

LIONESS

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WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS



1949 – 1992

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

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WRAC Recruiting Poster
Postcards of WRAC Centre, Guildford

Back Cover

WO & NCO Wing, WRAC College, Camberley,
Warrant Officers' Convention 1973 or 1974

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Editorial



This is an editorial of thanks! Thank you to everyone who has responded to my plea for WRAC material. As I said, this year, the *Lioness* magazine covers will reflect the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the WRAC. I particularly wanted to feature the WRAC recruiting poster, not just because some of you might have used it to apply to join the WRAC, but because of the heading:

You'll make all sorts of friends. This theme is repeated time and again throughout this *Lioness*. So many of you, ATS and WRAC alike, mention comradeship and friendship in your articles as such an important inheritance from your service days.

Thank you to Babs Blay who kindly supplied the postcards of the WRAC Centre. They may seem rather drab and dated. However, I am sure they will generate many memories for those of you who completed your basic training there – or indeed, served there on the training staff.

Thank you to Val Trout for the photograph on the back cover. Val gave me most of the names. Can anyone give me a full set?

Thank you, with my General Secretary's hat on, to all of you who have so generously sent in donations in addition to the money for your Grand Draw tickets. Your kindness is very much appreciated and the Association has benefited greatly at a time when obviously every penny counts!

Finally, thank you to all of you who make such kind remarks about the *Lioness* magazine. It is good to know how much you appreciate our efforts here and at the printers putting it together. But, don't forget it is you, the readership, which starts the whole process of by sending material in. Please – don't stop doing that – all it needs is an article on one side of A4 paper and one photograph.

Jane Freebairn

Message from the Vice President



I have been completely overwhelmed by the response to my plea in the last *Lioness* for your support at the Grand Reunion to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the Association and the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAC. It has been absolutely fantastic! Having

promised the Norbreck Castle Hotel that we would definitely have 400 attendees (bearing in mind that only 380 members were at the last Reunion in Warwick), we find that we now have nearly 550 names on the list and the applications are still rolling in as we go to print (early January). By the time you read this in early March who knows how many will be attending but the more the merrier!

We will endeavour to make the weekend the most enjoyable and memorable Reunion yet and I personally am looking forward to it immensely – I do hope you all are too. Remember the whole weekend is designed to enable us Army Women, irrespective of the capbadge we wore or are still wearing, to reminisce, to catch up with old friends, to make new ones, but above all, to have fun!

During the weekend we will think of those of you who are unable to attend and share the comradeship and we will raise a glass to you and other 'absent friends' no longer with us. I trust you will still enjoy hearing about it from friends who were there or by reading about it in the next *Lioness*.

By the time you read this, we shall be literally only a week or two away from the Reunion. If you have not applied and wished you had (I never give up!), it is worth giving Association Headquarters a ring to see if there is still a chance to come along – it is worth a try, you might be lucky!

I close with my very best wishes to you all for 2009. I look forward to meeting up with as many of you as possible throughout the year whether it be in Blackpool, at your local Branch or at an Area Reunion.

'Happy Birthday' to the Association and the WRAC!

Sue Westlake

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB ANNUAL LUNCHEON 2009

The WRAC Officers' Dining Club will next meet at the House of Commons for Luncheon on

Saturday 16 May 2009

Look for the application form elsewhere in this edition and complete it now. We will celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the WRAC so PLEASE do try to join us for this special event.

Articles of Interest

BACK COPIES OF *LIONESS*

W/205279 Miss Mary Santer
74 Walkern Road, Benington, Herts SG2 7LS
Tel: 01438 869618 (preferably between 9-10am
or evenings)

Any person requiring back numbers of the *Lioness*, please contact me. If required and I have it, either collect or pay postage. I greatly appreciate all that you do at the Association and would also like to pass on my best wishes to all the servicewomen in the Army today.

A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Madge Cole – Hull Branch

Four days after the Northern Area Reunion in Hull, I and three other members of the Hull Branch joined two coach loads of Hull ex-Service veterans and their wives to visit the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas. After a two hour journey, we arrived in time for a quick cup of tea or coffee before we all gathered with other visitors in the Millennium Chapel of Peace and Forgiveness. The Last Post is played and a minute's silence is observed every morning at 11am.

The Armed Forces Memorial is dedicated to all those Servicemen and women who have lost their lives since the end of World War II – their names inscribed on the massive walls. I must admit I had tears in my eyes reading the messages which relatives of Service personnel lost in 2007 had written on small wooden poppy crosses.

Two of us took advantage of the little train that operates taking visitors round the 150 acres, with a running commentary describing each memorial. The ATS statue is so very striking. Unfortunately the ground surrounding was rather water logged due to heavy rain earlier that week, so we couldn't see it as close as I would have liked.

We all boarded the coaches at 1600 hrs and set off for the



Standing L-R: Jean Robinson ex WRAF, Madge Cole ex WRAC, Dorothy Mirfin ex ATS (Chairman & Secretary Hull Branch)
Seated: Jean Norris ex ATS and Jean's husband

long journey back to Hull after a very moving and unforgettable visit to the National Memorial Arboretum. It certainly is well worth a visit if you get the chance.

PHARMACY PHUN IN THE BRITISH FIELD HOSPITAL, BASRA, IRAQ

Lt Col Ishbel Thomson AGC (SPS)



Ishbel Thomson & Nursing and Physio Staff on the Medical Ward

"You could do that!" said my neighbour at a Mess Dinner Night in the Army Medical Directorate Mess. And eventually in October 2008 I turned up at the British Military Field Hospital in Basra. Twenty-three years ago I left my civilian job as a pharmacist to join the WRAC, and my neighbour above had just returned from his third operational pharmacy tour in three years. The system approved the proposal that I deploy, as an AGC (SPS) officer, to be the pharmacist in Iraq. What started as a steady refresher programme turned into a whirlwind of military training, pharmacy training, visits, kit issue, inoculations, packing, more kit issue, more training, till I got on the plane at Brize Norton.



The hospital corridor

Arriving at 0430 hrs, I wasn't sure what to expect. I knew the hospital was a tent – but what a tent! It's about 100 yards long. The flooring is concrete, and off at right angles from the main corridor on both sides are the wards, physio, pharmacy, x-ray, labs, operating theatres and everything else needed for a hospital. The air-conditioning is a Heath Robinson affair of bendy plastic tubes of about 15" diameter with holes, powered by air conditioners outside. Outside every spur has its huge hesco sand blast walls protection and inside are blast walls. Although each department has a sink, toilets are outside as are patient showers. The hospital has its own generator farm for power and its own helipad for casualties.



Hesco sand blast walls

Thankfully the major trauma of the last couple of years has abated and the dreadful injuries to British servicemen seem to have ceased, at least here if not in Afghanistan. We have a variety of patients, including American service and civilians and lots of overseas workers mainly from the Indian sub-continent. We have a surprising amount of accidents – broken bones and the like – and return 8-10 patients each week to the UK.

However there is still a threat. My body armour and helmet are my best friends and go with me everywhere. If the alarm sounds we hit the ground. "Get on your belt buckle NOW" and there we remain until the all-clear sounds. We sleep in individual 'stonehenges' – reinforced concrete cells, with a hole to crawl into, with 0.5" thick sheet steel as a roof, topped with sandbags. Don't sit up too quick! But despite what you may have heard in the media, the security situation has improved out of all recognition. Iraq and its Army are getting stronger by the day and, by the time you read this, we should be well into the drawdown and out of Iraq mid-2009.

Working as a clinician embedded within the medical services is fascinating. The Hospital is tri-service but there were some puzzled looks as I appeared with green beret, AGC (SPS) badges and a red cross, but I was immediately made welcome. I am amazed at their good humour – many are on their third or fourth tour and have had sobering experiences in dealing with badly injured people. Some have seen friends injured, and three medics have lost their lives in Iraq but their professionalism is outstanding. Their resilience,

resourcefulness, enthusiasm and good humour is impressive; there are definite similarities to the 1980's MASH 4077 TV series!

Within the Medical Unit there are female doctors, dentists, lab technicians, nurses, physiotherapists, clerks, drivers and signallers, and the PTI – who runs her sessions at 0545 hrs – a bit of a shock but sets us up for the day. Within the Basra area there are also female logisticians, mechanics, artillery operators, chefs, those in intelligence and others. Many are out in the Forward Operating Bases working alongside the infantry/armoured corps in very primitive conditions, but they seem to thrive and love their jobs. There are many mobilised TA here and many of the TA and Regular staff are mothers, indeed a couple are grandmothers. Quite a number have joined up only in the last 3-4 years as their children have become teenagers and less dependent on them.



Ishbel and her drug "tuck shop"

A Pharmacy Technician and myself man the Pharmacy. Due to the heat all our supplies are kept in fridges or REEFERS – refrigerated ISO containers. We have a Theatre wide role in advising on all aspects of pharmaceuticals. My Technician goes to Kuwait each month to the Medical Centre to advise the nurses and junior doctors there. I visit the medical centres local to the hospital and interact with all units within Basra. Because I attend all ward rounds within the hospital, this means I can advise immediately and be aware of potential problems. There is plenty to do in dispensing, training the staff, advising, managing the tortuous logistics chain and planning the drawdown.

Has it been worth it? Overwhelmingly – YES – a remarkable personal experience. But more importantly, the Pharmacy cadre, who are struggling to fill the operational deployments, are grateful I volunteered. Moreover as someone rather old and bold, I could bring lots of general Army experience to the unit. And the future? Although we are withdrawing from Iraq with the job done, we will be in Afghanistan for years. Another Op tour for an AGC (Special Pharmaceutical Service) officer??



Mural with girls

ATTESTATION PARADE - FROM ATS TO WRAC

W/109224 Sylvia Johnson née Brightwell
44 Starfield Close, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5JO

I thought the following might be of interest to some of the *Lioness* readers. In May 1949 sixteen girls, former ATS (TA), attended an Attestation Parade at the Drill Hall, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich for transfer from the ATS to the WRAC (TA).



May 1949

All were members of 471/472 Telephone Operating Switchboard Troops of 54 Signal Squadron. I am bottom right of the photograph – showing a leg!

GARDEN PARTY AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Gladys W Pope, Publicity Officer, Salisbury Branch

There was great excitement when our Salisbury Branch received an invitation from the "Not Forgotten" Association for ten members to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in the presence of HRH the Princess Royal. The lucky ones were Suzanne Gordon, Clare Edwards, Dulcie Chalcraft, Joan Middleton, Irene Grey,

Thirza Sillick, Gladys Webb, Maureen Robertson, Gladys Pope and Eileen Pennell.

"Hats will be worn" was the order of the day and how we enjoyed hunting for that special hat!

The day dawned bright and sunny with a slight breeze, perfect. We boarded our mini-bus and set off. After our 'comfort stop' at Fleet Services, we got to London a bit early so we parked on the Embankment for a while – and on went the hats! We arrived at the Palace at the appointed time and queued to get in. The vehicles were all being searched. Dulcie Chalcraft was in a wheelchair so we were directed to the Garden Gate entrance. A charming WREN came to take over pushing Dulcie and we all went to our allotted space. A very cheerful Major Leona Jones appeared and chairs were found for each of us.



The Princess Royal speaking to Dulcie Chalcraft



Maj Leona Jones with Joan Middleton, Clare Edwards and Suzanne Gordon



Eileen Pennell, Maureen Robertson, Gladys Webb, Thirza Sillick and Joan Middleton

HRH Princess Anne arrived and we were the first group to be presented to her. She spoke with each of us. Thirza Sillick was able to say she had waited on her grandparents in the Artillery Mess at Bulford many years ago. Gladys Webb recalled they had met before at the hunter-trials at Larkhill.

We were then ushered to the refreshment marquee for tea. A table was found and food appeared from all directions! The strawberries and cream were delicious – I was persuaded to have a second helping (lovely!). Tea, coffee, cold drinks, sandwiches, cakes – it all tasted wonderful.

Leona came to us with Rolf Harris on her arm. What a joy. Then Sharon (taking good care of us) brought over her Beefeater husband to give us all a hug. I have been hugged by a Beefeater! When we could not eat any more we strolled down to the lake before going back to our original seats to await The Retreat.



Gladys Pope gets her hug from a Beefeater

Everyone we met was so helpful and friendly. I was chatting to three very smart Riflemen who had recently returned from a tour of duty in Cyprus. One young man

said it was his first PR duty and he couldn't wait to phone his gran in Manchester to tell her where he had been all day! The Band of the Irish Guards, who had played in a bandstand all afternoon, then marched on to the lawn for Beating Retreat. A wonderful display of slow and quick marching and excellent music.

A most memorable day for all of us came to an end and our driver Peter battled with London traffic to get us each safely back to our homes. During the last hour of the journey we drove into a most glorious sunset, a pink, orange, grey, blue, mackerel sky – a perfect ending. (I must just add my thanks to my son Peter who took a day off work to hire a very comfortable mini-bus to take us to the Palace, battled with the traffic and took good care of us all day. He said he had enjoyed looking after "the old dears"!)

Later we each received a photograph from the "Not Forgotten" Association of each of us shaking hands with Princess Anne. A lovely surprise and our grateful thanks to them for everything.

FAREWELL DAKOTA

W/146936 Mrs Betty Templeton née Corry
Flat 26, Dunira House, 110 Osborne Road,
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE2 2TA

Having read that Dakota aircraft were making commemorative flights from Newcastle Airport in June this year, I couldn't wait to book my place. My grandchildren, Michael (30) and Katie (19) who both enjoy flying, jumped at the chance to go with me and share this historic occasion.



Betty waiting to board a Dakota

For me it was nostalgia and living again a part of my WWII memories. For Michael and Katie it was a chance to experience flying in an aeroplane they had only read about when learning about the history of the Berlin Airlift. The noise of the engines, vibration and movement were a revelation. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

Altogether it was a memorable occasion which none of us will forget.

RAIN CAPE
Peter Challenger
pxk@btinternet.com

Hello, I am standard bearer to the Federation of Birmingham Ex-Service Associations. A group of about ten standard bearers have purchased black rain capes after getting wet on some parades!

Your national standard bearer, Mrs Maureen Deeley, has shown a keen interest – but only if they can make the capes in green. I am delighted to confirm that they do make them in green and the cost is £36.00.



Maureen getting wet pre-cape days

Editor: I thought that all of our standard bearers might be interested in this. Please contact Peter on his e-mail address for further information.

OPERATION BANNER – 1969-2007 Vee Moore, Secretary WRAC Dinner Club



St Paul's Cathedral – Op Banner Service

The 300,000 members of the Armed Forces who served on Operation Banner in Northern Ireland were honoured at a service in St Paul's Cathedral, London on Wednesday 10 September 2008.

Vee Moore, Secretary of the WRAC Dinner Club and a member of the Northern Ireland Veterans Association, paraded the standard of the War Widows Association, being herself the widow of a soldier killed in Northern Ireland. Vee's husband Ian, a Sergeant with 1 Bn Gordon Highlanders, was killed on 18 June 1972 in Bleary, County Armagh, an area notoriously termed "Bandit Country" by those who served there.

Vee said, "This was one of the most nerve racking things I have ever done in my life but it was such an honour for me to carry the standard and I was very proud to do so on behalf of all the widows and the families of those killed during this terrible time. It was a special time of remembrance and I especially thought about the WRAC – Ann Hamilton and Caroline Slater – who died in the Guildford pub bombings on 5 October 1974".

Thanks were given to the many Servicemen and women from across all 3 Services, along with the many civil servants who served in Northern Ireland. The commemoration remembered the hundreds of Service personnel who gave their lives helping to bring peace and stability to the Province over a 38 year period, the longest deployment in British military history.

RECOLLECTIONS FROM A VETERAN

Mrs Jeanne N H Kick BEM
108 Harewood Court, Wilbury Road, Hove,
E Sussex BN3 3GL
Tel: 01273 721004

Some time ago an old friend and colleague sent me birthday greetings with the following wording, which to me is the epitome of us all who have served in the ATS/WRAC:

The Barrack Square

Those to whom a Barrack Square means merely squads of men and voices, who have not participated in and accepted the challenges it presented with a good heart, have escaped the finest lessons in self-discipline and are the poorer for it.

With this began a companionship and comradeship the like of which I have never found again.

John Hesketh

Another old friend and colleague recently recalled that as Recruiters we often heard the word 'discipline' during interviews – the recruit would be asked why he or she wanted to join the Army, and so very often the reply would be, "Me Dad says the discipline will do me good".

