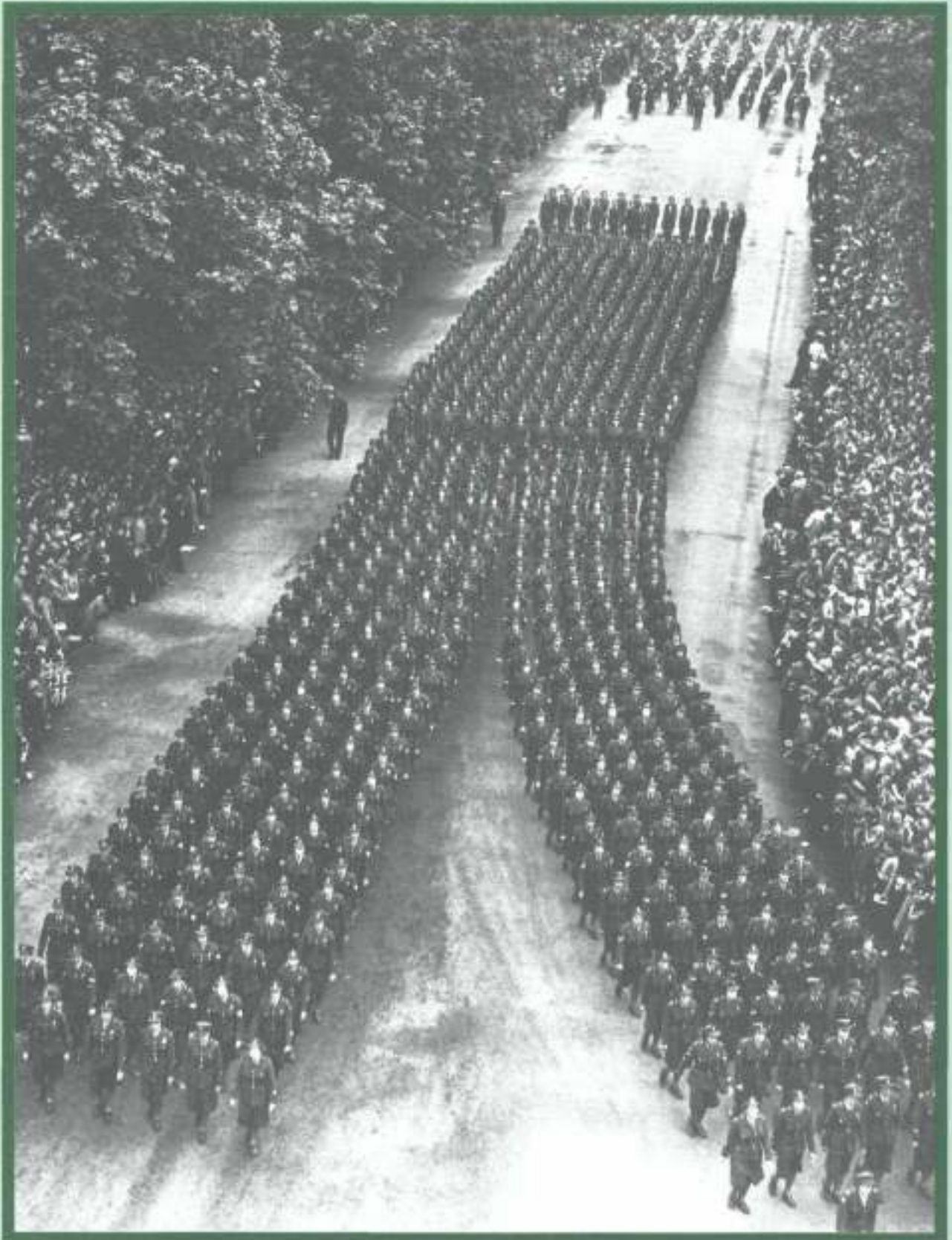


LIONESS

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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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8 June 1946

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ROYAL GREETINGS

Please convey my warm thanks to the Vice-President, Council and Members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association (Incorporating the Queen Mary's Auxiliary Army Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades' Association) for their message of loyal greetings sent on the occasion of their Annual General Meeting which was held on 9th April.

As your Patron, I much appreciate your congratulations for my birthday and for the Wedding of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall and send my best wishes to all those who were present.

ELIZABETH R

April 2005

EDITORIAL



Welcome to this edition of *The Lioness* and many thanks to all of you who have contributed. I am greatly encouraged by the number of letters I receive which begin, 'I was so pleased to see the article about.....' Following Major Flossie Odell's article about the Stanley Baker film, she has heard from two ladies who were there at the time – one the CO's staff car driver who now breeds sheep and an erstwhile tennis partner who now lives in South Africa. I also heard from

Miss Margaret Doherty. She is fourth from the left in the photograph of the ATS Continental Group arriving in Normandy which was on the back of the last edition. Miss Doherty, who served for 24 years and reached WO2, also sent me a recent newspaper article showing her with 25 gentlemen members of the Northampton and District Normandy Veteran's Association. Unfortunately the photograph was too 'fuzzy' to reproduce. Nothing beats an original.

Please also be careful about how you submit copy. Fancy read-only CDs are not helpful especially as photographs are usually in Word and cannot be adjusted. If you have a PC, it is much simpler if you send a floppy and photographs in JPEG or BMP format. They are also easily e-mailed! Enough of the technobabble. I do get asked if there is a limit to the length of articles and you will see that they vary tremendously. In an ideal world, it would be good if each article was no more than two sides of A4 and it included a photograph. I also try to ensure that there is a photograph on each page but it is not always possible..... Branch Secretaries please take note!

Many of you will know that Beth Todd, our Chief Clerk has left. However, she is still Chairman of Winchester Branch and has gone back into uniform to return to work with German Shepherds. We wish her well.

Finally, the Grand Draw tickets. This is the first time we have tried to sell tickets by including one book in each copy of *The Lioness*. These tickets are to help raise funds for the Association which is not a wealthy organisation but a Charity to encourage esprit de Corps amongst ex ATS and WRAC. The Grand Reunions happens only once every three years. The First Prize this time is £1,000! The tickets can be sold to anyone, not just members of the Association. PLEASE do your best to support us.

Jane Freebairn

Message from the Vice President



I am writing this having just returned from a very memorable weekend in London to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War 2. It was wonderful to be there and to see so many of you from the Association in Whitehall for the Unveiling of the Monument to Women of World War II by HM The Queen. The ceremony was extremely

moving and I was very proud to be part of it representing our Association. At the Reception afterwards, I was privileged to speak to our Patron and to Baroness

Boothroyd, Lady Thatcher and Lady Soames, as well, of course, as catching up with so many friends from the Association. At the end of this remarkable afternoon, whilst standing waiting for a taxi, I met up with Sir Jimmy Savile who was doing likewise. He was one of the principal donors to the Monument and spoke with pride about his sister who had been in the ATS. We eventually managed to hail a taxi and the driver made some cryptic comment like "Did Jim fix this for you?" as we drove off together! As I left him at Waterloo, Sir Jimmy kissed my hand and said, "you've made my day – I've never met a lady Colonel before!" I told him he had made my day too!

The next day some of our members attended the Service of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey and others had

Lunch at Buckingham Palace. The ATS and WRAC Association standards along with several Branch standards were proudly paraded on Horse Guards and down The Mall during the climax to these celebrations on the Sunday afternoon. The atmosphere was wonderful and I know that **PDF Compressor Free Version** but who watched it on television would have still felt the nostalgia and sense of occasion. I now look forward to reading all your stories and reminiscences about this unforgettable weekend in the next edition of *The Lioness*.

I cannot believe we have come around to another Grand Reunion already – where have the last 3 years gone? This *Lioness* carries the all important booking and application forms for the Reunion weekend– I urge you to complete

and return them as soon as possible to ensure that you get a place – it is going to be, by far, the BEST REUNION yet! Can I also encourage you to sell the Grand Draw Tickets which come with this edition and if you feel you can sell more, contact Association HQ for extra books. The prizes are well worth winning – First Prize is £1,000!

I shall be attending a number of Area Reunions in the next 6 months as well as some Branch Christmas Celebrations (no wonder I have put on weight!) so I look forward to seeing many of you at one of these social occasions. In the meantime, keep writing and speaking to us – we want your ideas and your input – it is your Association.

Sue Westlake

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

The Vice President, Lieutenant Colonel Sue Westlake presented three certificates during the AGM at the Victory Services Club on 9 April 2005. She congratulated all the recipients on their outstanding contributions to the work of the Association in general and their Branches in particular.



Ruth Jennings – Secretary Plymouth Branch



Pat Ash – Wolverhampton Branch



Evelyn Radford – Secretary Hereford Branch

OVERSEAS PAYMENTS

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

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

WRAC NATIONAL REGISTER

Are you interested in trying to find old friends?

Did you serve/enlist between 1949 and 1992?

Why not join the WRAC National Register?

Contact:
E Ann Butler-Deakin
14 Ash Rise, Moss Pit, Stafford ST17 9HE
Tel: 01785 249992

ATS Reminiscences

THE SINGING FIRE CONTROLLER

Mrs Mary Walker, née Whitfield
(W/188997, 575 Battery RA)

7 Green Court, Station Road, Scholes, Leeds LS15 4BX

I did my initial training in 1942 in Pontefract Barracks and well remember one of the Drill Sergeants shouting 'Now, come on Ladies, stick those chests out, you've got a hell of a lead over the men'. I was then posted to 575 Battery Royal Artillery to train as a Radar Operator at Portland Bill where I remember seeing all the planes, bombers and gliders being towed over the Channel towards France around D-Day.

At this time I was an Operator of Fire Control on the Transmitter with a Head and Breast Set switched on. Things were a bit quiet and I was waiting to be relieved. I forgot I was live and started singing at the top of my voice. The names of the song I've forgotten but it included the word 'Rendezvous'. My relief opened the door and I said, 'Hello, is it mealtime?' and a voice in my earphones said 'No my dear, it's Rendezvous time'. I'd been singing to the whole of the Command Post!

I was expecting a rocket for this but the Officer i/c said he thoroughly enjoyed the performance – does anyone remember this?

After this, in 1944, I was posted to a Gunsite in a village near to Brussels. When the war ended in Europe I was transferred to No. 2 District Censorship Station in Bruges for a while. Then I went to Bonn where I met Charles Walker, a Grenadier Guards Corporal, who later became my husband. We had two boys, now 50 and 48 but, sadly, Charles died in 1991 and I have not re-married.

My best friend, Eileen Tugwell, now Eileen Wood, lives in Epsom and I am in touch with her and sometimes visit. Most of my other companions are in the Grenadier Guards Association, Yorkshire Branch and they welcomed me as an Associate Member.

I am now almost 81, still quite active, and would be delighted to hear from anyone who served with me.

WHERE WAS I ?

Miss Dorothy Leed (W/186407)
"Dorbeth", 2 Wychwood Avenue, Finham,
Coventry CV3 6FJ

Born on 25 November 1921 in Cathcart, South side of Glasgow. Moved to village of Eaglesham on edge of the Fenwick Moors in early 1939. Village where Hess made his crash landing – we heard and saw his plane go over our house landing in a field nearby – I was there at the site soon after and actually got some small parts from the plane! All this before my call up papers in Summer of 1942. Training at Glencorse Barracks Dalkeith then posted (alone) to HQ CMD (Central Midland District) Royal Leamington Spa to join G Corps Intelligence Branch working on maps, Kings Regs etc and typing until

early 1944 when things were changing and I was posted to join HQ MWD (the new Mid West District at Shrewsbury. Most of the staff from HQW CMD went off to join 21st Army Group. A few girls of clerical/typing group went off to Shrewsbury – I had nowhere to go for a time strangely, then "report to Camp Commandant at HWQ MWED Shrewsbury". He had no place for me! No one had, but I got a desk and typewriter in "Q" at last and involved in moves and transport. Then out of the blue one day called to Camp Commandant's office, there he said "speak to no one – a car is outside to take you to a place of work of vital importance". Sure enough a "FANY" driver shut me in canvas back of a jeep on an unknown journey. I reckoned I was still in Shrewsbury and knew feel of roads etc. We stopped and she appeared to help me out. No idea where as car was reversed into an enclosed "tunnel" corridor. I was greeted by an officer who took me to a "cubicle" containing a desk and typewriter. "Have you had tea?" – No. "Come this way". I was led along this man made tunnel, put into a cubicle with table and chair. Tea was brought to me. Officer came and said "come – you are not required for 4 hours" and put me in a cubicle with a bed! After that it was an NCO who escorted me back to the typewriter cubicle, who gave me a Top Secret envelope which contained my "work". You had a bell to ring for help or to go to the toilet as you were escorted. Never saw anyone else but presumed there were other typists along these corridors.

From the constant darkness and strange smell I took it I was in a crypt or cellar of a church etc. I never found out where or who else was involved. Was there for several days and nights. You ate or drank when told, you worked when told and you slept to order! Gathered roughly from the contents of the work sheets – it was orders for movements of troops, supplies and all sorts etc. Knew the code names of exercise and code name of beaches, places were OS numbers for maps! Finally a thank you from officer and put back in jeep. Driver knew my billet address. Arrived helped out – night, stars out – "what time is it?" 4 am. I can't get in I have no key! We threw stones at the window of my mate's bedroom. Luckily she heard and opened. She and the rest of the office (and the landlady) all concerned for me.

I had disappeared so mysteriously and all I was allowed to say was I had been doing some top secret typing. I know not where. Only when D-Day was reported could I then reveal I had been giving the orders for movement of troops and for supplies to them. Later the GOC in C Western Command Lt Gen B G Horrocks came to the HQ to personally thank me. I had been picked out for my speed and accuracy of typing apparently! I was sent a Certificate from him later dated 13 June 1946 for Good Service.

Apart from that above and normal secretarial duties, my experiences progressed through the War organising and playing much sport – you name it I played it – I was an all rounder representing our HQ MWD and also Western Command. I kept in touch with many of my army pals. Sadly I have outlived them all now. The last friend died

one year ago – I may say none of them joined the Association though I kept telling them.

I myself joined the Association when I worked for the MOD at HQ Southern Command, Wilton. The Salisbury Branch were **PDF Compressor Free Version** (I had not met any of my friends from the ATS days). I had gone to Salisbury in 1960 as the advance party to seek a home for us – mother, father and sister – escaping from cold Scotland.

I had to return to Scotland on illness of my mother in 1964. In 1970 she was well enough to move and we settled in Morgans Vale, Redlynch. I resumed as an active member of Salisbury Branch marching with them on Armistice Days (even once laid a wreath). Much later my attendances were irregular as arthritis struck and even an attack of cancer. On the death of our parents and losing many friends, plus the fact “hippie” types were causing problems, my sister and I decided to move to Midlands August 1988, nearer our uncles. Sadly they too have passed on. While I was mobile I continued to join Salisbury group on check ups at Hospital or on holidays. Kept in touch (and still am) with Joan Morgan and Veronica Dodkins.

SOUTH AFRICA AND EGYPT

Mrs Betty Templeton, née Corry (W/146936)
Flat 26, “Dunira”, 110 Osborne Road, Jesmond,
Newcastle on Tyne E2 2TA

I was conscripted into the ATS in late April 1942 when I was 20. I did my basic training at Pontefract Barracks where we had the honour of being inspected on our passing out parade by HRH Princess Mary, the Princess Royal. I was then posted to the Clerical School in Strathpeffer in Ross-shire (where I was billeted in the Highland Hotel), to do an intensive three month clerical course. Afterwards it was home to Leeds for a short leave before my first posting. The journey from Strathpeffer on the slow train was quiet but the overnight journey from Edinburgh was quite eventful as after midnight I was able to say, “It’s my 21st birthday”. As the train was packed with service personnel we had a tremendous party! However it was a bit of an anticlimax when I arrived at Leeds to find the trams had not started running and I had to sit in the station for over 2 hours before I could get home.

My first posting was to Preston in Lancashire as a Clerk/Shorthand Typist at a RE Supply Depot. Volunteers were being recruited for overseas postings so I quickly added my name to the list. Within two months I had been accepted and was sent to a Holding Unit in London to be kitted out with tropical uniform and was told very sternly that we must not mention this to anyone.

On 16th January 1943 we travelled to Liverpool where we embarked on a troopship. Whilst waiting to be escorted through the dangerous waters of the Atlantic (all the ships of course being blacked out) we witnessed a number of terrifying raids on Liverpool and I realised how lucky I was.

The ship was the SS Volendam, an ex Dutch Cruise Liner,

striped of all luxurious fittings, but four of us were lucky enough to get a cabin with two portholes whereas the majority were below decks. We had one or two scary experiences when the accompanying destroyers dropped depth charges but in the event all the convoy survived. As this was my first long sea voyage I was rather apprehensive but I found my sea legs fairly quickly. During the morning we were kept occupied with various lectures (and of course boat drill complete with “Mae Wests”). The lectures included how to avoid sunstroke, (a punishable offence), being careful of what we ate and drank, the danger of mosquitoes, and most importantly, how we should comport ourselves in a foreign country. But we did relax in the evenings and a few of us got together with the men and formed our own concert party. (I had a good singing voice in those days). There we also 3 ENSA parties on board so we were never short of entertainment.

The journey to Durban took around 6 weeks, partly because our ship was the slowest in the convoy (we were always being chivvied by the little corvette) but also because we had to go a long way out into the Atlantic to avoid enemy submarines. We were in Durban for just over three weeks waiting for another ship to take us further on our journey – a real holiday as we were billeted in a lovely hotel on the sea front!

As a clerk, each morning I helped out in the South African Army Post Office sorting the mail. The afternoons and evenings were mostly free, except for further lectures and drills. The weather was glorious and we spent the afternoons on the beach and the evenings in the open air cinema or we were sometimes invited to dances. This may sound rather frivolous but we were told by our officers to make the most of it as conditions would be very different when we reached our final destination.

However the dream ended all too soon and we found ourselves on another smaller and less comfortable troopship. There were also three battalions of raw African conscripts who had only received the minimum basic training and were quite unused to discipline. By this time the heat was almost unbearable and although we changed into tropical gear, it was not such a comfortable journey. It was also quite weird and rather scary to hear the African drums throbbing at night and the chanting, when we were miles out to sea. During the day there were compensations such as watching the dolphins and flying fish and there were some spectacular electric storms.

We arrived at Port Tewfik in Egypt three months after leaving England and were taken by army lorries to the Kasr el Nil Barracks in Cairo. (These barracks had been condemned after the First World War!). It was there I had my first horrifying experiences of bugs. The place was alive with them and three times a week I had to dismantle my bed on the balcony, stuff all the corners and crevices with cotton wool soaked in paraffin and set fire to them. The smell was horrible. It was not a pleasant experience but it was amazing how quickly one became blasé, and also to using the obligatory mosquito nets because the barracks overlooked the Nile.

I was sent to work in the office of the Director of Ordnance Services and on the first day had to sign the

Official Secrets Act as they were already planning for the invasion of Sicily and later Italy. I think for the first time I really felt part of the war and was at last doing something useful. During the summer months I worked from 8 am to 12 noon and from 5 pm to 8 pm in the evening, seven days a week. **PDF Compressor Free Version** of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps and also two Lebanese girls. We were under intense pressure at all times as it was vitally important that the necessary equipment be available at short notice. After work there were always various invites to mess dances etc for which transport was provided there and back.

I joined up with a Royal Signals Dance band and we played at various Services Clubs and Camps in the area. On these occasions I was given special permission to wear civilian clothes. These were sent out to me by my sister-in-law who also sent me the latest dance tunes and songs. I was also lucky enough to get a ticket for a concert by Nelson Eddy when he came to Cairo to entertain the troops. Naturally I visited the Great Pyramids of Giza and Sphinx whilst in Cairo.

After being in Cairo for a year I developed Bronchitis due to the barracks being on the banks of the Nile and I was posted to Alexandria on medical grounds. At first I was billeted with 502 Motor Ambulance Corps, a Unit of voluntary lady ambulance drivers (similar to the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry in WWI). They had just come down from the Western Desert and were fully occupied in re-equipping and servicing their ambulances in preparation for their next assignment in Italy. Their CO in the meantime was acting as ATS Area Commander and I was her Clerk/Shorthand Typist, giving me my first stripe. When they moved out I was then attached to the Legal Depot at the HQ Barracks and also acted as Shorthand/Typist to the Brigadier, (which got me two stripes). Eventually I was promoted to Sergeant and took charge of the office where I remained for the rest of my time in Egypt. I was still in Alexandria on VE Day and we had a big parade along the sea front and celebrations well into the evening. The journey home in September 1945 was much quicker as this was via the Mediterranean. I travelled on a very old troopship and had to master the art of sleeping in a hammock. As you can imagine the first efforts were hilarious! I was finally discharged in December 1945.

Many experiences were rather frightening and I had to cope with conditions not previously in my imagination but I do not regret any of the time spent serving with the ATS and I was proud to be working alongside so many other dedicated people from other services.

When the TA was restarted in 1947 I joined 15th AA (Mixed) Signal Regiment at Gibraltar Barracks in Leeds where I met my husband who had joined the Royal Signals in 1938 and we were married in 1948.

MEMORIES OF THE 93rd REGT, RHYL

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

I have just been reading the *Lioness* on my balcony in

Spain and I am enjoying every moment.

I also have many memories of those years, one of which I will now recall and wonder if by chance there is anyone out there who remembers.

One day looking at the notice board I noticed a document, which read. Are there any personnel in the camp who can act, sing, dance etc? Captain Brian Reece a famous actor (better known as PC 40) was putting a show on in the theatre. Yes, we had a very nice theatre, big stage very good dressing rooms at the back. Mirrors with lights etc. Well as I had had stage training and could dance etc I put my name forward. We all met in the theatre, Brian was very nice and happy to see so many people turn up, especially the 12 chorus girls!

Our dance routines included a Spanish number and a very exciting Russian one. Brian had ordered the costumes from London and they had not arrived by the day the show was meant to open. He sent an Army Truck to Rhyl Station to collect them but they returned without them. Brian sent the truck back with strict instructions to stay until the train arrived with the costumes. They finally arrived much to everyone's relief. The costumes were lovely with many frills on the Spanish costumes. The Russian ones were bright orange with green trimmings.

By the way, I can still raise a leg!! Not bad at 83! I am enclosing a photograph taken at Union Jack Club last year at the Searchlight Reunion. I am sorry it is late but I have just received it.



Hetty Eames is seated front right

Editor: Mrs Eames says she is 83 and feels 63! I think she only looks 63!

MEMORIES OF V.R.Ds IN SHREWSBURY AREA

Subaltern Joyce Wood (née Sargent) RAOC
15 Magdalen Grove, Orpington, Kent BR6 9WE

I would love to hear from anyone who served with the ATS at No. 24 V.R.D. at Condoover, near Shrewsbury, especially during the period 1942 – 1946.

I rose from the rank of Private to the grand rank of Corporal whilst serving there. A look at my Maiden name will explain why I never wanted to be promoted to Sergeant.

My husband took me on a nostalgic return visit to Shrewsbury recently and I went to see the site of as many Vehicle Reception Depots as I could remember. One of them – Attringham Park – is now National Trust controlled. Much to my surprise the supplied literature made no mention of the ATS, but I did find the WAAF's. I must correct this, whilst I was there a friend of mine, Noreen Trowell was killed by one of our vehicles. She was buried in Shrewsbury Cemetery. We were not close friends but we shared the same billet in Shrewsbury. I was later moved to the Ballroom in the Lion Hotel for a short time.

The passage of time makes one forget many things. I well remember Harlescote Camp, now a development of houses. I also remember going dancing at the Maltings which was occupied by the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry. Happy days!



Nessie is in battledress and I am on the left

I would love to chat with any ex-ATS girls who knew Shrewsbury as I knew it, whether they knew me or not. I would particularly like to regain contact with the following:

W316686 Pte Murray (Johnnie) who lived at 53 Holmerwood Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Doreen Harris (home address Santon nr Scunthorpe)

Nessie ? (from Scotland)

Muriel (married to Ian Brown) Scotland

My home telephone No. is 01689 825837

IT WAS A COOK'S LIFE!

Mrs Florence Connolly (née Bass)
48 Ashley Gardens, Grays, RM16 2LR

Editor: I have been in touch with Mrs Connolly several times recently and I persuaded her to tell me her story. Mrs Connolly is an Honorary member of the ACC Association as well and has recently attended another of their Reunions in Hayling Island where she is an honoured guest!



Sgt Connolly in 1940

My name is Mrs Florence Connolly (née Bass) and I volunteered to join the ATS in January 1939 with one or two others from Grays. We travelled every week to the Drill Hall in Brentwood until I was called up on 25th August 1939. I was given my number, W/9596, and was posted to the 40th Essex Regiment at Warley Barracks. I had previous cooking experience and was promoted to Corporal in October 1939. I was put in the old kitchen that fed 250 men in peacetime. All we had were all coal coppers and coal ranges, a steamer and a Dutch oven that was built into an outside wall. We had to go through the vegetable prep room to stoke it up on the outside whatever the weather! We also had to collect our own coal in a two-wheeled barrow. Things began to happen very quickly and we soon had to feed 850 men in the dining room. We had to have two sittings and it was very hard work!

Then in 1940 I was made up to Acting Unpaid Sergeant. I was not going to get the pay until I had been to the Army School of Cookery at Omar Barracks in Aldershot and passed all my exams. Only then would I be paid. I still have my exam book today. It is an absolute treasure and I was absolutely delighted to meet up again with Miss Wilkinson, who had been my instructor and examiner and written many comments in that book, 50 years later.



Miss Wilkinson, Mrs Connolly and the book 50 years on!

By this time Warley Barracks had become No 1 Infantry Training Centre and another cookhouse was built to feed 2000 men. All the ovens were operated by steam and the men took over operating them. The photograph of the cooks is taken at Warley Barracks and I would love to hear from anyone who can remember it. I can also remember (maiden names!) Sgt Eileen Watkinson, Cpl Finny, Cpl Davey, Ivy Derby, Eileen Pouch, Sgt Challis, LCpl Swain, LCpl Bachelor and Sgt Shepherd. I would love to hear from them.



I have just returned from the 65th ACC Reunion on Hayling Island and was very humbled to learn from Lt Col Tony Monk (Regimental Secretary) that I am an Honorary Member because I was a Sgt Cook when Omar Barracks was opened!

I have such wonderful memories from those days and it would be so nice to hear from anyone who remembers me.



Wedding Day 4th May 1940

Editor: Can anyone think of a more appropriate Guard of Honour?

SOUTH BENFLEET 62 YEARS LATER!



The attached photograph shows the first meeting for 62 years of former ATS friends Mrs Joyce Scarborough of Harrogate and Mrs Barbara Castell of Leicester & Nottingham Branch. The reunion took place on Saturday 10th June in Joyce's home town. The meeting was the result of a photograph sent to 'Yours' magazine by Joyce.

The two served together in 537 S/L Battery at South Benfleet in 1943.



Braunton 1943/4



537 S/L Battery Benfleet 1943

W/8087 WINIFRED FRANCES GOODBODY (KNOWN AS DUSTY) 1ST MIDDLESEX PLATOON

My friend Stella and I joined the ATS on Thursday 9th September 1938, the day King George VI proclaimed that the Auxiliary Territorial Service was formed. We went straight from work at Stoke Newington to the recruiting office at Park Lane Tottenham opposite the Spurs Football Ground.

The Sergeant asked me when I was born? I said 4 April 1920. He did not believe me and said, "You only look 16. Have you got your birth certificate with you?" I asked him if he carried his birth certificate with him? He said no, I said I don't either. We had forms sent to us and had to pay 6d for a Doctor's certificate to prove we were in good health.

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Dusty with Good Conduct Stripe

We started training at Hornsey Drill Hall North London. The Drill Hall was in the process of being built so it was a case of mud everywhere. The roof was open to the sky and had no doors so it was cold inside. After a few weeks the roof was on and the doors appeared. We attended every Wednesday evening parade under the watchful eye of The Regimental Sergeant Major from the Grenadier Guards who the officers called Henry. He was over 6 feet tall and broad. He soon had us marching around and called me out to be the Right Marker!

We carried on training every Wednesday evening. During the summer of 1939 we were issued with our long overalls, most of us could not see our feet when we put them on. We were not allowed to cut any off so we had 8-inch hems.

September 27, 1939. We met up with Hendon Platoon on Paddington Station to start life in the Army at Central Ammunition Depot Bramley. We were lined up when the Section Leader was told to look for a girl with an honest face, the same Section Leader who issued my uniform. She kept looking at me until the officer came to inspect, what's your name child? Goody Ma'am, right I want you to look after this case, it's a typewriter. When we got off the train at Paddington the Officer called out has that child got the case, I replied yes Ma'am. Same enquiry getting off the train at Reading and getting on the train at Reading and getting off the train at Bramley. We then boarded a coach to Bramley Camp. When we got inside the camp the

Officer said, "Where's that girl with the money?" Blank looks all around. The Officer then said, "You girl. You have the case of money" I said "No I have got the typewriter, the Officer replied no you're carrying £200, the pay for the next few months. Remember we were only paid 9 shillings a week.

