not concerned by this figure. Investments were gaining in value and overall, the Benevolent Funds were worth £3,769,936 an increase of £173,095 on the previous year.

Income from donations had been much less. Income from either donations or legacies cannot be predicted and the figures vary enormously from year to year.

Grants and annuities from the Benevolent Fund and the PRMF had been made to the value of £158,46, a decrease of over £40,587 on the previous year. The number of cases had fallen but the costs of providing mobility and disability aids have risen. These funds would be monitored closely to ensure that they could support those in financial hardship for as long as necessary.

Essentially, the Funds remained sound in spite of the recent fall in the Stock Market. With the current increasing confidence in the market, it would not be necessary to realise any investments in the near future. However, Council had confirmed at their January meeting that the cash holdings would remain and no investments would be made just yet.

It was proposed that the financial statements be accepted.

Proposed: Band Seconded: Stafford
Unanimously agreed

7. REPORT OF THE EDITOR OF THE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

The General Secretary read out the following report in the absence of Mrs Purkis.

The Editor began by reporting that The Lioness was no longer the financial drain on the Association that it had been. Nonetheless, any financial contributions would be very welcome and gratefully received.

There had been some problems with regard to editing the magazine since last summer. Major Dee McElligott had resigned in July so there had not been a full time General Secretary and, therefore, no dedicated Editor. Mrs Purkis had agreed to be the temporary Editor but doing it from a distance had not been ideal. There had also been clerical and typing problems at Worthy Down. This had resulted in the loss of one or two articles for which the Editor apologised. Staffing problems had now been resolved. Mrs Purkis had agreed to edit one more edition after which the function would return to the General Secretary at Association HQ.

The Editor encouraged the meeting to send more articles and reminded contributors to include a SAE if they wished photographs to be returned. She expressed concern about the quality of digital photographs. They are fine for illustrations within articles but the sharpness can be lost if they are enlarged.

Lastly, the Editor reminded the AGM that The Lioness was bound by Copyright Laws. If contributors wished to send articles from any other publication, they should get permission in writing. Newspapers, for example, would normally agree to allow articles and photographs to be reprinted for the price of a printed acknowledgement.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Purkis for taking on the Editorship whilst the posts of General Secretary and Benevolent Fund Case Secretary were combined.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

a. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee had not actually met recently but preparatory work had begun for the Grand Reunion in April 2006. Two University sites were being considered; one being The University of Leicester and the other Warwick University at their Coventry campus. A recce would take place in late April.

The Executive Committee had approved the award of several Certificates of Appreciation to the following or their representatives:

Mrs Nan Ovenden	Medway
Mrs Janet Cameron	Medway
Mrs Peggy Turner	Chelmsford
Mrs Joan MacKenzie	Chelmsford
Miss Amy Weightman	Bournemouth
Mrs Kay Perfect	Canterbury
Mrs Marjorie Daglass	Canterbury
Miss Emily Newbould	Leeds

The following would receive their Certificate at a later date:

Mrs Doris McCoy	Plymouth –
to be presented 4 Jun	
Mrs Gwyneth Friday	Cleveland –
to be presented 6 May	

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee

The Chairman of the Grants Committee updated the AGM with a summary of the work of the Benevolent Fund in the last financial year. The Major Grants Committee had met once a month and minor cases had been dealt with on a daily basis. 705 cases had been received, a decrease of nearly 20% on the previous year. The ratio of cases had been 462 ATS to 243 WRAC meaning that two thirds of the cases had been ATS and one third had been WRAC. This was significant because the ratio had been three quarters ATS to one quarter WRAC. This confirmed the start of the trend away from ATS cases and an increase in WRAC applications.

A total of £135,00 had been spent. Nearly half of this money had been paid in grants for mobility, disability aids and house repairs and adaptations. Other service and civilian funds had been very generous and very often shared the costs of an application. The Chairman expressed our gratitude to 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.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund provided 21 annuities to those who are elderly, in poor health and living alone with minimal income. The annuity is set at £11 a week with a Christmas Bonus of £60. The Army Benevolent Fund had granted 97 annuities set at £55 per month.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund also helped 21 ATS towards topping up the shortfall of Nursing Home Fees with contributions ranging from £2 to £10 a week. The Army Benevolent Fund often shared these cases because of the total amount required.