After nearly thirty years service in the ATS/WRAC, I have cause to recall that discipline and comradeship came from my parents who both served during WWI. Father joined the 4th Queens Own Oxford Hussars, followed by service with the War Graves Commission in France (I was born in Paris). Whilst in the Regiment, he

was honoured to represent them with other British and Commonwealth NCOs as a Bearer to the Unknown Warrior in November 1920.

In the days before TV, our lives centred around Army friends, amusing stories and characters – but rarely ever the unhappy situations that surely must have occurred during WWI. During WWII, I served with the ATS – War Office Signals.



Jeanne after enlisting her own son – already a keen cadet!

I then served with the WRAC and spent twenty-three years at Central London Recruiting Depot. During that time I even enlisted my own son into the Scots Guards in 1958. A quick tally of our family service totals 85 years. Again, repeatedly – even to date – as we all do, one discusses old times and experiences, and there are a great many to tell – one can only refer to the words “With this began a companionship and comradeship, the like of which I have never found again”.

MY MOTHER WAS IN THE WAAC

Mrs M Huxham
Stoney Bottom House, Crossways Road, Grayshott,
Hindhead GU26 6HD
Tel: 01428 605259



Esther Phillips in WAAC Uniform

My late mother, Esther Bailey Phillips née Hall, was a member of the WAAC. I have recently acquired her photo in uniform and her enrolment and discharge papers. She was born on 14 March 1893 and died on 12 August 1975. I thought you might be interested because they were taken even before the WAAC became QMAAC.



Renée Burrows

I also enclose this photograph of Renée Burrows who I assume was a friend of my mother. There was a business card with the photograph that said, “Frederick G Lloyd’s Opera Co on tour. Miss Renée Raymond Professional Contralto.” As I am “into” family history research, I wonder if you would print this picture of Renée Burrows in case her family would like the original photograph.

Coincidence – my mother was born in Blackpool so I hope you have a very successful Grand Reunion there.

LADIES ARE LUNCHING IN TAMWORTH

W/427477 Belle Jenkinson née Turner
57 Dryden Road, Tamworth, Staffordshire B79 8HW

It all started on a train journey from Liverpool to Tamworth. Vee Moore and myself were talking and I suggested we start a branch of the WRAC in Tamworth. After some discussion we decided that we needed to put an article in the local paper. Vee volunteered to do this and afterwards we had some phone calls from the girls.

It was then decided to have our first lunch on Saturday 1 November at The Moat House; ten ladies turned up and two of them were ATS which was lovely to see. We have arranged to meet in January as December was too busy.

If there are any more ex-WRAC in the area who would be interested in joining our group, please do contact us. My

telephone number: 01827 64156 and Vee's number: 01827 69827. We will make you very welcome and hopefully in February we will see our Area Chairman and Secretary, Maggie Purkis and Irene Hall visit us to find out what we must do towards getting the branch set up.

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PRESENTATION OF VETERANS BADGE

W/377094 Celia Rooney Bass

21 Beechwood Court, Skelmersdale, Lancs WN8 9HT

I enclose a photograph of me being presented with my Veterans Badge by the West Lancashire MP, Rosie Cooper. There were over thirty of us being presented at the same time and it was a lovely occasion.



Celia receiving her Veterans Badge

When I saw Brenda and John Hurt's wedding photograph in *Lioness* 2/2008, it reminded me of Huron Camp as we were there at the same time. I thought that you might like to publish these photographs of Huron Camp as many of the *Lioness* readers will remember the camp well!



Aerial view of Huron Camp - NAAFI on the right



HQ Building WRAC School of Instruction

BLAZING PLANE HEROINE - W/60479 PTE MARGARET JOHNSON

Colin Stegeman

17 Quarry Road, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 4BP

Monday 14 December 1942 was a dark night at RAF Scorton near Richmond. At 2025 hours, four Beaufighter night fighter aircraft of 219 Squadron, each with a crew of pilot and navigator/radio location finder operator, were scrambled to intercept enemy aircraft in the North East of England. As the second aircraft became airborne, the pilot, Flt Lt WJ (Bill) Hunt radioed Scorton Control Tower to say that he could not control the aircraft. (It was later discovered that the canvas weather cover had been left on the tail plane). Hunt's aircraft reached Richmond where it just skimmed the flagstaff on the castle keep, narrowly avoided houses but then hit the top of a tree and crashed in a field about 400 yards further north.

The inhabitants of 'blackout' Richmond were aware of enemy action as the sirens had gone and those still alive vividly remember the loud noise of the engines of the low flying aircraft followed by the crash and the hillside soon being lit up by the flames from the burning five hundred gallons of aviation fuel. Twenty-two year old Pte Margaret Johnson leapt from her ambulance on what is now Green Howards Road and ran down the steep hillside to reach the front of the burning aircraft. Machine gun ammunition and cannon shells exploded continuously as she tried to reach the pilot in the front cockpit which was partly buried in the soil of the grass covered field. Margaret tore at the canvas covered fuselage to free the pilot simultaneously crying for help and 17 year old St John Ambulance Cadet, Ray Thornton, ran towards her. By this time the Fire Brigade had also arrived with soldiers from the nearby Green Howards Camp and a reserve policeman. The fire rapidly increased from its base below the pilot's cockpit and travelled towards the rear of the aircraft enveloping the navigator, Flt Sgt Harold Gysel. As Ray ran towards the uniformed figure, he could not make out if the person was trying to get into or out of the aircraft. The person's clothes were alight and Ray wondered if he should do a rugby tackle and smother the flames on the grass. As it happened, he hit the figure on the run to carry it away from the blazing wreck into the arms of others. One of them used an open blanket to smother the flames. It was only then that Ray realised that the figure was that of a woman and not till later that she was ATS, and not aircrew.



Margaret and Geoffrey in 1943

The London Gazette of 9 March 1943 refers to the award of a British Empire Medal to Private Margaret Mary Johnson "in recognition of gallant conduct in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner". Margaret was very proud to be presented with the BEM by His Majesty King George VI personally.

Peggy, as we now know she prefers to be known, originally joined the Women's Land Army as she was anxious to "do her bit" but was then persuaded by a friend to join the FANY. As she was in Motor Transport, she was transferred to the ATS. She served until 1943 when she left having married Sgt Geoffrey Kitchen, a pharmacist with the RAMC, who had been stationed in Richmond with the Green Howards. They emigrated to New Zealand and then Australia. Peggy now lives in Lesmurdie, WA. There she met Barbara Harper-Nelson née Rigby who was a Captain in the WRAC during the 50s. Looking through some old photographs, the one with Peggy wearing her BEM came to light. Barbara sent a copy to the WRAC Association. I had previously spoken to the WRAC Association trying to locate Peggy Johnson as I had completed a lot of research about the incident and was very keen to hear Peggy's story. Unfortunately, she was not a member of the Association so the General Secretary could not help me. Luckily she remembered my phone call when she received the photograph and I am now in touch with Peggy and have enabled Ray and Peggy to make contact again after all these years.

Peggy is almost blind now and celebrated her 89th birthday on 24 November 2008. Her family took her to the RAAF Association Museum in Perth WA where she was able to see a large scale model of a Beaufighter and they followed that with a luncheon in the RAAF Club – a fitting birthday present to this brave ATS lady.

Editor: I would like to thank Colin not just for this article but also for all his efforts in researching and writing the history of this incident. A commemorative plaque has been placed near to the crash site and it was unveiled on 1

December 2007 by the American nephew of the pilot. Peggy now has all this information as well so the whole episode is much more complete than it would have been if I had not received one telephone call and one photograph. What better example can we ever have of the importance of the role which the Association can play in making these links possible!



A recent photo of Peggy

**PRESENTATION OF 30 YEAR BADGE FOR
SERVICE WITH SSAFA FORCES HELP IN
PORTSMOUTH**

Maj (Retd) Margaret Edmondson MBE
4 Castleton Court, 52 Southsea Terrace,
Southsea PO5 3AU

I enclose a photograph of Lt Gen Sir Robin Ross presenting me with my certificate for 30 years service with SSAFA. Apparently, it failed to make the local newspaper as it was held on the same day that a man jumped over the railway bridge at Fratton Station to escape from the police!



*Margaret receiving
her certificate from
Lt Gen Sir Robin
Ross*

I joined the ATS in January 1942 and was commissioned in the October of the same year. My first posting was to Scottish Command and I also served in Eastern Command, Deepcut, Aldershot with the ACC, Manorbier with the RA and I finally retired in May 1968 from the WRAC Centre. **PDF Compressor Free Version** I volunteered to work for SSAFA in 1978 – at the age of 65!

Although I am now 94, there may be some readers of the *Lioness* who remember me from my ATS/WRAC service from 1942 until 1968.

LEICESTER SEVEN – PLUS ONE

Barbara Danter

30 Blake Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5JL

The "Leicester Seven" have become the "Leicester Eight"! From Leicester and Nottingham Branch, Lyn Wenham, ex WRAC, has joined us to make sure we stay on the straight and narrow – well to try anyway! We are delighted to have her company as she has fitted in so well with us.

It's been a very busy six months. In August we were asked to attend the Summer School at one of our local stately homes; Wollaton Park. Local schoolchildren had also been invited to learn about WWII. Once introductions were over, the children were all very impressed with our medals. We each told them about our life in the Army and then it was their turn to question us. One little girl said, "I didn't know girls could be soldiers" and then turned to me and asked, "How many enemy did you kill?"



Summer school with children from Bilborough School

We stayed for the whole day and the teacher told me later, when asked which day they enjoyed most, they said it was the day the ATS ladies came. So, for our reward next year, the Education Authority has given us two extra days in August for a further Summer School. But before that, on 1 April (it's true, I checked) we have to return to Wollaton Park where a field kitchen will be set up and the children from several schools will be competing for a prize of £250 for the best meal made from Spam. We, and a few other Veterans, are to judge the results!

In September we were asked to attend the 100th Anniversary of the TA in Derby and we joined the

assembly of top echelon for afternoon drinks etc. The CO asked us to join the march-past, which we were honoured to do. However, I did not hear the RSM say it was to be at the men's pace! We did it even though I was a bit out of breath!



With TA WW1 re-enactors – don't we look small?

In October we were invited to take part in the ceremony and parade to promote the British Legion Poppy Appeal in the local area; the Lord Mayor of Nottingham always buys the first poppy. Prior to that, I contacted Radio Nottingham as I hoped we might get a mention on air regarding the ATS 70th Anniversary. The News Desk felt that it would give the launch of the Poppy Appeal a boost, so, on Saturday 26 October, we were interviewed before the parade and it was broadcast on the evening news and BBC Radio Nottingham. On the Saturday night guess where my Leicester friends stayed....yes, with me! We had wall-to-wall beds, a girls night in, enjoyed by all... I think?



Taken on a wet Veterans Day – photograph courtesy of the Nottingham Evening Post where it appeared on the front page

The following day, Sunday, we were in the next town of Mansfield for a similar Poppy Appeal occasion. We were asked to help with handing out programmes and selling poppies prior to an afternoon of entertainment similar to the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall – it was wonderful – we even had a poppy fall.

At the beginning of November, we were all off down to

London again. Thankfully the morning of Remembrance Sunday was dry but quite cold. It was very nice meeting up with all the ladies on Horse Guards Parade once more, looking so cosy in their dark green fleeces.

So here we are again, another year almost over. We are now off duty until our trip to Blackpool in March, and we are all looking forward to that very much. Next June sees the eight of us off to Normandy for five days along with the Leicester Normandy Veterans Association to commemorate the landings there 65 years ago. No doubt much more will fill our diaries and there will be much to report on when another year begins – the fun never stops.



With Major Rhodes – ACO Nottingham – who manages to get us into everywhere worth visiting!

FINDING FRIENDS AT THE GRAND REUNION

Mrs Alison Schofield

At the last Grand Reunion we had one notice-board where members could post their own details and also find details of others who were attending so as to meet them. Attached to the board were lists with information of where people served, with which employing arm and their present branch; we also printed "name when serving" (providing people had written this down on their application!). The board seemed to be quite popular (we had spread out to three by the end of the Reunion), but one or two facts emerged which could help to find those you would like to meet.

1. A photo of yourself in uniform when serving helps to jog memory (sadly we all have changed!)
2. Don't forget to put your room number if you want people to contact you.
3. Did you remember to put "name when serving" on your application form?

Not every body is able to come to the Grand Reunion, but last time there were several notices from "absent friends" left behind (including one or two original photos). If you would like to send your name to be posted under this heading you may send it to me c/o the address below before 14th March 2009. Your information should include:

1. A copy of a photo when serving (include a stamped addressed envelope if you want it back)
2. Your number, rank and name when serving.
3. Your name now.
4. Where to contact you.

My contact address is:

Mrs A Schofield
5 Middle Avenue
FARNHAM GU9 8JL

Branch News

ABERDEEN BRANCH

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Hello again from Aberdeen. We have acquired two new members taking our merry band up to twenty-two. These ladies, one ATS and more or less housebound and the other WRAC who is going to come to our meetings, are most welcome.

I had a telephone conversation last week with our oldest member. When I enquired as to how she was, she replied, "Old age is creeping up on me faster than I can run away". The thought of our Alice running left me grinning!

Our Christmas Lunch has unfortunately clashed with other festive gatherings so we will be a bit on the thin side (I wish!) We will miss their company but drink their share of the wine with enjoyment!

Our new ATS member wrote to me saying how special this year was for remembering. She thought of her comrades fondly and said she was proud to have been a soldier and to have served with them. I, as one of the 1937 hatchlings, am grateful to all who served for the freedom and safety I have enjoyed.

Best wishes to you all.

BAND BRANCH

Hello all Band Ladies, Ann Jones here. I am delighted to say I have the great honour of being your new Branch Secretary and my first job is to try and get all of you to put your names on our Branch register. You may not know but you can be on your local Branch register and on ours. I hope you read in the last *Lioness* what a very good time was had by all at our last reunion at Littlecote House. We will be trying that again in 2010, as we have our Grand Reunion in March 2009.

If you are still playing and will be at the Grand Reunion, join in as some of the ladies have already volunteered to play. I am one of the GROTS (Grand Reunion Organising Team) and I will be wearing one of our distinctive baseball caps, so please do make yourself known to me.

Many of you who knew Jackie Warsop (Sgt Fox) will be very sad to hear that dear Jackie passed away on 8 December 2008. May I pass on my deepest sympathy to those who were close to her; she was always a joy to be with.

I am open to any ideas you may have and I am on e-mail, so do get in touch.

E-mail: mrs.ann.jones@googlemail.com If you prefer to use postal mail, my address is 97 Queensdale Crescent, Knowle Park, Bristol BS4 2TS.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Following on from our Branch News in *Lioness* 2/2008 and the reference to "Troop Aid", one of our members who works part-time in Asda, was given permission to

hold a collection for this fund. Her name is Kath Adams, ex-WRAC, and she was assisted by a Mr Horace Goodwin also ex-Service. Through the generosity of customers, they collected £1,215 in one month – in fact the sum of £1,000 was reached at the end of one week! Kath went off to Selly Oak Hospital to hand over the cheque after our December meeting. Kath can be seen in the photograph with the last Branch News in *Lioness* 2/2008. Maureen Deeley was also taking chocolates along. At the moment there is a female Captain in the hospital who recently lost a leg in an explosion in Iraq/Afghanistan (not sure which).

In July we visited the National Memorial Arboretum as planned and also had lunch there. We arrived early to enable us all to get into the Chapel. The new Armed Forces Memorial is beautiful in its simplicity – there are so many names already but the blank areas really tug at the heart strings – waiting for the future additions.

We did have a stall for Veterans' Day Celebrations and yes, it was wet again plus a very strong wind! Those of us who attended the Wales/West Area Reunion enjoyed ourselves as usual, with an excellent lunch but numbers were down this year. Those who didn't attend missed seeing and hearing the guest speaker – an exceedingly handsome local MP towering over everyone – over 6ft tall! We were represented at the Cenotaph for the Remembrance Service by Maureen Peach and Lesley Wallace and Standards were paraded in Birmingham as usual by Maureen Deeley (National Standard) and Sue Dolphin (Branch Standard).

Big changes have taken place at the BUSC (Birmingham United Services Club). It is now a night club! All Service plaques have been removed and the walls painted black. As one enters the first thing to be seen is THE DUNGEON painted in very large white letters. The room we have always used is black and has loads of electrical equipment, lights etc in it. We can no longer use a microphone or close the screen. All evening meetings have been changed to days so we are considering a move if we can find a suitable venue. By the way it is now called the BUSK!