I was a storewoman, and spent six weeks learning to be an amendment clerk and stocktaking in HM Stationery Office, which meant I was locked in. These documents had not seen the light of day since around 1919. I asked for a duster. Every morning I was allowed out for a break, I was asked how I was, I said "Not so dusty" so the name stuck!

I was transferred temporarily to the Ammunition School of Instruction but stayed for over 3 years. I was in charge (I/C) of all the books, 5 in a set for the Ammunition Examiners' Courses, Ammunition Storemans' Courses and Officers' Courses. I had to help the ledger clerk at times. I used to help in the laboratory and had the only pair of brown laboratory shoes marked Dusty. I also had the job of cleaning the wonderful collection of shells built up over years at the school by Mr Lee.

I was a trained first aider, stretcher bearer and fire NCO. This meant our gang was on duty at least one night a week. We used to sit on top of the air raid shelters and watch the German planes fly over us to London and pray that our families were safe. Being fire NCO meant I was taking fire drill every evening after work. When Princess Mary, The Princess Royal (the King's Sister) came to open our new camp, Nissen huts and ablution block, we were the Guard of Honour for Her Royal Highness.



ATS Guard of Honour

We had to keep our rooms spotless to show new girls how to clean etc and our room was chosen to be inspected by Her Royal Highness. My friend, Vi now a Sgt was in the escorting party. The Princess wanted to know what polish we used to get such a shine, Vi said "Issue polish, Ma'am and Dusty's balaclava!" which took some explaining. The CSM had caught me one day. "Goodbody; you haven't brought any wool yet?" I said I wasn't any good at knitting so I was given large size knitting needles and bundle of khaki yarn which was in reality dyed dish cloth yarn and a pattern for a balaclava. I knitted and knitted, and the more I knitted the longer the garment became. It would have covered a two-year-old completely. What to do with it

was the problem until Vi said we could wrap it around and around the bumper (floor polisher). So we did, hence the highly polished floor. Princess Mary saw the funny side.

We all went home on Easter leave, I had my arm in a sling. I had chemical clisters on my hand. Gwen and Amy had collided with each other on their bikes so Amy's knee was heavily bandaged as was Gwen's ankle. Duffy had just come out of hospital so was very white and shaky, Ivy had hurt her hand and Vi had an eye patch. We were getting off the train at Paddington when an elderly lady

said "oh poor girls they must have come home from overseas", it spread amongst the passengers waiting to board the train, who parted leaving space for us to walk off the platform. Vi nudged me and said "don't you dare say otherwise". Everyone clapped us, were our faces red.

I married John, who served for 35 years and we had four sons who all served; David in the RE, Alan in the Paras, Terence in Royal Signals and Rhoderick joined the Royal Navy.

BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS TO BRIGADIER EILEEN NOLAN CB

On a beautiful June day, in soaring temperatures, Brigadier Nolan, with friends, Colonel Nan Robertson and Lieutenant Colonel Sue Donovan, celebrated her 85th Birthday, in style! The Brigadier was surrounded by dozens of Birthday cards and bouquets of flowers, in every room, which were a source of great joy to her. She was so grateful, old names and places, and favourite stories, were conjured up, and reminiscences shared, with much enjoyment. Lunch, at *Chequers*, a favourite hostelry, where she was met by the Staff with Birthday wishes and a welcome glass of ice-cold wine, was followed by a visit to that much loved magnet, the local garden centre.

There, in blazing sunshine, whilst her 'retinue' wilted, she coolly wandered through the glasshouses, choosing trays of her favourite plants, a colourful array, to add to the many pots and tubs already blooming at home. A memorable day ended with tea and Birthday Cake, followed by a small Sherry party with local friends. Her greatest delight, however, and early Birthday present, had been the news, at the end of May, of the arrival of her Godson's baby boy, William James McGregor, the happiest of events to mark this significant year.



Reminiscences of the WRAC

ORDER OF SERVICE FROM FAREWELL SERVICE 6 TRAINING REGIMENT WRAC, LUFTON CAMP, YEOVIL, SOMERSET

Lt Col Val Trout recently gave Association HQ a copy of the Order of Service for the Farewell Service held at Lufton Camp, Yeovil. Apart from the usual prayers and hymns, including the Corps Collect, there was this prayer called A Servicewomen's Prayer:

O God, you have set us under discipline. Make us not only obedient to our Leaders, but give us the self discipline which will make us always obedient to the voice of conscience, and to the command of the highest that we know.

Help us always and everywhere to behave in such a way that we shall be an honour and a credit to the traditions of our Corps, and to the uniform and to the

badge which we wear.

Bless and protect those whom we love, and those who love us; and when the call of duty separates us from them, keep us true to them, and them true to us.

Help us at all times to know You, and to honour the Queen.

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ.

AMEN

Editor: I would be interested to know if anyone remembers this service. The puzzle is that there is no date on the Order of Service Do you know when it was? Were you there? Do you know if the prayer was written especially for this Service? Maybe someone who is reading this Lioness actually wrote it or know who did. Perhaps this will prompt a few articles about your time in training at Yeovil!

MEMORIES OF DONNINGTON

Jean Gray (ex-WO2)
23 Hometeign House, Salisbury Road,
Newton Abbot, TQ12 2TE

It was lovely to read Mrs Lloyd's (Gladys) account of her service. I was a lowly Cpl at Donnington when she was there but I remember her, also SSgt Iris Worsely (who I worked with as an ordnance clerk) Alice Bull, Eileen Sizeland, Trixie Furber and many others. There is one name that keeps coming back to me, Pte or L/Cpl Rosemary King, who was in my room. Rosemary was a Christian who would go to church every Sunday with her Bible in her hand, often suffering jibes from her fellow room mates that I as Cpl did not stop. As a Christian myself now that makes me ashamed of myself. I eventually left employment with the RAOC as a SSgt - doing Admin for 8 years. I spent my last 2 years as a WRAC welfare assistant - what happened to that pilot scheme I wonder?

I am in contact with Joan Ryder and Bobbie Brewster who I met in Germany, and enjoy our yearly gathering of the WRAC Dinner Club - thank you Anne and all who make that Dinner Club the success that it is.

EXAMINING AMMUNITION AT CAD KINETON

Mrs Gladys Scully (née Allen, Cpl, W/380435)
7 The Paddock, Ballymena, Co Antrim BT42 1RN

I read with interest Mrs J K Green's letter about CAD Kineton. I was one of the ammunition examiners she mentioned and it would be interesting to know how many of us are left.

I kept in touch with two - Frankie Hogan and Heather Quartley but sadly they have both died.

It really was a scream as to how I became an ammunition examiner. I don't know what the system is now but in those day (1953) one had to do an IQ Test. After the test you were put in front of a Personnel Officer who told you what you would be suited for as regards a job in the WRAC.

This officer told me that I could be an EAG, so I tried to look intelligent because I had no idea what that was and she apparently thought I should know, I suppose, or otherwise she would have explained what it was. The second option was to be a Kine Theodilite which again I had no idea what it was, examiner which were the only words which made sense to me so I opted for that!

We studied at CAD Kineton for one and a half years. There were twelve of us on the course and somebody in the War Office had decided that women would make better ammunition examiners than the men because we were more dextrous with our hands. Nearly all of the male ammunition examiners were National Service Men with BSc Degrees. About eight of us passed the course and I was lucky enough to pass a further exam and get a Grade IX Trade Class which promoted me to grand rank of full Corporal. I enclose a photograph of me showing off my two stripes, also another photograph with Dorothy Lloyd, the girl Mrs Green mentioned and shown in the photograph she had published in your magazine.



LCpl Dorothy Lloyd, LCpl Gladys Allen in "India" Nissen Hut - CAD Kineton, 1953



Cpl Gladys Allen just qualified as Ammunition Examiner Class I (note the 'A' in flames on the right arm) - CAD Kineton, 1953

When I qualified, I had to work in the factory removing tails from 2" mortars and putting on some others. I absolutely hated it and told the SIOO (Senior Inspecting Ordnance Officer) and to keep me quiet and not cause trouble (I think) he employed me as his Chief Clerk in the office which was much more pleasant. You had to be an ammunition examiner to hold this job and the person before me was a Warrant Officer 1, so I bet he was really happy when I got his job and he had to go back in to the factory. The SIOO was a lovely man - a Major M D S Pritchard-Davies. There were two IOOs as well and years later I met Captain P G MacDonald in the Officers' Mess in Paderborn, Germany - he was then a Brigadier.

I did the usual training at the Depot in Guildford and when we were posted to CAD KINETON we were

allocated our Nissen Huts but I had not realised this when I was told that I would be going to India. I was really excited to be going to India but came to my senses when we were shown the Nissen Hut.

These huts were built by the WRAC. One of the girls Bronwen Bumstead used to have a glass of water by her bed each night and in the morning it was frozen solid. In spite of all the hardships we made our own fun and survived to tell the tale.

MEMOIRS OF AN OFFICER'S BATWOMAN

Mrs J M Knight (formerly W406423 Pte Knight)
27 Manby Road, Great Malvern, Worcs WR14 3BD

This is just an acknowledgement of those special days, months, years, when one's heart sings with the joy of youthful vigorousness. These are some of the memories which are remembered and recalled when a trip down the lane of remembrance of dear friends and colleagues are relived and renewed.

12th Battalion WRAC Camp at Richmond Park was in all its seasons a wonderful place to be. The influence of comradeship and the combinations of immense parkland and the deer conjure the magic to mind and thoughts.

Richmond Hill Gate was manned by a gentleman we knew by the name of Tiny. Although the name belies the man, Tiny was enormous – a giant of a man and I for one felt safe that he was there on guard.



Pte Knight and friend in Richmond Park



Pte Knight and friend in Isabella Plantation

MY MISHAPS WHILST ATTENDING ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Avril Williams

1982 – Plymouth Grand Reunion – my first Grand Reunion, and the first as Secretary. Having been elected the previous week, I did not realise that a ticket had not been booked for the secretary's lunch. Brigadier King, the then General Secretary, kindly let me have his.

1985 – Harrogate Grand Reunion – stayed at the new Harrogate Conference Centre where the reunion was held. Before breakfast on the Saturday morning the fire alarm went off and we all had to assemble in the car park in various stages of dress.

1988 – St Paul's Cathedral/Barbican, Grand Jubilee – tummy bug.

1991 – Glasgow Grand Reunion – no vacancies at the Moat House for the Friday night so had to re-pack and move to the Moat House on Saturday morning. Got lost and nearly missed the AGM at the City Chambers. Just managed to get to the Service at the Cathedral on the Sunday.

1992 – The Final Band Concert – great panic could not find our tickets until the last minute. Took a lot of photographs – no film in camera.

1992 – Farewell to the WRAC – stayed in a hotel at Guildford. In the hurry to park the car at Stoughton Barracks the following morning, nearly crashed into a brick wall as the gear was not in neutral. Got soaked at the Beating of the Retreat, had left the umbrella in car.

1994 – Lakeside Grand Reunion – got lost trying to find the Park and Ride from the Cathedral to Guildford.

1997 – Blackpool Grand Reunion – no personal mishaps, but two members had to change their room.

1999 – AGM Guildford University – nearly lost four members who came by coach. They were dropped off on the outskirts of Guildford and had to walk to the University carrying heavy suitcases.

2000 – Cardiff Grand Reunion – no personal hitches, but had to march past twice.

2003 – Birmingham Grand Reunion – after an enjoyable Friday evening, was suffering from a chronic hangover whilst visiting the Arboretum on the Saturday.

AGC Open Day Worthy Down – attended four of these, and always got lost at Sutton Scotney, but arrived on time.

My next event will be the Grand Reunion in Coventry and I would not miss it for the world.

Editor: I have my fingers crossed that you will have an accident-free time at Coventry!

DID YOU ENLIST IN DECEMBER 1963?

Mrs Sue Foulks née Saunders, (W/420757)
111 Newlands, Whitfield, Dover Kent CT16 3ND

Do you recognise yourself in this platoon photo? It was taken at Lingfield in 1963. I am in the 5th row, 5th from the left. I have been in contact with Peggy Bush who is in the 2nd row, 2nd from the right. Our platoon officer was 2Lt J Hill and a few names I have found printed on the reverse of the photo are Cpl Toni Haswell, Privates Pat Aspinall, Kay Williams, Val Rouse, S Cox, L Selby, J Phillips, J. Hannah, ? O'Brien and ? Hickman. It would be great if some of us could meet up at the next reunion.

Editor: We hope many will meet up again at the Grand Reunion. You will see that the application form allows you to tell us which units you served in so we are going to try to set up some "Meet up" points.



Where Are You Now?

D.C.R.E. (EAST CHESHIRE)

Mrs Mary Thomas (W/174824, Pte M Hall-Patch)
87 The Straight Bit, Flackwell Heath, Bucks HP10 9NE

I joined the ATS in 1942 and after 6 weeks training at Honiton, was posted as a draughtsperson to D C R E (East Cheshire) at Alderley Edge.

I often think about my comrades there and wonder if anyone has any news of LCpl "Maggie" Prior, Drivers Joyce Knights and Angela Graham plus the 2 Peggy's. I would love to hear from them.

Q BATTERY, 562 SL REGT RA

Mrs B M Hudson (W360712)
19 Lawrence Street, Newark, Notts NG24 1NE

I would be very interested to hear from any of the members of South London based unit Q Battery, 562 (EE) LAA/SL Regt RA/TA). I met my husband Geoff there in 1949. We married in 1951 and are still together after all these years.

GUILDFORD INTAKE MAY - JULY 1965

Janet V Burchett-Vass, née Veness, Pte W/425624
Hi Holme, Station road, Old Leake, Boston, Lincolnshire
PE22 9QQ

Forty years ago, on 10 May 1965, this motley crew made its way to Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Guildford. I can't remember the platoon details and would love to hear from anyone who can. There was Betty McLaughlin, Elizabeth from Scunthorpe, Pat from Dudley, etc.

If your number is around W/425624, what are you doing now? I would love to hear from you. Please get in touch.



Guildford Intake May - July 1965

WHO ARE THEY?

Robin & Anne-Marie Ellis
Vellynsaundry, Pendarves, Camborne,
Cornwall TR14 0RS



Are they ATS?

I enclose the photograph of five young ladies, who, I am led to believe, were in the ATS.

The source of this photo is a mystery. It's negative was found in a leather settee bought at an auction a few years ago in West Co. All the photographs were of my old brother and his wife who live in France. Hence younger brother (UK resident) has been deputed to trace.

I would deem it a great delight to have this photo reproduced in your bi-annual newsletter and the young (then!) ladies being identified and perhaps the location also.

Editor: I am not 100% sure that all these ladies are ATS. I know someone will put me right!

HELEN COUTTS OR CASSIDY

Mr Ian Nivison, 1 Welhouse Road, Carshalton,
Surrey SM5 1RS

I enclose a copy of a wartime photograph of my Mother and what little information I have been able to gather.

Details: Name: HELEN COUTTS or could possibly be known as HELEN CASSIDY her Mother's maiden name. She was a Scot and was born at Garscube Road, Maryhill, Glasgow in 1916. This, or Raeberry Street, Maryhill, might have been her home address when she was stationed at Maryhill Barracks, Glasgow where the picture was taken in 1941. I have a faint recollection that she once mentioned that there were New Zealand Maoris stationed at Maryhill when she was there, also that she might have once been stationed on the East Coast of England.

I realise this is a very long shot what with it being over sixty years ago but you never know. It would be nice to obtain her service number as this has been the stumbling block in obtaining her service records from the records office and determining her possible entitlement to the Defence and or War medal.

JOAN MARY ROPER

Mr Simon Grose
5 Pullen Street, Narrabundah, ACT 2604, Australia

I am researching my mother's war record in the ATS. I have requested a copy of her service record from Historical Disclosures section of the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow but I am also interested in hearing from any of her surviving ATS colleagues.

Her details: Joan Mary Roper
Service Number W/95580
Served 1/12/1941 - 14/1/1946

My mother died in 1988. She shared few details of her wartime service with me or my brothers and sister before she died, but her brother, who served in the RAF, remembers that she was in a "hush-hush" role that involved coded signals. He also recalls that she may have attained the rank of Sergeant Major.

The only evidence we have regarding her role is a mention of her service card that she attended No. 3 Intelligence School in April 1942.

I would be very grateful for any assistance you can provide.

AGNES POTTER

Mr Harry Tye
11 Regents Close, Restrict, Brighouse,
West Yorkshire HD6 3QT

My name is Harry Tye. In 1943 we arrived at Ross-on-Wye from Ireland with the KOYLI and I met a young ATS girl. She had been evacuated from Dover. We got on very well. Unfortunately I had to pack my bags and go to Normandy with the KOYLI.

I have often wondered if she is still around. Does anyone remember Agnes Potter? Can anyone help me with her current name and address?

12 IND COY AUGUST 1955

Mrs I L Howe (ex W/389460 Pte Chamberlain)
133 Corn Close, South Normanton, Alfreton,
Derbyshire DE55 2JE

I go to the WRAC Reunions of late, each time I notice quite a lot of the ex-WRAC have photographs of their intake. I cannot remember having one and though maybe you could help?

I was enlisted on 8th August 1955 went to Kingston-on-Thames and was in 12th Ind Coy for the five weeks training, but I have no recollection of this. Can you help? I can only remember two names with me, that of Gill Dawson and Peggy Gilmoye. It's a shame we didn't do more at that time. It's only later on that you want to remember and share the happy memories.

I later joined 145 Pro Coy but it is how I started with WRAC that matters. My number was W/389460. That might help.

I live with the old methods. At 67? my soft wear, or is it SOFTWARE is so "floppy" it just doesn't do the job. Who cares, pen and paper are easier, anyway, more personal.

Hopefully you can help? I live in anticipation as well as in South Normanton, Derbyshire.

Editor: Sorry - I do not have copies of intake photographs. Perhaps someone reading this was on the same course and could let you have a copy?



Helen Coutts or Cassidy

KINES, C.A.E.E., R.A., 1942.
 WOODYATES MANOR, Nr SALISBURY
 Mrs M D Rogers, 103 Lion House Park, Mill Road,
 Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 2SE

PDF Compressor Free Version



Were you there?

Two Heads - D Oldridge, L Medlicott

*Standing - B Sutton, M Lee, E Emerson, C Jeal, J Perrot,
 M Smith, L Lloyd, D—, E Trow.*

*Front - C Keighly, D Carthew, K Stokes, A Dalby, D Jones,
 O—.*

'G' COMPANY SPRINGFIELD HOUSE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Group photo of girls of 'G' Company at Kidderminster attached to RAPC. We were living in a large detached house with very few amenities, but we managed and walked about 2 miles to work each day to a very old carpet factory, which the army had taken over. All wooden floors and stairs, such a fire hazard really, as nearly everyone smoked, in fact, some days it was difficult to see across the room. But we worked hard and when let out, the evenings were time to cycle off, borrowed bikes, of course, and meet up at the local hostelry for a sing song and a bitter or two, couldn't afford gin at that time, we had to wait for the yanks to come, they had more money!!! Happy days. Can anyone recognise themselves?



Weekly Workout

Monday

Beat around the bush
 Jump to conclusions
 Climb the walls
 Wade through the morning paper

Tuesday

Drag my heels
 Push my luck
 Make mountains out of mole hills
 Hit the nail on the head

Wednesday

Bend over backwards
 Jump on the Band Wagon
 Run around in circles

Thursday

Advise the President on how to run the country
 Toot my own horn
 Pull out all the stops
 Add fuel to the fire

Friday

Open a can of worms
 Put my foot in my mouth
 Start the ball rolling
 Go over the edge

Saturday

Pick up the pieces!!

Sunday

Kneel in prayer
 Bow my head in thanksgiving
 Uplift my hands in praise
 Hug someone and encourage them.

Whew! What a workout!

It's enough to tire one out for a long time!!

EASTERN AREA REUNION - 2005

The Eastern Area will be hold a Reunion on
 5 November at Colchester Officer's Club,
 Colchester at 12.30 pm. All ex-ATS and WRAC
 are welcome.

Branch members should contact their branch
 Secretaries but others should contact:

Pat Stevenson on 01473 827172 or
 27 Benton Street, Hadleigh, Suffolk IP7 5AR

Tickets which include a 2 course lunch and
 coffee are £12.50

Reunions

YORK REUNION

Irene Maclean
PDF Compressor Free Version

Thanks to the Internet, eight old pals met in York in April, some of us not having met for over 40 years. It was a beautiful weekend in a fantastic City. We were in memory lane most of the time, finding a couple of hours for a bit of retail therapy!



The girls were, left to right Anne Bell, Anne Waterworth, Sandy Taylor, Carol Traynor, Rose Friend, Anne Deakin, Irene Maclean, Chris (Cherry) Harbon. We are all meeting again at the WRAC Dinner Club in October and some of us will be attending the Royal Signals Reunion at Blandford.

The comradeship we found during our Service days was still very evident in York. Absolutely Fabulous!!

ATS ACK-ACK ASSEMBLY 19-22 MAY 2006

Anyone going to this reunion should note that the original date given was wrong! The RA Assembly is being held in the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool on 19-22 May 2006.

Please note this new date. The RA have changed it because the original dates (26-29 May 2006) coincide with the Bank Holiday.

If you have any other queries, please contact Elizabeth Lapham on 0161 4833498.

WALES AND THE WEST AREA REUNION HEREFORD, 11 SEPTEMBER 2004

When the Hereford Branch agreed to host the Area Reunion, we decided to make it a real fun day for everyone. The Three Counties Hotel was the chosen venue as it was the only location which seemed to meet all the requirements. The price per head of £15 seemed expensive but we were determined we were going to get

our money's worth and, thanks to the hotel, we certainly did.



The Hereford and Worcester Army Cadet Force were 'invited' to attend that day to act as traffic control and 'runners' for those ladies who were less able to do for themselves. If these cadets are an example of our future then we do not have anything to worry about. They were so good and helpful. Many had just returned from the Normandy beaches and the respect they showed everyone helped to make the day.



During the planning stages, we heard on the radio about the Home Front Recall Lottery funding to be used by veterans to celebrate in and around the 60th Anniversary of the end of the War. We were delighted to get a grant and it certainly helped towards individual costs, buffet for the cadets, wine on the tables and additional teas/coffees.



On the day, the weather was perfect – blue skies and warm. All the Hereford volunteers arrived and set up. The Branch members put in a tremendous effort. Jackie was selling books, Sharon was catching anyone who had not bought a raffle ticket and Mary Nicholls was at the 'Odds and Ends' stall. **PDF Compressor Free Version** Just before the electric cable extension drum for **one minute** (it was for the electric piano) and **she sold it!**

By this time, people were gathering and relaxing in the soft seating with their coffee and chatting. The Secretaries adjourned to their meeting. Towards the end of that meeting, the Mayor, Mrs Polly Andrews, and Lady Mayor arrived and were greeted by an official line up. We were then all piped into the buffet by the Pipe Major of the ACF Band. What a buffet it was! Lots of smiles and empty plates said it all.



After the meal, the Mayor and Maggie Purkis addressed us and the Mayor took charge of the raffle. Having drawn the first ticket, she just carried on and we finished in record time. Then came the biggest cake known to man or woman. This had been made by a chef from 'The Camp' in Hereford who had recreated all the Association badges in icing and arranged them around the cake. We did not have a knife up to the job so our Honorary President, Ena Price, the Mayor and our Area Chairman had to borrow the Drum Major's dirk!

Our entertainment began with the Wye Singers, ladies of Hereford who gave resounding editions of the familiar old

songs. I looked around in amazement to see that the cadets were singing their hearts out too. Then the doors opened to the Hereford and Worcester ACF Pipe Band marching in to 'Steam Boat'. They formed a circle and played a medley of rousing tunes. When it went quiet, I thought that no one was enjoying it but it dawned on us all that they were playing 'Daisy Daisy' so the room erupted into singing, arm waving and flags flying! Then came the serious part with 'Highland Cathedral' and 'Auld Lang Syne'. Again the arms linked and everyone stood up. It was such an emotional moment. The Pipe Band then slowly began to march out and left Pipie alone to play 'Going Home'. He then bowed and marched away allowing the music to drift away gently.

I have to sincerely thank everyone who was involved. It was an extra special day. The whole of Hereford Branch would also like to say 'Thank You' for the many kind letters of thanks and appreciation.



Articles of Interest

RUDGE HILL HOUSE

Mrs Anne Buckland-Smith, Rudge Hill House, Edge,
Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 6PQ

My husband and I live at Rudge Hill House, an old, three-storey stone building in Gloucestershire, on the very edge of the Cotswold escarpment. To the west, we look over the River Severn into Wales, with the city of Gloucester in the valley below. To the east, we look across the village of Edge to the old market town of Painswick. We are told that, during the Second World War, the house was requisitioned as a Mess for ATS working at the nearby Paul's Camp, which may have been a small tyre depot. Can any of your readers, who had served at the camp, tell us more?

Rudge Hill House has been extended and developed over its lifetime but there are few signs of its time as an ATS Mess. The door to one of the cellars still has a strip of old paintwork, suggesting that a wooden signboard was once there. Judging by its length and position, this might have been a notice to the Bomb Shelter. The gardens, which slope down the side of a hill in three terraces, still show small rectangular depressions in various places, now covered by grass, which might have been used as vegetable plots. There are two rows of old brass coat hooks in the cloakroom by the front door. However, the route taken to the camp may have been through the door at the back of the house and down across the garden.

We know that a searchlight and anti-aircraft gun battery was sited on Haresfield Beacon. We also understand that tanks manufactured in Gloucester were field-tested on Rudge Hill Common nearby. It is possible that Paul's Camp supplied spares, fuel, ammunition and communications. The Camp was used as a temporary encampment by American troops before the D Day landings.

We would be very interested to learn anything about Paul's Camp, but especially about Rudge Hill House. We should like to know how many were usually in residence, what the twenty-odd rooms were used for, who ran the Mess and anything at all about life here at the time, including any interesting anecdotes. If anyone has any photographs of the house, we would very much like to see them.

SUPPLIERS OF EMBROIDERED BADGES

In my editorial last time, I published information about a company called Premier Badges. I am grateful to **Mrs Celia Bass** for the following addresses of companies who can also supply embroidered badges and other items:-

Leith's Army Stores
7 - 9 - 10 Brunswick Place
Leith Walk
Edinburgh EH7 6HW 0131 556 2337

Pamela Lewis
The Heraldic Company (GB)
Overbriar Edge End
Coleford
Glos GL16 7HA 01594 83200

Maddocks & Dick Ltd
231 Canongate, Royal Mile
Edinburgh EH8 8BJ 0131 556 6012

Alice KABLUCZENKO Editor

When you read about Alice's Diamond Anniversary on Page 50 of the last *Lioness*, were you as intrigued as I was when I originally received the photograph? I had no first name for her husband and I knew it was not an ATS badge on her uniform hat!

Since then, Alice has sent me a book called "From the Mersey to the Vistula". In the book, written for her grandchildren, she tells the full story of how she met her Polish sailor. His name was Tadeuzs but was soon christened Eddie! They met at a dance in the Grafton Club, Liverpool which had a big band playing every night and Eddie and many of his friends used to go along when their ship was docked in the City. The book is very entertaining and also tells of their many visits over the years back to Eddie's family in Poland.

I just wondered how many of you went to the dances in the Grafton Club? Did you meet your husband there? Let me know!

VETERAN'S BADGE

Miss Helen Thomson (W/125562 ATS)
16 Catmoor Court, Scone, Perth PH2 6NH

I have just received my HM Armed Forces Veteran Brooch and I am delighted with it. It is in a lovely presentation box so I think they have done us proud.

I was a Churchill Conscript and served 4 years in the ATS, Stocktaking Depot, M T Spares, Derby. I became a Staff Sergeant. Initially I did 3 weeks training in the Cameron Barracks, Inverness. I am 85 years of age!

Editor: I do hope that all of you who are eligible have applied. They are available through the Royal British Legion or Veterans Agency.

THE LADYBIRDS - NEXT INSTALMENT

Irene Hall (ex RQMS WRAC and now Secretary Wales and the West Area)

Reading the article about the WRAC College Ladybird, being presented to Lt Col Sue Westlake by WO1 Agnes Doig, brought back memories not necessarily fond ones!

I wonder how many other Orderly Sergeants remember having to trudge down to the College gates on a winter's night at 23.59 hours and 07.00 hours to check that the two Ladybirds were still securely fixed to the gates and duly writing in the Orderly Sergeant's Report that all was secure. However, there were a couple of occasions when they did go AWOL. The thought of reporting to the RSM Shirley Wolstenholme that they had gone astray was worse than death let alone several extra duties.

Luckily, they never went missing when I was on duty. We always made sure we knew when Sandhurst Officer Cadets were visiting our WRAC Cadets, as they were usually the Ladybird Snatchers.