In conjunction with the Army Benevolent Fund, Pontins holidays were provided for worthy cases with children under 16. In 2002 a total of 21 families were given a holiday. The Chairman thanked Mrs Babs Mitcheson

who had co-ordinated the Pontins holidays for many years.

The WRAC Benevolent Fund Knitting circle had produced woollen garments for children for many years and thanked all those involved for their time and effort. In addition to our own woollens, we had received a donation of knitted garments from The People's Friend magazine at Christmas. The Chairman particularly thanked Brigid Archdale who coordinated the whole operation.

Both the Pontins and knitting schemes would be closely monitored. They were both age related, so there would be fewer and fewer eligible candidates. Soon, this type of assistance would no longer be required.

The Chairman of the Grants Committee then described a particular case and then asked all members to encourage their branches to continue to raise money for the Benevolent Fund. Branches had donated £2,280 in comparison with £3,682 the year before. All donations were greatly appreciated especially as the Funds had to rely on the income from investments, legacies and the unfailing support of the membership.

9. RESOLUTIONS

a. Motions of Urgency

There were no motions of urgency

b. Council Resolutions

There were no Council Resolutions

c. Branch Resolutions

There were no Branch Resolutions

d. Election of Vice Presidents of Council

The Chairman asked Branches to ratify the following:
Lt Col AK Brown MBE – (4th year of office)

Mrs JMC Robinson – (2nd year of office)

Proposed: Bath Seconded: Portsmouth
Unanimously agreed

e. Election of Honorary Treasurer

The Chairman introduced Lt Col M Woollard who had started her career in the WRAC/RAPC and had held many posts involving pay, allowances and accounting. Currently serving at Worthy Down, Lt Col Woollard had expressed great interest in becoming the Honorary Treasurer and was clearly eminently well-qualified. The Chairman asked the meeting to ratify this appointment made by Council in January.

Proposed: Newcastle Seconded: Plymouth
Unanimously agreed

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman said that she had two issues she wished to raise.

- a. **Memorial to the Women of World War 2.** As an update, the Chairman said that the Memorial would go ahead on the artwork that had now been approved without the figure of the woman on the top of the plinth. The Memorial would be 22 feet high, 16 feet long and 6 feet wide. The overall likely cost would be around 1 Million Pounds and a Heritage Lottery application has been submitted. **[Afternote: This has been agreed]** The project has the support of Government, the House

of Lords, MOD and English Heritage and a site had been identified in Whitehall itself. The Chairman was aware that many members of the Association would have preferred the memorial only to represent Servicewomen and the WAAF and WRNS Associations had shared that view initially. However, the Memorial would now reflect the incredible contribution made by a huge number of women and it would be in a high profile site. The Association could not alter the situation.

- b. **Tartan Skirts as Official Uniform.** The Chairman stated that Council had never wished to proscribe or dictate that those representing the Association should wear a uniform and the AGM last year had voted against the subject being discussed again by Council. The Association Rules only include details of the uniform to be worn by Standard Bearers. Ladies may wear whatever they wish when representing the Association so those who wish to, could wear tartan skirts. Comparisons had been made with the WAAF Association who wear tartan. It has been confirmed that this is not an official uniform.

The Chairman said that she wished these subjects to be considered closed and that they were no longer to be the subject of official Association business. Whilst individual members may still have strong views on the issues, they were reminded that they were personal views and they were not to campaign on either subject through the Branch network or write to our Patron or President about their concerns.

- c. **The Royal Star & Garter Home.** Major Penny Riddy informed the meeting that The Royal Star & Garter Home in Richmond would probably close and that three new care homes would be built. Currently we have six ladies in the home. Lt Col Trout said that one new home would be in the Richmond area, one in the West Midlands and the other at a location to be decided. She had suggested the Wiltshire/Dorset area. It was agreed that the Association would monitor the situation to see if Branches could be of any help when the new homes opened – unlikely before 2009.

- d. **Wales and the West Area Reunion.** Mrs Evelyn Radford informed the meeting that the Reunion would be held in Hereford on Saturday 11 September. All would be welcome.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place in the Victory Services Club, London on Saturday 09 April 2005.

Signed as a true record.

..... Date

1944

First ATS group to go abroad as a complete unit 'The Continental Group', destined for Normandy, with special training to enable them to work with women refugees if necessary.



ATS Continental Group arriving in Normandy, July 1944

By the end of the year over 6,000 ATS were deployed in Northern Europe. These included women in Mixed Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiments, the only deployment of women abroad in an operational rôle in the Army in World War II.