On the brighter side we have been lucky to welcome two new members – but have also lost two ex-ATS members who have died recently.

Due to our large number of members who do not come to meetings, here is the programme for 2009 – the cost of posting would definitely deplete our funds considerably.

January	No meeting
February	'Catch up' – news from members
March	Amusing stories/poetry
April	Bring/Buy Sale and quiz
May	Birthday Lunch ?Venue
June	No speaker yet booked
July	No speaker yet booked
August	Subscriptions – Members talks
September	Final collection of Subs
October	AGM
November	Bring/Buy Sale
December	Christmas Lunch

No speakers have been booked for the coming year until our venue has been sorted out. For further information please ring, Margaret Walkeden, Secretary on 01905 426272. See you in Blackpool.

PDF Compressor Free Version **BLACKPOOL BRANCH**

The Chairman and members of Blackpool Branch wish you a happy time at the Grand Reunion at the Norbreck Castle Hotel.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

The good news from Bournemouth Branch is that it has been saved from possible closure. A rescue package was put together by the two ex-WRAC members who attend branch meetings and they assumed their posts at the AGM in September. We now have a Branch Secretary and a Treasurer/Social Secretary.

Going back to the start of the year, we enjoyed a very good Christmas Lunch at the Tralee Hotel, despite the fact that the dining room was upstairs and the lift was slow and tiny in size. In compensation, the food was excellent! In February this year we were honoured to have Lt Col Sue Westlake as our Guest Speaker. She presented several Certificates of Appreciation and updated the branch on the Association. Other events included a talk on the Cockleshell Heroes, who destroyed enemy shipping in Bordeaux harbour and a social and Bring & Buy. In May, twelve members attended the South and South West Area Reunion in Bath and in August a group of members enjoyed a coach trip to Swanage where they were treated by one of our Branch to a superb tea at a hotel on the sea front. In November, two of our members attended the Remembrance Service at Westminster Abbey and Daphne Brookes, our retired Secretary, was able to attend the service in Whitehall, in a wheelchair pushed by her grandson. Kathleen Brownbill, a branch member, laid our wreath at the Cenotaph in Bournemouth.

Daphne had a memorable last year in office which she describes elsewhere in this journal. Her farewell at our AGM coincided with the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS and for this she baked an enormous fruit cake, adorned with an icing version of the ATS badge.



Daphne's cake

In November we enjoyed a most entertaining demonstration of flower arranging, suitable for a Christmas table, given by Mrs Carole Norman. We are now looking forward to our branch Christmas Lunch, which is to be held at a new venue – the Lynton Court Premier Inn in Boscombe.

The branch currently has 44 Annual Members and 33 Life Members. The majority are ATS members and, unfortunately, many are now somewhat infirm and unable to get to meetings, which is made more difficult by the large geographic area covered by the Branch. However, they all keenly look forward to receiving their copies of the *Lioness*.

Next year we are moving our meeting venue to the West Cliff Premier Inn, which has been constructed on the site of the Cadogan Hotel, one of our previous meeting places. We hope that the disabled access, good car parking and a major bus stop outside may enable a few more members to get to meetings.

Finally, we should like to extend a warm welcome to Cheryl Noble, who has recently joined the Bournemouth Branch.

Editor: I received the following from Daphne Brookes:

Sadly, Vicky Linnard née Stone died on 14 August 2008 aged 88. Vicky served in the ATS from 1940 – 1947 and was a Lieutenant employed with Royal Signals. She was a great supporter of this Branch and, although she suffered a stroke a couple of years ago which prevented her from attending our meetings, she always maintained her interest in what was going on. Vicky was also very generous to our funds. Apart from her involvement with Bournemouth Branch, she helped out in several charities including the British Red Cross, League of Friends of Royal Bournemouth Hospital and Naomi House; the hospice for children in Sutton Scotney. Vicky was awarded an MBE for services to road safety in 1987 after 25 years service in that area including being an instructor and examiner for the National Cycling Proficiency Scheme. Four members were able to join family and friends at her funeral service to give a final salute to a quite remarkable lady.

BRISTOL BRANCH

What an eventful time we have had over the past six months. Some of our members were invited by the "Not Forgotten" Association to visit Highgrove on 27 June. Whilst the weather wasn't so good, we had a wonderful time and the gardens were most interesting. Unfortunately Prince Charles was 'not at home'. We had delicious cake and tea afterwards and were able to go to the shop to buy some goodies. Our day was complete with a lunch at a local restaurant.

On the following Saturday, we had a stall at the City Docks for Veterans Day organised by Bristol City Council. It was not the best place to be, because it was so windy – we had to tie everything down, else it would have gone floating out to sea. However, we did generate interest and we did meet ladies who have since become

members so it was very worthwhile. Many of our members came to man the stall and talk to people. The Lord Lieutenant and her husband and the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress were very interested in our display and spoke to many of our members.

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A very windy Veterans Day

The following Saturday saw us at Weston-super-Mare with our display; again we didn't do too well – the weather was atrocious and we had to cover our display to protect it from the heavy rain and wind.

Our big event this year was our Branch celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the ATS. Our service, which was attended by the Lord Lieutenant, Mary Prior, and her husband and Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress Chris and Susan Davies, was held at the Lord Mayor's Chapel. Our Chairman, Esmé Davidson, ATS/Ack Ack read the service. This was appropriate especially for those ladies who were attached to the Royal Artillery as they have a window in the Chapel of Saint Barbara. Our service was taken by the Lord Mayor's Chaplain and afterwards we went for refreshments at the Council House. We had advertised our event in the local paper and invited ex-ATS to join us. Whilst we had some response, we did expect more as we live in such a large city. We had a wonderful day which was enjoyed by each and everyone.

In October we had a Tombola Stall at the Peoples Event at the Council House. We did not have a very good position so didn't raise as much money as we would have



Lord Mayor, Christopher Davies and Lord Lieutenant, Mary Prior cutting the ATS 70th Anniversary cake

expected. We were next to a stall that did the most delicious home made cake – not very good for our figures.



Manning the tombola stall

Remembrance Day, Bristol was like most places cold and damp but we did have lots of members on Parade and the wreath was laid by our Vice Chairman, Stella Fogg. Those of you who were on parade in London will remember the bitter cold – thank goodness for the fleeces!

Our Annual Lunch is in February and we are going to combine it with the 60th Anniversary of the WRAC. We are all looking forward to the Grand Reunion. There are quite a few going from Bristol and we are grateful to Bath for the offer to share their coach.

Our Branch Chairman and I were invited by 266 Battery Gloucestershire Volunteer Artillery to attend a St Barbara's Day service at the TA Centre in Bristol. Major Rogers presented us with a Commemorative Plate which commemorated the founding of the ATS Members of AA, Command Branch Royal Artillery Association 1996 – it is a limited edition. We shall have much pleasure in showing this to our Branch Members.



The Artillery Plate

We look forward to seeing lots of friends at the Grand Reunion, until then our Best Wishes to you all.

BURY BRANCH

Greetings to all of you and we wish you all a prosperous and healthy 2009. This is my second attempt to do this report. The ribbon will not turn on the typewriter and my finger is worn. **PDF Compressor Free Version** mistakes – I will carry on and hope for the best. Not a great deal to report this time. We welcomed a new member to our group – Jackie Sharpe. She served with the WRAC at the Ministry of Defence in London.

Our Secretary, Mary Gregory, gave us a very interesting report on her visit to the Royal Garden party in July and said how much she enjoyed attending. We were delighted to see her photograph with the party in the last *Lioness* – didn't they all look smart?

We look forward this month to our Annual Christmas Lunch at the White Lion Hotel, Bury, where the landlady Joan always makes us welcome at our monthly meetings and other annual events.

Only six of our members managed to get to the November meeting because of ill health and bad weather etc. There were already a small group of young lads in our usual room – all soldiers just back from Iraq and Afghanistan and they attended the Remembrance Service here in Bury. Then we told them who we were – there were smiles all round. It is amazing to think that when we served in WWII over 60 years ago these lads were not born. They gave each of us a glass of wine and we raised our glasses to them.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Our meeting in early August at Mavis Middleton's beach hut in Herne Bay was tinged with sadness when members learned of the death of our Treasurer, Kay Perfect. Kay will be greatly missed by us all; she was meticulous in keeping our accounts and represented the Branch at many parades, proudly carrying our standard. Personally I will miss her dry sense of humour, her guidance and advice, which she always gave unstintingly since I took over as Secretary. She was a very special person.

So far we have been unable to replace Kay, therefore the Treasurer's job, for the time being, is shared between our Chairman, Kate McGregor and myself. Fortunately, one of our newer members, Bernadette Lyons, ex-WRAC, has volunteered to be our standard bearer and we look forward to seeing her on parade soon.

So the year continues. In September we collected annual subscriptions and October we had our Branch AGM. In November Liz Cork paid us a return visit to update us on the work of the Donkey Sanctuary. All too soon it will be Christmas when we will be enjoying the company of friends and guests at our festive meal at the Dominican Priory in Canterbury city centre.

May we extend our best wishes to all members of the Association for 2009 and look forward to meeting old friends and new at the Grand Reunion in Blackpool.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

We continue to meet at the RAFA Club in Chelmsford on the third Tuesday in the month. Sadly, we lost Joan Burke, ex Cpl ATS, who died in August. Joan was a loyal member who took part in the activities of the Branch and particularly enjoyed the holidays she had with us.

After our summer break, in September, we held a "What are the names of these Sweets and Chocolates?" quiz. There was a good response and some members solved well over 50% of the answers. *Editor: Did you get to eat the "questions" afterwards?*

In October we held our AGM. We are glad the entire Committee is prepared to carry on for another year – and we have a new Committee member, Margaret Tebbutt who is ex-WRAC and lives at Brentwood. Welcome and thank you, Margaret. After the AGM, our Vice/Chair Joyce Wright treated us all to scones, jam and cream with our tea and we all tucked in! Following this, she led us in a game of "Call my Bluff".

On a dark November afternoon we met again and listened to very different accounts of early service experience from Eileen Green and Barbara Rayment. Eileen served in the ATS in its earliest days – she had to wait some time to be fitted for a uniform as when she joined they did not have any! Spending some time at Warley Barracks as RQMS, her story was unique and fascinating and we much enjoyed it and the photographs she brought with her. Barbara had a different but equally interesting tale to relate. As she is a former WAAF she is able to visit a holiday centre run by the RAF at Rushington, near Worthing in Sussex, where she enjoys excellent accommodation, food and the company of other ex-Service people. It is understood to be open to all ex-Service people.

Also in November a wreath was laid at the War Memorial in Chelmsford from the Branch to commemorate Armistice Day – we are the only female ex-Service organisation to do this in Chelmsford.



Chelmsford Branch Secretary – Gina Shadrack – lays the wreath

December is almost here as this report is written and in a few days we shall join once more together for our Christmas Lunch. Our guest is our Area Chairman, Mrs

Patricia Stevenson, and we look forward to seeing her and enjoying a happy time together (not to mention the food)! We are sorry that, because of illness, some members are not able to come along. We shall miss you and hope for better things in the New Year. We also appreciate that some members are unable to get to meetings because of distance, but we hope you will keep in touch with the Branch especially if you need help or are about to go into hospital or change your address.

Most of us are in our 80th year and are veterans of the 2nd World War. The effort made by members to get to meetings is considerable so it is much appreciated that, by meeting regularly, we are able to continue to share friendship, companionship and the bond of having together served our country in time of war. Sadly, as I write this, I have to report that two more of our members have died: Mrs Joan Orme and Mrs Evelyn Shepherd and we will miss their friendship.

Our grateful thanks to the staff at Worthy Down for their continued help and support. Contact: Tel: 01245 251088 – anytime.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

In August we had our Luncheon to celebrate our new Standard and invited representatives from two local Councils who donated to our funds, as well as four local Standard Bearers. The lunch was very good but we don't plan on doing it again for a long time!

We had a good contingent at the Northern Area Reunion in Hull – numbers are dwindling but we all do our best to attend. Thank you to Hull Branch for the hard work they put in and for an excellent supply of raffle prizes! As Area Secretary I would like to say a personal "Thank You" to all Branches for their continued support.

Three of our members went to the WRAC Dinner Club in Liverpool and as usual they had a great time. One member went on the "Ferry across the Mersey" – it was freezing cold but managed to keep warm thanks to her new Association Fleece. Many people ask what the badge is and comment on the nice warm colour. At present we have discussions going on about our Christmas lunch – will the entertainment be the same as last time?



Cleveland's own marching band – will entertain for a small fee!



Dot Ryder announces the buffet is ready – Christmas Party 2007

Our October meeting was taken up with the AGM. No new members volunteered for Committee, so after the business affairs were discussed, the Committee was re-elected for another year. We had a table top auction and after much hilarity we raised £70 for Branch funds.

Having just returned from holiday, I was very sad to attend another funeral this morning of one of our Branch Members, Ivy Rattue. Since my own Mum died not long after I joined the Association, Ivy adopted me and I was very fond of her. *Editor: There was photograph of Ivy on Pg 12 of the last Lioness.*

Cleveland Branch sends greetings to all branches – keep enjoying your meetings.

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

One of our members, Pam Elliott (Griffin), visited the National Memorial Arboretum and brought back a kitchen magnet of our ATS Statue for each of us. She was also given a standing ovation at a Royal Signals Association meeting for having served during WWII. Our ATS wreath was again laid at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday.

We have just had an enjoyable buffet Christmas lunch (no December meeting) attended by members and guests. This was held in the Duke's Room, the Chatsworth Hotel where, with kind permission, we hold our monthly meetings every 4th Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm.

Sadly, we have lost Bobbie Grinyer (Rawdings). She was always very supportive in spite of ill health.

Best wishes to all, especially to Hastings Branch where three of us were members before forming the Eastbourne Branch.

EXETER BRANCH

A very sad start to our year as our Treasurer, Mrs Pat Heron, died on 16 June 2008 – we are missing her very much. Three of us attended her funeral.

In June we had a Tea Party at our retired Secretary's house, which was a very happy event. Only six members were able to attend our July Meeting, which despite being St Swithin's Day, was fortunately dry and sunny.

We do not have a meeting in September. The September meeting was very quiet as only three of us managed to be there and it was decided that our Birthday Lunch in October at the Lord Nelson Inn, Topsham would be our last meeting. We were delighted that Maj Maskens-McIntyre was able to join us and she very kindly took all our books.

We had a most delightful surprise when six of us were invited to attend a Luncheon at The Thistle Exeter Hotel on Friday 12 December 2008 by the "Not Forgotten" Association, such a wonderful way to finally close our Branch after twenty-three years. We are hoping that from time to time we may be able to get together for a cuppa and a chat.

FIFE AND TAYSIDE BRANCH

Things have been very quiet since my last Branch letter. We had a small scare when we found that our Thursday lunch meeting place stopped doing lunches and we had to find somewhere quickly but all is well and back to normal since a new chef has turned up.

On 18 October, we had our Scottish Area AGM with members coming from most of the Scottish branches including seventeen from Tayside. On 30 October we had a Service of Dedication at St John's Kirk in Perth when a plaque was placed to the Women of World War I and World War II and to the WRAC.

Our Christmas lunch was held at the Royal George Hotel in December and after that, those who are going will be looking forward to the Grand Reunion in Blackpool.

We have lost a few of our friends but keep hoping for new members to join us.

GLASGOW BRANCH

On 27 June we celebrated Veterans Day with a parade to the Cenotaph on George Square where the Lord Provost of Glasgow took the salute. The Rev Dr L Whitley, minister of Glasgow Cathedral conducted a short service of commemoration and a wreath was laid. A civic reception was held in a marquee where we enjoyed tea and sandwiches. We were entertained by a jazz band and singers.

Our session began on 8 September when Mrs McPhail reminded us of our teen years. She spoke about the theatres, cinemas and dance halls that we frequented.

October was a busy month for us. Firstly, Mrs Shar, from Friends of Glasgow Museums spoke to us about some of the artists and paintings held in the Kelvingrove Museum. Next, some of our WRAC members travelled to Liverpool to attend the WRAC Dinner Club and had a very enjoyable weekend. Then, on 18 October, we

travelled to Perth for the Scottish AGM and reunion. As it was the 70th anniversary of the formation of the ATS, Lt Col Jo Young and her committee made it an extra special occasion by inviting the Provost of Perth, Mr John Hulbert and his wife Sara, who welcomed us and joined us for coffee and photographs taken by the Press. 30 October saw us back again in Perth for the dedication of a plaque to the Women of Scotland who had served in the QMAAC, ATS and WRAC. This was held in St Johns Kirk and the service was conducted by the Rev Susan Wing, ex-WRAC and Honorary Chaplain to the Association, and the Rev Peter Thomson of the Kirk. We then had a very enjoyable lunch in the Salutation Hotel which was a perfect ending to a lovely day. A very big thank you to Lt Col Jo Young and her committee.