Editor: I still don't know where the other one is!

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO MY MOTHER 60 YEARS AGO

Mrs Elizabeth Laurence-Smith MBE
The Coach House, Monks Walk, Ascot,
Berkshire SL5 9AZ

Names on back of photograph are: Willay A, Porteus D, Robinson M, McCarthy D, Richards M, Crode M, Williamson P, Abbott S, Jones L, Lynch E, Edwards A.

Dear Mother

I have just returned from another wonderful 48 hours leave in Brussels to find your letter waiting for me. It made me a little homesick to read about you putting out the flags and your other celebrations for VE Day. Our own celebrations went on for the whole week and Antwerp was certainly a very lively place. The Belgians say, of course, that the excitement was not nearly as great as their liberation days, which is understandable. A lot of troops came down from the line and they, of course, went wild, plus the RAF. It must be a wonderful feeling for them to

know that they won't be shot down anymore or to fight in the sky – the same with the front line troops.



The Monty Services Club in Brussels – May 1945

There is a flap on now and we expect to see Germany before very long. The idea is that most of the equipment is up there and Antwerp is pretty far to bring guns etc so Hamburg seems the likely answer. In some of the lovely forests outside Brussels there are tremendous ammunition dumps which stretch for miles and it will be a few years before it is cleared. Also fields of disused tanks, cars, guns, etc.

I am ignoring any censorship regulations here but don't think it can matter.
Mary Churchill is back from London so the celebrations must be over.

I must close now for I am getting bitten by mosquitoes. A lot of animals seem to be hovering about me. I am sitting up in bed writing this. It is certainly nice going to sleep and waking up in a tent!

Dearest Love

Elizabeth

Editor: This letter was written by Subaltern Elizabeth Goad. Many of you may know her better as Mrs Elizabeth Laurence-Smith who earned a well-deserved MBE for her sterling work as the Benevolent Fund Case Secretary.

TOTAL SERVICE 65 YEARS!

Mrs Jeanne N H Kick BEM, 108 Harewood Court,
Wilbury Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 3GL

Ex members of the Women's Royal Army Corps are serving the Royal British Legion County of Sussex.



Still Soldiering On

Left to right: Ex Sgt (Recruiter) Jeanne N H Kick BEM
Chairman Hove Branch Royal British
Legion,
Chairman Conference Committee Sussex
County Royal British Legion

Ex Sgt Averil Rosser
Chairman Women's Section, Sussex County

Ex WWII Vanessa Dike
County Secretary Sussex County Royal
British Legion

Ex Cpl Debbie Lofts
County Standard Bearer Women's Section
(County Standard Bearer 13 years)

70TH BIRTHDAY BASH FOR CHARITIES

Miss Evelyn Norton, 10 Dower Close, Darley Abbey,
Derby DE22 1DJ

I was W/375520 Pte Evelyn Norton and served in Guildford from December 1952 until September 1954 when I was posted to Egypt. It was my 70th birthday in February and I decided to hold a "big bash" in aid of charities.

In spite of the bad weather, nearly 150 people came along from places as far away as Slough and Doncaster. I was especially pleased to see some ex-WRAC friends. Belle Jenkinson and Nancy Puckey came from Tamworth with their husbands; Joan Day and her husband came from Nottingham but the prize for the longest journey goes to Anna McGinley, née Smith, who came all the way from Glasgow!

The Ockbrook Big band provided the music and were dressed in American uniforms. They played many Glenn Miller favourites as well as other "Big Band" tunes. Lots of the people who were there were also dressed in 40s clothes. There were prizes for the best three but I wish I could have given them all a prize they were so good.

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Evelyn with Glenn the band leader who played Glenn Miller's Music, hence the American uniform.

We had an excellent buffet but the best bit was the big cake. It had a camel, palm trees and a pyramid to remind me of my time in Egypt.



Evelyn with her cake

The most important part was the raffle. We had three good prizes for the £5 door tickets and all together £1200 was raised for charity and I am very grateful to my friends and family for helping me to do that. I was pleased to give some of that to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund.

Editor: Miss Norton also sent the double centre spread from the Derby Evening Telegraph which showed what a good party it was. She says she is planning her 75th party already!

PTI COURSE 1943

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

I very much liked the back page, of the last edition, seeing the young ladies at the PTI Reunion. It shows what

exercise does for you! I too was a PTI. Enclosed is a photograph when we were training (ATS). I think it was taken in 1943 at Buckhurst.



Outdoor Exercises - 1943 style!

I still keep up the exercises, but with a Senior Citizens Club. We sit on chairs so we exercise mainly our arms and legs to music with many a laugh.

MESSAGE TO THE LADIES OF THE WRAC DINNER CLUB, STOKE-ON-TRENT 2004

Mrs Valerie Gaff

(Greater London Branch WRAC Association)
11 Anthony Road, Welling, Kent DA16 3EH

May I take this opportunity to thank the ladies who so kindly donated to the Royal Tank Regiment Association's Fighting Fund for Tpr Kevin Williams of the 2nd RTR during the Dinner in Stoke-on-Trent and to the Committee for allowing the collection.

I said that I would let everyone know how much was collected and I am delighted to say that £300.00 was sent on your behalf to General Sir Antony Walker KCB at RTR Headquarters, Stanley Barracks, Bovington, Dorset. This amount was just fantastic. I didn't expect to reach such a figure. I am married to an ex 2nd Tankie who is a member of both the London & Medway Branches of the RTR Association so you can see my involvement in the fund. It stands at a staggering £65,000 which is due to a large extent to several National Newspapers running a collection.

Since October 2004 there have been two court hearings, one at the Old Bailey and one at the High Court in Fleet Street. Due to the complexity of the case between the Military and Civil Law it now has been referred back to the Old Bailey to be heard in June sometime. At the moment there is a reporting ban in place so details will not be made public until the end of the trial.

Once again ladies my sincere thanks for your generosity and to Ann Deakin for a wonderful weekend.

PS The case concerning Tpr Kevin Williams was brought forward and it was found that there was no case to answer so he was cleared and freed.

LOST AT SEA – SIGNALLERS OF THE FIRST AND NURSING YEOMANRY (FANY) by Brian Austin

On Saturday 12 February 1944 the troopship the SS *Khedive Ismael*, sailing in convoy KR8 from Mombasa, Kenya, to Colombo, was sunk within just two minutes. No fewer than 1297 lives were lost from a total ship's complement of 1511, making it the third largest loss of life from a merchant ship sunk during the Second World War. Amongst them were 77 women – a double tragedy as it represented the greatest loss of serving women in the history of the British Commonwealth. Eight of them were young women from the Women's Territorial Service (East Africa) who were part of the FANYs formed in Kenya during the 1930s. Their reason for being aboard the stricken ship was kept a closely guarded secret for they were all attached to the Royal Signals and their function, on arrival in Ceylon, was to operate in the Cipher and Signals offices thereby releasing the men for service in the campaign being mounted in Burma.

One of those FANYs was my aunt, A/Sgt Barbara Mary Austin, no. K 541, a 24 year-old South African who had enlisted in Nairobi in June 1941 along with so many of her compatriots. She was young woman of purpose, full of vigour and much to the amazement of her mother in Johannesburg soon reported that she was driving lorries! However, six months later,



Barbara Austin

according to the terse statement in her Service record, she was 'attached Signals' and wore the Corps blue and white armband when on duty. In September 1942 she was promoted A/Cpl (Paid) and was shown as being 'on estab Shipping Intelligence'. And there was certainly much shipping intelligence to be had since the sea route around the Cape was so vital to Britain's wartime interests being both the oil supply route and the link to the Far East. German submarines had been very active there from 1940 and had taken a heavy toll of Allied shipping. Soon they were joined by the Japanese with their huge, ocean-going, submarines larger even than the escort vessels of the British convoys. One of those submarines was I-27, 356 feet long and displacing 2,198 tons. Since entering the Indian Ocean in June 1942 the I-27 had sunk 75,466 tons of allied shipping. On 12 February 1944 the I-27 sank her last ship – the SS *Khedive Ismael* – due south of the Maldive Islands and just a day's sailing from her destination. Of the nine FANYs aboard only one, L/Cpl Gloria West K.641, survived and she was one of only six

women and 208 men to be rescued from the shark-infested waters almost boiling due to the depth charges from the two escort destroyers HMS *Paladin* and HMS *Petard*.



FANY Memorial – Knightsbridge

The eight FANYs from East Africa who died are commemorated on the famous FANY Memorial plaque in the north wall of St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge.

Editor: Thanks to Brian Austin and the Royal Signals Museum publication, "The Shutter Telegraph," for their kind permission to reproduce this fascinating story.

D DAY 60TH ANNIVERSARY CRUISE "MV VAN GOGH"

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



Jean Kingdon née Black



Babs Kersley

Babs and I met in 1942 when she was posted to work in "J" Coy Office, ATS in Winchester.

We were on good terms, only occasionally socialising together. At the end of the War I married and left the service, Babs was posted overseas. We started a spasmodic correspondence, which gradually developed into a real friendship and to this day we remain good friends. We both belong to the Royal British Legion and decided to travel on the D-Day 60th Anniversary Cruise (6 June 2004).

The MV Van Gogh was a comfortable ship, offering a selection of facilities, a variety of cabins, lifts to all cabin decks, several bars and comfortable lounges, a cinema, swimming pool, sauna and a very good restaurant.



Babs Kersley and Jean Kingdon

DAY 1 – We boarded the ship about four o'clock in the afternoon and had afternoon tea. We had an excellent dinner and the ship sailed for an overnight anchorage.

DAY 2 – We set sail to join the flotilla of ships in Southampton Water for the symbolic crossing of the Channel. We watched a specially arranged fly-past. In the afternoon there was a special service conducted by the RBL National Chaplain and a Poppy drop from a Lancaster Bomber from the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. In the evening after passing through the canal and Pegasus Bridge, we berthed at Caen-Ouistreham. A Gala Dinner was served in the restaurant.

DAY 3 – After an early breakfast we boarded coaches for Bayeux to join the Bi-National official ceremony in the Bayeux Cemetery. After the service we rejoined the coaches for the journey to Arranches, packed lunches were provided. We had a little free time in Arranches making our own way (with help from the British soldiers) to watch the N.V.A. parade scheduled to start at 1715 hrs.

Babs and I managed to get quite a good position at the front of the crowd with a sideways view of the VIP platform.

We were to rejoin our coaches at 2030 hrs about seven to ten minutes walk away up a slight incline. We were all there waiting the coaches arrived at 2230 hrs (yes two hours late). Had it not been for the British troops I do not know what would have happened. Don't forget we were all "getting on a bit", many with walking sticks. These young soldiers were wonderful. They helped people up the slope to the coach park, they found chairs and benches, they carried endless supplies of bottled water and even found coats and wraps for some who were feeling the evening cold.

When the coaches eventually arrived we were taken directly back to the ship, a planned detour had to be cancelled. It is a good thing the evening meal was a buffet supper!!

DAY 4 - We arrived back in Southampton quite early and after breakfast disembarked around 0830 hrs. It was a terrific experience, meeting and chatting with many "old soldiers" and being looked after by the "young" soldiers of today. As I said they were wonderful.

My trip to France for "D" Day was a really terrific experience, something I shall remember for a long time.

A VOLUNTEER AT THE OLYMPICS

Maj (Retd) Penny Spink MBE

Two years ago, I attended a conference at which Olga Kiku, the Volunteer Manager for the Athens Olympics, spoke about their plans to recruit volunteers of all ages, both with and without specific sporting technical expertise. Having always wanted to experience an Olympics from the inside, and preferably in fencing, I followed Olga's instructions and registered as a volunteer. No funding was available for travel or accommodation costs, but volunteers would receive their uniform, free travel within the Olympic area and subsistence when working.

My application was accepted, and I contacted various officials in the Greek Fencing Federation requesting to be included in their volunteer lists. It was very difficult to arrange accommodation as all the hotels in central Athens had been booked by ATHOC, the Athens Olympic Committee organising group. Eventually through a contact in the RYA I found a small hotel in Palio Faliro, on the coast, at a reasonable price, and quite near the fencing venue.

I flew into Athens a week before the Games and was kept busy travelling across the city firstly to collect my accreditation and uniform – a taxing experience involving bits of queuing at various points in a very hot hangar-like building, and then to spend two days in the Olympic Village on the north side of the city. I was working on the Fencing Sport Info desk, where we helped the team managers to arrange their training schedules and to give them the information they required both for the pre-competition period and for the Games venue at Hellinikon. It was fascinating to see the incredible diverseness of the competitors, all the national costumes and the myriad of flags of all nations.

I had decided in advance to buy a ticket for the Opening Ceremony. Much to my surprise I found myself sitting next to a local family, one of whom was a volunteer in the fencing venue! It was the most magnificent



Penny in her Olympic uniform

ceremony, fascinating from start to finish. The historical display was brilliantly executed, and I found myself looking forward to reading about the colourful tableaux in the excellent book given to all ticket holders, along with a torch and bell for crowd participation! Team GB got a particularly vivid view of the torch. The lighting of the Olympic Torch which had travelled round the globe from Olympia was a very poignant moment and the lighting of the high-tech stadium flame was most impressive. After all the speeches and formalities of opening the Games, the firework display was stunning and would have been visible well beyond the city.

I worked on the Fencing Info desk and spent my days collating results for the team captains and answering a miscellany of questions. My companion was an Englishwoman who has lived and worked in Greece for many years, and was a schoolgirl fencing champion before she left UK. We started at 8 am and finished between 9 and 10 pm, with a break in the middle of the day.

I was fortunate enough to watch part of the preliminary rounds most days, including those involving our two qualified British fencers, Louise Bond-Williams (sabre) and Richard Kruse (foil). Both were spurred on by an enthusiastic British crowd, complete with face paint. Richard reached the last 8, a fantastic result, and Louise the last 16, again very creditable. We now look forward to seeing them achieve a medal apiece in Beijing.

With the vote on the bids for 2012 now coming very near, London will be able to learn a great deal from Athens on how to organise the volunteers. The legacy from both the facilities and the 'human resources' of 2004 will be formidable.

FAMAGUSTA REVISITED

Mrs Kathy George, née Moig (Cpl WRAC W/434468)
53 Crawley Avenue, Hebburn, Tyne & Wear NE31 2LP

I joined the WRAC in November 1968. After basic training in Guildford I went on to train as an Analyst Special Intelligence. Then in July 1969 I was posted to 9 Signal Regiment in Cyprus. There I met some lovely girls who are still my dearest friends. I also met my husband Mick who was serving in the Royal Signals. We were married in September 1970, in St Patrick's Church at Ayios Nikolaos.



With Lion in 1969

We had a wonderful time during our stay there. We went all over the island, spent lots of time on the beach, went on boat trips and visited most of the local tavernas. We spent many warm evenings in Famagusta and often visited the Turkish walled city, which we called 'Turkey Town'. The enclosed pictures were taken there, near the entrance to Othello's Tower.



With Lion 35 years later!

The lion has not changed at all. I can't say the same for myself! On that visit we were able to get into Famagusta for the first time since the Turkish Invasion. It was very sad to see the destruction, hotels which were once beautiful and modern, now wrecked and crumbling. Gardens once beautiful all overgrown and hidden. I hope that soon the politicians will get together and try to resolve their differences. Famagusta could be a wonderful holiday resort again.

I have been reunited with some of the 'old girls' from my time in 9 Sigs and have been to the WRAC Dinner Club a couple of times now. I have met up with Pam Bray who also met her husband Alan Bowen at 9 Sigs and Jan Lang, now Jones, who was my bridesmaid. Also at the dinner I met Jackie Wilson and Sue Pickersgill who also met their husbands in Cyprus. Well it is called the island of love. I also met Lesley Lloyd and the previous year Angie Sillett who also served in 9 Sigs. I am looking forward to this year's dinner in Birmingham and hope some more old friends turn up. We always have a lovely time and I would recommend it to everyone who has served in either WRAC or ATS. The ATS ladies can dance the night away as well as the rest of us, but we are quite a hardy lot. I loved my time in the WRAC and have had a great time meeting up with my old pals, looking forward to meeting up with some more.

MORSE STAR

Noel Leadbeater (W/212511 ATS)
4 Riley Court, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4HG

During the war I served in the "Y Service" as an intercept operator, part of the Enigma operation, stationed at Beaumanor.

Recently the Scarborough Amateur Radio Group held a competition. They sent out a morse transmission including 5 letter blocks on a specified frequency. On my very small radio receiver I was fortunate enough to pick

up their signals and take down the "message". Today, 7 June 2005, I heard from the organiser that I had scored 100% in accuracy.



Pte Leadbeater - Morse Star

I consider this to be a tribute to the wonderful training we had at Trowbridge and then Douglas, Isle of Man. My Morse Instructor was Corporal Ravenscroft, "The Raven," and I would love to know that she is still alive and could read this acknowledgement to her skill and patience.

Editor: I think it is also a tribute to your own abilities. Many congratulations.

TRIP TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Mrs M D Marsh
55 Church Court, Church Lane, Midsomer Norton,
Bath BA3 2JA

I went with Bath Branch to Lichfield from 24 - 27 May. The main purpose was to visit the Arboretum to see the WRAC Association grove. The weather was not very kind as it rained that day and as this is an open area we all got very wet. We had a visit to the Chapel and told the history of how and why this was started. This area covers a lot of ground, and it was good that a map was provided to help us find our way around.

We found the WRAC plot and others relating to the regiments we served with. I found the Royal Artillery grove which impressed me. Other members of our group

found others that their brothers and friends had served in. We exchanged experiences and memories of the days we spent serving beside the men to help our country. We all came from different backgrounds, but were proud to wear the khaki uniform.

Many years have passed and yet we meet at our branches with the same spirit as we had then. So hope this will go on for many years and Good Luck to the girls now serving as we were.

Editor: Mrs Marsh was also kind enough to send some of her own Service memories and I hope you will enjoy sharing them.

"Service Memories"

My service in the ATS made me respect other ranks above me. I had always shown this to my parents, relations and teachers during my school days. I knew what I would get from them if I did not do as I was told. I was 18 when I enrolled and trained at Northampton Racecourse. We had all types of girls in our Nissen Hut. We covered up for those who were not on a pass that came in through the window after curfew.

Most of the uniform was standard size and I was only about 5ft. Do you remember passion killers (khaki knickers) elastic top and legs? Well, mine kept my knees and bosom warm! Pay was 12/6d per week out of which 7/6 went to my Mom.

I trained for the Gun Operation Room where we plotted the planes from the coast to the nearest gun site. This was a good training for map reading for later years. We were treated the same as men; PT at 6.30, plus run, route marches and drill. Some did not know their right from their left.

Serving nearly 5 years, I came out the same as I went in - Private W/206456 with a clean record and 3 medals. During this time I met the man who became my husband in September 1945. We were married for 49 years.

I have never regretted joining up, although I never was a teenager in many ways, being in uniform. It taught me to deal with problems in life.

I now belong to the WRAC Association and would encourage any ex-ATS to join for friendship as we need this when getting old.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY IN SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

Joyce Callaghan
PO Box 7, Epping, NSW, Australia 1710

The 60th Anniversary of V E Day was the reason for a quiet celebration by British Ex-Servicemen and women in Sydney Australia. On Friday 6th May 2005 we had morning tea at the State of NSW Parliament House. Small groups knew each other, but we soon moved around, searching out others for an interesting conversation about the old days! We couldn't manage to eat all the very fancy cakes provided.

A coach took us towards the eastern suburbs of Sydney (towards the coast and harbour entrance) and dropped off for a seafood lunch at a complex of well known restaurants and kiosks at Watsons Bay. It was a lovely summer's day and there were plenty of people about. Our bus picked us up and took us on our way – past some magnificent real estate, driver giving a non-stop commentary, to the residence of the British Consul General, where we were expected for afternoon tea.

The house was very gracious and fairly old (in our terms). We were served a constant supply of finger food both savoury and sweet, brought to us as we sat in a huge circle under an awning; the British Consul spoke to us all in turn, taking about 2 hours. The whole day was very pleasant indeed.

Next day, Saturday, we all met at a city hotel for lunch – a set meal, absolutely delicious. We were entertained by two men with guitar etc as background music, then a "cockney" singer in stunning black and white dress, plumed hat, and singing all the old songs from the 40's. Jokes we all understood, all taking us back to our youth. Jugglers then took over with consummate skill.

The two days were very well organised, nothing stinted. We will remember the occasion with pleasure.

WHO IS THIS RECRUIT?

Mrs P J Smith, née Stark (W/425499,
WRAC Staff Band 1965-1969)
The Arbour, 7 Grove Road South, Southsea,
Hants PO5 3QR



I came across the enclosed photograph in a book entitled, "Handbook (With Footnotes)" by Eve Arnold, Bloomsbury Publishing plc, 2004, and thought you might be interested to see it and perhaps even include it in *The Lioness*.

According to the title it was taken in England in 1965 and looks suspiciously like a recruit in training to me. I joined up that year but certainly don't recall any swanky American photographers turning up and photographing us!

Anyway, I'd be fascinated to know if anyone can identify the woman in the picture.

Editor: I'm sure many of us would be interested. This photograph also appeared in the Daily Telegraph.

CLUB ATS COLCHESTER

Mrs Beryl Newell
Jodes Holly, St Mary's Road, Aingers Green,
Great Bentley, Colchester, CO7 8NG

Club ATS is purely social and caring and is still going strong well into it's third year. We have a total of 53 members and a monthly attendance of approximately 30. Three new members have joined us this year. More and more members are finding it difficult to use buses and we are now starting a scheme for members individually to keep in touch with these members.

We ended last year very sadly, with the death after a stroke, of our Chairman, Mrs Margaret Grey. Even now, in June, we are still missing her. At her son's request, a donation was sent to the Stroke Association.

In January, we applied for a Lottery Grant for the club. All their requests for information have been complied with, and hopefully, the cheque will arrive soon. We have booked a coach to go to Felixstowe with a lunch at the RBL Club, so that more of our Suffolk members can attend. We also plan a VJ Day commemoration in August with a Buffet Lunch in Colchester.

In April, we were asked by local TV "About Anglia", if some of us would talk about VE Day. Four of us met the presenter and his cameraman in Colchester Castle Park on a beautiful day and spent a happy 20 minutes chatting and reminiscing. This was broadcast on 6th May. Also in May, we were invited to Dovercourt by Jean and Dorothy for a Buffet Lunch to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of VE Day.

We have been invited to the Eastern Area Re-Union Lunch in Colchester in October by Pat Stevenson – who was a member of Colchester Branch and is now the WRAC Association Eastern Area Chairman.

Best wishes to all our former members. We still meet on the second Wednesday at the same place and would always be glad to see you.

Editor: I would, of course, much prefer it if Colchester Branch was still an active Branch of the Association. However, at least they are all still staying in touch!

REETINGS FROM CANADA

Mrs Joan Brownson née Roberts (W/292554)
470 George Street South, Apt 214, Peterborough,
Ontario K9J 3E4 Canada

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*Joyce Malyon née Roberts and Joan Brownson
née Roberts*

First, I enjoyed reading about our 16th Annual Reunion in London Ontario, Canada.

I joined the ATS in 1944. While in training at Guildford I had a bad reaction to my vaccination and I was in the hospital with a high fever when a buzz bomb dropped on the Nissen hut! After training I went to Camberley – to driving school. The Queen was there at the same time. My next posting was to Nescliffe where I was in a bunker packing cordite in a 25lb shell. I then went to Chilwell in Nottinghamshire where I was cleaning returned shells in an acid bath. After my demob, I met and married my husband. In 1956 we came to Canada with our 3 boys and had 2 more boys here. It's been an exciting and busy life and I wouldn't have missed it.

I belong to the Legion. We have our own Ex-Servicewomen's Branch – BR 452 Peterborough, Ontario. We are one of four branches in Canada and our branch is the only one with just Ex-Servicewomen – no associates.

Since I grew up in Coventry I am pleased that the next Grand Re-union will be there. I am hoping to make it over there.

WHY Y SIGNALS? – I Found Out!

Cynthia M Humble, (née Grossman)

20 Wembley Gardens, Bramcote, Nottingham NG9 3FE

I was born into an Army family in 1925 and in 1939 was

saying goodbye to my father who was to serve overseas. We were living in Stirling, in Scotland, which had been his last posting before the outbreak of war. For the next three years school and Pathé Gazette newsreels of the war at the local cinema determined my life. Older male school friends left to train in branches of the armed forces, and my thoughts turned to service life in khaki to emulate my father, who by this time was in the Middle East. So, at seventeen and a half, with parental consent, I joined the ATS. Three weeks on the parade ground and army food slimmed away my puppy fat, and I was about to sit the tests that would establish my career. It appeared I was not mechanically minded, or inclined towards mathematics. However, I had an ear for musical notes, and was of a patient nature, and so I was to be a wireless operator in Y Signals.



At the start of my training

I spent the next few months in the Isle of Man, learning Morse – to receive but not to send. Soon we were into a routine of breakfast, morning parade, and into classrooms by 9.00 a.m. to learn the Morse code alphabet, the Q code, and to me the dullness of lectures on magnetism and electricity. This went on till 5.00 p.m. with a brief break for lunch. We had no idea what this learning was for, and the drill parades and physical training periods were welcome activities. At some point we learnt we were to intercept German messages that would be in code, and on no account were we to speak of this to anyone, not even our nearest and dearest. In a funny way this was put to the test, when we were to be inspected by an important visitor, the Princess Royal, sister of King George VI. She proceeded slowly down the line and stopped in front of me. "What do you do Private?" she asked. I floundered, saying in my mind "You can't tell her" – "We march and play games, Ma'am," I said. She must have thought I was a waste of space, not knowing that the game was a form of bingo, the letters on our cards being sent in Morse!

In the New Year we were told which Listening Stations we were to report to on the mainland. They were Beaumanor in Leicestershire, Keddestone Hall in Derbyshire, and

Forest Moor in Yorkshire, the latter some miles from Harrogate. Most of my friends from the Edinburgh Training camp were to join me at Harrogate and Forest Moor. Our billet was to be in a girl's boarding school outside the town, Queen Ethelburgas, now sadly demolished. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

In the first eight weeks we worked to get used to real German traffic, and the shifts, especially the night shift. The wireless station was up on the moors, and we travelled in large troop carriers in convoy, taking about thirty minutes to get there. The shift was 1.00 p.m. – 7 p.m. 7.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. midnight – 7.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. to midnight. Next day was a day off, and the following morning a few hours of chores before starting the cycle again. We sat in a set room tuned into our allotted frequencies, taking down messages in blocks of five letters, adjusting our sets and earphones to the many outside aerials. These messages were whisked away and sent to what we only knew as Station X. Where that was, and what was done to them we did not know, other than what we did was TOP SECRET and important. I was interested in amateur dramatics having been involved in these since school days. Jane Dandridge, another wireless operator, started a play reading group, and we progressed to acting. Jane produced "Ladies in Retirement" and "Quiet Wedding". In the latter I wore a wedding dress that someone had borrowed and to dress up was out of this world!

The Wireless Station on the moor was surrounded by a high wire fence, and when the night shifts were exchanged all was in darkness. Came the day in May 1945 we had been on the midnight to 7.00 a.m. shift and the sets had been very quiet, with very little Morse, and some messages in German language coming through. Tired, we rode back to our huts to sleep. It was a lovely day and sleep deserted us for we knew something important was to be announced. We sat outside the hut on the grass in our blue and white striped pyjamas and eventually we heard – THE WAR WAS OVER! Half the shift, me included, had to go on the 7 p.m. to midnight shift. We sat twiddling the knobs on our sets with nothing coming through and those five hours passed slowly, but were enlivened with soup plates of raisins (luxury) put by our wireless receivers to nibble the boredom away! Come midnight, we were relieved by the incoming laughing and happy shift telling us we would need dark glasses. Puzzled, we went through the open doors to find the whole station ablaze with light. The blackout was over! In the grounds was a large static water tank to be used in the case of fire. The whole watch spontaneously made a circle around it, joining hands and singing "There'll always be an England", and the Scottish girls adding "As long as Scotland's there!"

So ended my war, but not my service life. Some months after VE Day, I was posted to Beaumanor, another listening post near Loughborough, where we continued to intercept. This was the station featured in the film "Enigma" based on Robert Harris's book.

I was commissioned in October 1946 and was posted to Folkestone, a transit camp in a requisitioned hotel for wives and children about to join their husbands and fathers in Europe. Eventually it was for families returning from India after Independence. I was Messing Officer, which I found more stressful than intercepting – coping with rations and complaints! I then went to Chatham, HQ

of the Royal Engineers where I met my husband-to-be, Sam Humble.



With second pip aged 21

My final posting, now in the WRAC, was to the Drivers and Clerks Training Centre at Horsley Hall, Gresford, North Wales. I was there until I married in June 1950.