On 9 November, six of our members attended the Armistice Parade on a wet and stormy day and a wreath was laid on behalf of the WRAC Association.

On a sad note, we have lost one of our past Presidents, Mrs Cathie Lindsay (Catherine McCallum) ATS, who passed away on 13 November after a short illness. Four of our ladies attended her funeral and offered our condolences to her family.

We now look forward to our Christmas Lunch in the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel and send our season's greetings to all members of the Association.

HARROGATE BRANCH

Our Best Wishes to everyone and may we all enjoy a peaceful and healthy New Year 2009.



Pam, Doreen, Barb, Enid and Sheila

The photograph is of our small contingent at 11a.m. on 11 November at the Cenotaph in Harrogate. Unfortunately we are never able to get a picture of us on Parade on Remembrance Sunday, particularly of our Chairman Barbara Dawson laying the WRAC Association Wreath but we were there (even me in my electric mobility scooter!)

We average fourteen members at our monthly meetings which are always interesting, friendly and much enjoyed. We have had speakers from the Samaritans, wartime

childhood memories, a trip to China (slide show) and musical memories. We have a wonderful special school, Springwater School, here in Harrogate and we had a lovely afternoon when the Deputy Headmistress, her assistant and two girl pupils joined us to show pictures and explain the book. We had a very successful evening and a Beetle Drive/Tea Party which was hilarious – some of us hadn't played Beetle in 50 years!

Twelve of us had a super day out by train (private compartment!) to the North East Reunion in Hull. The local press gave us such good publicity and the young photographer was there at the Station to see us off.



Sheila, Doreen, Pam, Margaret, Joyce, Barb, Maureen, Susan, Margaret, June and Connie on their way to Hull

HASTINGS BRANCH

Another busy year has passed and, although membership is low, those remaining have been loyal and we have been able to provide some interesting and enjoyable events. For the last time we held our Strawberry Tea in June at the Coastguards Tea Rooms. It has now changed hands and we have to seek another venue – very sad for it was such a beautiful spot.

As membership is now so small, we have decided to have only one speaker each year in future. However in 2008 our second speaker was Mr Hoad and his subject was the



Hastings Branch, Lt Col Sue Westlake and Kate McGregor at the Netherfield Arms

Cuckmere Valley and the surrounding places of interest. It was a most entertaining afternoon with lots of lovely slides. In September our summer outing to Bewl Water was most successful. We had a boat trip round the reservoir followed by a buffet lunch overlooking the water and boats.

In September we also celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the Formation of the ATS with a Lunch at the Netherfield Arms at Netherfield near Battle. We were delighted to entertain the Vice President of the Association, Lt Col Sue Westlake, and our Area Chairman, Captain McGregor.



Lt Col Sue Westlake and Branch Chairman, Monica Ellis with the original Standard

At our AGM in November, our Chairman, Monica Ellis née Quick, resigned after eleven years in that post and we presented her with a Turner print showing fishermen on the beach at Hastings as a token of our appreciation for all she has done for the Branch over these years. However, we are very pleased she has agreed to be our first President and that she has also agreed to continue as our Welfare Member since those duties are becoming more demanding as time passes. (At our last meeting she reported on contacts with eight members and she will be visiting others prior to Christmas.)

Our Christmas Party will be held on 12 December followed by our New Year Lunch early in January after which we start on another year in the Association, which we hope will continue to bring friendship to so many ex-Servicewomen.

HEREFORD BRANCH

I would like to take the first opportunity to send some of our ladies our thoughts for a swift recovery. We are thinking of you, Ida Hunt, Margaret Matthews, Terry Jones and Eva Burton. Ida's son sent a beautiful letter saying that his Mum's memories still have her in the Army. It shows how important our time and friends we make are so important for a lifetime.

We have been having a really busy year raising money through a great coffee morning in Ross on Wye. Through our raffle in June we were able to donate money



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*Standing L-R: Sue, Joyce, David, Rosemary and Mary
Sitting: Mary and Oscar*

towards the Wales and West Area Reunion. This raffle is drawn at our annual picnic held at a local beauty spot called Queens Wood.

This year was especially poignant as we were able to dedicate a mature oak tree in memory of one of our members, Nora Maunder. We had special dispensation to get a mature tree instead of a sapling as our ladies wanted to see it in all its glory and, with the best will in the world, none of us have 100 years left to wait! The Ranger gave us a special spot and we were able to raise a plaque saying 'In Memory of Nora Maunder, WRAC Association - Hereford'. Her son and wife came from the Isle of Wight for the dedication which was given by our president Mrs Ena Price (a very youthful 94 years old - and a Sergeant Major before the Second World War had begun).



Hereford ladies at the tree dedication

In September, one of our ladies, Ms Caroline Neil, spoke to us about her cycle ride for the 'Big Battlefield Bike Ride' which raised money for 'Help for Heroes'. Hereford Branch put their hands in their pockets and gave £125 and another £35.26 was added through Gift Aid. We are very lucky to have such a great group of members. Not resting on their laurels, some members who are also members of the Royal British Legion collected a staggering £5,000 for the Poppy Appeal.

October brought our AGM and Joyce and I never learn to duck. For our sins we have another year in the saddle. We followed this by arranging our Christmas Dinner at a local hostelry, The Axe and Cleaver; this is to be held on 10 January 2009 - a little after Christmas but time enough for all the turkey and stuffing to be digested and ready for the next round.

Remembrance Day was well attended and the standard was flown again. **We are trying to search for a lightweight pole and are putting out an appeal to anyone who can help.** When the wind is blowing and the rain adds extra weight, you want to ensure that everything is perfect. Jo performed in exceptional circumstances, even getting special parking from the Police, in what was a dignified and moving ceremony.

We have a group going down to the Guildford Museum to see the exhibition of Queen Elizabeth Barracks. The curator was given one of the books written by the Ladies of Hereford Branch and made contact to say how much he enjoyed it.

LEEDS BRANCH

Following a hectic summer our meetings are now almost back to normal. We welcomed two new members including one ex-QA nurse who served in Egypt. We are looking forward to hearing about her Service days. The other new member is a transfer from the south who now lives in Yorkshire. We hope she will be happy with us.

Our September meeting ended with afternoon tea and a cake to celebrate Elizabeth Bustard's 80th birthday. The Northern Area Lunch at Hull was voted one of the best. We hope this will continue even though cost will have to be a serious factor.

In October we had our AGM and members asked for the Branch to continue as before as everyone wanted to keep it going. Lily Burke, our sole remaining founder member, brought birthday cake for us to celebrate her 90th birthday.

Six members are going to the Grand Reunion; can it possibly be as enjoyable as the ATS 70th Birthday Party? Wonderful pictures in *Lioness* 2/2008.

One of our members was in the Land Army before joining the WRAC so was thrilled to receive her Badge and to be able to join other ladies at The Cenotaph for a Memorial Service. Members were involved in the record breaking Poppy Day collections and in Remembrance Sunday parades and services. Two members and friends were at the Festival of Remembrance in the Albert Hall and at the Cenotaph for the Parade.

Four members joined Leeds Branch RA Association for their Christmas Lunch. Our busy year ended with our usual most enjoyable Christmas Lunch at Thomas Danby College which was also Mary Clement's 80th Birthday Party.

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Our next meeting will be in February when we have a Bring and Buy sale for Branch funds. March will be the Grand Reunion – how time flies.

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

We have had a good year and we usually have twenty to twenty-five at our monthly meetings. Our programme for the year has gone as planned with two trips out; one to Rutland Water as mentioned in *Lioness* 2/2008 and another back to Ulverscroft Grange when twelve of our ladies again enjoyed the charity's hospitality. An additional boat trip again organised by Carol Morris was also enjoyed by some of our ladies.

Our AGM took place in October and our Secretary, Lilian Hollis, retired from the post and Sue Slattery was unanimously elected. Sue has been a member for some years and is involved with the Army Cadet Force, so a very busy lady. We know she will get the same support that Lilian has enjoyed over the years. Our other new Branch officers are Pam Richards, who with the help of Lyn Wenham, will take on the role of Welfare on the retirement of Irene Bell who has for many years cared for the health of our ladies and sent them cards and flowers for special birthdays. Thank you, Irene.

Also at our AGM we discussed using a new venue for our meetings and had the opportunity to try the room for our November meeting. Our members were unanimous in that we should hold our future meetings there. It is in the same building that we had the Area Reunion in Leicester in a few years ago so we now have a very nice room for our monthly meetings; very near to the railway station and also on a main bus route. Meetings will still be on the second Tuesday of the month – between 1330 to 1530 hrs.

In November, seven members again attended the Remembrance Service in Whitehall along with other members, many wearing the Association fleece. It was quite a feat of endurance this year with a very cold wind. We were some of the last to march on to Whitehall and also to come off this year so had a long wait, but we all feel it is worth making the effort – whatever the weather!

We will end 2008 with our Christmas Lunch and start 2009 with a visit to the theatre to see *Evita*. In March, fifteen of our ladies will be attending the Blackpool Grand Reunion including two new members and three from the closed Ashby Branch who now belong to us. We are all looking forward to the occasion. Can it be any better than the last at Warwick University at Coventry? We shall see!

Finally our good wishes to all Branches for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2009.

LINCOLN AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Another busy time for the members of the Branch. June saw us enjoying lunch on the Barge on the Brayford in Lincoln for the second year running.



Joyce, Kay, June, Mary, June, Fiona, Brenda & Jean

At the end of the month the Branch attended a parade and service in Boston for the opening of the Veterans Way. Plaques have been laid along the pathway and one of our members, Nan Waters (ATS), organised the laying of a plaque to commemorate the ATS, which has been presented by the WRAC Association. Thank you to everyone for their donations. Also, very well done to Nora Jones, who paraded the Branch Standard for the very first time. A daunting prospect which she carried out with great aplomb! It was the first official outing for the standard and this huge black cloud came over and actually had the cheek to rain on us.



Chris, Jean, Nan & June by the plaque

In July, on a beautiful sunny day, we visited the museum at RAF Digby which contained a superb collection of wartime memorabilia. Our guide was SSgt Debs Alderton as the RAF Digby is home to a large contingent of Army and Royal Navy personnel as well as the RAF. Debs gave us a fascinating insight into the workings of the Station and operations room during the war years. We had a terrific lunch in the WO's & Sgts' Mess and at a price hard to believe in this day and age!



Some of the Branch at the Boston Veterans Way



Members with SSgt Debs Alderton.

August saw us at Jean Sperry's house for lunch in her garden and yes, you will have guessed, it rained! Many thanks to Jean for fitting us all into her lounge. We also had an outing to the Thorold Arms in Harmston near to RAF Waddington where we met one of our members for the first time, Julie Haycraft. Julie and Alison made us very welcome and we had a super meal. The strawberry pavlova was to die for and if you are in the area you know where to go.



*Standing: Chris, Julie, Gwyneth, Alison
Seated: Marion & Nora*

On 10 September eight members of the Branch attended the North East Area Reunion lunch in Hull. One of the

best days for a while weather wise and well done to all the team who made it such a pleasant day.



Jackie, Beryl, Joyce, Gwyneth, Nora, Chris, Mary & Jean

At the end of September a standard re-dedication service was held at St Mary le Wigford church in Lincoln to coincide with a 70th anniversary tea for our ATS members. We welcomed visitors from the Leicester & Nottingham and Grimsby Branches.



Cutting the cake at the ATS Party

Nine members attended the WRAC Dinner Club weekend in Liverpool and a good time was had by all. It is so lovely to meet friends on these occasions and make new ones. One of the highlights was the arrival at Pierhead of the QE2 on her farewell voyage.

October also saw several members attending the Lincolnshire Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal launch at the Heritage Aviation Museum in East Kirkby. A WWII Lancaster bomber, the Lady Jane, was taxied down the runway and was a truly amazing spectacle with all her engines running. Members again attended the Remembrance Service held at the City Memorial in Lincoln with Gwyneth Stratten laying the wreath on behalf of the Branch and Nora parading the standard.

Branch fund raising this year has included a Bring and Buy and a successful Coffee Morning and Sale which was open to the public.

We are now approaching the end of our second year and we have been pleased to welcome new members to the Branch. Thank you to all those of you – and you know

who you are – who regularly attend the meetings and give so generously whatever is asked of you.

Best wishes to all our sister branches throughout the country as we look forward to another successful year in Lincoln. See you in 2013!

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

Here in Liverpool we have had a fairly eventful year. In May we had another trip to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire (you can't possibly see it all in one go). We managed to have a good day apart from; the bus driver not knowing the way, getting lost, being an hour late and torrential rain! The new Armed Forces Memorial on the hill, commemorating those fallen since WWII, is awesome. It definitely had an aura about it and, the fact that the stonemason was busy chiselling in the names of those recently lost in Afghanistan and Iraq brought it home that the sacrifice continues.

On Veterans Day, 27 June, some of us were on parade at the Cenotaph at St George's Plateau.



L-R: Margaret McHenry, Eleanor Gibson, Pat Brown, Irene Drew, Pat Prendergast, Kay Goodchilde, Margaret Bridge

It was a good ceremony attended by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, Dame Laura Muirhead and the Lord Mayor and his Lady Mayoress. Tea, coffee and biscuits were provided afterwards. In the evening five of us attended the Town Hall for a reception with the Lord Mayor. We were grandly entertained with lovely food, drinks galore and music provided by the King's Regiment Band – we felt really special.

On Remembrance Sunday, I very proudly laid a wreath at the Cenotaph on behalf of the Branch. Again, a wonderful ceremony and a great march past despite the rain. It was all topped off by a fly past of a Dakota aeroplane. Afterwards, we were entertained to a wonderful buffet lunch in St George's Hall. On the following Tuesday, 11 November, I again attended at the Cenotaph for the CESRA parade.

At the beginning of December, Pat Prendergast and I are going with the Chester Branch for Christmas lunch at

the Belgrave Hotel, Chester – we are really looking forward to it.

Unfortunately this year we have lost three of our members – Edith Breakall, Agnes Lappin and Eileen Marsden – we extend our sympathies to their families.

At the moment I am racking my brains over how to get more WRAC to the meetings. Our gallant ATS girls are now starting to feel their age. They have done sterling work in the past and we hope they will continue to do so for a long time but if the Branch is to survive we need ex-WRAC to come forward and do their bit – so come on girls give it a whirl and enjoy some comradeship again. If you are in our catchment area, we would love to see you. My e-mail is patb@st-bridgets.org.uk

LUTON BRANCH

It was touch and go whether Luton sent in a report this time, but luckily my replacement cartridge for the typewriter turned up just in time....

After our excursion to Woburn Abbey in May, our June speaker was Police Constable Bill Toffs, whose alter ego is as one of HM The Queen's Yeoman Bodyguards, that elite body of men who stand behind our Patron at such functions as the Mansion House dinner. Resplendent in his Tudor uniform, he regaled us with some interesting and amusing anecdotes about his duties.



Madge Evans with Bill Toffs

In July we had a very thought-provoking talk from Karen of HULA Animal Rescue Centre about the work of the organisation. Their role includes rescuing unwanted animals and those whose owners have passed away and caring for wildlife, such as badgers and foxes injured in road accidents.

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On 5 July, Luton Combined Ex-Services Association held the Veterans Day celebrations. The Branch had a handicrafts stall and raised over £60 towards "Help for Heroes". Our annual quiz versus the Far East Veterans Association sadly resulted in our team being beaten by one point! Watch out FEVA, we'll get that shield back in 2009.

We were quite busy over the Remembrance period: on Friday 7 November we were at Moorlands, a local private school, where after the service we were served an excellent lunch – school custard has improved greatly since my schooldays. On Remembrance Sunday we paraded at our local War Memorial and Mary Fitzpatrick laid the wreath. On Monday 10th, we went to school again, this time to a local primary school at Leagrave. It is very heartening to see youngsters becoming interested in the meaning of Remembrance. One thing which impressed us was the excellent behaviour of the pupils at both schools.

On 22 November, three of the 'girls' manned a Christmas stall in our local Arndale Centre, which resulted in a further £75+ being raised for "Help for Heroes". The management were very kind to us, not making a charge, and providing us with chairs, tables and noticeboard. In December we shall have our annual 'bunfight' at our venue and in January our anniversary lunch at a local hostelry.