During all these years I never breathed a word to anyone, including my father and fiancé of those early days in the ATS. When the Enigma Machine became news, and the mysterious Station X was revealed as Bletchley Park, I wondered what had happened to Sally Taylor, Maisie Craig, Bobbie Fell, Christine McGill, Sheila Clarke and many other names in my autograph book. Edna Simpson (née Graham and I, Cynthia Humble, (née Grossman) are still in touch. The others are vivid and very much alive in my memories. One thing that will keep us alive is a photograph of our watch at Harrogate, in Bletchley Park – we are museum pieces!

LADY MUSICIANS THEN.....

"HAPPY BAND OF GIRLS"

First WRAC Band, by Janet Cox née Skellon

In the summer of 1949 I saw an advertisement in the national press for ladies who could play any kind of instrument or had knowledge of music, to form the new WRAC Band. I decided to pop down to the recruitment office and sign up unbeknown to my father who had very Victorian views and would have disapproved.

I sat the examinations, had a medical and they found that I couldn't hear properly. After having my ear syringed a bead fell out which must have been there for years. I was then told that I was too young to join up as I wouldn't be 17 and a half years old until the following November. I went home with my hearing so clear and I was dying to tell my parents about the bead, but decided against it in case I got a clip around the ear from my Dad.

One day during October I came home from work and Dad



The WRAC Band. Photograph courtesy of ex Director of Music Maj L Hopkin MBE who can be seen with her clarinet behind the Xylophone!

was sitting by the fire with a look of thunder on his face and in his hand was a very official looking letter. I had forgotten my visit to the recruiting office and wasn't really bothered about joining up, but Dad said "I have signed it. Go and don't bother to come home – you will only get pregnant." What a start to my life in the WRAC.

At the beginning of November, I travelled down to Guildford and after being kitted out with uniform, D.Ks, large bra, woollen stockings, brown lace-up shoes and enough STs to last me until I did get pregnant! After basic training I duly joined the Band. What a welcome. I believe that I was only the fourteenth girl to join. The other members came from all over the country, one was a Salvation Army girl, a couple from colleges, another couple from the Dagenham Girl Pipers and one or two who had transferred over from the ATS Band.

Our Bandmaster was WO1 Fred Goddard who was so kind to the girls. We could talk to him about most things and "cry on his shoulder". I was enlisted as a cornet player and our instructor was Sgt Ted Stevens, the Band Sgt Major, who taught us all he knew about brass instruments. He was very strict but had an understanding manner.

On 22nd April 1950 the Band was asked to take part in a concert with the Kneller Hall Band for H M King George VI. By that time we had 25 playing members and had been kitted out in our very smart No 1 Dress with gold braid. This was our first public appearance and it went down so well that we took off with a bang playing at such places as Eastbourne, Brighton, Worthing and Edinburgh. We also made a broadcast for the BBC on Music While You Work. In addition we played at the Lord Mayor's Show, the Tattoo at White City and Edinburgh and played for the Queen's Coronation River Pageant.

Despite my father's prediction, I did not get pregnant whilst in the band but did have a bit of a scare when the band was playing in Catterick. A colleague in the band and I developed terrible stomach pains and reported sick thinking it might be food poisoning – by coincidence both of us were suffering from appendicitis.

When the hospital spoke to my father on the telephone

the following day the nurse said to him, "Mr Skellon, your daughter is in the Royal Infirmary. This is just to let you know that they are both doing well." Dad put the 'phone down and said to himself "I knew she would get pregnant". Anyway, he decided that he ought to find out more and rang the hospital the next day to ask whether his daughter had a boy or a girl and was informed that I had had my appendix removed and that my friend was also at the same hospital having undergone the same operation. From that day on my father trusted me. I left to get married at the end of 1953, but have very fond recollections of my time with the band and have not forgotten any of the musicianship that I acquired there and still play with various other bands.

The original girls who joined the Band in 1949 formed a group called the 49-ers and we meet once a year to reminisce and catch up on all our news. We all have wonderful memories of our time in The Band.

.....AND NOW!

MARCHING MUSIC

WO1 Caroline Constantine leads the Army Air Corps Band, based in Middle Wallop. She is the Army's first woman bandmaster.

Interview: Phil Pitt

Photograph: Allan House

I can't remember not being able to read music. I went to a good primary school that started everybody on recorders, and so as they learned to read words, they learned to read music. If you showed the ability or desire to go further, then you would go on to have lessons with a specialist. I was given a flute and a clarinet and told to go off for a week and see which one I liked. I found the flute suited me and I was told never to touch a clarinet again; it's all to do with embouchure, the shape of your mouth.

By the time I finished Sixth Form College I was at Grade Eight on the flute and Grade Six on piano. I then did a degree in music at the University of East Anglia, but I had no knowledge of military bands. I was thinking about

becoming a professional musician or a teacher. Unless you're involved in officer cadets, the military side of life is not something that you are aware of at University.

As a post-graduate at the London College of Music I met a couple of students who were trying to get into the Army as musicians but I still didn't see it as any kind of potential career. I wasn't good enough to get a position with one of the major orchestras where the competition is incredibly fierce, but I enjoyed administration and concert management, so I moved into music publishing.

From there I went into the Army. It was a strange leap. I sang with London Philharmonic Choir in my spare time. We did a concert at the Milton Keynes Bowl and a load of men in suits turned up. I couldn't work out why they were there or what they were doing. Also, there were no string players, just brass and wind. It wasn't until everybody started getting dressed for the concert that the uniforms started coming out and I realised it was the Grenadier Guards Band. I got talking to them and they encouraged me to join up. I was 23. Basic training was daunting, but I was older than most of the recruits and had experienced living away from home already.

From there I went to The Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall in Twickenham, the home of Army music, to train as a musician. Learning to march and play at the same time was the hardest thing for me. I'd been an orchestral player up to that point, so was used to working sitting down. All of a sudden, I was thrust to the back of the band with a piccolo and had to march.



WO1 Caroline Constantine

I was posted to the Royal Logistic Corps Band first. It had been suggested to me from the beginning that one day I might want to consider becoming a bandmaster, but I only started to think about it about a year and a half after joining the band. I had to decide whether I wanted a long-term career or just do my three years and leave.

Bandmasters need to balance musical skill and experience with man-management. My job mainly revolves around being the training and recruiting officer for the band. You've got to balance managing musicians' careers for the good of the whole band, as well as developing their own individual aspirations.

I answer to the Director of Music – who is the Officer in Charge of the band. My main day-to-day duties are providing training both musical and non-musical. We have to ensure new members of the band pass their exams. Then there is extra training – for some learning to drive, for others more adventurous things like parachute courses, hang-gliding and skiing.

I often lead the band for pass-out parades and mess nights, and with the Director of Music, conduct part of the concerts that the band performs. However this means that I don't play as much as I used to.

I hope to become a Director of Music in the future. I've got till 2019 to serve, so I don't feel there's a huge rush to try for a commission.

I am still the only female bandmaster in the Army. There are others coming through now, though. I don't feel like a trailblazer, but I do get a few strange looks. Time will change that.

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A CLOSE SHAVE

C Morrison, 2 Boyd Terrace, Uig by Portree,
Isle of Skye, Inverness-shire IV51 9YQ

I'm sure that most of us who served in London during the war have memories of one or two "Close Shaves", but I have a vivid memory of a "Hair-raising experience" over which I have a quiet smile to myself when I remember.

During those days of rationing, we didn't have many extravagances to spend our money on but we indulged ourselves by patronising the so-called "Court Hairdressers" (who had Debutantes etc. in their clientele). My friend Joan went to "Henri" and I went usually to Vasco for a "Vasco Bubble". However, one day, when shopping around Piccadilly, we decided to have our hair done at one of the large Department stores; so, off we went to the third storey hairdressing salon. They had just introduced the new "open-plan" system rather than individual cubicles and Joan and I were sat side by side with two Assistants attending to us.

We were told that the firm had introduced a new vibratory system that, supposedly, did wonders for our scalp and we opted to have this done. When we were all strung up it was rather like the enclosed photograph except that our wires were plugged into two knee-high cabinets, rather like an old-fashioned telephone exchange.

All went well for a while and we chatted until we heard the ominous "vroom-vroom" of a Doodlebug (VI rocket). Normally we just carried on as usual but we knew that, once the engine stopped, the rocket would fall straight down and explode. This happened when it appeared to be directly above us and the two Attendants started screaming and ran away downstairs, leaving us totally immobilised and attached to wires. All I could say to Joan was "I expected to be bombed in London but didn't expect to be scalped!"

After a few minutes, the two Hairdressers returned and

apologised very sheepishly for not unplugging us but, as we were unhurt, we just passed this off with a smile!

That was one hairdressing experience I shall never forget!



Pre Carmen Rollers!

BRIDGING THE GENERATIONS

It was in 1987 that Mary Nicholls felt someone tap her on her shoulder while she was out shopping in Hereford. She turned and a lady said to her, "I think I know you". Mary had to cast her mind back some 45 years in order to recognise her old Company Sergeant Major, CSM Ena Boucher (now Mrs Ena Price). She joined the ATS towards the end of 1938 and trained alongside the TA in her hometown of Hereford. She wasn't very keen on 'rifle practice' but quickly got the hang of 'drill' even though she wasn't yet kitted out in khaki. Ena was also given 'gas tuition' long before respirators were issued! During the months of waiting for her uniform the Army paid Ena to wear her own raincoat in inclement weather. When the uniform did eventually arrive she was soon packing her kit bag to join 430 women who spent a couple of weeks under canvas at Malvern in June 1939. By the time war was declared she was a well-established Sergeant and knew how to bring out the best in her girls.

Private Mary Dearden on the other hand was a 'canny lass' from Newcastle upon Tyne. She began her life in the forces during 1940 by working in the NAAFI at a RAF Spitfire Station near Darlington. By 1942 she wanted a bit more adventure so she joined the ATS along with a few of her chums. Mary's adventurous spirit had to be put on hold for a little longer since the reception camp where she did her basic training was only a one-penny bus ride from her home. With 2 years experience in the NAAFI

Mary didn't need to be taught how to produce bangers and mash and was soon helping to set up requisitioned billets for ATS units. Finally she was posted to the Green Dragon Hotel in Hereford where Ena was the CSM. This was also a requisitioned billet for ATS drivers and Mary was in her element helping to keep everyone well fed.



Mary and Joyce Nicholls

After that chance meeting in 1987 Ena and Mary had a lot of catching up to do. Ena remembered that Mary had married a local chap called Ken Nicholls, but didn't know she had settled down in Herefordshire to be a farmer's wife. Nor did she know that Mary had 3 sons and a daughter, Joyce, who had served in the WRAC during the 60s!

Private Joyce Nicholls had listened to her mum's stories about the ATS for as long as she could remember and she couldn't wait to be old enough to taste the Army first hand. Ken didn't want to sign the consent form but, as usual, persuasive Joyce won Dad over. That said, Joyce wouldn't let either parent see her off at the station when she set off to Guildford. Although she wanted to be a driver, Joyce was posted to Germany to be trained to work in a telephone exchange. The WRAC was training recruits 'on the job' rather than sending them to centres such as Catterick. Once she became accustomed to travelling on the wrong side of the road and had picked up a bit of the language, Joyce thoroughly enjoyed life as a soldier in BAOR. When she returned to Civvy Street she continued to use her Army trade and has been employed by the MOD for the last 30 years.

Mary proudly introduced her daughter to Ena and the trio decided to try to trace some more of the ATS who had been stationed in Hereford during the war. They knew some had married and stayed in the area. Three ladies soon became eight and they all rolled up their sleeves with great enthusiasm to raise funds for a reunion party in 1988 – the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS.

The Hereford Branch of the WRAC Association was born! Today Ena, with her indomitable spirit and sense of fair play is our President. 'Canny' Mary, her traditional values and no nonsense approach is in the Chair and Joyce has the unenviable job of Treasurer. Congratulations Ena, Mary and Joyce, you bring warmth, compassion, fair play and much jollity to every meeting.



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WRAC Association Memorabilia

All items of memorabilia can be obtained from the Association Headquarters.

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to WRAC Association and forward with your order to WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester, Hants. SO21 2RG.

All prices include postage and packing



Association
£3.00



ATS
£2.75



WRAC
£2.75



Bell & Thimble
£2.50 & £2.00



Ladies Hankies
£2.00



Paperweight in box
£12.00



Key ring
£2.50



Regi-Bears £8.25 each



Table Mat £6.50 matching Coaster £2.50



Address Book £2.00 each

Other Items For Sale

WRAC Cap Badge	£6.50
Teapot Stand	£3.50
Square Tray	£4.40
Leather Bookmark	£1.25
Note Book	£2.00
Comb in case	£2.00

Branch News

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH BRANCH

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At our AGM we reviewed our past year which followed the usual pattern of various talks, some summer pub lunches and a few 'natter' afternoons. Our finances are in good order thanks to our Treasurer, Mavis Litchfield-Parry.

All very satisfactory but, sadly, other pressing matters were not to have such a good result. Our Chairman/Secretary, Doreen Peters and Mavis expressed a wish to stand down. However, no new faces were forthcoming and, regrettably, we had to decide to close in twelve months time. However, we were persuaded to delay closure until after the Grand Reunion and that is what we plan to do.

We are investigating how we can retain our membership and, when we know what is available, we will let all members know, especially those unable to attend meetings. They are being advised of the situation in our customary Summer Newsletter.

BATH BRANCH

Since the beginning of the year we have had a very interesting and varied Programme. We try to have speakers about once a quarter; we are still able to meet twice a month, average attendance being 18 to 20. The dates we don't have speakers are for business of our Association, and the Branch, a social afternoon, and sometimes a Sales Table Meeting. This helps towards the rent of our room and speaker's fees.

Speakers have spoken on a variety of subjects. One of the most interesting being on Vending Machines. We learnt that even the Ancient Egyptians had a form of Vending Machine! We had a return visit by Mrs. Furey-King who some of you know as she has done so much to bring the various ways in which the ATS served during World War II to the notice of the public. She even produced some of the clothing we wore, especially the underwear! We learnt about Bath in the distant past. It would appear that events organised in the early 1900s were better organised than the present day ones, certainly they did not take so long to organise as today. We learnt about old needle-cases, and how women have always sewn, going back B.C. A speaker from Age Concern informed us of benefits we could apply for now we are senior citizens!

The highlight of the last few months was receiving money from Home Front Re-Call which enabled us to have three days visiting Stafford to look round the National Memorial at the Arboretum. We saw quite a difference from when we visited at the time of our last Grand Reunion. It is a pity there is not more publicity about it. We have been surprised at the number of people who know nothing about it. We look forward to meeting our new Area Chairman, Major Ann Maskens-McIntyre in the near future.

We have welcomed several new members recently, some being ex-WAAFs so we do have some interesting discussions with our fellow ex-service members.

The following report about the Branch visit to Stafford was sent in by Miss Margaret Crawley:

Having received a grant from the Lottery's Home Front Recall Fund, 16 members of Bath Branch set off on 23rd May for a 4-day trip to Staffordshire in order to visit the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas. We had visited the Arboretum in 2003 and were impressed at the way the various memorial gardens had progressed since then. So far, over 100 plots have been allocated. There is a daily Service of Remembrance in the Millennium Chapel as a reminder of the reason for the Arboretum.

We also visited the Staffordshire Regimental Museum near Lichfield, which has a replica of a First World War trench in the grounds. Later we looked round Lichfield Cathedral which has a number of plaques connected with the Regiment.

There was also time for a visit to Coughton Court, which has lovely gardens, and on the return journey to Bath we stopped for lunch at Stratford on Avon.

Everyone agreed it had been a memorable trip and a visit to the Arboretum is certainly to be recommended.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Written by Mary Gunning

This is very much a nostalgic year with the 60th Anniversary events. We think of old friends of 60 years ago and wonder if they are still around. Birmingham had many girls attached to 'G' Company, who were stationed at Droitwich and Kidderminster working with the RAPC. Please look at the photograph in Where Are You Now?



Mary Gunning
(nee Spencer) in 1943



Mary Gunning receiving
Certificate from General
Secretary!

We managed to rally a good crowd at our May Birthday Party and were delighted that Major Jane Freebairn, Maggie Purkis and Irene Hall, together with some of Wolverhampton Branch, came along. We had a lovely time and everyone enjoyed the excellent meal and entertainment.

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Two of our members were presented with Certificates of Appreciation and I was one of them. My Certificate now hangs in the hall amongst my gallery of family photographs for one and all to see, 'Life in the Old Gal' yet! Thank you members of Birmingham for nominating me. Joining the WRAC/ATS Association was an added bonus to my life. I have met some very nice ladies and we all have a common interest and enjoy listening to the tales of army life as it was when we were young. For the first time I went on holiday with an ATS friend, our Secretary, Joyce Smith. We both said how much we had enjoyed the week relaxing together. It gave me the idea that perhaps other members who are on their own might look at the Club for a holiday companion for most of us are fairly adaptable. Think about it ladies it doesn't have to cost the earth!

Some of our members are attending the unveiling in July, the Horse Guards Parade Event and also attending the Service in Westminster Abbey. Quite an eventful year to look forward to and with a lottery grant towards the cost of travel most appreciated.

BLACKPOOL BRANCH

We continue to meet for lunch at 1.00 p.m. on the third Friday of each month at Franco's Restaurant, Cleveleys. Some of our members travel quite a distance to attend and their efforts are much appreciated.

Two of our ladies will be present at the Unveiling of the Monument to the Women of WW2 and we are all looking forward to the hot summer the weather forecasters have promised.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

Having missed the last edition of *Lioness* I have quite a fair amount to report for this issue but will keep some items to a minimum.

Going back to June 2004, we enjoyed our annual garden party at the home of our Secretary, and once again the weather was kind to us. In July we were well entertained with a highly amusing talk "Enjoy being a woman with men in mind" by Kate Greenway. In September Mrs Furey-King gave us an insight to her database, giving details of the various sections in which ATS girls worked during WW2. Our October meeting was used to catch up on our business matters, to discuss the future programme and we held a successful Bring & Buy to help offset the increased cost of our venue. In November we held our AGM. Margaret Drew reported on a meeting held at Bournemouth Town Hall with the Mayor, Mrs Emily Morrell Cross and reps of other Veterans organisations, at which it was decided that Bournemouth would celebrate the end of hostilities in 1945 by having celebrations in the

town on Sunday 14 August 2005 (as near as possible to VJ day).

At another ceremony at the Town Hall one of our members, Merville Pidgeon received a Normandy Brooch. Merville was the only lady amongst some 30 Normandy Veterans at the ceremony. Thirty-two members enjoyed the Christmas Lunch, held at the East Anglia Hotel.

In February our new Chairman, Betty Tucker took the meeting, having just recovered from a bad attack of shingles. We had another Bring & Buy to boost our funds. At the March meeting Captain Grinsted from the Salvation Army gave us a talk about the origins of the Salvation Army, its growth worldwide and the work carried out in many spheres. In April we were entertained by Mrs Margaret Bright's illustrated talk about the River Thames from its source right down to the Queen Elizabeth Bridge at Dartford.

Mrs Nickless, a past Branch Treasurer, moved to Kent but wishes to remain a member of this branch. Surprisingly, we are still welcoming new members, six in the last year (five ex-ATS and one ex-WRAC.) One wonders whether we advertise the Association enough. New members only seem to hear of us by chance and always say, "I wish I'd known, I could have joined years ago".

Our May meeting took the form of a Mystery Coach trip and our destination was the Blue Pool near Wareham. We had a superb afternoon in the beautiful grounds. The weather was kind and our afternoon concluded with a cream tea. Our local library set up a WW2 Quiz evening to which local organisations were invited to enter teams. We are proud to say our team came second – well done "ATS Girls".

As this goes to print we are looking forward to the June meeting when we have a speaker talking about National Trust Properties and Gardens in Wessex. This will be followed by the Veterans Festival in Weymouth and in July the celebrations in London and our own celebratory garden tea party at the home of our Secretary. We do not meet in August but hope that as many members as possible will be at the end of WWII hostilities events being arranged by Bournemouth Council on Sunday 14 August.

Sadly, I have to report the death of Joan Vaughan, a long serving member of this branch. Joan joined the ATS 6th Hampshire Company just prior to the outbreak of WWII. The Coy trained in Portsmouth and was accommodated in a girls' school, and subsequently worked in the RAOC Barracks nearby. After 18 months the company was posted to Leicester but Joan returned to Bournemouth where she served in the Pay Corps, reaching the rank of WO2. Her family lived in Bournemouth and Joan was a very active Church member of St Michael's Church. As a branch member she attended regularly and was very popular, sadly in recent years her eyesight was failing and she grew frail and was unable to attend for the last couple of years. Joan had been a strong and wise committee member and, back in 1980, was our Treasurer. We all miss her wisdom and good humour and particularly her

GRAND REUNION 2006

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(PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FORM)

The Grand Reunion 2006 will take place at Warwick University (Central Campus - Coventry) from 31st March - 2nd April inclusive.

The Reunion has been costed as an all-inclusive package; either £150 for en-suite, or £100 for standard accommodation. By all-inclusive, we mean that room charges and all meals are included in the ticket price. Anything you choose to purchase in the bar or one of the cafeterias will be up to you, in cash, at the time. The cost of a ticket in no way reflects the standard of accommodation or the facilities available at the University. While the Arts Centre at Warwick University does not boast the same architectural magnificence as the Great Hall at Birmingham, the Coventry Campus in general is newer, more compact and far superior to that at Mason Hall. The fact that ticket prices are so low is due to a very generous bequest made to the Association.

Many of our members will remember DABS Brook, who sadly passed away in March 2002. Avril Williams (Secretary of Cambridge Branch and good friend of DABS) gave the Association a great deal of money in her memory. Council voted to spend much of the bequest on subsidising the next Reunion.

The University is easily accessible by road or rail. There is ample free car parking at the University. For those travelling by rail, the local bus service runs regularly between the Campus and the station (the fare is only 90p). Taxis are plentiful and the fare is (at the moment) about £3.00. (Obviously if 3 or more share, the fare becomes the same as that on the bus).

The outing to the National Memorial Arboretum in 2003 was very popular but we have decided against organising an outing for three main reasons:

Providing and distributing packed lunches for a portion of the membership became an administrative nightmare.

The Coventry Campus is very conveniently placed for those who would like to visit the various local attractions. There are several - more information in the next *Lioness*.

Many of us are now more content to stay on site and spend the morning browsing in the bookshop, enjoying a stroll by the lake, and generally reuniting with old friends and former colleagues. Please tell us where you served on the application form and we plan to create a "Reunion Corner".

Several members of the Association have asked that we provide accommodation for an extra night to avoid the necessity of travelling by rail (especially) on Sunday. We are very happy to provide a list of nearby hotels and B&B's (please indicate your interest when returning your application form).

THE PROGRAMME

Thursday 30 March 2006

Grand Reunion Organisational Team will arrive at the University for final preparations.

Friday 31 March 2006

Members arrive at the Rootes Building (Reception, Cafeteria, Dining Room and Bar) from midday and check in at the Association Reception Desks.

Room keys will not be available until 1500hrs.

Members will be encouraged to deposit their luggage at Association Reception and explore the campus. The bar and cafeterias will be open for lunch.

The Reunion Package begins at 1500hrs. All items marked with an asterisk * are included in the ticket price.

Members collect their room keys from University Reception from 1500hrs. If members wish to go straight to their rooms, (between 300-500 yards away) a shuttle bus will be available and some of the members of the Grand Reunion Organisational team will help with carrying luggage.

- * 1500 – 1530hrs Tea with chocolate biscuits will be served in the Arts Centre foyer (directly across the road from the Rootes Building).

Members to meet in the bar on the first floor of the Rootes Building before dinner. There is a lift in the building.

* There will be supper and entertainment in the Panorama Suite on the second floor of the Rootes Building. The theme for the evening will be 1940's/1950's and members are encouraged to wear dress of the era – not compulsory. Water will be available on the tables and bottles of wine will be on sale in the dining room, but if you prefer an alternative libation, do purchase it from the bar.

Saturday 01 April 2006

- * The shuttle bus will run between the accommodation blocks and the Rootes Building. Breakfast will be served in the cafeteria on the first floor.

The Secretaries meeting will take place shortly after breakfast in the Arts Centre Building.

Members will be free to take advantage of the campus facilities (bookshop, Post Office, bank, etc), visit local attractions or relax and reunite with friends and former colleagues.

- * Morning coffee and biscuits will be available in the Arts Centre foyer.
- * Lunch will be served in the cafeteria in the Rootes Building.

The AGM will be held in the Arts Centre (Butterworth Hall).

- * Afternoon tea and chocolate biscuits will be available in the Arts Centre foyer.
 - * The shuttle bus will again be available to transport members back to the accommodation blocks.
- Members will gather in the bar in the Rootes Building before dinner.

* Dinner will be served in the Panorama Suite as on Friday evening. Again, water will be provided on the tables and bottles of wine will be on sale in the dining room. Several members of the AGC Band will play during and after dinner.

Sunday 02 April 2006

- * The shuttle bus will again be available to transport members to the Rootes Building before breakfast.

Members are advised to vacate their rooms and deposit their luggage in a secure location in the Rootes Building. It may be wise for those travelling by car to take their luggage and deposit it in their boot at this time.

- * Breakfast will be served in the cafeteria in the Rootes Building.

Those wishing to march will form up behind the AGC Band. The proposed route is approximately 300 yards, culminating at the main door of the Arts Centre Building. The Drumhead Service will take place in the Butterworth Hall.

- * Coffee and biscuits will be served in the foyer of the Arts Centre Building after the Service.
- * Lunch will be served in the Cafeteria (Rootes Building) for those who do not decide to make a quick get-away.

The Grand Reunion will effectively close at 1500hrs.

There are only 400 places available for the Grand Reunion 2006. Please complete your application form (attached) and return it together with your cheque (made payable to WRAC Association) as soon as possible.

Cancellation Policy

If you have to cancel your attendance at the Grand Reunion and do so before 16th March 2006, you will receive 100% refund. If you cancel by 23rd March 2006, 50% refund will be made. Sadly, if you have to cancel after 23rd March 2006, (only a week before the function) a refund will not be available.

Ticket prices of £150 or £100 (en-suite or standard accommodation) are "set in stone". However, public transport fees may fluctuate before the event.

Please don't ignore your Grand Draw Tickets. In the past, when we had a serving Corps the Association was able to raise enough money to fund the Grand Reunion. We can no longer do this and rely on your support. The Grand Reunion is being heavily subsidised. **PLEASE HELP BY BUYING YOUR BOOK OF TICKETS FOR £5.00.**

The Council of the Association has put together what, I'm sure you will agree, promises to be a memorable and enjoyable weekend. We look forward to seeing you at The University of Warwick (Central [Coventry] Campus) on 31st March 2006.

APPLICATION

GRAND REUNION 31ST MARCH – 2ND APRIL

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Please complete this form in Block Capitals and Return by 15th December 2005			
TITLE (Miss/Mrs/Rank)	INITIALS	SURNAME	DECORATIONS
ADDRESS:			
POST CODE:		TELEPHONE NUMBER:	
BRANCH:		SERVICE/PERSONAL NUMBER:	
DATES OF SERVICE:			
UNITS / PLACES SERVED:			
I WISH TO ATTEND AND BOOK A ROOM AS FOLLOWS: YES/NO* *delete as appropriate			
EN-SUITE AT £150 ☐ STANDARD AT £100 ☐ Cheques to be made payable to WRAC Association			
SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS _____			
1.	I have to use a wheelchair. Yes / No		
2.	I have mobility problems so have to stay on the ground floor. Yes / No		
3.	I can manage one flight of stairs. Yes / No		
4.	I wish to stay in the area on Sunday night. Yes / No Please send me details of B & B Hotels which I understand I have to arrange myself. Yes/No		
5.	Do you have a carer who needs to share your room? (The carer will have to pay the full rate) Yes / No		
6.	Will you be staying for lunch on Sunday? Yes / No		
Seating at Friday/Saturday Dinner:			
1.	I wish to sit with the members of _____ Branch.		
2.	I wish to sit with my friends who I will nominate by 8 February 2006 Yes / No		

Please return by 15th December 2005 enclosing one 2nd class stamp with your application form and cheque to:

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

GIFT AID DONATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE WRAC ASSOCIATION

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(Reg No 206184)

including

THE ATS AND WRAC BENEVOLENT FUND

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

- If you are a UK Taxpayer, you can make a Gift Aid Declaration when you make a donation to charity. By making such a declaration, the receiving charity can reclaim any tax you have paid on your donation. This will give the Association or the Benevolent Fund an extra 28p for every £1 you donate.
- Gift Aid Declarations may be written or given orally over the telephone.
- If your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and/or capital gains at least equal in amount to the tax that the charity reclaims, you should cancel your declaration.
- You can cancel the declaration at any time simply by notifying us that you wish to do so. If an oral declaration is cancelled within 30 days from the date on which written confirmation is sent, it will be as if the oral declaration had never been made.
- If you are a higher rate taxpayer, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment Tax Return.
- If you are unsure whether or not your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, please contact the Association HQ on 01962 887570 or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR 113 Gift Aid.
- Please notify the Association HQ of any change of address.