2009 promises to be interesting – the Grand Reunion, followed by a visit to the Royal Windsor Tattoo in May, plus more.

MARCHES AND MID WALES BRANCH

In September, the Branch had a special visit up to Tywyn which gave us the chance to meet up with one of our "far flung" members. Our Chairman, Lizzie, deserves a big thank you for the 'food and organisation' as she went to Tywyn with her husband prior to the meeting to find the best venue. She also visited Monica to ensure that she would be able to join us. It was indeed a very happy



Marianne, Nancy, Lizzie, Monica, Irene, Deanna, Joan, Elaine, Gill

meeting. As it happens, Nancy Cole, who had been a member of Cardiff Branch, now lives in the same sheltered accommodation as Monica. About eight years ago, Nancy had moved to be closer to her family and Monica rightly insisted that she join us on the day. We were all delighted that she did, but especially Joan, another ex-Cardiff member, who I know felt the long trip from Barry was well worth it. There was quite a reunion going on with her and Nancy which is surely what the Association and our comradeship is all about.

Thank you to Joan's husband, Tom, for taking this picture after we'd enjoyed a hearty lunch at The Whitehall Hotel in Tywyn on 27 September. Monica summed up the occasion in an e-mail afterwards:

Greetings – Marianne, Lizzie, Gill and everyone.

What a splendid day on Saturday. Weather, food, organisation, timing and transport all excellent and the company – well that was the icing on the cake! Thank you for making it such a happy time. It was my first group outing since January 2006. I now feel confident to attend the RBL Women's Section meeting at the end of October.

I hope you all had a good journey home and felt it was worth the long trip – I can only say "Do come again and thank you all". I'm sure Nancy feels just the same – she gave a blow-by-blow account to the other residents at teatime!



Nancy & Monica



Stopping off for tea at Aberdovey on the way home

Dates for 2009:

Branch AGM: Saturday 16 March at 12 noon prompt at The Sun Inn at Clun, Salop.

Summer meeting: Saturday 27 June - time and venue to be decided.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

Editor: I actually received two reports from Newcastle Branch. This one is from Joyce Stephenson and I suspect that she thought that Mabel, the Branch Secretary might not make it back from Canada in time to write one. Mabel, now into her 90s, managed both her trip and her report in the nick of time.....thanks, Mabel.



Hayling Island - A Pelionis, J Stephenson, B Hershall

In spite of a poor summer in the North, our meetings have been quite interesting. At this moment in time our Chairman/Secretary will be travelling back home after what we hope has been a good holiday in Canada, whilst our Treasurer is busy packing to join her relations in Australia. They both work hard for us and they deserve a good break. Other members have enjoyed holidays in the UK and also cruising around the Mediterranean, all with some nice warm sunshine in mind. Some of us accepted a nice holiday arranged by the ex POW Association to attend their AGM at Hayling Island, a Warners Complex. A long journey was made easier by a very good driver. Refreshments were served en route by Mr George Hershall, the son of an ex POW. He had also arranged our trip to Hayling Island and back - thank you George.

The Warners Camp proved an excellent venue - a scenic lake surrounded the building and the ducks enjoying every minute of it - well it did rain and rain. As part of the entertainment, the resident DJ played the night away in full uniform. We danced to the Glen Miller sound, Bugle Boy, Ring of Pearls and Boogie Woogie - not a stiff back bone in the house. Rain again the next day and it was suggested we take a seat in the COs Mess where a physic named Mystic Meg would tell the future to some of us. It worked out that on purchase of a lucky charm, all would be well - no more stiff joints, and certainly a better outlook on life. As the War time saying says "You could tell it to the Marines".

Equipped with umbrellas our trip took us to nearby Chichester, a beautiful town, the Cathedral truly worth visiting - even in the rain.

Now for a serious note and the reason we were there and thoughts for the men that did not arrive home. A lady Priest was ready to take her Service - a solemn time, at the Cenotaph. Wreaths were laid after moving indoors. The British Legion had the main room for our use and Standards were laid once again. The Sermon was given by the lady Priest and, in spite of the fact she had not taken any type of Service, she did extremely well. She based it all on a small book she was given as a child. On arriving home yet a further invitation from the ex POW Association was received to their Christmas Meal - always a pleasure.

We are a small Group and there is always a nice welcome with Ann Pelionis on the sales table - many a bargain to be had. Peggy Binns was taking care of Get Well Cards, Lena on Subs, Grace on Raffles and Joyce Stephenson on tea. Well, where else would you find a bargain - stationery and refreshments, not to mention a chat?

Home, and dried out, we all looked back on a very enjoyable time.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

This will be a shorter than usual report as the last date for sending is almost here as I write so I shall start where we left off, around June last. We have now found that the Veterans Day was to be around 28 June and as we had already arranged a lunch for a date in this month, it was decided to use this as an advanced Veterans Day and, as we had no further meeting, this was accepted.

After the 70th Birthday Party in April, our Branch was, on 8 July, represented at the Royal Garden Party! I, as Secretary, had the pleasure and privilege to be there and this was a delightful and exceptional experience. I was not one of the four actually to be presented but I was very lucky to find myself a spot at the front of the line down which HM The Queen walked to interview two young men who had - I think - done something outstanding at the Olympics. Imagine my surprise when the DVD which I had ordered eventually arrived and I found myself thereon, briefly but positively there! A memorable day indeed!



Newcastle ladies at the "Not Forgotten" Association lunch

Adding to our favours, eight of us were guests of the "Not Forgotten" Association at a lunch on 9 December. The hotel was only a mile up the road for me! We enjoyed the sherry reception and the lovely soup and turkey and Xmas pudding AND WINE TOO. Everything was super! While the music started we had one or two who could not wait and our lot were showing off their dancing skills of course!



In the centre is the 102 year old gentleman

One of the guests I knew was a gentleman who is 102 years old and he is quite fit – travels all over by public transport. As we were going the next day to yet another lunch, we arranged for him to join us. He duly turned up and he brought his accordion and gave us a great rendition from his lengthy programme. He was a Green Howard – the eldest one alive!

We were pleased to have met Rosie Thompson and her hard working band of helpers and I should like you to convey our grateful thanks to them.

Editor: The "Not Forgotten" Association receives a copy of the Lioness so that is why I always ask for a report and a photograph from those of you who have enjoyed the hospitality of that amazing organisation. It lets them know how much the Association appreciates their kindness and generosity.

On a more serious note, regretfully there are three deaths to report. One of our very staunch Life Members, Miss Betty Amor, on 20 September at Low Fell, Gateshead. She was very popular and will be sadly missed by all of her many friends and all members of our Branch. Mrs Patricia Nora Cole née Turnbull on 27 June, at Rowlands Gill, Northumberland, another very good member who travelled quite a long distance to our meetings whenever possible. Mrs Doreen Boulter had not attended meetings due to ill health and it was only due to persistent trying that we found out that she had died in May at Blyth, Northumberland. Her maiden name is not known,

On a very cheerful note – we have increased our WRAC numbers to, I think, five, and we are more than pleased to welcome Mrs Jennifer Andrews who has kindly offered to take an active interest in Branch admin and this comes as a great relief to us as we want to keep going! Molly our Treasurer is off to South Africa on 9 December until our February meeting – we wish her a happy holiday. She may be back when the *Lioness* is due!

We expect that the turnout at the Grand Reunion will be mammoth!

Best wishes to all members everywhere!

NORFOLK BRANCH

We have been fortunate this year in gaining seven new members. Our membership now totals 93. Two of the ladies were former ATS – Miss Beryl Manthorpe and Miss Hazel Pearson. Former WRAC new members are Mrs Melanie Clark née Regis, Mrs Vanessa Needham née Wightwick, Mrs Pamela Ormston née Arscott, Miss Sylvia Pratt and Mrs Elizabeth Winter née Fry. Perhaps you will recognise names. Some live in parts of the county from where Norwich is almost inaccessible with the vagaries of its transport system. Norfolk, I think, has one of the bitterest memories of the reviled Dr Beeching's axing of our once extensive railway system, now very much part of a wide coverage by nostalgic television programmes.

However, we still manage to have between sixteen and eighteen members regularly attending and supporting our activities. These have not been very wide-ranging this year – our annual representation at the Cathedral service for Nurse Edith Cavell and again at the Yarmouth Plaque on 11 November.

We went to Bury St Edmunds, en masse, in October when we met Mrs Patricia Stevenson (our Area Chairman) and friends from Cambridge and Ipswich Branches for lunch. This was a very jolly affair and afterwards we had time to roam around the shops or the beautiful Abbey gardens, whichever suited our mood.

Four of us represented the Branch at a tree-planting ceremony at the old Weybourne Camp in memory of former WRAC member Mrs Brackenbury who met and married her husband while serving there.

Another, particularly for me, wonderful occasion was the unexpected pleasure to be among twenty members of the ATS invited to attend a Royal Garden Party in July in recognition of our 70th Anniversary. I was honoured to represent the Branch being one of four members to meet Her Majesty the Queen. Her Majesty was interested to know of our Norfolk connections and some of the history of war-time events in which we participated.



Christmas tea

We really enjoyed our Christmas tea party on 6 December and were delighted that so many of our friends from the WRENS were able to join us. In January we are invited to the WRENS' Christmas lunch and our own is arranged for 17 January.

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We are hoping to hold our March meeting in King's Lynn, combined with a lunch, to meet our members who live in West Norfolk and for whom Norwich is so distant. Several members have booked for the Grand Reunion in Blackpool and hope to meet many old friends there.

All good wishes to Branches everywhere for a successful 2009 and many thanks to everyone in "the Office" for their support and the production of *Lioness*.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

Our Chairman's principal exercise in 2008 was to promote the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS; we hope that she and our entire branch have a reserve of resources to be able to put as much effort into the WRAC's 60th Anniversary this year.

Last year's highlight for Betty was her visit to see Her Majesty the Queen at the Garden Party in July. Her main achievement through the year was her work, well aided and abetted by all our active members, to 'man' a couple of exhibition stalls at the Veterans Weekend in the Guildhall in June and to read to the public in the hall at the opening on the first morning, a letter of congratulations and best wishes from HM the Queen.



Veterans Weekend

Our annual visit to Truro on 20 May enabled us to meet up with our Cornwall members. Thank you Enith for

your liaison work making it a good day at the Royal British Legion Club. It was also good to meet, for the first time, new members Joan Francis, ex-ATS and Margaret Fortes, ex-WRAC.



Truro Reunion

On 14 June some of our ladies collected for the Army Benevolent Fund Flag Day. In July, Sea Sunday was marked on the 13th by a Service at St Andrew's Church and on the 20th by the Royal Naval Service at Plymouth's RC Cathedral. We were represented at both Services.

Evon held a garden party at her home on Callington Road on 9 August to raise funds for Cancer Research. Five members braved the dreadful rain to support her hard work. Evon's total so far stands at £235.

Atlantic Day Parade on 7 September was held this year in St Andrew's Church instead of on the Barbican not just because it was a washout last year but also because of the financial strain high insurance costs for parades which necessitate the closure of city streets. Seven members attended and were invited to the Stonehouse Social Club for a very good hot/cold buffet.

On 9 September we celebrated our special ATS 70th and Plymouth Branch 30th Anniversary with a cruise on the estuary of the River Exe with a cream tea. We were joined by Maj Maskens-McIntyre, our Southern and South West Area Chairman, who came from Charmouth to be with us. Betty had invited a reporter and cameraman to come with us and we arrived home in the evening in time to see ourselves on West Country TV. We obviously enjoyed ourselves but I'm not sure of some folks' memory of the day judging by the amount of wine glasses that were shown in photographs and on TV!



On the River Exe celebrating the ATS 70th Anniversary

We celebrated RAFA's Annual Thanksgiving Service for our Victory of the Battle of Britain at St Andrew's Church on 21 September and were invited for refreshments in the Raffles Club, Mutley, afterwards.

Evon, Jane, Pat and I went to the WRAC Dinner Club at the Adelphi Hotel in October. We had a lot of fun meeting up with old and new friends. Also in October, Betty and I went to the Southern and South West Area AGM at the Wilton Bowls Club. As it is too far from Plymouth for a day visit, we spent a long weekend with my sister who lives about fifteen miles away. Lovely, 'generous' cottage pies were prepared and cooked for us by Joan, the Area Secretary.

November was unusually quiet because the regular Festival of Remembrance had to be cancelled this year due to lack of funds. To rectify that problem, some of our ladies have volunteered to collect for the Federation of ex-Services who are raising funds for the Festival on several days through the year in stores etc so that we may be sure of a Festival in 2009. Unfortunately our standard bearer, Carol Martin, is leaving us for a new life in the USA. We wish her and Phil well and hope to tempt a younger member to help Evon with the more active parades.

Our Christmas lunch will be at the Masonic Hall in Stoke as usual; I'm sure it will be a great success. Maj Maskens-McIntyre has kindly agreed to join us.

Our Committee have a meeting in January and are looking forward to the Grand Reunion in Blackpool in March.

We have our meetings in the Royal Fleet Club, 1.30-4pm on the first Monday of the month, except when there is a bank holiday when the meeting is moved to the second Monday. There is no meeting in January. Please feel free to join us anytime.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

Portsmouth members numbers are still steady at 57. We gained two new ex-WRAC members during the year. Sadly, we lost Nan Sear who was 94 and one of our loyal long-standing members. We shall all miss her. Five members and our Standard carried with honour by Phyllis Price attended her beautiful and very moving funeral service.



Coffee morning at Mary Moore's House, Portchester

We started the year with our usual coffee mornings in member's homes to raise funds: January at Edna Metherell's, February at Mary Moore's and March at Phyllis Price's.

The big event for our older members was the 70th Anniversary Party at the Victory Services Club on 4 April. Nine members went and had a very good day. A lot of talking, a good buffet and even champagne with the birthday cake. We could even remember the words of the old songs when the entertainment provided by the "Not Forgotten" Association came on. The bonus for Portsmouth Branch was getting our photographs inside and on the front cover of the *Lioness*.

May saw a party of us in Bath for the area reunion. It was the day Portsmouth played and won the FA Cup. We took our Portsmouth banner with us to decorate our table. Bath members made us very welcome and we all enjoyed the day. June was Parade month; three members went to the D-Day Stone Service on the sea front and our Standard and a few members were at The Falklands' Memorial Service in Old Portsmouth.

In July, two members went to the Parade and Displays on Southsea Common for Veterans Day and 100th Anniversary of the TA. On 8 July, we held our AGM at the Hampshire Club. This year we had six members present – a small increase on last year. We talked about the Branch affairs for the past year and arranged a list of events for the coming 2008/2009 year.

In August we held a coffee morning at Sally Watson's house in Cowplain, a very nice get together. On 24 September, we held our usual Pub Lunch at The Harvester in Fareham. This year we had a VIP guest, Lt Col Sue Westlake. We managed to seat everyone at small tables, all sixteen of us in the same area. Sue Westlake went around all the tables talking to everyone and asking names. We all enjoyed having her with us and at the end she still remembered all our names – what a wonderful memory she has. We received a very nice letter of thanks saying she enjoyed the day.

In October we had a visit from our member Winnie Rice from Canada. She was visiting her relatives in the area. Six members came along and we went out to lunch after the meeting. Winnie's great granddaughter Amber, who came from Canada with her, seemed to enjoy herself. At the end of October we had a coffee morning hosted by Jasmine McCree in Gosport which made a bit more for the funds.

November is Remembrance Parade time. We are getting smaller each year – old age catching us up. Sally Watson paraded our Standard very smartly and was supported by three younger members. Andrea laid our wreath and three older members sat in the Veterans' enclosure.

We shall end the year with a coffee morning hosted by Gillian Utting at Elizabeth Court in Gosport and we hope for a good attendance. We still have some coffee mornings arranged for after Christmas – one in Portsmouth, one in Portchester and one in Waterlooville.

We meet on the second Tuesday in the month at 11am

in the Hampshire Club, Fratton Road, Portsmouth. It would be nice if more members came along to support us at meetings and events.

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As I write, 2008 draws to an end – what a great year it has been for our Branch. The highlight has to be the invitation from the “Not Forgotten” Association for ten members to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in July: a full report appears elsewhere in the journal.

Also in July, seventeen members visited Wilts/Berks Rifles Museum in The Close, Salisbury where we were warmly welcomed by the assistant curator, Jackie Dryden. Plenty of very interesting exhibits. Then we went for lunch at the café next door.



Jean Staal, Dulcie Chalcraft, Kay Cassey, Frances Green, Maureen Robertson, Joan Middleton, Thirza Sillick, Eileen Pullen and Sue Dixon in the Museum garden.

In August, for our Branch garden party held at Val's home in Amesbury, it was decided we would all wear hats just like those who went to Buckingham Palace had for their Garden Party – what a fine display we had!



The Hat Parade

We were lucky to hold it on a “non-raining” day (rare in August). There were plenty of quizzes and an auction and lots of poring over the Buckingham Palace photographs and lots of tales about that lovely day. It was a most enjoyable meeting. Our Chairman, Alison Ogden,

made a presentation to Val Trout with thanks from everyone for her hospitality. Thirza Sillick presented Gladys Pope with a large box of tea bags, thanking her and her son Peter for all their care last month during the Palace visit and all the photographs. (Gladys's reputation for tea drinking is legend!)

Our AGM was held in September when all the committee members were re-elected en bloc: Chairman Alison Ogden, Secretary Val Trout, Treasurer Jill Trainor and Publicity Officer Gladys Pope. Our President, Joan Freeland thanked them all for their hard work on behalf of the Branch. A number of suggestions for speakers and visits were made for the next year's programme and Val has now issued a list she has arranged. Another active year to look forward to.

An open meeting in October gave us a chance to chat to each other, with tea, coffee and biscuits.

After our well attended November meeting, Val introduced Carole Slater from Age Concern who gave a very informative talk about the range of help and advice available to anyone over the age of 50. An amazing statistic she included was that in Salisbury District there are 150 volunteers and at the 20 Day Centres/Lunch Clubs there are 304 volunteers. I think we should all support Age Concern. Our Chairman Alison Ogden thanked Carole for a very lively and enjoyable talk.

We are delighted to welcome two new members – Marilyn Offord and Linda Clark (we are slowly winking out these ex-WRAC members, so we will continue to beat the drum!)

Sadly, Joan Morgan, one of our founder members and Branch Secretary/Vice Chairman for 40 years, died in November. She had been ill for some time and is missed from our meetings.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Our Branch members wish everyone a happy and healthy 2009.

Looking back over the last months of 2008 we have enjoyed our meetings together, although somewhat



Sandra with our Standard at Wellington Veterans' Day

depleted in numbers. Sadly we have to report that Cindy Bryceland died in June – ten members attended her funeral and Sandra carried our Standard.

Veterans Day in Wellington on 29 June was very well supported, with a service at the Remembrance Service at All Saints Church. Afterwards we had refreshments in the Church Hall. Also in June we went to the Veterans Day at RAF Cosford. It was a splendid day with a tour around the "Cold War Museum" a spectacular sight, very impressive with lunch included.



Lucy, Hilda, Nancy at RAF Cosford, Veterans Day 2008

Our Secretary Beryl was dressed to kill when she attended the Buckingham Palace Garden Party in July and had a right royal time there.

In August, we went with the "Shropshire Royal British Legion" to The National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas. There was a Parade of many Standards, which included Sandra and Nancy with theirs. A Service was held at the Armed Forces Memorial – quite a remarkable day. Whilst there, we met the family of an ex-ATS lady from Horninglow, Burton on Trent. We gave them details of our Association to give to her and she has since joined, so we say welcome to Mrs Olive Builth (née Murrey).

September saw the Wales & West Reunion at The Lord Hill Hotel in Shrewsbury. Once again it was a great day. Still in September, Beryl and Nancy went to Blackpool for the 'ATS Dinner Club' Autumn Break. It was a wonderful week, the Gala Night was excellent, ending with music and dancing. However, for some unknown reason, we kept getting lost in the many corridors of the Norbreck Castle Hotel on the way to our rooms and meeting others who were lost too. We blamed the staff because they took our "Landmark Chair" away at the junction of our corridors! Yes, we were sober!

At our AGM the same Committee was re-instated. We are all doing our very best to keep our Branch going. We were invited once again by the REME Association to enjoy another social evening with them. During November, we all staunchly supported the Royal British Legion selling poppies. We attended Remembrance Services and events, which included the Garrison Church, Wellington Service and Parade, Ceremony of Light, visiting two Schools, Wellington Town Square and Telford AFC Football Ground.

Our Christmas Lunch is in December at a local Hotel which we always enjoy.

Now back to 2009. We are looking forward to the Grand Reunion in March at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. We are all booked in and ready for action – see you there. Let us raise a glass to HQ for our excellent *Lioness*, which we all love and best wishes to our soldier friends everywhere.

STAFFORD BRANCH

During last year I was dreading the inevitable closure of our Branch. Like many Branches our monthly attendance figures have declined through poor health, mobility and transport problems. The Committee's concerns resulted in an Extraordinary AGM being held in September 2008. Nine stalwart members not only attended but quickly made it clear they wished the Branch to continue. The conundrum was how to do this? A very lively debate resulted in a happy solution – 'meetings' would be held three times a year. These meetings would be social and could possibly just have to involve eating!

My grateful thanks to the ladies who attended that meeting; they showed such enthusiasm and determination to keep the Stafford Branch alive. The ATS and WRAC standards were definitely flying high over the Castle Tavern that morning. The photograph shows five of those stalwart members.



L-R: Dorry Newton, Joan Poole, Ada Sturland, Betty Wilshaw & Joan Higgins

I would like to thank all members of the Branch for their support and confidence in me during the last 12 months. The ladies of Stafford would like to wish you all health, wealth and happiness for 2009. See you at the Grand Reunion.

STIRLING BRANCH

The Branch has four Life Members and twenty-seven Annual Members and during the past year six ex-WRAC members have been allocated to the branch. Hopefully they will find time to join us at our monthly meetings on the last Saturday of each month.

Central Scotland has been celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the TA and a reception was held in the Great Hall of Stirling Castle on 11 July to which three members were invited.

On 12 July a PDF Compressor Free Version
On 12 July a Veterans Day Parade marched from Stirling Castle to the Kings Park where there was an RAF fly-past. On Sunday 13 July a large number of Standards were paraded to a Service in the Church of the Holy Rude. Some of our members attended each of these events and I attended a Primary School and answered questions from Class 7 pupils on my experiences in the ATS in the Second World War – some of the questions were 'mind blowing'!



Treasurer and Secretary with two branch member after Christmas Lunch at the Terraces hotel

The Branch wish to express their appreciation of the work that goes into producing the *Lioness* twice a year and each issue is eagerly awaited.

STOCKPORT BRANCH

We send greetings for 2009 to everyone at home and abroad. We still meet at the Armoury in Stockport on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Numbers vary as we get older but it is well worth the effort of getting there to catch up with each other.

April: 14 of our ladies went to the National Memorial Arboretum on 23 April – such a change since they were there last time. They were so thrilled with the new Armed Forces Memorial – it is so beautiful.

May: 1 May there was a wonderful party held by the Wilmslow Branch to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Formation of the ATS. It was a wonderful occasion and very well attended. People were invited from all over the North West and eight from the Stockport Branch went and really enjoyed it.

June: Eleven of us had a super day in Llandudno; the weather was kind and the sun shone all day. Before leaving for home we had a great afternoon tea.

September: Three ladies went to Blackpool to attend the ATS Dinner Club which was very enjoyable. We arrived

Monday and returned home on Friday morning. It was lovely to meet old friends and make new ones. We also fitted in a trip to the lights, a Gala Dinner and a trip to Keswick in the Lake District – a really fabulous few days.

October/November: October was busy for us. We had a special guest at our meeting. Sandie, the daughter of our member Brenda Logan, was visiting from Texas – such a charming lady. So we held a party and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Only three of our members went to London to the Westminster Abbey Remembrance Service this year. The weather was woeful on the Saturday but thankfully was dry on Sunday for those who marched. On 22 November, we lunched at the Catering College – fourteen members and guests attended and the food as usual was lovely.

We are sad to report that two members have died recently; Jenny Barratt in October and Lilian Storah in November. Members attended both funerals and were invited for refreshments afterwards by the respective families who were lovely warm people and made us feel very welcome. Jenny and Lilian will be sadly missed by so many people – they will join the ranks of our dear departed members: always remembered and never forgotten.

December: We are looking forward to our Christmas meal at the Pinewood Hotel in Handforth on 11 December. We have not been there before but ladies from the Wilmslow Branch always go there and have a wonderful time. We are sure we will too!

Finally, we would like to add our grateful thanks to all the people at Worthy Down who do so much for us.

SUFFOLK BRANCH

Greetings from Ipswich, we are still soldiering on all merry and bright. We meet every third Thursday in the month at the Labour Club, Silent Street though not so silent once we arrive! We have had a good year; numbers remain consistent, averaging fourteen at our meetings. We have enjoyed many quizzes, debates, sing-a-longs and lots of laughter.

At the AGM a new Secretary was elected – Sheelagh Wilson ex WRAC, who is younger than most of us, keen and energetic. We need women of this calibre if we are to continue as an active branch. Sheelagh takes over from Liz Ives. We extend our thanks to Liz for all the work she did in starting up the Branch and we hope to see her at forthcoming meetings.

If any members are at a loose end on the third Thursday of the month, drop on by – we really would love to see you.

ULSTER BRANCH

Hello and best wishes for 2009 to everyone from the Ulster Branch.

On Remembrance Sunday, Mary Wilson, accompanied by Jean Hopper, laid the Ulster Branch WRAC Association wreath at the Belfast Cenotaph. It was a very cold morning as there was a biting wind blowing through the Garden of Remembrance But there was such a sense of pride and a feeling of being part of something bigger than ourselves. The women who made the ultimate sacrifice that even the elements could not dampen our spirits. This year we had to parade a little further than usual through Belfast and, on our return from the ceremony, marching to the familiar tunes, the coldness and sadness were soon forgotten and everyone, including the hundreds of people lining the route, were positively jubilant. A day, which had started off cold and sad, had suddenly become quite wonderful.



Mary Wilson and Jean Hopper

We are all looking forward to a Christmas Lunch which we have organised for 13 December in Beechlawn Hotel in Dunmurry, just outside Belfast. In previous years we had gone to the Pantomime but this year we have decided to do something different and I am sure we will all enjoy an excellent meal as well as having a good time. We had invited Santa Claus, but it is just a wee bit early for him. However, you never know, he could still turn up!

Some of our members have made arrangements to go to the Grand Reunion in Blackpool in March next year which I am sure will be a memorable occasion and we look forward to seeing their photographs on their return. Once again there has been quite a lot of illness and, in particular, I want to mention our Assistant Secretary, Dorothy Wraight, who has gone through a long spell of bereavement and illness and also Peggy Couser who has been in hospital recently. Both these members have done a lot for our branch over the years and I would like to wish them a return to good health, also any other members who are suffering illness or sadness at this time.

We are already planning ahead for 2009 and we are still hopeful that we will be able to arrange an outing in May or June.

WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND BRANCH

Our numbers have increased by two Life Members and we hope they will be able to join in some of our meetings/functions. So, we now have twenty-six Annual Members and twenty-two Life Members out of which sixteen – twenty are able to attend our meetings held twice a month.

At our AGM in March our Committee was voted in for a further year. In April Betty Hodder, one of our members, gave a very interesting talk on the History of Portesham; also in April, Esther Pring, another member, held her usual coffee morning and £80 was raised which was put towards Branch funds.

A contingent from the branch attended the Area Reunion hosted by Bath – what a super day – congratulations and thanks were passed to the Bath Committee. Weymouth is due to host the Area Reunion next year and Bath's show will be a hard act to follow.

June saw the annual Veterans Parade in Weymouth and this year the Freedom of the Borough was given to the Devon & Dorset Regiment, which is now part of the Rifles. At the same time, the Royal Engineers exercised their right to march through the town. Later that week we had a stall on the seafront and managed to raise £65 for the *Lioness* and to advertise the Association.

As the cost of hiring a coach for an outing has escalated beyond the means of most of our members, it was decided that we would have an informal luncheon during July at a hotel in Weymouth. Twenty-six members attended and all had a good time. We have decided to do the same next year.

We reconvened in September and it was good to see everyone after such an awful summer. Peg McElwaine reported on the Buckingham Palace Garden Party to which she had been invited and had been lucky enough to be presented to Her Majesty the Queen. Fortunately they had good weather so their hats did not get ruined. In October, Colin Pomeroy gave us an extremely interesting talk and slide show on the RAF entitled "Wings over Weymouth". It was great to see pictures of the old town and local districts before and after WWII.

On 14 October the branch paid tribute to the ATS with a 70th Anniversary Buffet at the Prince Regent Hotel. Twenty-nine members were present and Lt Col Sue Westlake joined in the celebrations. A special cake adorned with the ATS badge had been arranged and Mollie Holland, who had joined the ATS in 1938, was asked to "cut the cake". Whilst at the lunch, Lt Col Westlake kindly presented Certificates of Appreciation to two of our members – Peg McElwaine, our President with 51 years in the Branch and Necia Trent, our Chairman with 36 years in the Branch.



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Maj Maskens-McIntyre, Mrs Necia Trent, Mrs Peg McElwaine and Lt Col Westlake

Thanks to Joan Robb for sending the photograph

The Area Secretaries Meeting was held on 18 October and, as always, Joan Ford provided a super luncheon before we started the business proper. Thank you Joan for keeping us well fed and watered – it is most appreciated.

We paraded on Remembrance Sunday, which despite the weather, was very well attended by marchers and spectators. The Standard Bearers had a difficult time hanging on to their charges. "Yours truly" very nearly did a Mary Poppins but just managed to keep hold of the Standard and stay upright. Also in November, we had another speaker, Mr Ron Harris, who gave an excellent talk on Weymouth & Portland during WWII, showing extremely good slides. He also exchanged information with members living locally at that time. His talk was thoroughly enjoyable and he has kindly agreed to return next year.

We finished off our year with a Christmas party with food brought in by members and wine and soft drinks paid for by the branch – a good time was had by all.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

The members of Wilmslow branch send you all their best wishes for 2009.

We miss going to London to march in the Remembrance Parade, we used to make a weekend of our visit to London. On the Friday we had afternoon tea in one of the 'posh' hotels. Saturday morning we put our crosses in the Remembrance Garden at Westminster Abbey which is always an emotional time as we remembered our loved ones and friends, then in the afternoon we attended the Royal Albert Hall. Sunday morning was the Parade itself with all the standing and waiting, but oh! all those medals proudly worn by so many who fought for our freedom. At least we are still able to attend our own church services and British Legion Parades. Watching the repeat of the Whitehall parade on TV, we were pleased to see Vice President Lt Col Sue Westlake among the marchers.

I was talking to our Choirmaster who said he was too young to be in the War. However, he had done his

National Service and that set me thinking. All those who were just children during wartime and too young to really understand about rationing and blackouts will now be Senior Citizens! So what does that make us who were in the ATS? *Editor: special citizens!*

We will be having our Christmas Lunch at our usual hotel, but will be fewer in numbers this year – just eight or nine of us. Nevertheless, we will enjoy ourselves as we are always made very welcome and they decorate the table with streamers and crackers to give it that party feeling.

Our Secretary, Lilian Edwards, was in the local newspaper again. She is quite involved with tracing her family tree. She was so determined to track down the Russian side of her family that, a few years ago, she went alone to Lithuania and Latvia searching for information but with no success. Her computer has been invaluable in her quest and has enabled her to find relatives she knew nothing about. She is quite a whiz kid on her computer and is always thrilled to find another name to add to the family tree. Her grandson Guilio says she is almost as good as he is, praise indeed!



Silver surfer extraordinaire Lilian Edwards with grandson Guilio Bigazzi

She used to do voluntary work for Age Concern but had to give it up when she broke her wrist which did not heal well. "I wanted to raise money for the Charity" she said, "So I volunteered to sky dive but my doctor wouldn't hear of it". Good grief! I should think not in her 80s.

Three of our members have booked to go to The Grand Reunion in Blackpool – including our Secretary and are hoping it will be as enjoyable as the last one in Coventry which was excellent.

Betty Masterman our member who is now happily settled in Spain, has sent us a cheque in lieu of Christmas Cards – so many thanks Betty, we drink a toast to your good health. We are pleased to hear that you have found the name of a member of your Ack Ack Bty in *Lioness* after years of looking. So ladies, never give up hope if you also are still looking for someone.

We send our Best Wishes to our member Joan in Australia and wish you all good health in 2009.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

By the time you read this we will be well into 2009 and looking forward to the Grand Reunion – I hope to see some of you there.