FORCES REUNITED

www.forcesreunited.org.uk

Attention all forces and ex-forces personnel!

ForcesReunited.ORG.UK is the fastest growing and largest community of forces personnel on the web.

ForcesReunited.ORG.UK enables you to contact all your old friends that have registered with us and with over 200,000 members, there's bound to be someone in our database you already know!

It's free to join and has the backing of SSAFA Forces Help, the national charity helping serving and ex-Service men, women and their families.

You can use the service even if you don't have access to a computer by calling 08707 484 137.

Benefits of Membership

- Find your old friends and communicate with them again!
- Arrange or attend reunions organised online
- Share your service stories with others
- Leave a remembrance memorial
- Meet new friends in our forums and chat rooms

REASONS WHY THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS SO HARD TO LEARN

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The drum was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
5. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
6. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
7. I did not object to the object.
8. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
9. There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
10. Too close to the door to close it.
11. The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
12. After a number of injections my jaw got number.
13. Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
14. I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
15. There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.
16. Why do we have noses that run and feet that smell?
17. How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?
18. You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out, and in which, an alarm goes off by going on.

steadfastness, which saw her through her last illness. These two photographs were received from Miss Vaughan's relatives.

This parade was on 12 September 1943. Controller Farrow ATS and the BAPC were the official party with the Bournemouth Garrison Commander and the Mayor and Mayoress.



ATS 5TH birthday Church Parade



Ex-Forces Sub-Area Outing

This outing was to Eastney Barracks in Portsmouth on Sunday 18th May 1980.

The years roll on and for some, the ageing process has its trials but, all in all, we are a very happy group. We can but hope that soon some of our WRAC members will start attending meetings and gradually take over the reins, as we'd hate to see our branch close. Our best wishes to everyone, HQ staff and all branch members country and world wide.

Branch Members' Footnote:

All the above activities and many more have been made possible mainly by the hard work and untiring devotion of one person, our Branch Secretary and Treasurer and at one time Entertainment Assistant, Mrs Daphne Brookes. We all owe her a great vote of thanks, and wish to record our appreciation.



Thank you, Daphne!

BRADFORD BRANCH

Written by Norah Kendall

Greetings to all members at home and abroad.

We continue to meet on the 2nd Monday of each month, sadly our numbers are depleting owing to various reasons, holidays, ill health, difficulties with transport (we are all getting older), etc. etc. but we will press on. We welcomed a new member to the Branch, Mrs Grace Bates who lives in Bradford and served in the ATS.

I knew the time was approaching when I must consider giving up carrying the Standard. The decision was taken out of my hands when I went into hospital for a knee replacement operation. Consequently, I missed the Remembrance Day Parade and other events which occurred at that time. But I did manage to attend our usual Christmas lunch in the Pine Room of Bradford University which everyone enjoyed.

On 10th March I was invited to lunch – again at the Pine Room, and to my great surprise it was in my honour as a thank you for my 22 years as Standard Bearer. Thirteen members attended and I was presented with a bouquet of flowers – gifts and a poem composed by Mildred Foster, a loyal member. I will add this as a footnote at the end of this article. I was very touched.



Norah with her bouquet

I am very sorry to have to give up doing something which I've enjoyed over the last years, remembering the very first time for which I volunteered (never volunteer for anything in the Army) and how very nervous I was, but I soon got over that.

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The Standard then bore the ATS logo and was purchased in 1947 for the princely sum of £9.10 shillings. This Standard is now laid up at Eden Camp, Malton and can be seen in a glass case in the Chapel.

When the WRAC Standard came out, my sister (who is a dressmaker) made my uniform and with new shoes, sparkling white shirt and green tie I was completely made over. During this last 22 years the Standard has been extensively paraded not only in the City of Bradford – Dunkirk three times, Brussels, London, Glasgow, Southport, Oldham, Grimsby, York, Leeds and at Aldershot where I met and spoke to the Queen. At Guildford I met the Queen Mother and the Duchess of Kent and marched in London at the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002. So many memories to treasure and look back on.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our members who have supported me on so many parades. I couldn't have done it without you.

Norah, You've come to the last time
You carry our Standard come rain or shine
For 22 years you've 'Lowered' and stood at ease,
As our Standard 'Blew' in the breeze.
You've always made us feel so proud
When our Standard we espied,
When on Parade home or away
To see you ALWAYS made our day.
Thank you for all the days
You served our Branch in your special way
Now it's time to take your ease
And look back on all you've achieved

M. Foster

BRISTOL BRANCH

I never thought that when I had the idea to apply for funding for a Tri-Service event that it would take up so much of my time.

Our Tri-Service lunch was held in February and we were honoured to have as special guests, The Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lord Mayor, Dawn Primarolo MP, Major Jane Freebairn whom we were delighted to see, and Lt Col (Ret'd) Val Trout. We had 55 ladies attend representing the three services. Bristol Royal Marriott Hotel did us proud, they went along with our theme of red/white/and blue, with blue and white napkins and blue glasses.

We did our own menus and place names and one of our members Sandra Steadman did the table decorations. What a welcome we had from the Hotel, the meal was superb, we enjoyed the speeches from our guests, especially Major Freebairn, who in her speech included all the services. It was a wonderful day all the guests and ladies were presented with a special 'Bristol Blue' paperweight as a memento of the day.



We then had to start organising our next event, which was being held on 7th May. We had meetings with the City Archivist to finalise what we wanted in the display, taking the information supplied by members to be recorded at the Record Office, and meeting with the Secretary and Dean at the Cathedral to discuss the Service. Last but not least and important to us were our meetings at the Council House. Bristol City Council was most generous to us and let us have the use of the Council House free. Local BBC Radio found out that we were holding a VE Event, and subsequently contacted us to arrange a meeting. They asked if they could join us. Six of our ladies were invited to the BBC to talk about their wartime experiences, which were recorded and broadcast every day over a period of two weeks at different times of the day.

We had invited the Lord Lieutenant to join us, but unfortunately he was on holiday so we had his Deputy, also once again the Deputy Lord Mayor and his wife, and the High Sheriff and his wife, as well as Dawn Primarolo MP and Doug Naysmith MP.

Lots of letters were sent out inviting local councillors to join us, as well as the different Associations. The men were invited to join us and show their support. It was decided that our theme for 7th May would be 'Doing A Grand Job'. This was advertised on electronic advertising boards in the town shopping centre.

At the Council House we had a stall where we displayed



memorabilia, some of which was put under glass. We had ration books and ID cards made, we also had on show the sweet ration along with Liquorice Root, Locust Beans and Tiger nuts, Archivist Display, with the museums and also the Libraries. We were delighted that Belinda Sinclair came and joined us with her display of photos 'Unsung Heroines' and also her book 'Let The Women Come Forward'.

At 3.15 p.m. the ladies formed up outside the Council House and with the Air Force Cadet Band to lead us, followed by Maureen Deeley carrying our National



Standard and standard bearer from the Wrens we marched? No, we walked the short distance to the Cathedral. Civic dignitaries took the salute and we marched into the Cathedral for our Service. They brought Evensong forward so that we would have the choir. When we were walking down the aisle of the Cathedral on our way out, members of the public started clapping, and when we got outside, the Dean and Canons and dignitaries were clapping us as well. It was magical.



The display by the City Archivist to whom we are indebted, is being displayed at local libraries around the City, so it will be seen by a great number of people. Our ladies have been featured in a VE Video that is on general release, and also recorded for a video that is being sent to local schools. We have been told that over 5000 people attended the display at the Council House, and there were over 600 in the Cathedral for the Service. I am honoured that my verse 'A Tribute' that I wrote was published in the local paper, is on display with the City Archivist and also was put at the back of the Cathedral Service book.

[Editor: It is also published in our Poems Section.]

We are organising a Tri-Service trip culminating at a nice hotel for a cream tea. I feel that we have achieved what we set out to do. It's been a lot of hard work but well worth it.

Our Branch meetings have been very well supported, but the last few have been hectic, what with filming, interviews and the VE Videos. I was lost for words (unusual for me) at our April meeting when I was presented with a Bristol Blue dish by our members as a Thank You.

We are planning a Branch lunch which will be in August, I think every one of our members deserves a special 'treat' for all the support that they have given during these past months.

Of course, in the meantime there is the July Event in London, and I am sure that Bristol Branch will be receiving invites to various activities. We will be having a plaque placed in the Council House (we have picked our spot) to acknowledge the ladies of the three services.

Our best wishes to all Branches, we hope you have a wonderful summer and we look forward to reading all about it in the *Lioness*.

BURY BRANCH

By the time this report is published the celebrations for the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War on the 10th July will have taken place. Several of our members will be visiting London to see the Unveiling of the Monument to the Women of World War II in Whitehall. Two of our group are going to the reception.

In March we were saddened to learn of the sudden death of Doris Anderson, a much respected member of our Branch. She was looking forward to her visit to London in July and had already booked her accommodation. Along with a Dunkirk veteran we were able to form a Guard of Honour at her funeral. Doris and her late husband had had a long involvement with the Dunkirk Veterans Association.

In May we celebrated VE Day with a buffet lunch at our meeting venue, The White Lion Hotel, Bury. The landlady Joan 'doing us proud' as we say in Lancashire.

Later in May we were able to enjoy part of the '1940s Wartime Weekend' when the East Lancashire Railway and other organisations turned the clock back. Every nationality seemed to be represented in the uniforms of the day, as well as civilian men and women dressed in their 1940s fashions. The festivities ended with a fly-past of a Spitfire and Hurricane.

We look forward to the Grand Reunion in 2006.

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

Hello all, this is the report for the Cambridge Branch since our last AGM in 2004. We celebrated our 25th anniversary in April, although the numbers attending the meetings have dropped drastically, we still meet once a month.

Sadly we lost two dear friends during the year, Violet Rhodes in July and Martinne Freestone in November.

Here are some of the activities that took place during the year.

We had a lovely Barbecue in Jean Farrington's garden on one of the dry evenings in August, when we had the pleasure of the company of our new Area Chairman, Pat Stevenson.



August Barbecue

Four attended the WRAC Dinner at Stoke-on-Trent in October and had a great time as usual.

A Christmas Dinner was held at the Gonville Hotel in Cambridge in December.

Only two of us managed to attend the AGM at the Victory Services Club in April but it was great to see so many WRAC there.

We are looking forward to: the WRAC Dinner weekend in Birmingham in October, the Eastern Area Reunion at the Officers' Club in Colchester on the 5 November and, last but not least, the Grand Reunion in 2006.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Greetings from Canterbury Branch. We completed our programme for 2004 with our Christmas dinner. Nearly 50 members and guests sat 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. At our February meeting our President, Jenny Wells, acted as quizmaster and took us back to our childhood with a quiz on pantomimes. Unfortunately, due to heavy snowfalls in Kent we had to cancel our March meeting. Nevertheless, it was business as usual in April when we enjoyed a fish and chip lunch followed by a competition for the best Easter card, which was won by Toni Atkins with a beautifully designed card.

In May, Ron Coleman, the husband of one of our members, Barbara, gave us a talk on being a long-standing member of the Canterbury Operatic Society and his love of light opera.

At our June meeting we invited members of the East Kent Branch of the WRENS Association and the local WRAF Association, not forgetting our friends from Medway Branch to a tea party. It was a lovely afternoon, the sun shone and we were able to meet up with old friends and enjoy a lovely tea in pleasant company.

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 p.m. at the Dominican Priory, St Peter's Lane, Canterbury.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

This report begins with sad news as since Christmas we have lost three valued members of this Branch.

On 4 January ATS Iris Brown née Holmes, Lance Corporal W/149694 passed peacefully away at home. Iris had served from 1942-1946 as a medical orderly and joined us in 1989. We remember her for her artistic skills – Iris liked craft work and painted handmade cards and watercolours. She also created fabric collages, one in particular for her local WI of which she was a member, and took part in their many drama productions. She was a regular member of our branch.

On 29 February ATS Peggy Turner née Turner WOII

W/31190 died. A Life Member of the Association and one of the founder members of the branch, Peggy served from 1940 – 1947 and became a Regimental Sergeant Major. Prior to early 1988 Peggy typed our newsletters on her typewriter, and collected “subs” but she will be remembered for the games of “Ho” and quizzes – games including “Call my Bluff” which she had produced entirely by herself. Like Iris, a very committed member of the branch. In July 2004 she was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Association for her contribution to the work she did for us.

On 3 April ATS Iris Nutton W/236542 died in a Nursing Home away from her home in Chelmsford. Iris served from 1942-1945 and became a member of the branch in 1990. Earlier on, Iris took part in our Group Holidays which she much enjoyed. She also went to “Back in the 40’s” events in her ATS uniform. Iris had not been able to attend meetings for some time because of ill health so it was with surprise and pleasure we accepted from her son a brass statuette of an ATS Servicewoman which we will now have on our table at meetings.

The branch was represented at all their funeral services and at the request of Iris Brown, the Hon Secretary officiated at the organ for her service.

In January we had “Tea and a Chat” and bought back some unwanted Christmas presents on our stall. We have had various speakers to our meetings including in February a talk by the local Community Police. This gave us a lot to think about. In March our Treasurer Eileen Mickelborough presented us with a Nursery Rhyme Quiz which was much enjoyed as was a talk in April by Ron Kennedy who spoke movingly on his experiences as an evacuee. He had some quite horrific stories and described them so well you could hear a pin drop.

We are having a talk by Age Concern in May and a few members are off on holiday to Sinah Warren, a Warner holiday Centre, on 30 May.

Statue to Women in 2nd World War. We are delighted that Eileen Mickelborough was successful in the ballot for a ticket to the unveiling on 9 July. Joy Williams and Peggy James were reserves and have since heard they are also able to go. Well done, all three.

We continue to meet at the RAFA Club in Hall Street usually on the third Tuesday of the month at 1.30 – 3.30 pm and welcome any new members to come along. We are delighted that we now have 2 regular WRAC members and hope we shall get some more. Contact the Hon Secretary – Gina Shadrack Tel: 01245 251088 for more information.

We would like to record with gratitude, the help we get from Worthy Down.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

Quiet start to 2005 as the weather played a large part in keeping members indoors. In January we had a speaker from the Air Ambulance Service. They are dedicated men and women – please God we never need their services.

February and March meetings were very thin on the ground, but we still managed to hold our main fund-raiser, our Auction. This enabled us to send a donation to the Benevolent Fund thanks to our generous members.

Three of our WW2 Veterans were invited to London to share in the 60th Anniversary Commemorative Events so our secretary, Gwyn Friday, applied for and got a grant enabling some “young girls” to escort the ex ATS ladies. We are booked up and will be looking for you all in July.

Last month we had a local Church Minister/Historian at our meeting – a very well informed man and entertaining.

In July we are having our VE60 party (hopefully not Spam and dried eggs). We got a pack from the British Legion containing flags, posters, etc. – wonder if Vera Lynn is free on that day!!

In September our North East Reunion is to be held at Harrogate, and we are looking forward to it. Will send pictures for the next Issue. **[Editor: Yes please!]**

CREWE BRANCH

Well, we didn’t start off very well this year. At our first meeting in February only Betty and Edith attended. Then after that Betty, our Chairman, was taken ill and meetings were suspended. **[Editor: Sadly, Betty died just as this edition went to the printers.]** We did manage to hold our Spring Dance at the Crosville Club on 14th April and with help from friends it was a very successful evening.

Only Edith went down to London on 9th April for the AGM and, as Chairman of the British Legion, Crewe Branch attended the VE Celebrations in the town in May, accompanied by Joan. Edith and Molly have had invitations to the Unveiling Ceremony of the Monument to Women of WW 2 in London on 9th July.

One of our members, Elsie Walton, was taken into hospital. She is now back at home. Best wishes from us all, Elsie.

Although we haven’t been able to do much this year, so far, the Branch is still doing nicely and everything is being run as usual. We will break for the Summer Holidays and then we are looking forward to attending the Area Reunion at Shrewsbury in September.

DUMFRIES BRANCH

The ladies of the WRAC Association (Dumfries Branch) thank ‘Home Front Recall’ for the lottery grant that made it possible for them to enjoy two extra get-togethers, which were out of our syllabus. This was part of the VE Day Celebrations, which many of our members remember only too well, as they played an important active part during WW2.

The first was at the Queens Hotel, Lockerbie, on Tuesday, 7 June 2005. We had a beautiful centrepiece of an iced cake, with floral decorations depicting ‘Roses’ for Love,

'Lilies' for Peace and lastly, Forget-me-nots, as a reminder of the loved ones who didn't return from the war. During the evening, we had entertainment from David Shanklin and William Williamson, two well-known local characters, who made us laugh, sing and remember all those who could not be there. We had a very good time at the Queens Hotel for making this event a truly memorable one.

Our second event was on Saturday, 11th June. We enjoyed a wonderful lunch at the Casa Mia Restaurant, Dumfries before we were transported to Dumfries and Galloway Aviation Museum World War 2 Commemoration Day. What a glorious afternoon! We enjoyed seeing the Paras 'drop in'. Regretfully, not one of our ladies was brave enough to have a go on the 'tower' that the Paras had erected for the public to have a go at jumping off. However, some members exchanged war stories with many of the Parachute Regiment Veterans who were on parade. The weather was warm and sunny, making the whole day memorable. We, at the WRAC Association (Dumfries Branch) thank 'Home Front Recall' again for making these events possible for us to attend.

Apart from these extra items, Dumfries Branch ladies have had a Spring Lunch in March, a half day visit to The National Trust House and Gardens at Threave, Castle Douglas, preceded by lunch at the 'Grapes' (of course) and it is only just into June! We still have some trips out, including afternoon tea, and the Scottish AGM in October to look forward to before we settle down to our Christmas Lunch. What a year it's been so far. We regret that some of our members are unable to attend, due to health, travel problems, etc. We want them all to know that we miss them, wish them well and hope that maybe, one day soon, they will be able to join us.

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

Bad weather caused our February meeting to be cancelled but since then, we had a very interesting talk with slides. The Speaker's hobby was to search the local countryside for 'Little Known Military Heritage'. He discovered Home Guard lethal metal barrels, filled, in the verges, all ready for a German invasion.

Most astounding was a derelict cable house still with its cable protruding from the wall for anyone to handle. Apparently, this cable was connected all through the war to the U.S.A., Russia and France. There are still Home Guard hidden places underground.

Are there still places like these in other parts of the Country?

We are looking forward to the ATS Dinner Club lunch on 25th June to be held in the Royal Green Jackets, London.

Best wishes to all.

FIFE & TAYSIDE BRANCH

Since our last report we have had our AGM for 2005. It was attended by 21 members with 11 noted apologies. A grand raffle and sales table was held. Our numbers are

still fairly healthy with 45 Annual and 39 Life members, although we have lost contact with Mrs. Annie Clark of Dundee and Mrs Annie Christie of Scone.

We still continue to hold our monthly lunch meetings in Perth and the attendances average about 20 members. Lots of chattering goes on. The summer holidays are in full swing with a variety of places being visited, e.g. Italy, Malta and the Island of Iona on the West Coast of Scotland. Some of our members are looking forward to the Scottish AGM, which this year is being held in Glasgow. Then later on we will be in Birmingham for the Dinner Club and further arrangements are being made for the Grand Reunion in Warwick.

In April Miss Winnie Thomson celebrated her 90th birthday and Mrs Terry O'Day and Mrs. Doreen Livingstone celebrated their 80th birthdays.

Two of our ladies are going down to London for the unveiling ceremony of the Memorial to the Women of WW 2.

GLASGOW BRANCH

Nine Glasgow Branch ex-service ATS have just returned (May) from a two-day 60th anniversary Commemorative Festival. Our hosts were the Royal Signals Association in Scotland and the Lord Provost and Town Council of Falkirk. Unfortunately, the weather was so bad that most of the outdoor events were badly affected, but in true army tradition we put our best foot forward. We enjoyed the company, the chatter, the dancing, the singing and the food. Thank you Royal Signals and Falkirk Town Council.

Glasgow Branch are hosts for SCOTTISH AREA AGM AND REUNION which is being held at the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel, Glasgow on the 15th October 2005 and we hope that some of our old friends from branches now sadly closed can join us at the Hilton.

Despite the inclement weather since January, our meetings have been very well attended, our speakers and musical entertainers were of the usual high standard. The WRNS & WAAF joined us in February for a musical afternoon.

At the start of 2005, the Glasgow Association of WRNS suggested the Ex-ATS, WRNS and WAAFS should do something to commemorate the 60th Anniversary. We formed a committee of 6, 2 from each service, resulting in a lunch on 11th August to take place in Glasgow Caledonian University.

We send best wishes to all our friends.

GREATER LONDON BRANCH

It seems a long time since Greater London Branch went into print but we have been through, and come out of, quite traumatic times. Our very loyal and efficient Secretary, Joan Ahrens died quite suddenly last September. She had been ill for a while and carried out her duties to the branch almost to the last week of her

life. Her passing caused us a great deal of worry and even thoughts that the Branch might have to close, but as the saying goes "When one door closes another opens." That has been the case and Val Gaff has very nobly taken on the task. Fortunately Val is younger and full of enthusiasm and the Branch as a whole will be well received.

The Branch only meets three times a year, which is probably just as well with the high rents we have to pay. We have been delighted to welcome members from Ilford and Wimbledon whose branches closed last year. As our own numbers sadly dwindle it is good to have these ladies to swell our ranks.

In February we discussed the way forward for the branch which seemed to be carrying on as usual! In April two of our younger members related the tales of their experiences in the Corps in the early seventies which of course now seems history. Mal French amused everyone as I knew she would when I suggested she spoke. Her stories are very different from the Wartime experiences of our older ladies.

There are various activities to look forward to for the 60th Anniversary and being in London we can get the full benefit of what is on offer. On Saturday 3 September we have our London Area Re-union to be held in Luton. This has been made possible by the hard work done by Madge Evans in obtaining a Lottery Grant. An appropriate date for us. Not only the start of the Second World War but the date we held our first re-union many years ago.

Good wishes to all our friends in the Association and here's to the Grand Re-union in 2006.

GRIMSBY BRANCH

The ladies from Grimsby Branch added to their Spring wardrobe on a shopping spree to Melton Mowbray in April. They "shopped till they dropped" around the markets and shops and rounded off the day with a meal on the way home. Earlier in the month we held a jumble sale which raised enough money to pay for the coach for the outing.

Instead of our normal meeting in June we had a VE/VJ Party with bunting and posters. We indulged our appetites with "NAAFI sandwiches", sausage rolls, pork pies and chicken drum sticks, huge slices of chocolate cake topped with fresh strawberries and all washed down with a glass of wine or cup of "char". The highlight of the event was a presentation of Veteran's Badges to 19 of our ladies who served during the war. The Badges were presented by Brig (Retd) Barry Reeves - President Royal British Legion Lincolnshire. The Brigadier and his wife Margaret joined in with our celebrations, played a couple of games of bingo, and Margaret won a prize in the raffle. I do believe I heard the Brigadier whistling "Colonel Bogey" as he drove away back to Lincoln.

We are all excited because we have been successful in obtaining a Lottery Grant towards a weekend in London for the National Day of Commemoration of WW II. Twenty two of us plus some paying guests and carers are

going to London on Friday 8th July and will watch the Unveiling of the Monument to Women of World War II on Saturday and enjoy the commemorations and parade on Sunday. Carole our Standard Bearer is to take part in the parade. We will all be cheering her along the Mall. Some of our ladies have been lucky enough to be chosen to attend the official events with the Queen. More news of that next time.

HASTINGS BRANCH

For this Branch December 2004 marked the end of another year of Ex-Service friendship and we celebrated with our usual Christmas party. As in the past, everyone received a present from the tree and a YoYo Competition was won by a guest from the local Branch of the Association of WRNS.

We have decided it is necessary - due to age and infirmities - to slightly reduce our activities so we did not meet in January. February was the meeting at which our Chairman endeavours to fill jobs for the coming year i.e. tea makers, raffle queen, bring and buy stall operators, etc. In March we had a most interesting talk on the selection, training and work of Magistrates and this will be followed by a visit to the local Magistrates' Court in August.



April was a Celebration Lunch to mark our 25th Birthday and our Guest of Honour was the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Hastings, Councillor Pam Brown. As the Mayor had been a Serving WREN we thought it appropriate to invite members of their local Association and their Vice President, Mrs. Mary Mears, sat beside the Mayor to enable them to chat about past times. Also present was the Reverend Barbara Hobbs (née Hopewell) and her husband. The Rev'd Barbara served in the WRAC and is now a most welcome member of our Branch. She has recently taken up the appointment as Priest-in-Charge of Hastings Old Town Anglican Churches.

Unfortunately, we were unable to send a representative to the AGM in London but again this is mainly due to age and health of members, which is causing us some concern.

In May we held our Annual Coffee Morning to raise money for our Welfare Fund and managed to make just over £200 clear profit. Nearly all the cakes were sold, nearly all the plants were sold and Betty Simpson

accurately named the Teddy Bear. However, we received a tremendous amount of Bric-a-Brac, a lot of which was not sold. This was packed into boxes and packed into the Secretary's car by the husband and son of one of our members to whom we are most grateful. The Secretary must have been so disappointed to have to leave the boxes and placing them in her garage, for that night the garage was broken into by intruders. It is not known how much was taken but had they removed the lot our Secretary would have posted a 'Thank You' notice on her garage door!

The Annual Strawberry Tea in the garden of our Vice Chairman is our next event – usually very well attended and most enjoyable. We will report on the remainder of the year's activities in 2006 *Lioness* No. 1 and in the meantime send greetings to all other Branches.

HEREFORD BRANCH

Thanks to the Royal Mail, our last effort did not make it for inclusion in the *Lioness* so here goes. A full report of our Area Reunion hopefully is also included and you will see it was a great success. **[Editor: – sorry had to précis it but the photographs should tell the story!]**

The publication of our book, 'This is the Army Miss Jones' has been extremely successful. Our first batch soon sold and we had to have additional copies printed. The ladies of the Hereford Branch put together memories of their life in the army and these were collated in army number order, which gave a running thread through the history of women in the army, starting with Miss Jones in the First World War.

More up to date adventures are of Mrs Alice Matthews, who was invited to the Army Benevolent Fund's 60th Anniversary Service at Westminster Abbey last October along with Lt Col Soames and Mrs Laurence-Smith who together had served our own Benevolent Fund for 25 years prior to the Millennium, accompanied each other to what was an uplifting Service. After meeting several former colleagues, they enjoyed lunch with Lt Col Westlake and Maj Freebairn. Altogether a most enjoyable day and she felt it a great privilege to be included in such a memorable occasion.

On the 8 May 2005, the Hereford Branch got together for a meal at the 'Newmarket' to mark the anniversary of VE Day. They listened to old familiar songs, reliving memories both happy and sad. The room was decorated



with Union Jacks and bunting. Our President, Ena Price gave a short speech, which was remarkable in its simplicity and justifies being printed in our Branch news.

'We are making this occasion of Memories of 60 years ago – THE WAR YEARS. Some of the members here today were too young to register most of the events. Those who served in the Forces throughout the conflict still have vivid thoughts of Service life at that time, of the laughter and of the tears too and also our comrades who did not return. Also it is a time for celebration, enjoying our freedom in the life we can all enjoy today. Compared to many folks, we really live in a land of plenty. Let us please now raise our glass to our comrades.'

We also give special thanks to Beryl Parry (Proprietor) who stinted at nothing and nothing was too much. Bon Voyage on your next adventure Beryl.

Events for the near future are our annual picnic (is this our 3rd occasion?) How time flies, remember dogs, cats, grandchildren are all welcome. We are looking forward to the next Area Reunion in Shrewsbury this year and hope to see everyone there.

LEEDS BRANCH

A most unusually mild 2nd February enticed 16 members to our first meeting of the year. We welcomed two new WRAC members and had a very successful Sales Table of unwanted Christmas Gifts.

Our March meeting had to be cancelled due to snow and ice.

Sadly, our April meeting opened with 2 minutes silence for Olive Faulkner who had died in February. She had been a regular member for 20 years and we shall miss her very much. A gift of money from Olive's family will be put towards the cost of our Christmas Lunch.

Seven members enjoyed a visit to the theatre in Leeds. We thoroughly enjoyed a rousing Musical which cheered us up.

Four members joined 27 other friends for a most enjoyable holiday at Alvaston Hall Hotel. Three members attended the Royal British Legion Women's Section Conference in Brighton.

May found us having lunch at Thomas Danby College where Olive's brother and his wife joined us being over from America. In June Elizabeth Bustard gave us a most interesting account of her visit to India with Heroes Return. This included a visit to the Taj Mahal. **[Editor: How about an article for *The Lioness*, Elizabeth? I am sure we would all like to hear your story.]**

Two members with friends joined the North West Area RA Association weekend in Blackpool – a wonderful holiday. Our Secretary attended Northern Area meetings and the AGM in London.