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In July, Sue Westlake kindly let us loose in her garden again for our "Party in the Garden". What a night. We were eating outside so were very disappointed that it was quite cold but Jane managed to do quite a brisk business in Association Fleeces which were very cosy. Food as always prepared by Sue Taylor just kept coming; we had our usual raffle which, despite the low numbers attending, raised £40. Many thanks to both Sues for a terrific evening.



The AGC exercise their Freedom of Winchester

At the end of July, the AGC exercised its right to march through the city of Winchester. A couple of Branch members took part in the parade, as did an ex-member and a few of us went to watch. The parade was blessed with fine weather and a good turnout with cheering crowds (everyone seems to love a military band.) At very short notice in August, we had a hastily arranged meal to say goodbye to Rowena. Rowena, a stalwart of the branch for many years, is one of our serving



The branch wishing they could go to Nepal with Rowena

members and, as she was being posted to Nepal, we thought we should say goodbye to her – considering it was a Friday lunchtime we had a very good turnout.



Lynn and Kath

In September, a number of us went to the Golden Lion for a meal. Maggie brought Bailey, a visiting Black Labrador, along with her, very friendly and spent most of the meal under the table. A very good meal was had by all, with a chance for a jolly good natter, also an opportunity to say goodbye to Kath. Kath was Chief Clerk at HQ before Denise and then worked in the AGC Museum in Winchester. She has decided to move on and is awaiting final notification of her new job – we wish her well.

In November, with the loss of our usual venue, the AGM was held at the Secretary's house, with most people opting for a fish and chip supper purchased from the chippie around the corner. Once again a very small turnout, so although we made some decisions, we were unable to decide on our Branch outing – watch this space.

Recently, we asked branch members to show us photographs of when they met VIPs and Cath Cox née Rickman came up with this one:



DWRAC, Brig Mary Anderson visits Cyprus and Sgt Cath Rickman is introduced

DISPATCH COMMAND

YES/68/43/18

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR

A pause in her duties in Singapore for Sergeant Geth Stokes.

The occasion: the visit of the Director of the Women's Royal Army Corps, Brigadier Mary Anderson, to the Far East.

Geth, whose parents live at 37, Stomars Lane, Winchester, Hants, has been with the WRAC since November 1951, when she enlisted in Southampton. In her service she has been to Germany and Cyprus and has already done one tour in Singapore - between 1963 and 1965 - when she visited Bangkok in Burma and Bangkok in Thailand.

From: British Army Public Relations,
HQ FAREWELL.
March 1968.

The press release

WORTHING BRANCH

Worthing Branch has now been up and running for over a year. We meet regularly, on the last Tuesday of the month, other than December.



We had two outings for some of our members with the "Not Forgotten" Association which were both thoroughly enjoyed. We had a strong contingent at the Veterans weekend right next door to the Church Hall where we meet. We also had a Christmas party at Carol and Greta's home, which was great fun, with lots of lovely food.

Most importantly, from the Secretary's point of view, this year we laid a wreath on Armistice Sunday here in Worthing. It was the first time in a good many years that this had happened and we are very proud to be able to resume the tradition.



WRAC Association wreath at the Worthing War Memorial

WRAC SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE

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

Sizes 36 - 46

Other colours available

Also
Knitted WRAC Dolls

Price list and further information from:

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

COPY DEADLINE

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

20 JUNE 2009

ATS Reminiscences

EARLY UNIFORMS AND MORSE TRAINING

W/21391 Betty Forrester
The Riggs, Courtmill Road, Rosemarkie, Fortrose,
Rossshire IV10 8UE
Tel: 01381 620537



Fife ATS drilling in Perth

This photograph of us in uniform was taken in 1939. It shows a group of Fife ATS Pay Corps drilling in the grounds of Sharp's School in Perth. The uniforms were the very first ones and I'm sure were "revamped" before the final design was decided.

I am at the rear of the squad and the Sgt in the front was Rena Goodwiltie. She is wearing the issue raincoat which we all thought was very good.



Hazel Elvey is on the left

These two photographs were taken in Trowbridge in 1942 and show Morse training in the Creed Room. This was an automatic morse transmitting device using punched paper rolls rather like music boxes and pianolas. It produced a good and even speed for training but it was not like the real thing!



Squad 2 training in the Creed Room

DUTY IN NAPLES

W/309387 Helen Burness née McNeil
9 Jamieson Avenue, Ochilview Court, Stenhousemuir,
Stirlingshire FK5 4TX
Tel: 01324 570534



Ruth Cunningham, Gladys Church, Margaret Hocine, Renée Brown and myself, Helen McNeil

I am enclosing a photograph taken while on duty in Naples. I have been in touch with Ruth Cunningham. If you manage to include this in the *Lioness*, someone might recognise themselves – it's been a long time and I will leave it to you. I have been to all Reunions in Scotland, the last one in Perth. I am a Life Member, starting off in Edinburgh Branch, now in Stirling Branch. We were in Naples on VE Day.

OLD DALBY AND BERWICK-UPON-TWEED

W/320129 Mrs Margaret Middleditch née Johnstone
16 Woodfield Avenue, Ayr, Ayrshire KA8 8PQ

After listening to you talk at the Scottish Area Reunion in Perth, I just had to send these two photographs. The group photograph was taken at the Old Dalby in 1945. I am sitting at the end of the wall.



Old Dalby 1945



Berwick-on-Tweed 1946

The other photograph was taken at Berwick-on-Tweed in 1946. I think the officer's name was Brenda Bailey. I was known as Peggie Johnstone. After Berwick, I was posted to HQ in Glasgow (Park Gardens) and was demobbed in 1947 after I got married to Jack Middleditch.

I do hope some of the girls will remember these days and maybe even remember me. I would be delighted to hear from any of them.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FORMATION OF THE ATS - 1988

Mrs Dorothy Foster née 'Dot' Court
2 The Green, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Notts NG12 2LA
Tel: 0115 933 2228

I wonder whether any of your readers remember the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS. At the

Royal Albert Hall ceremony in 1988 there was a special mention of the ATS and current members of the WRAC did a sketch of "times gone by"; writing home, repairing a motorcycle and doing PT etc. Towards the end of the show a number of us former ATS girls were selected to march down the steps into the main arena and join the mass ranks of those performers on the day. I was one of the fortunate ones and led the Parade down the steps on the right hand side. We marched down in pairs and I wonder whether any of the other girls are members of the Association and recall this rather nostalgic occasion? I still have a tape of the whole performance but unfortunately have been unable to extract a good enough still shot to reproduce in the *Lioness*.

On a previous occasion I wrote an article on my experiences in the Army and particularly my time in Palestine as a Supervisor telephonist at the King David Hotel, Jerusalem which I left just prior to the hotel being blown up by Jewish Terrorists. My Section Sgt was Agnes Brown and, whilst I had no joy from that article, I wonder whether anyone new to the Association may remember me?

CUP WINNERS - HQ EC GROUP ATS

W/207559 Sheenac Muir née Maclean
27 Park Manor, Crieff, Perthshire PH7 4LJ

I was posted from Luton Hoo in 1943 to the DADPR Branch in Luton and was billeted in a hat factory at 39 Bute Street. The girls there were attached to REME and it was a mixed Mess.

128 EASTERN PLATOON
H.Q. E.C. GROUP ATS.



128 Eastern Platoon - Cup Winners

There was a competition for the smartest platoon in the HQ EC Group and we won it! The photograph shows us with the Cup held by our officer, Sub Francis, and sitting on the left next to her is Sgt Rudge who put us through our paces. We did all our training in the Station Square and woe betide us if skirts were not pressed, shoes polished and hair off collar! The girls were all a friendly, bright crowd - happy days. Some of them signed the back of the photograph and the names I can read are: Ena Christie, Vera Friedman, Grace A. Murray, Pamela Rose, two Audreys and someone whose nickname was 'Shovel'!

**WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB
LUNCHEON AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
SATURDAY 16 MAY 2009**

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Jane Freebairn

To celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the WRAC, it has been decided to hold the Luncheon in London and in some style! Thanks to Pepi Simpson (Hollingsworth) persuading her husband, Mr Keith Simpson MP, to sponsor us, we will be able to hold the event in the House of Commons. We will meet for pre-Luncheon Drinks on the Terrace Pavilion overlooking the Thames and then have luncheon in the Churchill Dining Room.

The cost will be £60 which includes the pre-luncheon reception, a three-course meal with coffee and Petit Fours and wine.

If you are a member of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club, you will have received personal notification and you should use that form to apply as soon as possible if you have not done so already.

If you are not a member of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club, please complete the attached and return it as soon as possible and certainly by **FRIDAY 3 APRIL 2009 AT THE VERY LATEST.**

We do hope that you are able to support us on this occasion. It is an excellent opportunity to help celebrate a significant anniversary of the WRAC. It is also a chance to register with the WRAC Officers' Dining Club – something you have probably been meaning to do each time you receive the *Lioness* and read about the dinners and luncheons. So – maybe you thought about going to the Grand Reunion but could not make it. Now is your chance to have a get together with those you have not seen for a while. Go on – give your friends a ring and arrange to meet in London on 16 May 2009. You will not regret it!

**WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB
ANNUAL LUNCHEON
SATURDAY 16 MAY 2009**

I am able to come to the Luncheon at the House of Commons and I enclose a cheque for **£60** made payable to the WRAC Association.

I have the following dietary requirements

I would like to sit beside:

Title/Rank..... Initials.....

Surname..... Post Nominals.....

Address:

Post Code..... Tel No:

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

It would also help me if you would tick **one** of the following:

- A. Because I am coming to the luncheon, I am unlikely to attend a dinner in November.
- B. I am coming to the luncheon and I would also support a dinner in November.

**PLEASE RETURN TO GENERAL SECRETARY, WRAC ASSOCIATION, GOULD HOUSE,
WORTHY DOWN, WINCHESTER SO21 2RG
BY FRIDAY 3 APRIL 2009**

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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



I wish to join the WRAC Association as a Life Member and enclose £50 cheque

OR

I enclose £5 cheque for Annual Membership, which is in payment
of the first annual subscription up to the 31 October

Date: Signature:

All cheques must be in **sterling** and made payable to "**The WRAC Association**"
Subscriptions include *Lioness*
Overseas members are asked to contribute an extra £3.50 a year to cover postage of *Lioness*

Please complete this form in **BLOCK LETTERS**

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

Miss/Mrs/Ms: Surname:

Given Names: Decorations:

Surname when serving: Date of Birth:

Address for Correspondence:

.....

.....

Post Code: E-mail: Telephone No:

Units during service:

Date of Enrolment: Date of Release:

GRAND REUNION

FRIDAY 20 MARCH – MONDAY 23 MARCH 2009

PDF Compressor Free Version OUTLINE PROGRAMME

All members who are attending the Grand Reunion will be given a Welcome Pack on arrival which will contain an up-to-date programme of events. This is to give you a general idea beforehand.

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	REMARKS
Friday 20 March	1400	Reception opens. Receive Welcome Pack and check Seating Plans Fund Raising	It would be really helpful if everyone could book in at the Norbreck Castle Hotel during the Friday afternoon – even if you are not staying there. This will help us confirm numbers and names for the seating plans.
	1830	Pre Dinner Drinks at Norcalympia Bar	Pre Dinner Drinks are at individual cost.
	1930	60s/70s Dinner	Do please wear appropriate “Fancy Dress” if you like – it is not compulsory though! Wine will be at individual cost.
	After Supper	Music from the 60s/70s	Dancing/listening until 2330 hours.
Saturday 21 March	Morning	Fund Raising/Sale of Draw Tickets	Until 1230 hours
	1430	AGM	In Norcalympia
	1830	Pre Dinner Drinks in Main Hotel Bar	Pre Dinner Drinks are at individual cost.
	1930	Gala Dinner	Some wine/glass of port for the Toasts will be provided. Additional drink at individual expense. Small section of Kings’ Division band will play during Dinner.
	After Dinner	Music for dancing	Until 0100 hours
Sunday 22 March	1030	Church Service in Norcalympia	Branch Standards may be paraded. Kings’ Division Band
	1130	Parade	Led by the Kings’ Division Band.
	Afternoon	R&R!	
	Evening	In House Entertainment	Provided by the Norbreck Castle Hotel in the Conservatory.
Monday 23 March	After Breakfast	Grand Reunion ends	Safe journey home

There may be some members of the Association who are not booked in for the Grand Reunion but who would like to attend the AGM or the Church Service. If you would like to come to either of those events, please contact the General Secretary on **01962 887570**.

WRAC DINNER CLUB

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WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

Application for Membership

Membership No: DC/.....

Present Name:
(Miss Ms Mrs Rank if serving)

Christian Names:

Address:
.....
.....

Postcode: Tel No:

Email:

Mobile:

Army No: P/ W/ WO/

Surname when serving:

WRAC Service From: To:

TA Service From: To:

Last Rank held/still holding:

Trade/Job whilst serving:

Decorations:
.....

Please return to:

WRAC Dinner Club – Membership Secretary
Carole Austin, 'The Gables', 20 Redcar Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 2LR
Tel: (01253) 352259

I wish to join the WRAC Dinner Club and enclose:

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

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

Signature: Date:

A 2nd class postage stamp would be much appreciated. Thank you

*'Suaviter in modo, Fortiter in re'
'Gentle in manner, Resolute in deed'*



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Parade for the Duchess of Kent

The other photograph is of a parade and inspection in Luton by the Duchess of Kent shortly after she was widowed.

I volunteered for overseas service and was posted to the Control Commission in London and then went over to Brussels and Germany – but that is a different story! I am a member of the Fife and Tayside Branch.

WHO WERE ALL THE VOLUNTEERS BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR?

W/9821 Mrs Lilian Edwards née Staig
17 Covington Place, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 1NS

In 1938 the ATS was formed for women to release the serving soldiers for military duty in the event of a war breaking out. Their term of engagement was for four years only and their duties were to be non combatant, so they were for the most part to be employed as drivers, cooks, clerks and any work that could be performed by the 'weaker' sex.

I volunteered when I was 18 years old and it was necessary to obtain a parent's signature. My father refused to sign the papers but, when he was in hospital, I persuaded my mother to do so. When my father found out his remark was "I hope they give you floors to scrub".

This was still peacetime, but the "war clouds" were gathering. I went to the nearby Army barracks each week for training when drill was done in "4s" later changed to "3s". I was kitted out in uniform – a very heavy khaki serge shapeless skirt and a jacket that fitted where it touched. In July 1939 we went with the military unit to camp under canvas, in bell tents, eight to a tent, with feet to the centre pole. We had a plague of earwigs which got everywhere including some very intimate places.

When War was declared, I reported to my local barracks, and then went by tram to the outskirts of Liverpool to Lord Woolton's estate. Next day we went by train to Herne Bay in Kent, billeted in empty hotels and attached to a driver-training centre.

In June 1940 after Dunkirk, it was thought too dangerous on the south coast where we could hear the guns on the other side of the water. So we were disbanded and I went to a holding unit for a while, then to York to be with the Pay Corps, probably because of my peacetime employment as a comptometer operator. I had my 21st birthday in York in November 1941. My next posting was to a Signals Regiment in Huddersfield. I worked in the ATS Coy office and remained there until 1942 gradually being promoted to WO2.

As there was no establishment for me, I was posted to London as the CSM. We were attached to the Statistical Branch of the War Office in Hobart House near the Palace. The system used to keep records was called "hollerith" – forerunner of the computer as we know it. My next move was to a "secret" location (Home Forces), which proved to be Reigate in Surrey where "D Day" and the invasion of Europe were being planned. When the European War was over I was posted to Glasgow for eventual discharge and involvement with the formation of the Army Education Corps at the University of St Andrews, the idea being to help the returning troops back to civilian life. There I met my future husband, Alex Edwards, just back from Burma where as a "Chindit" he had been dropped behind Japanese Lines. We married in Aberdeen his hometown in April 1946.

So I never scrubbed a single floor and I think my father was quite proud of me.

Editor: Read more about Lilian, Secretary of Wilmslow Branch, in their report.

MY TIME AS AN UNOFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE ATS BAND!

W/277067 Mrs Alice Alexander née Siesel
23 Brodie Road, Chingford, London E4 7HF

Reading about the ATS Band in *Lioness* 2/2008, I recalled the following episode:

After VE Day on 8 May 1945, I was granted compassionate leave to travel to Paris to gather information about family members caught up there during the war. I had neither money nor any idea as to where I was going to stay once there. Armed with field rations and a block of hard chocolate to sustain me, by



Enjoying dinner at the Hotel Metropolitan – I am raising my glass

chance I found myself on the same boat as the ATS Band for the crossing to Calais. They were to perform in victory celebrations in Paris. We soon palled up and it was suggested that I should tag along when they checked into their reserved hotel in the Place de la Concorde. After the war, no one would query an extra body. It worked; though not without a feeling of guilt, I enjoyed the luxury of a single room with all meals and service at table. However, the sad thing is that I did not find my relatives though I stayed for some days. The place was teeming with American and Canadian service personnel.