We are having a Victory Lunch for our July meeting complete with Bunting, Balloons, Union Flags and funny hats. Those members with tickets are eagerly looking

forward to the 9th and 10th July in London. One member will be in Portsmouth for the 200th anniversary of Trafalgar – certain to be a memorable experience.

Several members will be joining Vee Robinson for a Mixed Hy. A.A. in October in September.

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the ending of "OUR" War we shall be remembering those who are still fighting for us in various Wars over the World.

LEICESTER & NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

Six months since our last report and the time is flying by. We continue to meet on the second Tuesday of the month with an average attendance of 20 members.

We visited the theatre in January and enjoyed 'Half A Sixpence' followed in February with a further instalment of 'The Life of a Tiller Girl'. Mrs Margaret Hudson who gives the talk had her memorabilia stolen a few weeks later and was very upset. However, most of it was recovered some time later.

In March, our Bring and Buy, followed by a very interesting talk in April on medals and the stories behind many of them. There was an excellent display of medals won by some very brave people.

In May, a small coach took our ladies to an excellent Garden Centre where they could have lunch and a browse amongst the plants and shrubs. Several members bought something so, hopefully, this summer will see them in members' gardens.

This brings us to June when we will have a Nibble and Natter, catching up with each other.

We have gained four new members including Dorothy Foster who has transferred from London Branch. Sadly, we lost Mrs. Vera Machin who had been in and out of hospital over the past three years. We had expected her to return to us so it was a shock to learn of her death. Vera took our money at the door for several years.

To our other members who have been ill or have family problems we send our best wishes.

By the time this report is published our ladies will have enjoyed the unveiling of the Statue to the Women of World War 2 on 9th July and the events on 10th July for the 60th celebrations in London. Our Standard Bearer, Mrs. Vi Rawlins will be parading and marching to Buckingham Palace so we will be looking for her along with all the other Standard Bearers on the television.

Our future activities will make our next report, until then we send all good wishes to our members, especially to those who can't get to our meetings but continue to support us through the year.

Our AGM is on 11th October, and may I remind members that annual subscriptions are also due on 1st October. Thank you once again.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

Yes, the Liverpool Branch is still going strong! We met in the City of Liverpool British Legion Club, in the city centre, since the Branch was formed in the late 1940s. So were upset to learn the old Georgian property was to be sold and we would have to find a new venue. Thanks to the determination of some members, we were offered the use of a lovely room in the Britannia Adelphi Hotel in the city centre. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month except for January and August. Most members lunch together in the hotel restaurant before the meeting begins at 1.45 p.m. New members are most welcome.

Our members joined in the Christmas parties and Victory Celebrations at the hotel and visited some of the Exhibitions staged in Liverpool, being most surprised to see the ATS uniform of a popular (but sadly, now deceased member), along with her service history in The Museum of Liverpool Life. We taxed our old brains with quizzes and 'Bring and Buy' to help our funds. This year, as we get older, we have had members in hospital and ill at home and look forward to having a 'full house' soon. Audrey Hayward who served as our treasurer for many years has gone to live in the British Legion 'Dunkirk House' in Somerset. We wish her well in her new home.



Christmas festivities

Best wishes to all at HQ and long may we all continue to keep in touch.

LONDON BRANCH

Firstly I must apologise for not giving a report in the last issue of the *Lioness*. I have no excuse, I missed the date.

2005 did not start off very well, many faces are missing at meetings, including Dorothy Foster, our Chairman since 1992 who has moved to Nottingham and joined Leicester and Notts Branch. We do miss her but get news through the grapevine.

We have also lost our Membership Secretary Aline Leswell know to us all as Sandy, who died in February. Such a staunch member of the Branch we all miss her dreadfully.

Mrs Cadogan gave an interesting talk at the beginning of the year about the BBC in days gone by. She had recordings of snatches of oldies such as Toy Town, ITMA, Workers Playtime, etc. It brought back memories.

In March we had Mrs Woot from HQ to tell us more about our Benevolent Fund which was very enlightening. Our General Secretary Maj Freebairn accompanied Mrs Woot making it a doubly enjoyable afternoon. We kept them busy answering many questions. We hope they enjoyed it as much as we did. **[We certainly did – thank you again!]**

Hope you are all enjoying all the shows for the celebration of 60 years of peace that are being put on for our benefit celebrating VE day. I don't know about you, but I enjoyed it all the first time around. Younger and more energetic – Happy Days.

LUTON BRANCH



Luton Branch Party – December 2004

Since the last edition of the *Lioness* the Luton Branch members have had a very busy and interesting schedule.

October and the inevitable AGM, where it was decided to print a quarterly newsletter to keep the members who are unable to attend monthly meetings in touch with the branch. Eleri Pirie, our treasurer offered to do this. We took on the night of the Far East Veterans Society at our November meeting. The annual quiz! And once again the WRAC Association won the honours.

December would not be December without our Christmas lunch, to which the members of the Luton Branch Women's Royal Navy Association were invited. Members brought in seasonal tit bits and after a word game organised by Madge Evans we all tucked in.

After a short meeting we celebrated our first meeting of 2005 by visiting a local wine bar for a New Years Lunch. Fifteen members were able to attend. We were all brought down to earth at the February meeting by a member of the Bedfordshire Police Force, who gave a talk entitled Bobby's Scheme. This is a security scheme for vulnerable people in the community. It was extremely interesting and relevant with many of our members living on their own and increasing in years.

The March meeting included a demonstration of Poker Work. This is the art of creating patterns on wood or leather with a hot poker.

Apart from all this the branch has been organising a VE/VJ celebration to be held later in the year. Madge has obtained a grant to enable the Branch to host a party at the Thistle Hotel. As many ex-service people as possible will be invited to join us, there will be entertainment and refreshments during the day. Of course this will all be old hat by the time you read this and you will have partaken in some form of celebration also. Hopefully there will be something to remember for us all for the next sixty years.

MEDWAY

January and February meetings were well attended but the March meeting was cancelled due to the heavy fall of snow. This turned to ice so members were unable to venture outside their homes.

In April we enjoyed afternoon tea at a member's house and we all tucked in to cream scones and sponges made by Nan Ovenden.

As May was the 60th year anniversary of the war ending we booked a meal out. Sadly this was a disaster! We didn't have enough meals and those we did get were overcooked.

Canterbury kindly invited us to join them in June. A buffet was laid on and a quiz to exercise the brain. Four members won raffle prizes. Many thanks to Branch members at Canterbury. We really do enjoy our visits to you.

July is a busy month with a Parade and Service at Rochester Cathedral and the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War 2 which members and guests will attend.

In August we plan a strawberry tea at Janet Cameron's house out in the garden weather permitting and round the large fish pond which is big enough for a dip if too hot.

Chatham Royal British Legion hold their Parade and Service at the dockyard Church and members from Medway hope to go to that.

Many members have had a clear out of cupboards and a boot fair has been arranged for September with other service associations and the Royal British Legion. We are hoping to raise funds for all our branches.

The Medway Branch will hold their Annual General Meeting in this month and hope to see as many members as possible the date is the 12th at 1400 hours.

Our membership remains the same and we have about 12 attending regularly. The Branch holds raffles, Bring and Buy, coffee mornings and cream teas. All these activities help to keep the Branch open.

Thanks must go to all those who donate one way or another. We do send a donation to the Benevolent Fund on your behalf.

[General Secretary: In the last financial year, Medway donated £150.00 to the Benevolent Fund. Well done and thank you all very much]

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BRANCH

Several of us are delighted to have been successful in the ballot for places at the ceremonies in London on 9th and 10th July, and are hoping for good weather as we are all reviewing our **PDF Compressor Free Version** the occasion having scarcely dared venture out of our winter woollies so far this year. We are very grateful that 'Awards for All' has granted us a substantial sum towards fares and accommodation, thus saving a good deal of concern over expenses. We hope that the next *Lioness* will be bulging with stories and photographs of the experiences of the two great days.

The very poor weather at the end of May caused us to postpone the coffee morning and sale in our secretary's garden to raise funds, so it was re-arranged for 7th June. For a week beforehand, piercing north winds en route from Siberia scooped up thousands of tons of water from the North Sea, dumping it all on Norwich, causing much worry and doubt. Miraculously, 7th June dawned sunny, warm and dry and a jolly time was had by all, satisfactorily boosting the Branch's bank balance.

Our Christmas luncheon, held in January (in Norfolk we "du diffrent") was a great success, and at which we were delighted to welcome our new Chairman of the Eastern Region, Mrs Patricia Stevenson. It was also very fortunate that one of our newer members, Mrs Liz Ives from Suffolk was there. Our secretary, meeting her for the first time, unable to restrain herself, pounced on her with the question "Are you interested in starting up a separate Suffolk Branch?" Kindly and forbearing Liz, after a go at the red bottle, said she would think about it. And think about it she did and we are hoping for great results. Suffolk members, being so far from Norwich must feel isolated from their Norfolk counterparts and it would be very good if they could meet at a venue nearer to home. We are very grateful to Liz for her efforts.

So, if any members reading this would like to support Liz and join the Suffolk Branch she would be delighted to hear from you. It may be that you know of other former ATS/WRAC ladies who do not yet belong to the Association. Mrs Elizabeth Ives may be contacted on 01473 327059. She intends to have an introductory meeting in September, during the day at a convenient venue. Do give her a ring and she will be happy to give you all details.

Sadly our numbers are decreasing and almost each month it seems we have to pay our respects to those valued members who are no longer with us.

Those of us who are able to attend meetings, always enjoy our get-togethers and we are fortunate in having a former WRAC, Lyn Hatch, as a member. Lyn told us about her 'civilian' job as a Prison Custody Officer and kept us spellbound with accounts of her work; a second time, she returned with her custody van, into which we reluctantly climbed, a few at a time, feeling that it was a case of "Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter...." How grim and frightening it must be to be incarcerated in one of those tiny cells. If anything will keep us on the straight and narrow from now on, that will.

Lyn is involved in many other activities and completed a successful Run for Life on behalf of Cancer charities recently.

We are very lucky that we can have the use of a Community Coach, supported by the local Council with an award from Lottery Funds, and which operates within a given area of Norwich. The drivers are very kind and helpful and are able to pick up members from their own front door, which means that those who are not very active or mobile are able to come on our various local outings. At the end of this week we are going in strength to a garden centre and nursery for lunch, and wherein, no doubt, we shall once again spend all our pocket money.

We are looking forward to having our own special celebration of the anniversary of VE/VJ Days in October at Colchester, together with our other East Anglian friends, the Chelmsford and Cambridge Branches.

We hope that everyone will, in this particular year, enjoy many joyful reunions and celebrations and we look forward to reading all about them in the next *Lioness*.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

Once again, we enjoyed our Christmas Lunch at St Aubyn's Masonic Hall in Stoke. The chef prepared a very good meal and I was very surprised towards the end of lunch to learn that the waitresses had not turned up. The barman, secretary and chef did such a smooth job of serving the dinner that I didn't notice that they had a problem! 29 of us were able to be there and we re-booked for Friday the 2nd December this year. If any out of town folk would like to join us, please give me a call.

The Festival of Remembrance will be held on November 11th at 7.30 p.m. at the Pavilions. We hope to parade our Standard if we have a volunteer within the branch or we will ask the RBL for the services of a cadet, with Mary and Evon as escorts.

We are pleased to welcome a new member Mrs Carol Ann Martin, ex-WRAC, who has recently moved back to the West Country from the Midlands. Carol is still working so we haven't seen a great deal of her yet but she comes to our meetings when she can arrange her time out, as indeed, do our other working ladies, Evon and Win.

On the distaff side, we report with sadness the death, after a long illness, in March of Mrs Lynn Abbot, ex-ATS.

Our new Chairman, Jennie Stimpson, and I went to the AGM at the Victory Services Club in April. We went to London a couple of days early so we could 'do' a few sights. Jennie packed in a bit more than I did because she hopped off on the Saturday morning while I was at the Secretaries' meeting. We enjoyed our pre-breakfast walks in Hyde Park.

Also in April we enjoyed a coach trip to Polperro. Fourteen went on the small coach and Evon kindly brought Betty and Margaret in her car to meet us outside the Methodist Chapel. Most of us had a look around the Chapel. It had been very badly damaged in the floods a

few years ago and it was interesting to see how well the buildings had been renovated. They now have a lovely kitchen, a fellowship room, excellent toilets, access for wheelchairs and the ground level of the Chapel itself has been repaired in a modern style, yet the one hundred year old gallery is fantastic and the high vaulted woodwork was preserved in all its glory.

Plans are in hand for us to have a Steam Rail and Boat trip on the Totnes – Dartmouth run, also we hope to sample some of the new cruises that are available this year on the Tamar river and surrounding ports of the Devon and Cornwall coastline.

On 1st May, five of us attended the Atlantic Day Parade, Service and lunch on the Barbican, courtesy of the Merchant Navy Association.

Mary and Jean have volunteered again this year to collect for the Army Benevolent Fund.

Mary, Eileen and I have been invited by the 'Not Forgotten Association' to London for a holiday in June, it looks like a very interesting and varied program.

FAFA will hold their Annual Thanksgiving Commemoration and Wreath Laying Ceremony on 26th June, 5 ladies hope to attend.

Grace Cox and Audrey Symes have been invited to the celebrations for the 9th and 10th July. One to have lunch with H M the Queen, the other to attend the Service at Westminster Abbey. Betty and her grandson plan to be at the unveiling of the Memorial to women of World War 2 and Mary hopes to be there too with Marian and Debbie.

We have our meetings in the Royal Fleet Club, Devonport. 1.30 – 4.00 p.m. on the first Monday of the month, except when there is a Bank Holiday, the meeting then is moved to the second Monday. There is no meeting in January.

Contact telephone numbers are:
Ruth Jennings, Secretary 01752 363118
Betty Mitchell, Assistant Secretary 01752 348632

SHIPLEY BRANCH

Time once again to send our report to the *Lioness*. I'm afraid our numbers are going down with more of our members unable to join us at our meetings in Shipley Library. We still enjoy meeting those who can still manage to join us for a talk and enjoy the usual tea and biscuits.

At our meeting in May we talked about D-Day and the ending of the war in Europe but remembered that the end of the war would be in June on VJ Day. One of our members was working on the Telephone Exchange at Catterick camp and was on night duty with another Ack Ack Signals ATS and they had a small radio which gave them the news in the early hours of the morning that Japan had surrendered, so they rang all the extensions in the Exchange to tell them the war was over.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Greetings to everyone, wherever you are, let us hope there is some nice warm summer sunshine on the way.

This report is short and sweet, not a lot has been happening. We meet as usual at the Haywood/Lonsdale Court Community Room, in Glebe Street, Wellington, on the first Wednesday of the month at 2.00 – 4.00 p.m. excluding January. Attendance fluctuates, due to illness, transport difficulties, etc.

In March, Beryl brought her delicious birthday cake in for us all to enjoy.

Four of us went to the AGM at the Victory Club, and three of us went on the 'London Eye', seeing the fantastic views all around.

In April we had a good day out with the Royal British Legion, (Wellington and Oakengates District Branch) on their coach trip to York.

We have had an Attic Sale which raised £16.00. A few of us have received our Veteran's Badges. On 1st June our members went out to lunch at the Hare and Hounds, where the food was very good.

Our Area Reunion is on 10th September at the Lord Hill, Shrewsbury. We hope to be at the Grand Reunion next year. More outings, etc. are coming up, so watch this space.

Best wishes to you all from Shropshire.



Shropshire branch after their lunch out

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Hello Everybody – but a very special greeting to Sunderland Branch. Thank you for Lyn Jenkins! We have made her Secretary and she is just great! We knew from the beginning she would make a great contribution and so it shows. All I can say to you is if anyone else fancies moving South a very warm welcome awaits you!!

Meanwhile, so far 2005 is shaping up for a very busy year. We met in January and a pleasant post Christmas evening was held.

In February we had skittles, which always brings many surprises, attended by a good number of members. Well, the good participation from members.

Some of us went to Port Solent for a most delicious meal of fish and chips – Mother Kelly's Restaurant is apparently quite famous for this. They were waiting for us on arrival and the meal and service was first class. The weather was gorgeous for March and afterwards we took a leisurely walk around Portchester Castle before returning home.

In April we held our Annual Dinner at Romsey British Legion – our guest of honour was our Vice President, Lt. Col. S Westlake. Whilst the meal was a little slow, there was so much chatter it was hardly noticeable. It was an excellent venue and a super evening was had by all.

May came along and Mr George Bagley from the Lions came along to talk about 'Message in a Bottle' and then handed out some freebies to everyone's delight. I would recommend this message to everyone, especially to members living on their own.



We again had a mini coach trip – eleven of us visiting Compton Acres, near Poole and we also met up with Freda Lyons and her friend from Bournemouth Branch. So far, each time we have had these trips out the weather has been good to us – our next one in July is to Holmsley in the New Forest for lunch followed by a stroll through Lyndhurst.

Our June meeting was fantastic – Aileen Derrit gave us a talk complete with the relevant kit of the day of the ATS, she has certainly done her research and no doubt invested much time and money – a really fascinating subject, thank you Aileen. We look forward to the follow up.

June and July look to be very important and busy with so much going on. Our Standard Bearer Margaret Barham has a busy time ahead starting this weekend at Weymouth Veterans Parade. We have also appointed Pauline Stone as our Deputy Standard Bearer following Jean Houghton who having so many commitments has to stand down. We have been and continue to be so fortunate in having a deputy and Jean has held the

position for several years and has always done an excellent job.

In closing, the Committee are working on the Christmas Party – the same venue as the Dinner – Romsey British Legion where we again hope to have the company of Lt. Col. S Westlake and Major J Freebairn. It's a busy life.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH

Since our last newsletter we have, unfortunately, lost two more of our members including Elizabeth Douglass who had been ill for quite some time and was in hospital awaiting an operation at the time. Although no longer able to attend meetings she always kept in touch and still had a lively interest in Branch affairs.

Edna Rooks died very suddenly in March. She had attended the February meeting when she had expressed much indignation at something her grandson had been told at school about the role of the ATS during the war. The teacher had, apparently, said that women had not worked on anything other than clerical work, cookhouse duties or drove ambulances so that men could be released for more dangerous activities. The only women to be near explosives were those working in munitions factories. A letter was duly sent correcting these 'facts' and an invitation was sent inviting the teacher to one of our meetings to hear what women really did in the armed forces. Edna, unfortunately died before a reply was received and, in fact, we are still awaiting a reply.

We have had one Diamond Wedding already this year. Congratulations to Lottie Hutchins and her husband George. Gladys Parkes and Fred celebrate their Diamond Wedding in August. Gladys may be known to quite a few of you as she was branch Treasurer for many years and also attended the ATS Dinner Club regularly.

Some of our members are going to the 60th Anniversary Celebrations in London and are looking forward to the experience.

We have been lucky enough to receive a grant from Home Front Recall which will enable about 20 of our members to attend the N E Reunion to be held at Millstones near Harrogate in September. We are looking forward to this. Because of falling numbers and the fact that some of our members cannot sit for long periods it is becoming more expensive to organise coach outings. If we cannot get a full coach-load, those who can travel have to make up the cost and it is not economical to do this, especially when local companies can run their own trips more cheaply.

I hope everyone has a great 60th Anniversary year. Best wishes to all Branches.

ULSTER BRANCH

Our "new" Secretary, Mary Wilson, has effortlessly taken over the reins, and the usual events are galloping along or looming up on the horizon. Twenty-three members enjoyed the Annual Luncheon in February. The faithful

Gang of Three ran the ballot and organised the Bring'n'Buy sale. The latter is a great opportunity to re-distribute unsatisfactory Christmas gifts (having checked that the donor isn't a present member!)

The Summer BDE Compressor Free Vision
ing will be on Saturday 28th May
woops! looming AND galloping at this stage. We're going to the Cathedral City of Armagh this year – only an hour's coach trip away from Belfast. No need for a coffee break in that case – but someone will know “a nice wee place” for a gossip. There will be interesting historic landmarks to research in Armagh – as well as modern “Marks & Spencer!” kind of places. Retail therapy rules OK.

Disappointingly, no one from Ulster Branch could attend the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War II. Holiday visits away (or visitors returning) precluded the 9th July date.

Our mention of that 60-year friendship of Mae Milne and Gwen Angus brought an unexpected response from Lt. Col. Gerry Fahey who had been stationed with them in Palace Barracks, Holywood, all those years ago. She is now, of course, retired but has, as a neighbour, another Sub. Walsh, nee Patten, enjoying life in Malvern, Worcester. Members, do please make yourselves and your histories known to the Secretary of your Branch or to HQ – it is stories like this that touch the old heart! Wasn't it E M Forster's admonition “Only Connect”? Well, please do!

And oh! What a sad disconnection we've had word of – Beth's departure from HQ. Trudy swears there's a lump in her throat as she types – Bethan's appreciation of her “odd odes” type of humour was a great boost (not everyone welcomes black humour!) We all send our very best wishes for her future work, even if we missed saying, “Nos daoach” on 6th May. (My Welsh was learned 60 years ago – did I spell it properly?)

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BRANCH

Not so many 'Ins and Outs' since our last report.

Ruth Drake had been allocated to our Branch, but since then has asked to be moved to Bournemouth as it was much easier for her to travel down there for meetings than to us.

Sadly, we have heard that Olivia Paris has passed away. Olivia moved into a retirement home in Kent so that she could be nearer to her family. Her records were kept at HQ since she could not attend branch meetings. Our condolences were sent to the family.

We have had a few very interesting talks:

Betty Hodder gave a very enlightening talk on her army driving service. Starting with her training days, then driving in Wales and damaging railway property, to her Scottish experiences and a stolen Canadian Jeep. Then to Camberley and on to Belgium and some very traumatic times driving wounded and Belsen victims (which she has

never forgotten). All her experiences are recorded at the Imperial War Museum. One of our unsung heroines.

Peg McElwaine talked about “The Joys or Otherwise of Travel” and spoke of the different countries that she had visited. Branch Members joined in and exchanged their views and experiences of travel.

Janet Cox gave a very interesting and amusing talk on being one of the founder members of the WRAC Band. She had enjoyed her time with them so much that she has continued performing with civilian bands.

Quite a few Branch Members attended Weymouth Remembrance Parade and Diane paraded our Standard. Wreaths were laid in Weymouth, in Portland and in Portesham.

In December we were advised that Lieutenant Colonel Trout had retired as South Area Chairman and that Major Mack Maskens McIntyre had been appointed in her place and congratulations were passed to her.

At the Branch AGM in March our Committee were unanimously re-elected. Also, during March we had our Annual Luncheon, again at the Crown Hotel who always look after us so well.

For the VE Day Celebrations on 8th May the British Legion set up a Veterans marquee at the Nothe Fort where the Town Band played wartime music and the local operatic society sang relevant songs, whilst there was a festive feast of wartime goodies, including sausage rolls, sandwiches, etc. Local military Standards were marched into and out of the Fort, one of which was our Standard, paraded by Diane.

Our Annual Outing this year was very enjoyable, despite the inclement weather. We went by coach to Breamore House in Hampshire, stopping off on the way for a pub lunch. At the House we visited the museum where they had exhibits showing all sorts of agricultural tools and machinery, and little shops and stores which would have been part of the village scenery in the then farming community. Then on to the Manor House, which is still in use by the family. The contents were truly amazing, with fine quality paintings, tapestries and furniture. The House even boasts the ubiquitous ghost – we didn't stay on to see her! We finished off our day with a cream tea.

Veterans Week came along all too quickly and we marched along Weymouth seafront and paid our respects at the British and the US memorials. Diane carried the Standard on this parade.

The Branch fares well and we look forward to continuing with our meetings, outings and other functions in the future.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

The members of Wilmslow Branch send greetings and good wishes to you all.

What a great year for celebrations! At long last that controversial Monument to Women of WW II is to be unveiled, no doubt in years to come visitors to London will wonder what the overcoats and hats represent. Let's hope they will be informed. We were very sorry to learn of the death of **PDF Compressor Free Version** so tirelessly for the Monument and now that it has all come to fruition and the great day is almost here it is very sad that she won't be there to share the unveiling with him. The unveiling will be a great day.

Two of our members are going to be in London that weekend. One will be watching the ceremony and the other attending the service in Westminster Abbey. So they will have lots to tell us at our next meeting and, maybe, photographs to see. Perhaps they might even meet the Queen. Now! That would be something.

We do hope the weather will be fine and that we stay-at-homes can watch it on television.

On July 10th there is to be a service in Chester Cathedral: the Royal British Legion has arranged for coaches to take members. It will be a full day as other events will take place and Spam sandwiches will be available in the Town Hall. "Spam" That brings back memories, doesn't it?

We enjoy reading reports from other branches, what they do, where they go. In the last *Lioness* we loved the one from Sunderland where Gladys was in France and was approached by a gentleman who said she had been his sweetheart when she was stationed at a Barracks in 1945/1946. You must have kept your youthful looks Gladys, so let us into the secret as we're all getting a few(?) wrinkles now, but so far nobody has lost their teeth. I don't know about glasses.

In July it will be our eleventh Birthday so we will once again be lunching at our usual hotel, where we always have an enjoyable time. The head waiter is a bit of a comic and knows us all.

After receiving an invitation from Rhyl Branch to Afternoon Tea we had to arrange transport and were looking forward to the outing. Now we learn that the response from other Branches was so small it has had to be cancelled. We have had some good times there and have enjoyed meeting old friends and are sorry about the cancellation.

Our intrepid secretary went alone on a trip with Saga and visited Estonia, Latvia and Finland and thoroughly enjoyed it all. She is researching her family history and as her mother's family hails from Lithuania is eager to learn more about them. She was told that people often used the name of their birthplace as a surname, which widened the field somewhat, and although she learned nothing new she came home very satisfied with everything. Funnily enough, there was another lady on the trip with the same surname in her family.

We are sad to report the death of one of our members, Marjorie (Ginger) Clarke, after a long illness. We are not a large Branch so every member we lose is sorely missed. We held a minute's silence at the next meeting in her memory.

So it's goodbye from us until next time when we hope to have more outings and events to tell you about.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

The branch held its annual Post Christmas party in January. This year we were once again able to sample the delights of The Charles House Chinese Restaurant in Winchester, a good turnout and a very good evening was had by all. At 82 Doreen, a stalwart of the branch since she joined sampled a Chinese meal for the first time. I am glad to say that she gave the evening the thumbs up.

Our March meeting was a skittles evening at our local Civil Service Club. Another good turnout. Although there was a choice of meal Indian, Chinese or Fish and Chips everyone elected for fish and chips, which came as a bit of a shock for the chippie!! Maggie and Hermé were dispatched to go and get the food, both hoping that we would get away with not playing a few rounds. Unfortunately, the girls left extra spaces for us to catch up with our goes!! No idea who won, despite having a number of PTT's with us we still tend to make the rules up as we go. Once again Doreen had a good time despite the fact she has very limited vision.

April saw a number of us at the AGM in London, although most were involved in meetings some of us managed to hit the shops.

Our May meeting had to be cancelled because the Secretary failed to appreciate what a popular venue the local vineyard is, so by the time a request to visit went in they were already booked for the rest of the year. Learning by her mistakes she has already put in a request for next year.

Some of us did however manage a Friday lunchtime trip to a local pub for a meal with Beth as it was her last day as Association Chief Clerk. We are very sorry to lose her from the office but she has agreed to stay as our Chairman at least until she sees how her new job works out.



Beth's last day in the Office!

Also in May we managed to get 2 teams entered into the Royal Signals quiz night in Aldershot. The teams were The Lionesses who have competed for several years (originally from the Aldershot Branch) and Winchester Pride - a new team from the new Winchester Branch.



The Winchester Pride Team

The format was the same with five rounds of 12 questions each and a list of 12 anagrams to keep us going in between the rounds. The big decision is always when to play your Joker. It can only go in on one round and doubles the points you score on that round. In the finish up The Lionesses decided to keep it until the last round. This was a new format this year and was called Who Wants to be a Millionaire? We thought it would be a good round to use the Joker on because at least each question was multiple choice so we thought we had a reasonable chance of scoring well.....Huh! Theories! As it happened we got full marks on the True and False round so should have played it then.



The Lionesses with Aldershot Garrison Sergeant Major Joe Fairbairn

As usual the Sports round left us well behind but we did rather well on the American language round when they gave us an English word e.g. braces/chemist shop/motorway and asked us for the American equivalent – suspenders/drug store/freeway. Alison Schofield was

doing very well for us and did finally confess that she had spent two years in California! Nonetheless, we did not know that Americans call suitcases valises.

We were very disappointed with the anagrams because, for the first time ever, we could not complete them and still had one unsolved at the end. The letters we had were UNSTABLER and we could just not figure it out.....have you?.....Imagine our frustration and embarrassment when we discovered the answer was SUBALTERN!

Both teams did very well – The Lionesses actually came third – and we are looking forward to next year already.

WOLVERHAMPTON BRANCH

Once again we had to cancel a meeting early in the year due to very bad weather. Since then we have had two interesting meetings.

In March, Betty Clyne, our Chairman, brought a selection of her many spoons for us to look at and admire; and in April, Mary Davies, our Secretary, explained the art of 3-D Decoupage, and brought several completed pictures, and others in various stages of completion.

A short Service, organised by the Royal British Legion was held by the Wolverhampton Cenotaph on 8th May, the Secretary represented the Branch. We were also invited by a local Lions Club to a VE Celebration. Four members (and one husband) accepted the invitation, and had a very jolly time, and particularly enjoyed the Chicken and Chip Supper.

Birmingham Branch Birthday Party was also very enjoyable, and our Branch was well represented.

Pat Ash and Betty Clyne have received Certificates of Appreciation this year. Pat received hers at the AGM in April, and Betty at the Birmingham Party when the General Secretary was there to make the presentation.

We send our best wishes to friends near and far and hope they are well.

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Sizes 36 – 46

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Letters to the Editor

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Anne Williams. C/o FCO (Moscow),
London SW1A 2AH
Fraddsmeadow@hotmail.com

Dear Editor

In late November 2004 I travelled from Russia with my husband, Peter, Maj Gen P G Williams OBE to Estonia, where he was due to give a lecture at the Baltic Defence College in Tartu.

Estonia turned out to be a wonderful surprise – a little treasure of a country and so clean and orderly after the rat-race lifestyle that we have become used to in Moscow. The centre of the capital, Tallinn, is a medieval jewel that has to be seen to be believed.

The nicest surprise, however, was to meet up unexpectedly with two other 'veterans' from the WRAC and from Beaconsfield. Turned out to be the British Ambassador to Tallinn, Nigel Haywood (ex-RAEC), and his wife, Louise (ex-WRAC and RAEC), with whom we were thrilled to stay in their fantastic residence overlooking the Baltic.



A happy rendezvous. The Williamses on the left and the Haywoods on the right.

Mrs Flo (Mush) Harper (W/183695 Hunter)
104 Gt Knighleys, Basildon, Essex SS15 5AW

Dear Editor

Many thanks for my *Lioness* received this week. I always look to see if there were any of my old comrades to whom I would be known as "Mush" Hunter. I served for almost 4 years on Mxd HAA. First in 488 Battery in Leeds up to Summer 1943 when I was posted to Lancing, Sussex. From there we were stationed at Southampton, Portsmouth, Totton and Cosham. Unfortunately I cannot remember the number of the second Battery but I remember well when we had to sleep on the gun post the night before D Day. I can remember some of the girls names Ryan, Lynch, Gardner, Proudfoot and my best friend Jess Smith who has since died.

PS Please excuse writing I am 84 years of age and partially sighted.

Editor – Your letter was very legible. Mrs Harper also appears in the Weddings Section!

Mrs Zoë Taylor (Chairman Womans Auxiliary Corps (India) Association), 4 Nant Talwg Way,
Barry, Vale of Glamorgan CF62 6LZ

Dear Editor

Please forgive my tardiness in acknowledging receipt of your splendid magazine and letter.

We have been in the throes of producing our Newsletter and managed to include Nan Bazin's article. I knew many of these ATS Officers. They did sterling work and some then joined our Association after the war and remain loyal members to this day.

With many thanks.

Miss Elizabeth de Bourbel, 14 Radbourne Lane, Mackworth, Derby DE22 4LU

Dear Editor

Age and infirmity prevent me from joining the nearest Branch to my retirement home, so it is a pleasure and interest to read about the Canterbury Branch of which I was a member pre-1990.

What fun that tea party (pictured) in June must have been! I recognise Jenny Wells. She was an active member and leading light when I (based in Deal) joined the branch in about 1970.

Cheers! – all of you there – and with good wishes for continuing success.

I would also like to correct one of the entries in the Obituaries on Page 55. The details for McCANDLISH should read Mrs Pauline McCandlish, née SQUIRRELL, of Stanford-in-the-Vale.

Esme Davidson (née Stephens)
20 Tavistock Road, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 1DN

Dear Editor,

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Reading the *Lioness*, it was a lovely surprise to see a letter from Bunty Beattie (née Jones) in Australia looking for anyone in 457 Battalion. I wrote to her and we have been exchanging letters since then. I remembered many names she listed and hope to get in touch with them. Thank you *Lioness* for getting us together again. If there are any more 457 Battalion about, especially Nessie Swan, Laura Kingsgate and Dot Pearnime I would love to hear from them.

Mrs M Sealey (Pte M M Collins W/286861)
13 Treborough Close, Taunton,
Somerset TA2 8HE

Dear Editor

Thank you for your letter and Application Form for the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War 2, I very much regret that I am unable to attend due to my disability.

However, I shall be with you in mind and spirit on the occasion. I hope it will be televised and that it will be a bright, sunny day.

On VE Day I was stationed at Feltham COD, Middx. We were given 48 hours leave. We went in groups with our friends to London. You could hardly move for people. The pubs ran dry early in the day and the excitement was terrific. Jubilation everywhere.

I managed to hang on to Winston Churchill's arm for a few minutes as he tried to fight his way through the crowds. I will never ever forget it. It was a wonderful experience. I have always said – it was Winston Churchill and Vera Lynn that got us through those days.

I do hope everything goes well on the day.

Wing Commander D H Warren DFM, MA, TD.
DPA RAF (Retd)
39 St Margaret's Way, Brotton,
Saltburn by the Sea, Cleveland TS12 2UE

Dear Editor

I wish to pay a tribute to the ATS of the war days who manned command posts at all AA sites. I was on secondment to such a site in 1940/41 based at Bullsmoor Lane, Waltham Cross, on the London raid perimeter, and served on 3.7" AA guns.

The ATS based there were just about the most wonderful people I've ever met. They were always cheerful even at 0400 hrs when cocoa was issued, and they, bless them, were frozen stiff.

If any of those who served at Bullsmoor Lane, are reading this I send them my very best wishes and say "Well Done ATS".

I left the Mixed AA Battery in late 1941 and mustered into the RAF-Bomber Command.

If you can find the space in *Lioness* please reproduce my hearty good wishes, not only to those already mentioned but to all ex ATS with Mixed AA in particular.

Major (Retd) J F M Whitehead
14 Church Lane, Eagle, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 9DJ

Dear Editor

With reference to the photograph on Page 13 of No. 1 *Lioness* 2005, sent in by Mrs I L Howe – née Chamberlain. I recognised it immediately – I have a copy. The year was 1956, the year I joined the WRAC. It was not taken at Guildford but at the WRAC PT Wing, Aldershot. Four of us were awaiting our PT Instructor Course and joined in all games, courses running, up to our course. I don't remember what course this was – maybe "Bunny" does. I am in the back row extreme right – how young I look! Jan Donnison is third from the right – and I remember Mary? extreme left. The one on her right was the other potential PTL.

I did complete 30 years, but doubt if any of the others did! To see how I've weathered the years see back page, the PT Reunion Dinner. I am sitting on the right between Col Joan Freeland (née Temple) and Shirley Boettinger (née Kitchen). Her twin sister Anne Kitchen is left of Joan. If this could be printed in the No. 2 issue – I would be most grateful.

Editor: It is always a pleasure to get such a response. It shows the system works!

V1 BUZZ BOMB

Mrs Mary Bazett (née Marsden W/75859)
Hobbs Orchard, Silver Street, Coaley, Dursley,
Glos GL11 5AX

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Dear Editor

I was most interested to see the photograph of a V1 Buzz Bomb (or Doodlebug as we called them) in the last issue of the *Lioness*. I was in B Troop 564 Bty, 183(M) HAA Regt RA from January 1945, on a gun site near the village of Hoboken, near Antwerp, when I was given what I think was possibly the original photograph, by an American Soldier. What appears to be an official stamp on the reverse is as follows, rather illegible now – "Passed for personal? only. NOT for publication, 519 Port EN S2".

This particular V1 was not shot down by our guns, but I learned from past issues of the *Lioness* that there was another (M) HAA Regt in the Antwerp area, so perhaps this was their target.

Everyone who has seen this photograph has had the same reaction as Chris Brooker – did the person who took the photographs survive to tell the tale?

Mr K Truscott

23 Willow Wynd, Portlethen,
Aberdeen AB12 4SY

Dear Editor

In the latest issue of the *Lioness* (2005 No. 1) I was surprised to read of the obituary of Mrs Patricia Margaret Truscott née Buck.

The reason for this surprise was that I am her husband and until the arrival of this issue she had not advised me of her death.

I am happy to tell you that she is not dead and the notice of her demise was a mistake. She had at that time been having a hip operation from which she is now fully recovered.

As my wife and I are both ex Royal Signals I take it that a breakdown in Communications can be forgiven.

Editor: I am so sorry! My aim is to edit a Lioness which does not have to print such a letter. I have written separately to Mr Truscott confessing that I too was with the Royal Signals!

COPY DEADLINE

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

30 November 2005

SERVICE IN SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG

Mrs Joyce Callahan, née Pennie
PO Box 7, Epping, NSW, Australia 1710

Dear Editor

Further to my request for 1946 – 1948 ex-ATS who had been in either/both Singapore and Hong Kong, I have received letters from 3 women – one the sergeant who organised us onto the ship going out – the 'Alcantara' – and looking after us the whole way and two others whose paths did not quite cross mine, but who lived in the same Singapore Tanglin barracks and/or the same old colonial house in Hong Kong.

I made computer copies of a newspaper photograph of the Company in Hong Kong 47-48 and photocopies of interesting newspaper cuttings in Singapore, and sent to each of them. We have corresponded further, each adding to the collective memory.

If you were there in either place, at any time, do write to me. Your later experiences would add to the overall information.

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.

Enid Roberts – (Joan Ahren's sister)

Dear Editor

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Thank you so much for the touching tribute to Joan in the *Lioness* magazine and arranging for a copy to be sent to me.

There was so much of Joan's life I was unaware of, as she didn't really speak of her army days in great detail. But having her scrapbooks to read through has given me some insight. She always seemed

happy with her chosen career. My memories of Joan from a young age are when she came home on leave and the excitement it generated in our household.

On the 19th February Joan's birthday we placed a commemorative vase on the grave and thought of the many times we all visited together, especially May 2004, never thinking it would be our last with Joan.

I was so pleased Val Gaff has agreed to take on the work and wish her every success. Thank you again.

Dear Lord...

*So far today, I am doing all right.
I have not gossiped, lost my temper,
been greedy, grumpy, nasty,
selfish, or self-indulgent.
I have not whined, bitched, cursed,
or eaten any chocolate.
I have not charged on my credit card.
But I will be getting out of bed in a
minute, and I think that I'll really need
your help then.*

Maureen Deeley – (Birmingham Branch)

Dear Editor

Sorry it's a bit late but I've only just got the photos back. Hope you can put them in the *Lioness* (Editor: Only just made it!)



Birmingham Party

This is a nice one of us all at the Birmingham Birthday Party. As you know we all had a great time. The food and entertainment were really good.

The other photo is of some of the WRAC Dinner Club Committee drinking Champagne in the snow. We all went down to Carol Gorman's for the weekend. Had a great time. Maureen, Kath, Sue, Verna and Carol.



Last but not least I would like you to put in the *Lioness* a very big thank you to everyone who sent me get well cards and phoned to enquire how I was. It was very kind of you all.

Weddings

GOLDEN WEDDING

PDF Compressor Free Version
ROONEY - BASS

W/377094 "Mickey" Rooney was married to Bill Bass on 29 October 1955 in Alton. Bill was in REME and had just come back from Malta when they met.

Present address: 118 Banksbarn, Skelmersdale, Lancs WN8 9EX



Taken two weeks after their wedding



Fifty years on

DIAMOND WEDDING

BROADWAY - STERIO

On the 17th June this year, Joyce and Cliff will be celebrating their Diamond Wedding.



Fitter 2E Frederick (Cliff) Sterio



LCpl Joyce Broadway



Joyce and Cliff as they are today

W128538 Lcpl Broadway was in 540 Bty/158 Regt and also attached to 467 Bty/135 Regt. She helped to operate the predictor as WO1. Her husband was a Fitter 2E in the RAF. Joyce writes:

We have 2 sons, 5 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. We would love to hear from anyone who remembers us from our service days.

My mother also served with 540 Bty, we were stationed together in Scotland. She also served in the Women's Royal Flying Corps (*Editor: Does anyone else know of this Corps?*) in 1914 - 1918.

Present address: 43 Woodham Park, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan CF62 8JF

DIAMOND WEDDING

POOL – GOODWIN

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Wedding day 10 February 1945



Diamond Wedding Day 2005

I joined the ATS in 1941 and was demobbed in 1945. I started in Droitwich, then to Warrington, Peninsula Barracks, next High Leigh, then Aldershot and finished at Woking. I met my husband when I lived in Kent, before I joined up. He joined the RAF later than me and went to Canada for two years where he got his wings.

We were married at St Clements Church in Cosford on 10 February 1945. We have 3 daughters and one son, 4 grandsons and 2 great granddaughters and 1 great grandson. We had a nice service at the Church at Old

Headington for our Diamond Wedding, and had friends and family back home for a buffet lunch. The years have just flown by and some of the happiest were spent in the ATS.

Present address: 13 Ingle Close, Northway Estate, Headington, Oxford OX3 9DB

DIAMOND WEDDINGS

**EELES – PRIOR
EELES – WILSON**

My sister and I were married within 6 months of each other. We were both in the ATS. She married Capt A G Wilson on 21 July 1945 and I married LCpl B G Prior on 12 January 1946. We were married at Belgrave Congregational Church, Torquay. Maiden names Daphne L Eeles, and Sylvia D Eeles.



Taken during a recent Veteran's meeting.

Daphne was a Corporal with the RASC, Sylvia was a Private – G D Clerk at Balmore Hutments in Reading.

We look forward to celebrating our Diamond weddings together.

Sylvia D Prior (W/302195)

Present address: 26 Lea Road, Wyke Regis, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 9HT

DIAMOND WEDDING

HUNTER – HARPER

I was in the ATS and my name was Pte Flo (Mush) Hunter. I married Cpl R E Harper Royal Marines on 22 December 1945 at Otley, West Yorkshire. Incidentally you were kind enough to publish our Golden Wedding in the *Lioness* 10 years ago.

Present address: 104 Great Knighleys, Basildon, Essex SS15 5AW

Editor: Congratulations! Can we do the same "double" for anyone else?

Poems

A POEM FOR VE DAY

What should we tell the youth of today
Of those six long war-torn years?
Should it be the fighting, the deaths, we recall
And the many thousands of tears?

The battles, the Blitz, the anxious nights
With the moonlight reflected red
From the angry glow across the sky
"A bomber's moon," we said.

Should we tell of all the lives that were lost
Of the headstones, cold and bare,
Sons, brother, fathers – our own youth perhaps
So many whom we loved are there.

No, keep that to ourselves but never forget
In the quiet of our hearts and minds,
But tell of the other side of those years
And the bitter-sweet memories that bind.

Tell them of courage, selflessness, care for friends,
Of sacrifice made without thought
For the safety of others – unknown perhaps –
Perhaps your own life bought.

Tell of the feeling of total commitment
Not for self was the war to be won
But for our way of life, the strength of the whole
And for peace when the fighting was done.

Though time may have softened and healed our hurt
Today we remember the pain
But just as we've travelled these past sixty years
Let us tell them again and again.

Of the meetings, the partings, the falling in love,
The laughing together, snatched moments of fun,
The comforting arm, the outstretched hand,
Strength, compassion in everyone.

So don't tell the young only of WAR
Remind them we knew it would cease
As we worked and fought and journeyed together
The route to the blessings of PEACE.

© Sybil Steel 1995 – originally written for the 50th
Anniversary of the end of World War II

A TRIBUTE

When you look at me what do you see?
A white haired old lady with a tired worn face
Who cannot walk far without the help of her stick
or walker to keep up the pace
Look closer and you will see more
A young girl just eighteen years old
Who answered the call
to defend her Country
In time of War.

She drove a large truck, manned a big gun,
Didn't have time to have any fun.
She flew a plane, dodged enemy fire,
Chartered the ships and put out the fires.
She felt sorrow for those girls who died,
her friends, her mates,
Who just like her gave up their youth, but was sacrificed.
She may have worn Khaki, Navy or Blue
But does it *really* make any difference to you?

After the War, what happened then?
She went back to being a wife, a mother, a friend.
So look again, come closer this time
and as you stand there, say a 'silent prayer',
For without this white haired old lady
You might not be here.

© J Naysmith 2005

WE REMEMBER

To the women of World War II a fitting Memorial,
To be unveiled by H M Queen Elizabeth in Whitehall.
It's an honour and a privilege to be invited,
To travel to London for a Service united.

It's a time to remember and never to forget,
We were called to serve our country, our families to
protect.
We remember our wartime friends from all walks of
life,
On and off duty we marched and we walked side by
side.

During the past sixty years to date in civilian life,
Many of us keep in touch by 'phone or we write.
With heart-warming affection we remember them all
on this special day.
May God guide us to keep the Peace, for this I pray.

Kathleen McBurney, W/215449, ex-telephonist

COPY DEADLINE

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

30 November 2005

**A PRAYER ENTITLED:
A HOUSE BECOMES A HOME WHEN
YOU CAN WRITE "I LOVE YOU" IN
THE DUST**

PDF Compressor Free Version

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better
To paint a picture or write a letter
Bake a cake or plant a seed,
Ponder the difference 'tween want and need

Dust if you must but there's not much time
Rivers to swim and mountains to climb
Music to hear, and books to read,
Friends to cherish and a life to lead

Dust if you must, but the world's out there
The sun in your eyes, the wind in your hair,
A flurry of snow, a shower or rain,
This day will not come back again

Dust if you must, but bear in mind,
Old age will come and it's not too kind
And when you go, and go you must
You yourself will make more dust.

Share this with all you meet in life as I just
did. It's not what you gather, but what you
scatter that tells what kind of life you have
lived.

AN ENIGMA OF AGE

I don't think I've got any taller
In fact the reverse is quite true
Thru' the years I have got a bit smaller
So why am I in such a stew?
I resort to some crazy contortions,
Which I find are increasingly tough.
I know I'm of ample proportions, and my age is
against me,
Oh, stuff:
I'm fairly conversant with E-mails,
But one problem I cannot assay -
Why is it, when cutting my toenails
MY FEET ARE SO DARNED FAR AWAY?

Madge Evans

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for next year are due for payment on
01 October 2005

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.

A TRIBUTE TO THE ATS

Some had never left their homes before
But times were dire, we were at war,
Now it was so patently clear
Our duty was to volunteer.
Posted to a training camp to find
We missed the comforts left behind,
Vaccinated, inoculated, issued with army kit,
Uniforms which mostly didn't even fit,
Underwear was basic, nothing very glamorous
Designed to deter any male who was feeling amorous,
Wooden beds with 'biscuits' barracked every day,
Ablution huts with lavatories quite a trek away.
Domestic chores and army regs which we had to keep,
Queuing up for our pay which did not last a week.
Food was quite plentiful but also very filling,
Many a girl put on weight in spite of all the drilling.
Then time it was for the final parade,
Farewell to the new friends that we had made,
Where would we be at the end of the day
Somewhere familiar or far far away?
Now we were trained to replace the fittest men
To man the gunsites, to cook or clean, perhaps to push a pen,
With the hardships and the dangers which had to be endured
Those dewy-eyed civilians had certainly matured.
When the war was over we faced an uncertain peace,
Issued with civvies clothing, time for our release,
Many places we had been, made some lifetime friends,
All this was over sixty years ago and now this saga ends
By giving a salutation to those who happily survived
And to pay a lasting tribute to all who sadly died.

Madeleine Croll (née Rees) W/128587

**ATS OR WRAC ASSOCIATION
STANDARDS**

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

As General Secretary, I have become aware
that there are probably many ATS or WRAC
Association Standards which have been laid
up in Churches up and down the country. I
believe we should create a record of these
before all our memories go!

If you know of any, please let me know. The
name and address of the Church and the
description of the Standard would be useful
and a photograph would be even better.

**PLEASE HELP TO COMPILE THIS
HISTORICAL RECORD FOR THE
FUTURE**

6th HAMPSHIRE COMPANY, ATS ODE TO THE PAY CORPS

So that readers can fully appreciate the meaning of the following "ode" it must be explained that our billet is occupied by a renowned body – the Royal Army Pay Corps – and an equally renowned body (in a different way) the 6th Hampshire Co., ATS. Therefore, our every action is governed by the cry: "Remember the Pay Corps". They are above us, below us, around us and, in fact, everywhere.

Hush, hush, whisper who dares,
Remember the Pay Corps are working downstairs;
One more stamp of your foot on the floor,
And Senior Leader will burst through the door
With a voice that makes you shake at the knees,
"Shut up, you girls, be quiet there, please".

Hush, hush, whisper who dares,
The odour of cooking has wandered upstairs;
Haddocks and kippers, the joy of our life,
Are causing the Pay Corps to rise up in strife,
Mournfully moaning that they are all gassed,
And before we did cooking they should have been asked.

Hush, hush, whisper who dares,
The sound of our wireless has wended downstairs;
And our laughter to them is the cackling of hens,
Do they hear the squeaks of our fountain pens?
Since actions are governed by aforementioned Corps,
Perhaps we had better not breathe any more?

(With apologies to A A Milne and kind thoughts to the RAPC)

LEARNING THE LESSON (or WE WON THE WAR!)

The war is over, there's no more war
Yes it's May, nineteen forty-five,
Joy unconfined – we're all of one mind –
Oh it's so good to be alive.

Now for the peace, that should be simple
But is it easy to maintain?
Of course it is, for WE WON THE WAR
We should be the ones who will gain.

But after the war food was shorter than ever
The winters were really severe
Churchill was out, the Americans gone
BUT WE WON THE WAR that's quite clear.

The answer is simple, we can all understand,
"Love your neighbour" it says loud and clear
But where in the world can that neighbour be found?
At the Poles, in the sands, far and near.

Learn your lesson, you leaders of nations
Put your hand in another man's palm.
Be he coloured, or Muslim or no faith at all
Do no man or woman great harm.

Look to the east and look to the west
Are the folks so different from you?
Learn the lesson – now WE'VE WON THE WAR
They want a safer world too.

So make love and not war, win the peace.
Do not covet or envy another's
Join together, and let's try to live
Like a family of sisters and brothers.

Betty Mitchell

OFFICERS' DINING CLUB

It has been decided to amalgamate the Officers' Dinner and the Officers' Luncheon so that they will both be "administered" by the Officers' Dining Club. Some of you will recall that the Luncheon had its history in the HQ Officers' Mess AGM and Annual Luncheon. So the Officers' Dining Club will hold two functions a year – a Dinner in November and a Luncheon in May.

You know, it really doesn't matter what it is called, does it? From my point of view, the important thing is that you come along to one or both! They really are quite fun and the numbers are growing so that must prove something. The Luncheon in May was a great success and several ladies who came for the first time wondered why they had not been before. As you can see, this photograph was taken "post-Port" and I wonder if it might make a good entry for a Caption Competition? Something along the lines of: Brig Nield: "She was just as daft when she was my SO2 WRAC 1" or, Col Clissitt: "Come along, Jane. It would be better to leave quietly now!"



The next Dinner will be at the Victory Services Club in London on SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2005. If you are a member, you will be notified separately. If not, please contact me and I will add you to the list.

Obituaries – their final salute

LIEUTENANT COLONEL W D ANDREWS OBE

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Lieutenant Colonel Andrews, or Andy as she was always known throughout the Corps, was the first female Quartermaster to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel; at the same time she was awarded a richly deserved OBE.

I first met Andy when she was Quartermaster of the Company I took over in Cyprus in the 1950s. I soon realised that everything on the Quatering side of the Company was in safe, reliable and efficient hands. No worries there!

We met again in the 1960s when Andy ran the Change of Air Station in the Cameron Highlands in Malaya and I was ADWRAC in Singapore. We finally met up again when I was fortunate enough to have Andy as my Quartermaster at the Recruit Training Centre at Guildford.

Once you met Andy you didn't forget her. She had an ebullient personality, she was enthusiastic and extremely efficient. She achieved her high standards by her own personality. She talked, and charmed, people into doing what she wanted done and they did it, willingly!

Like many Welsh people, Andy could sing. She had a strong clear voice which she put to good use when we produced our Christmas Pantomimes in Cyprus. Andy would not only sing her own part but, if required, would stand in the wings and sing other parts while the characters on the stage mouthed the words! None of us had a voice to compare with Andy's!

Sadly Andy's retirement was blighted by ill health, but I shall always remember her exuberant personality, her sense of humour and her warmth, and will always be grateful to have known her.

Colonel Betty Metcalfe

MRS PAULINE RIPPER

Pauline Ripper was born on 12 May 1923 in Manchester. On the outbreak of war in 1939, she put a year on her age, joined the ATS and worked as a Sergeant secretary in an intelligence unit in the tunnels under the South Downs. Later, she was posted to the ATS unit in Nairobi, Kenya. En route her convoy was attacked by enemy aircraft but her ship came through undamaged. In Nairobi she worked for the Army Post Office and became the expert on redirecting incorrectly addressed mail. She met and married an Army Adjutant of an internment camp, where they had a house and developed an affinity for Italians. (After the war they had a holiday flat on the Italian Coast). They had four sons and one daughter, but three of the boys died. The other two children are doing well. The boy lives in Kingston, Surrey and the girl married an Englishman, frequently post aboard. At present they live in Dar es Salaam. There are two grandsons, both at British Universities. Pauline died from cancer in the

Charing Cross Hospital in Hammersmith on 17 September 2004.

David W Ripper

25 Ham Street, Ham, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7HR

LADY MARGARET COLVILLE

1918 – 2004

Meg, as she was affectionately called, joined the Territorial ATS, attached to the KOSBs, in October 1938, and was a private clerk at the ATS HQ.

When war broke out, the HQ under Senior Commander Allen, moved to Scottish Command HQ in Edinburgh. After 6 months Meg went to a Selection Board to become an officer and attended the Cadet Course at Saltdean, Brighton. She was posted to the ATS Reception Depot in Edinburgh where she served for 2 years.

Subsequently she served for a short time at Glencorse and Ayr before being posted to Orkney for 2 years. A natural listener and compassionate without sentimentality, she built up a wealth of experience.

When the Victory Parade was held in Edinburgh, Meg led the ATS Section down Princes Street on VE Day.

She was Lady-in-Waiting to Princess Elizabeth and later on, after being widowed, she was appointed Lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

C Whitelaw

CAPT (RETD) M D RIDDY



Penny Riddy with her daughters, Penny and Steph

Muriel Drusilla Riddy was nicknamed Penny (an abbreviation of her maiden name) when she joined the Army shortly before September 1939 and ever since then she was known to us all as Penny. She enjoyed Service life and was soon made an officer. Having married an Army

Major, she left the ATS at the end of the war to become a full-time wife and, later, mother of two daughters.

In 1966 she became the WRAC Recruiting Officer at Chatham where she prided herself on the quality and not the quantity of her recruits. No handbags, no hats, no dress and NO HANDBAG earned no points! When that post became redundant Penny was given an RO III post in the Directorate of Army Recruiting and considerably brightened up the office lives of her fellow ROs until she retired.

After the death of her husband, Douglas, she went to work voluntarily one day a week at Kew Record Office and once again soon endeared herself to her colleagues by her enthusiasm and the sheer joy she took in the old detailed records of the servicemen she was checking. (She applied the same enthusiasm to research her own family tree.)

While visiting a friend's husband in the Star & Garter Home, she discovered there were ex ATS/WRAC servicewomen there and she immediately took upon herself the role of ATS/WRAC visitor. She involved WRAC Corps HQ in their welfare and in addition to her weekly visits, made a special Christmas trip with cards and gifts from the Corps - there were many other little gifts from Penny herself regularly. She made a point of giving Star & Garter news at the meetings of the Greater London Branch of which she was a very popular member.

As her Vicar revealed at her funeral service, Penny was often fondly referred to as "The Duchess" by her Church friends. On his last visit to Penny in Kingston Hospital, she gave him the complete 'programme' for her goodbye service and commanded her two daughters, ever at her bedside, that the funeral must not be on Friday as that was his day off and he needed a day off as "you are looking a little peaky Jeff". He said she would always be remembered for her sheer joy of living and genuine interest in everyone and everything. Quite irreplaceable. We agree.

BML

MURIEL DARBYSHIRE

Many of you will remember Muriel Darbyshire (Darby) particularly from the WRAC Dinners and her great enjoyment of those occasions. How many of you remember much about her Army career? Muriel had completed basic training as a cook before joining the ATS in 1944. She served in Saltburn, Portsmouth, Gosport and Bordon before being discharged in 1947 when she married. She brought up a son before re-enlisting into the WRAC in 1960 and took up her old trade of cook at Catterick.

In 1963, she went to Lingfield and was promoted to Corporal. Between 1965 and 1967 she served in Northern Ireland and Manorbier. In 1968, she was promoted to sergeant and posted to Aldershot. There she changed to Admin Duties and was promoted to Acting Staff Sergeant. Subsequently she served in Edinburgh and Guildford where she was SQMS. She reverted to the rank of

Sergeant on posting to Krefeld. She was awarded her LS and GC just after her fiftieth birthday in 1977.

Darby always had a happy smile and we shall miss her company at many a social gathering..

Editor





ALINE HOWIESON WYPPER LESWELL (SANDY)



It is with great sadness we report the death of Aline (Sandy) Leswell (née Webb). The speed of her passing was a terrible shock to say the least, and our hearts went out to her daughter Margaret and grandchildren whose lives were shattered in just three short weeks.

Sandy joined the ATS in 1945 at High Legh Knutsford. She trained as Signals Telephonist at Craigmillar and Denbury. She was then posted to HQ North Highland District Inverness. After that she went to HQ London District in January 1946, CHQ MELF and Palestine Company in March 1947. Sandy attended a pre-release course in Fayid Egypt and was demobbed in 1948.

She joined Colchester Branch in 1989 transferring to London Branch in 1999. Sandy served on our committee since 2000 as Membership Secretary, a post she enjoyed and was very good at. In particular, she was good at

spotting those who had not turned up to a meeting and then finding out if they were OK.

Eight Members attended her funeral in St Mary Cray, Kent for a last farewell. She will be greatly missed by us all.

MRS MARY J.L. THOMSON (née DIXON) OBE
18 January 1917 – 9 December 2004

Mary was educated at Shrewsbury High School for Girls and the Byam Shaw School of Art in London. But when war clouds gathered in 1938 she joined the ATS which had been established under Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan.

Mary thrived in the military environment. On the outbreak of war she was posted as adjutant to an ATS training centre where the volunteers received basic military instruction and were selected for such jobs as orderly, clerk, driver or telephonist. She taught the women to march and had the honour of parading them for inspection by the King and Queen.

In 1941, Mary, who by now was the youngest senior commander in the ATS, was appointed to take charge of auxiliaries in an anti-aircraft group. She recalled that during one of her visits to a mixed battery it shot down a German plane and the pilot parachuted into the sea.

During the remainder of the war Mary held a succession of staff posts in Anti-Aircraft Command and was promoted to Controller. Mary got on well with her male military colleagues but she was determined to retain her femininity. Throughout her service she wore a string of pearls under her khaki shirt!

In late 1945 she was appointed the senior ATS officer in the Middle East based in Cairo. Her primary task was to arrange for the demobilisation of the foreign nationalities serving in the ATS but she was also required to perform an ambassadorial role for the army. As the honoured guest at one Arab feast she had the privilege of being served a sheep's eye by her host. With typical quick-wittedness she excused herself on the grounds that the honour was too great for a mere woman and instructed the male major accompanying her to chomp for his country.

On her repatriation from the Middle East in 1946 she left the ATS with a well-earned OBE and, after a period working with the English Speaking Union, married the Reverend Ian Thomson, who in his later years became the Chaplain of All Soul's College, Oxford.

She played an active role in many charities including the National Association for Mental Health, the National Trust for Scotland and the Friends of the National Galleries of Scotland.

Her favourite saying was 'Eternity lies in the depth of the moment'.

Compiled by Dr Jeremy Crang, University of Edinburgh

JOY MANNERS (née TRAYNOR)

The accompanying photograph was taken when Joy was the Junior Under Officer of Windsor Company at Huron Camp, Liphook, then the home of the WRAC School of Instruction. **PDF Compressor Free Version**



After commissioning, Joy qualified as a Signals officer at Catterick and served successively at Edinburgh Castle, in the Middle East during the Suez crisis and subsequently in Cyprus during the 'Eoka' emergency.

Her overseas tour completed, Joy returned to the UK and it was whilst at Kingston, being trained for provost duties that she met her future husband whilst playing tennis. They settled in Farnborough and Joy joined the Aldershot Branch of the WRAC Association. She was a staunch supporter of Branch and Association for over 30 years and remained so until it closed, serving as Chairman and committee member over a long period.

Twelve years ago Joy was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent operations and three courses of chemotherapy before her death in 2005. Throughout these long years she displayed exemplary courage and cheerfulness, attending Branch meetings whenever her health permitted and keeping in touch with other members when too ill to leave the house. Joy died at home, cared for by her husband, Malcolm.

FAREWELL TO THE "MIGHTY" ATOM"

Kathleen Ellis was born near Leeds in 1914. Although diminutive in stature she was a keen and accomplished tennis player who as a young woman participated in many tournaments in her native Yorkshire. During World War II she continued to play, transferring her allegiance to the ATS unit in which she was serving. In 1942 she was in the ME section attached to R Wing I of the Royal Army Pay Corps (the photograph shows her seventh

from the left amongst the ATS in the second row). Are there any others of her comrades reading this?

Kathleen's life was to change for ever, when she was posted to the Frensham area in 1943, and older village residents remember that others in her unit told them that they had brought "the mighty atom" with them. Of course, this unit was not alone in being stationed in the area – there was a large element of Canadian forces also, (those who trained at the WRAC School of Instruction when it was at Liphook will remember that Huron Camp was one of five huddled encampments originally built for Canadian units and named after the Great Lakes.)

One of those in the Canadian army was Peter Walker, an Englishman who had emigrated to Canada and returned to fight for his native country. Peter and Kathleen fell in love, not only with each other, but also with Frensham and the tranquil village life, which it then offered, so in 1945, when the war had ended they married and settled there. They both loved children and fostered several who had been brought to the area as refugees, finally being able to adopt a baby of their own. Kathleen continued to play tennis and when the village tennis courts were threatened with demolition she visited every house and requested one pound from each in order to save the courts and start a club – (she was able to do this because she also ran the local newspaper business and combined this with her deliveries). Sadly, Peter developed Parkinsons disease and Kathleen nursed him devotedly in their tiny cottage until the day he died.

Kathleen was immensely proud of her service in the ATS and was happy to be a guest at the meetings of the Aldershot Branch when transport was available. At one meeting in particular the lecturer was a former Royal Marines Bandmaster on the Britannia, whom she had known as a small boy.

In December 2004, shortly after celebrating her 90th birthday, Kathleen realised that living alone and facing precipitous cottage stairs was too much of a challenge so she reluctantly undertook another great change of area – this time to the Welsh borders, where her daughter was working. She died there in May 2005 but was returned to Frensham for her funeral in the village church where she had worshipped for over half a century.



ABBOTT Mrs Mona Evelyn (Lynn) Abbott, née Common, of Plymouth on 09 March 2005. ATS

ANDERSON Mrs Doris Anderson, née McCormick, of Bury on 20 March 2005. ATS

ANDREWS OBE Lt Col (Retd) Winifred Doreen (Andy) Andrews OBE of Chester-le-Street on 23 March 2005. ATS/WRAC

ANGUS Miss Gladys Angus, née Jones, of London on 20 June 2005. ATS

ATFIELD Mrs Muriel Joyce Atfield, née Smith, of Orpington on 29 March 2005. ATS

BAKER Mrs Winifred (Winn) Baker, née Smith, of New Barnet in October 2004. ATS

BALLANCE Mrs Eileen Mary Grace Ballance, of Oxford on 7 November 2004. ATS

BANKS Mrs Edna Banks, née Higgins, of Winchester on 27 May 2005. WRAC

BANKS Mrs Rowena Michelle Banks, née Scott, in January 2005. WRAC

BANAHAN Mrs Jean M L Banahan, née Price, of Johannesburg in February 2005. ATS

BARTON Miss Denise Barton of Epping on 5 May 2005. ATS/WRAC

BATES Mrs Vi Bates, née Roberts, of Newton, Nr Swansea on 20 June 2005. ATS

BAYLISS-BLOMLEY Mrs E Bayliss-Blomley, née Johnson, of Mold on 6 February 2005. ATS

BELL Mrs Mary Patricia Bell, née Bardy, of South Australia on 2 February 2005. ATS/WRAC

BICKERTON Mrs P Bickerton, née Southcott, of Bury St Edmunds on 9 April 2005. ATS/WRAC

BRANT Mrs Winifred Brant, née Wilson, of Sale on 27 December 2004. ATS

BUDDEN Mrs Joan May Budden, née Holdsworth, of Leeds on 18 March 2005. ATS/WRAC

BURTON Mrs Anna Burton, née Hamilton, of Solihull on 11 January 2005. ATS

CASSELS Mrs Mary Cassels of Oxford in August 2003. ATS

CLARK Mrs Elexa Clark of Guildford on 18 February 2005. ATS

CLARKE Mrs Marjorie (Ginger) Clarke, née Whitehead, of Wilmslow in March 2005. ATS

COBB MBE TD DL Lt Col (Retd) Angela Vera Cobb, of Birchington, Kent on 18 June 2005. ATS (*Founder of ATS Band*)

COOMBER Mrs Betty Coomber, née Woollett, of Sittingbourne on 27 February 2005. ATS

COUZENS Mrs Mabel Couzens, née Stocker, of Fareham on 24 March 2005. ATS

CROFTON MBE Maj (Retd) Dorothy Alma Crofton MBE of Dereham on 16 April 2005. WRAC

DARBYSHIRE Miss Muriel (Darby) Darbyshire of Darlington on 04 March 2005. ATS/WRAC

DAVIES Mrs Rhoda Patricia Davies, née Smith, of Wirral. ATS

DICKSON MBE Mrs Ruth Dickson MBE, née Greenwood, of Stoke-on-Trent in May 2005. ATS

DOUGLAS Mrs Olga Douglas, née Chapman, of Scotland on 22 April 2005. ATS

DOWNER Miss N Downer of Bath on 12 April 2005. ATS

ECCOTT Mrs Doris Eccott, née Andrews, of Chandlers Ford on 29 December 2004. ATS

FAULKNER Miss Olive Faulkner of Leeds on 6 February 2005. ATS

FENTON Mrs Eleanor Mary Fenton, née Tripp, of Middlesbrough on 28 February 2005. ATS

FRITH Mrs Elsie Frith of London on 27 April 2005. ATS

GIBBS MBE Lt Col (Retd) Gladys Jane Gibbs MBE of Leicester on 06 January 2005. ATS/WRAC

GIROUX Mrs Marjorie Giroux, née Sellars, of Darlington on 13 May 2005. ex WAAF, Associate member

GRAY Mrs Elizabeth M Gray, née Fleming, of St Andrews on 8 January 2005. ATS

HADAWAY Mrs M J Hadaway, née Corbet, of Sevenoaks on 23 December 2004. ATS

HARDING Mrs Kate Harding, née Chorlton, of Blackpool in April 2005. ATS

HEAL Mrs Betty (Paddy) Heal, née Paddock, of Clevedon on 04 May 2005. ATS

HIGGINS Mrs Beryl Higgins, née James, of Ryde on 2 March 2005. ATS

JAMIESON Mrs Ann Jamieson, née Houseman, of Harrogate on 05 January 2005. ATS

LESWELL Mrs Sandy Leswell, née Webb, of Orpington on 22 February 2005. ATS

LONGHURST Mrs Louise Longhurst, of Southampton on 9 November 2004. ATS

MACHIN Mrs Vera Machin, née Barnsley, of Leicester on 26 January 2005. ATS

MANN Mrs Ethel Joan (Jenny), née Armour, of Axminster on 15 June 2005. ATS

MANNERS Mrs Joy Manners, née Traynor of Farnborough in June 2005. WRAC

MARSH Mrs Sue Marsh, née Whitworth WRAC

MARTIN Mrs Ivy Martin of Norwich on 29 May 2005. ATS

McAFEE Mrs Stella B McAfee, née Farrow of Coventry. ATS

McGHIE Mrs Winifred McGhie, née Holland, of Glasgow on 11 December 2004. ATS

MERCER Miss Anne Mercer of Liverpool in September 2004. WRAC

MOORES Mrs Queenie Moores of Crewe on 25 January 2005. ATS

MONTGOMERY Mrs Euphemia Montgomery, née Cowan, of Edinburgh on 7 February 2005. ATS

MORRIS Mrs Helen Morris of Buckley on 25 January 2005. ATS

MOUNTFORD Ms Lilian Mountford of Lindfield on 22 February 2005. WRAC

NASH Mrs Phil Nash of Deal on 5 June 2005. WRAC

NICOLSON Mrs May Nicolson, née Ballingall, of Glasgow in February 2005. ATS

NUTTON Ms Iris Nutton of Chelmsford on 3 April 2005. ATS

O'HAGAN Mrs Heather Mary Byard O'Hagan, née White, of Aylesford on 02 June 2005. WRAC

OSBORNE Mrs Janet Osborne of Glasgow on 17 February 2005. ATS

PARIS Mrs Olivia Paris of Crawley Down on 8 February 2005. ATS

PARKER Mrs Adelaide Parker of Broadstairs in December 2004. WRAC

PATTON Mrs Betty Patton of Crewe on 3 July 2005. ATS

POLLEY Mrs Mildred Francis Iris Polley, née Jeffries, of London on 26 December 2004. ATS

PROVOST Mrs Lillian Provost of Stockport on 13 January 2005. ATS

RAYNAR-WILSON Miss Lavinia F Raynar-Wilson of Weston-Super-Mare. ATS

READER Miss Lucy Marion Reader of Sidcup on 5 October 2004. ATS

RIDDY Mrs M D (Penny) Riddy, née Penson, of Twickenham on 14 February 2005. ATS/WRAC

RIPPER Mrs Pauline Ripper, née Wootton, of Richmond on 17 September 2004. ATS

RISEBORO Mrs Kathleen Riseboro at the Royal Star and Garter Home on 29 April 2005. ATS

ROOKS Mrs Edna May Rooks, née Enderby, of Sunderland on 3 March 2005. ATS

SMITH Mrs Dorothy Elizabeth Smith, née Barton, of Swaffham on 15 March 2005. ATS

STEWART Mrs Elizabeth Stewart of Torquay on 04 May 2004. ATS

STEWART Mrs Susan Stewart, née Stewart, of Isle of Skye on 27 February 2005. ATS

STUART-SMITH Miss E (Budge) Stuart-Smith of Southampton on 17 February 2005. Former hockey coach

THORNTON Miss Winifred Mary Thornton of St Leonards-on-Sea on 18 February 2005. ATS/WRAC

TURNER Mrs Peggy Turner of Chelmsford on 29 February 2005. ATS

VAUGHAN Miss Joan Vaughan of Bournemouth on 3 March 2005. ATS

WALKER Mrs Elsie Walker of Stirling on 14 March 2005. ATS

WALKER Mrs Kathleen Walker, née Ellis, of Ross-on-Wye in May 2005. ATS

WAVICH Mrs Euphemia (Effie) Wavich, née Kennedy, of Glasgow on 26 February 2005. ATS

WEBB MBE Miss Hilary Valentine Webb MBE of Sutton. ATS

WHITE Mrs Gladys White, née Stevens, of Bungay on 28 April 2005. ATS

WHITE Mrs Janice Lindsey White, née Morrison, of Totnes in January 2005. WRAC

WHITTAM Mrs Annie Whittam, née Holland, of Stockport. ATS

WILSON Miss Florence Joan Wilson of Coventry on 01 June 2005. ATS

WILMOTT Miss Edith Wilmott of Bristol on 18 Jan 2005. ATS

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB ON SATURDAY 9 APRIL 2005

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1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming 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 her support team: Major Jane Freebairn, General Secretary; Mrs Maggie Purkis, Chairman of the Executive Committee and Colonel Audrey Smith, Chairman of the Grants Committee. The Chairman especially welcomed Mrs Margaret Wroot who had been in post as the Benevolent Fund Case Secretary since July 2004.

The Chairman continued by outlining her programme of visits to individual Branches and Area Reunions and emphasised how important this contact was. The Chairman had also represented the Association at the ABF's 60th Anniversary events, at the Carol Service at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and had attended the Veteran's Plenary hosted by the PUS of State for Defence and the Minister for Veteran's Affairs, Mr Ivor Caplin MP.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from many individuals, including Col AM Clissitt, Col SP Richards, Lt Col Purton, several branches and the following members of Council:

Brig Dame Mary Pihl, Brig Dame Joanna Kelleher, Brig GK Ramsey, Miss M Thomson, Lt Col The Lady Martha Bruce, Col H McMahon, Lt Col M Woollard, Lt Col J Young, Mrs A Denham and Mrs M Cranmer.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated in *The Lioness* 2/2004. No comments had been received. It was proposed that the Chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Southampton Seconded: Medway
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 at Worthy Down and secondly in London at the Victory Services Club in January. The main items of interest were:

a. Lt Col Trout had stood down as Chairman Southern Area but would continue as Secretary to Salisbury Branch. Maj Anne (Mack) Maskens-McIntyre had taken over and the Chairman welcomed her to her first AGM as an Area Chairman.

b. National Memorial Arboretum. Council had agreed to place a Staffordshire blue brick plinth and commemorative plaque on the WRAC Association grove. There would also be three benches to represent the three Army women's services – WAAC/QMAAC, ATS and WRAC. The Chairman referred to the March newsletter of the ATS Dinner Club in which Mrs Fellows, the Editor, had suggested that the purpose of the WRAC Association grove had only recently been expanded to include the QMAAC and ATS. This was not true. The WRAC Association had always incorporated the QMAAC and ATS Comrades Association. The General Secretary would write to Mrs Fellows to clarify this point. [AFTERNOTE: Brig Field

has agreed to explain the situation to the ATS Dinner Club]

c. ATS Statue Appeal. Council had been informed that Mrs Beeston of Wolverhampton Branch and Mrs Rogers of Eastbourne Branch had started a fund for an ATS Statue and that the National Memorial Arboretum had agreed in principle that the statue would be given its own site. It would not be in the WRAC Association grove. The General Secretary had published a letter from Mrs Beeston in *The Lioness* but had added an Editor's note explaining it was a private venture and not an Association sponsored venture. Soldier magazine had also published the appeal with the same explanatory note. Mrs Rogers confirmed to the meeting that she understood the situation. The Chairman wished her well in her venture.

d. Gift Aid. The Hon Treasurer had helped to complete a thorough investigation into Gift Aid and how it affected the Association. Recent claims would realise nearly £2,500. It was most likely that the Association would be able to claim against the subscriptions as well. However, it would require much more administrative effort. Initially, current records would have to be reviewed and updated. After that, work would begin on subscriptions. The Association would contact individual members about their own donation/standing order to confirm current records.

e. Dame Kelly Holmes. The Chairman had written to Kelly Holmes to congratulate her on becoming a Dame and to explain that Council had agreed to make her a life member of the Association in her own right. Dame Kelly's secretary had replied and said that she would keep the Grand Reunion as a possibility in her diary.

f. Auditors. Council had agreed to re-appoint Baker Tilly as Auditors.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

The General Secretary read the report in the absence of the Honorary Treasurer.

The Audited accounts for the year ending 31 October 2004 had been published in *The Lioness* Edition 1/2005. Last year, it had been reported that the total worth of the Funds had increased by over £200,000. The Stock Market had continued to move upwards and some significant legacies and donations had been received. In total, therefore, the overall worth had increased in this financial year by £450,000.

The Association, excluding the Benevolent Funds, had an income over expenditure of £63,782, well over twice last year's figure. This was almost exclusively accounted for by donations totalling £40,947 in comparison with £3,611 the previous year. £40,000 would be used to subsidise the Grand Reunion in April 2006. It was noted that, without donations, the net income of the Association was only some £5,000. This was not a large figure considering that the AGM would cost over £2,000.

The Benevolent Funds had also benefited from the upturn in the Stock Market and one or two extremely generous legacies. In total, over £188,000 had been received – a tremendous increase over the £11,000 which had been received the previous year. The Benevolent Funds had a total value of £4,156,152, which was an increase of £386,216 over last year. The Funds had been sufficient to fulfil the commitment to those in hardship without the worries of the previous years when the Stock Market had not performed at all well.

Most of the Funds are invested, but nearly £738,000 was still held as cash on deposit. The sum of cash had increased greatly this year because of legacies and donations and it had been agreed at the January meeting of Council that up to £100,000 would be invested. The Council would consider this issue again at their July meeting.

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In summary, it was reported that the Funds were sound and it should be possible to meet all commitments over the next few years. The Honorary Treasurer recommended that the financial statements should be accepted and the audited accounts should be ratified.

Proposed: Salisbury Seconded: Portsmouth
Unanimously agreed.

7. REPORT OF THE EDITOR OF THE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

The Editor began her report by explaining that she had only edited one edition so far and thanked Mrs Maggie Purkis who had edited the previous two editions whilst she had been double-hatted as the Benevolent Fund Case Secretary and the General Secretary.

Although there had only been 56 pages instead of the possible 64, no articles or Branch news had been ignored. Unfortunately a couple of Branch news had not been received. The Editor encouraged Branch Secretaries and anyone who was concerned about submitted material to confirm with Association HQ that it had been received.

The deadline for the next edition would be 20 June which would be before the main July events to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War 2. However, it should mean that there would be a bumper edition in March 2006. The Editor encouraged everyone to send in as many articles as possible about the commemorative events and explained that *The Lioness* should be regarded as a significant part of the Association's archive. It was important to create an excellent historical source for the future.

The Lioness magazine was an expensive publication and printing, distribution and mailing costs rose steadily each year. The Editor asked Branches to consider this when fund raising. *The Lioness* was an important communication tool especially for those not mobile enough to attend Branch meetings. The Editor reminded the meeting that the Association was a charity and *The Lioness* was a national newsletter.

Finally, the Editor acknowledged that digital photography was excellent because it was quick and relatively cheap. However, scanned, copied or e-mailed images suffered considerable deterioration during those processes and often the final photograph could not be used. It was always best to submit the original. Also, although it was tempting just to submit several photographs, it would be much better to select the best one with a suitable caption and the names of any individuals appearing in the photograph.

The Editor looked forward to receiving a large amount of material for the next edition.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

a. Executive Committee

The Chairman of the Executive Committee reported that the Committee had met several times since the last AGM. The main items discussed had been the proposed amendments to Rules 6-9 and the Grand Reunion in 2006.

(1) Rules 6-9. The suggested amendments had been published in *The Lioness* and agreed by Council. In summary, there would be fewer categories of Council members. One category would be "Six members who have served in the WRAC". These six members were previously

categorised as two Council Vice Presidents, two officers and two servicewomen who had served in the WRAC. All those members would have the same length of tenure (four years) and Council would ratify the appointments annually. Lastly, the Executive Committee membership would be increased to include all Area Chairmen. The Chairman would ask the meeting to ratify these changes later.

(2) Grand Reunion. A Grand Reunion Organisational Team had been established and Council had agreed that a £40,000 donation would be used to subsidise the Reunion. They had also agreed a budget of £5,000 to help with set up costs. Application forms would be in the September edition of *The Lioness* and 400 places would be available. The weekend would be considered as an "all in package" from tea on Friday afternoon until luncheon on Sunday. There would be a themed dinner on Friday evening with entertainment, a Gala Dinner on Saturday night with music and a Church Parade and Drumhead Service on the Sunday. The AGM itself would be held on the Saturday afternoon. It would cost £150 for en-suite and £100 for standard accommodation. The Chairman of the Executive Committee hoped that the 400 places would be filled!

The Chairman of the Executive Committee emphasised the importance of selling the maximum number of Grand Draw tickets. One book of 5 tickets priced at a £1 for each ticket would be included in each copy of *The Lioness*. Members would be encouraged to sell additional tickets. The prizes would include £1,000 cash, 2 night's in a superb hotel in Lincoln and one week's self-catering accommodation in UK.

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 were dealt with on a daily basis. 600 cases had been received which was a decrease of nearly 20% on the previous year. The ratio of cases was 370 ATS to 230 WRAC so three-fifths of the cases had been ATS and two-fifths WRAC. This was significant. Previously, the ratio had been three quarters ATS to one quarter WRAC. This confirmed the decrease in ATS cases and the increase in WRAC applications.

The total amount spent last year was £127,000. 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 had often shared the costs of an application. Also 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, had helped significantly.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund provided 21 annuities to those who were elderly, in poor health and who lived alone on minimal income. The annuity had been increased to £12 a week at the July meeting of Council. The annuity also included a Christmas Bonus of £60. The Army Benevolent Fund also awarded annuities set at £55 per month. The ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund administered 96 such annuities on behalf of the ABF.

The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund also helped towards topping up the shortfall of Nursing Home Fees. 27 ex-members of the ATS had been helped with amounts up to £15 a week. The Army Benevolent Fund often shared these cases because of the amounts involved.

In conjunction with the Army Benevolent Fund, Pontins holidays are provided for worthy cases with children under 16. In 2004 a total of 6 families were given a holiday. Our thanks go to Mrs Babs Mitcheson who has co-ordinated the Pontins holidays for many years. The Army Benevolent

Fund have recently introduced Warners Holidays for the more mature person and the Benevolent Fund hoped to make more use of this facility in the future.

The Chairman of the Grants Committee also thanked Brigid Archdale who dealt with the woollen garments which were sent to those with young children. Both the Pontins and knitting schemes would be monitored because they were age related and the number of eligible candidates was decreasing rapidly.

The Chairman of the Grants Committee finished by describing a case and then thanking all the Branches and individuals who had donated money to the Benevolent Fund. In total, £2990 had been received which had been greatly appreciated.

9. RESOLUTIONS

a. Motions of Urgency

There were no motions of urgency

b. Council Resolutions

(1) Certificates of Appreciation. Council had approved six Certificates of Appreciation. The Chairman presented Certificates to the following for recognition of devoted service and significant contribution to their Branch:

Miss Ruth Jennings	Plymouth
Mrs Evelyn Radford	Hereford
Mrs Gladys Ash	Wolverhampton

The following had been awarded a Certificate but were unable to attend the AGM:

Mrs Mary Davis	Plymouth (Miss Jennings collected the Certificate)
Mrs Betty Clyne	Wolverhampton
Mrs Mary Gunning	Birmingham
(The General Secretary would present both these Certificates at the Birmingham Branch Luncheon on 4 May.)	

(2) Amendments to Rules. The Chairman reminded the meeting that the proposed amendments had been published in *The Lioness* and that the Chairman of the Executive Committee had explained the rationale behind the suggested changes. The Chairman asked the AGM to agree the amendments.

Proposed: Bury Seconded: Stafford Unanimously agreed

c. Branch Resolutions

There were no Branch Resolutions

d. Election of Vice Presidents of Council

Sadly, Mrs Janice Robinson had passed away soon after last year's AGM. Council selected Mrs Alison Schofield, Assistant Editor of *The Lioness* to fill the vacancy. Also, Lt Col Anne Brown had finished her four-year tenure. Council selected retired Lt Col Jo Young now living in Scotland and Vice Chairman of that Area to fill the vacancy. The Chairman asked the meeting to ratify the appointments.

Proposed: Band Seconded: Barnsley Unanimously agreed

e. Election of Honorary Treasurer

The Chairman asked the meeting to ratify Lt Col Woollard in her appointment as Honorary Treasurer.

Proposed: Dumfries Seconded: Canterbury
Unanimously agreed

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman said there were two items she wished to brief the meeting on:

a. Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the End of the Second World War. The Chairman summarised the events happening during the first ever Veterans' Awareness Week from Monday 4 July until Sunday 10 July when there would be a service in Westminster Abbey, a luncheon in Buckingham Palace hosted by Her Majesty The Queen, and a commemorative show on Horse Guards followed by a Parade of Standards and a flypast of WWII aircraft. On Saturday 9 July, Her Majesty The Queen would unveil the Memorial to the Women of World War 2 in Whitehall. The Association would be well represented.

b. Armed Forces Memorial. The General Secretary explained that an Armed Forces Memorial would be established at the National Memorial Arboretum. It would recognize the men and women of the Armed Forces who had died while on duty and those who had been killed by terrorist action since the end of the Second World War. There would also be a Tri-Service Memorial Plaque in Westminster Abbey and a Roll of Honour for each service. The one for the Army would be kept in the Chapel of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. This Roll would include the names of all those who had died in service. The names of 119 women would be on the Roll of Honour and there would be 31 names on the Memorial in the Arboretum.

The following items were also raised:

c. Armed Forces Memorial. Mrs Deeley fully supported this national Memorial which would commemorate the large number of young servicemen and women who had lost their lives in recent conflicts.

d. The Lioness. There was an understanding that Branch news input for the magazine should be under 300 words. The Editor said that was not a strict rule but that any article whatever its length would be edited as necessary.

e. Catering at the Grand Reunion. It was confirmed that all meals would be included in the overall price of the Grand Reunion so everyone attending would receive all the meals they had paid for.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place during the Grand Reunion at the University of Warwick (Coventry campus) on Saturday 01 April 2006.

Signed as a true record.

..... Date.....
(Chairman)

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