On a visit to Versailles with a group of friends, crates of the finest wines, pilfered and hoarded by the German invaders, were discovered and I was given my first ever taste of champagne. I joined in sightseeing even visiting the Sorbonne University where my great-grandfather had once taught. Emboldened by the knowledge that the French were now amicably disposed to anyone in British uniform (including a nonentity like myself), when passing the Curie-Pierre-Joliot Institute, I had the nerve to enter and look around. Mariette, one of its scientists whose husband had returned from a Polish concentration camp the day before, welcomed me and proudly gave me a tour of the laboratories and rooms worked in by Marie Curie. In a darkened room she showed me Marie's discovery, "polonium" with its greenish/blue phosphorescent glow. The 1937 Nobel Prize winner Irene Joliot, Marie Curie's daughter, was continuing her mother's work. Mariette suggested I should meet her and went to look for her but she had already gone home and was therefore spared the extreme embarrassment of having to talk to an uninvited and brazen nobody. The audacity one had in one's youth! I do owe a debt of gratitude to the ATS Band for having ensured that I would not be destitute.



A trip along the Seine on 8 June 1945 with the "Hospitality Jane". I am seated at the front

LULWORTH 1943

W/111378 Jo Waters née Mills
51 Lodge Road, Fetcham, Surrey KT22 9QY

I was very interested in the account of the Bovington Reunion 2007 as I was posted to the Gunnery Wing at

Lulworth Camp in January 1942. I was the shorthand typist in the Orderly Room and had to take dictation from the Colonel. I didn't understand much of what he was talking about so they took me out on a tank with an instructor and I drove the tank and used the various instruments and then fired the gun. I laid a line of smoke along the top of Binden Hill.

My husband, Philip Waters, came to Lulworth on a course after he had finished his overseas tour – first in the desert and then Burma. We married in 1948 and celebrated our Diamond Wedding on 27 March 2008.

I was lucky enough to go to the Unveiling of the Memorial to the Women of World War 2 in London. It was wonderful to be with you all again – such a marvellous atmosphere.



L-R: Jo Mills, Ivy Ransome and Rita? (a Projectionist)

MY WAR YEARS

W/2049 Mrs Jessie Low née Dunsmore
24 Grahame Terrace, Gilmerton, By Crieff,
Perth & Kinross PH7 3HB

Craigie, where I was brought up, was a suburb of Perth City. When Guiding was introduced to the local church in 1931, I was thrilled to become one of the first Guides in the Company, uniform fascinated me! Then at 17, I joined the Rangers Company at St Ninian's Cathedral.

When the ATS formed, they had a local company which met in the Drill Hall at Queen's Barracks, Black Watch Depot. I joined them on 1 December 1938. I wanted to be a cook, but with no experience and as I was already a clerkess in 'civvy street', they signed me on as a clerk. Thank goodness, when I saw the facilities cooks worked with, both inside and outside the kitchens.

The initial training evenings were mostly drill in 4s at that time. I had learned that in the Guides – left, right, together – but I was soon smartened up – 1-1, 2, shoulders back, chin in, arms straight by your sides, heels together, toes apart. Drilling in civvy shoes was no good so we had to go to Norwell's Shoe Shop in the High Street where they had a consignment of proper army shoes, brown and really heavy. We were then ready for our drill lessons.

The Black Watch went to camp at Barry Buddon that year. Some of the local ATS would have liked to accompany them but the Black Watch were having none of this and we had to spend the day in the barracks for instruction. I was sent to the RQMS who showed us around his store and collected the necessary documentation. He gave us a coffee break, sent us home for lunch and finished the training session at 3 o'clock! Not what I was used to in my normal work, I can tell you!

When I got home from work on 31 August 1939 there was the OHMS letter stating that I had to report to Queen's Barracks next morning at 8.30am. When I arrived we were detailed where our place of work would be. Five others and I were sent to a hut where there were long tables on each side. We were given a pile of attestation forms to complete for each reservist reporting for duty.

On Sunday 3 September the Hut Sergeant allowed us to listen to his wireless and we heard Neville Chamberlain tell us that we were at war with Germany. Lights went out all over the country.

Reservists reported for duty over the next four weeks. We completed their forms and sent them to the stores to be kitted out. In the meantime our own uniforms arrived comprising a tunic, skirt, cap, two khaki shirts with collars attached, one tie and two pairs of khaki lisle stockings. Underwear and an extra skirt came later. Washing was difficult as we were on no account to wear civilian clothes. No washing machines then! Barrack routine was the order of the day but we were allowed to wear Black Watch tartan skirts when we were off duty. They were tailor-made, with 4 pleats.



North Inch Perth 1941. With our Black Watch tartan skirts

In the meantime, Balhousie Castle was taken over by the ATS as a billet. As NCO, I had to do duty one weekend in six, night duty once a fortnight and evening duty once a week. This meant that, after checking late passes at 10 p.m., I had a long walk of about 45 minutes in the blackout to get home. I would be frightened to do that now! Girls had to be in at 9pm. with two late passes a week which allowed them to stay out until 10pm. Perth was alive with people in uniform. The Record Office took over Sharp's School.

We had to report to the Black Watch RSM Drummond at 8.30 a.m. each weekday morning for drill. Several male squads were drilling at the same time and we were certainly put through our paces. So much so, that we were deemed smart enough to go on the monthly church parade to the West Church (now St Matthew's) in Tay Street. We marched down Atholl Street and up the High Street to the sound of the pipes and drums.

I became the Chief Clerk in the RASC office, stationed in the newly built Queen's Hotel in Leonard Street. Then, in October 1942, I volunteered for general service, was promoted to CSM and posted to a Hvy Ack Ack Bn at Oswestry.

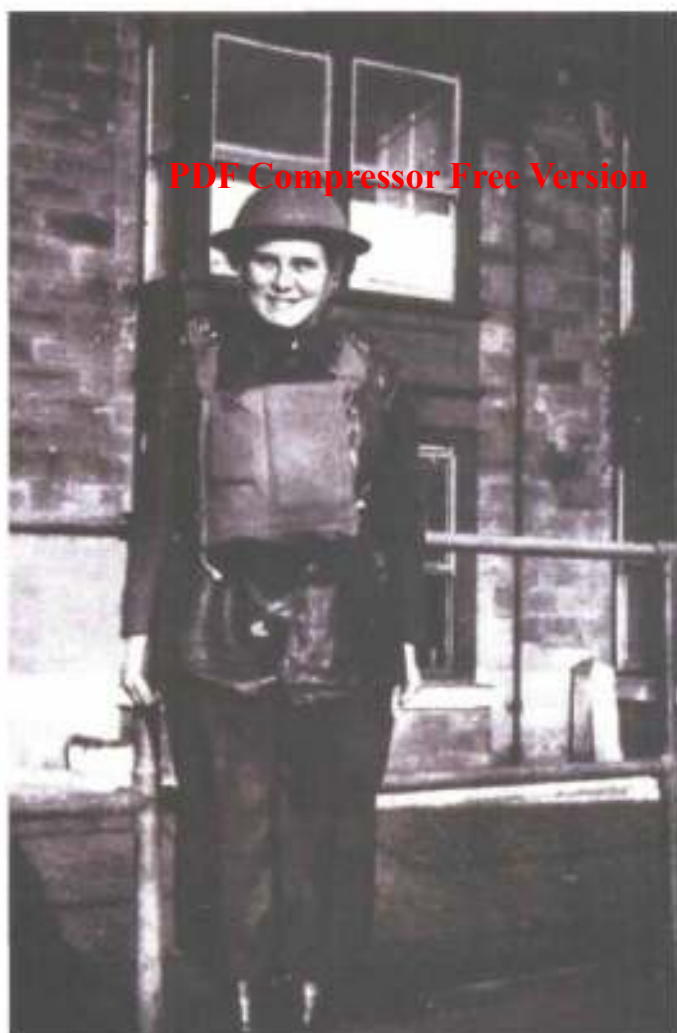


Warrant Officers' Course. Jessie is second from the left on the back row. RSM Hadley is centre front

This was the unhappiest month of my army career. Having travelled in a packed train from Perth, changing at Crewe, surviving on mother's sandwiches, I was met by the Bombardier who took me to the Sergeants' Mess where I could buy a drink and a snack over the bar. I had to share a bunk with a permanent Staff Sergeant. Of course I had to have the bottom bunk – what a welcome!

The following morning a male CQMS issued us with our operational kit – battledress, boots and gaiters. "What size shoes do you take?" I said, "Sevens", so he issued me with size nines! This happened to all of us. The girls had no idea how to wear boots with gaiters. By this time most of them were in tears. The ATS RSM took our first parade. She was the most forbidding woman I have ever encountered.

After a month we were sent off one night to an unknown destination. This turned out to be a firing camp at Whitby. The operational staff were training every day climbing up 199 steps to the cliff top, where they fired at balloons being towed behind aircraft.



Training Camp Whitby. CSM Dunsmore in combat kit at Royal Hotel

After training we were moved every few months from Whitby. We went to Wilmslow onto Harwich, Caldecot, Cardiff, Ipswich and then to Shoreham-by-Sea. This was where some of the troops were getting ready to embark before the final push on D-Day. I was then posted to Portland Bill and was able to celebrate VE Day in Weymouth.



40th Perthshire Company reunion just after the War at one of our yearly lunches

With the war in Europe over there was no more need for Ack Ack batteries, so I was posted to the RAOC at Beeston, a clothing depot where 'demob suits' were

being issued. Then I volunteered to go abroad and was posted to Klagenfurt in Austria in 1947 as part of the Army of Occupation. I remained there until 1949 when I was posted to Aberdeen as RSM with the TA, covering Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverness, Wick and Thurso. Our annual camps were held at Cultybraggan Camp, Comrie, and it was there that I met my future husband and where, after our marriage, we would eventually live for a number of very happy years.

ISABEL HAS ONLY A THREE DIGIT NUMBER - W/835

W/835 Isabel Watson née Troup
Marrbank, 61 Cupar Road, Newport on Tay,
Fife DD6 8DP

For one 18 year old Dundee woman, Isabel Troup, first acquaintance with the new ATS began in September 1938, when the chef at Broughty Ferry's Ballinard Hotel where she worked, showed her an ad in the Courier seeking recruits.



Isabel as a brand-new Provost Lance Corporal

Isabel promptly went off to join to discover that despite the Government rhetoric, the news – and more important the appropriate documentation – had not yet reached those on the ground; a tradition still proudly observed today, many would say!

Eventually she was enlisted in November 1938 with an Army number of only 3 "real" digits (000835). Training, including a camp at Barry Buddon, followed until the ATS was mobilised and the day after war began Isabel reported to Dudhope Castle, Dundee, as a clerk attached to 5th Bn the LVPV Bde.

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When the Battalion went north in 1940, the ATS didn't accompany them and Isabel of 14 (Dundee) Coy ATS was attached to the RASC and posted to a Supply Depot at Crossford near Dunfermline. While there she met Robert Watson a Royal Marine from HMS Rodney, in the romantic surroundings of Pittencrieff Glen; they married in 1943 not long before Isabel qualified for service with the RMP. She served in UK and mostly in Scotland being demobbed in Glasgow.

After bringing up her daughters, Sandra and Lesley, she saw another newspaper advert seeking recruiters for the new WRAC and offered her services. During the 23 years of service which followed, Isabel is reckoned to have recruited a full battalion's worth of women. She returned to civilian life in early 1975.



Isabel as she is now

As a point of interest, Isabel's daughter, Lesley, followed her example by serving a full career in the Army. She, like her mother, was awarded the LS&GC Medal: a rather rare double distinction for the distaff side.

1st COY NORTHUMBERLAND ATS

Mollie Henderson
103 Cheviot View, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne
NE20 9BH
Tel: 01661 822155

I have just received *Lioness* 2/2008. I have been a Life Member of the Association for a good few years and have always looked for names or photographs of old acquaintances without much success.

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed

photograph of 1st Coy Northumberland ATS taken in Territorial days – I am the Corporal seated front left. I was called up for full time service on 30 August 1939 and, when I was eventually posted to a mixed AA Unit, moved around the coast to quite a number of locations.



Strensall Camp – July 1939

I wonder if I am now the only one still alive who was on the photograph? I am 92 and presently regaining strength after treatment for a cancerous lymphoma in my throat – my second win over the dreaded disease, my first being 22 years ago. Although I lost all my hair and 1 ½ stone in weight, I have survived. "Its being so cheerful that keeps me going."

I am glad I am not in the Service now – I don't think I would have liked the strenuous life present day recruits have.

WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR MUM?

W/242258 Nancy Johns née Lord
29 Surbiton Road, Ipswich IP1 4AX

When Suffolk member Nancy Lord is asked this question, she can reply in all honesty, "Helping to shoot down enemy aircraft." She was on duty with 499 Medium AA Bty when the very first Messerschmitt (ME 410) was destroyed by Ack Ack fire. Nancy has copies of messages sent to the Battery, including one from General Sir Frederick Pile GOC-in-C Anti-Aircraft Command directing that "congratulations" be passed to 499 Bty. "Well Done".

One from the Battery Commander reads "I wish to place on record how proud I am of the most excellent results achieved as a result of the combined effort on the part of all RA and ATS personnel concerned". A good "dead bird".

If there are any members of 499 Bty who remember Nancy Lord, she would love to hear from you.

MY EXPERIENCES AS AN ATS TYPIST

W/37050 Mrs Edith Williamson née Genese
4 Clarke Road, Borrass Park, Wrexham LL12 7TY
Tel: 01978 353802

I volunteered for the ATS hoping to learn to drive or to go into the PE Corps as I was a good athlete. However, I

was called up and told to report to Victoria Station on 8 May 1940 together with many others. We were taken to the Ocean Hotel, Saltdean near Brighton and were delighted to be doing our training from there!

We did a couple of route marches into Brighton but they did not have any uniforms ready for us. On the third day I was sent to the office and, as I had been a shorthand typist in a big London office, and as they were desperately short of such people in Preston Barracks, Brighton, I was rigged out with my uniform and all the kit and sent there. I was billeted at a small hotel and was chauffeur driven to and from work. Things were looking up!

The unit was making preparations for the expected German invasion, as it was the Coastal Defence Corps. I was kept very busy and actually typed the orders to blow up both the Brighton piers! By then we realised the plight in France and, of course, the Dunkirk evacuation happened on 27 May. The officers were then involved in helping around the Kent coast and we were moved all around Kent and Sussex. After about four months two more ATS girls, Terry Stripe and Nora Crabbe, joined me.

Eventually, the unit moved elsewhere and I was sent to DDMS Medical Corps at Ashford in London. Plenty of bombs! Terry and Nora were posted elsewhere. I met my future husband there and then went to Montgomery's HQ in Reigate. I stayed there for a short time and was then sent to Maidstone in Kent to work for the officer who was interviewing and selecting men (some very famous) for suitability to go to OCTU.

Still moving from place to place around Sussex and Kent, I got married during this time but stayed on for two years until I was expecting a baby and I ended up in North Wales.

I would love to hear from anybody I met during my varied career, especially Terry Stripe and Nora Crabbe.

MY LAST AND MOMENTOUS YEAR AS BOURNEMOUTH SECRETARY

W/276481 Mrs Daphne Brookes née Bower
37 Harewood Gardens, Bournemouth BH7 7RH

What a great party we all enjoyed to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Formation of the ATS in London. Everything, the food, entertainment and the comradeship were all terrific and I know that all the 200 present had a great time. However, more was to come. My excitement knew no bounds when I learned that I was one of the 20 selected to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on 8 July. I had never in my wildest dreams believed that such a privilege would be mine as I neared my 83rd birthday. That excitement was to be surpassed when, en route to the Palace in the mini bus, Lt Col Sue Westlake announced that Her Majesty had graciously agreed that four of the group were to be presented. All the names had been put into a hat and mine had come out as one of the four! I all but wept. We were told where to stand and the Lord Chamberlain took our names and, when Her Majesty reached us, it was he who introduced us in turn. With my stick in my left hand and being a trifle "wobbly", I was terrified that I might

land up in a heap as I shook hands and tried my best to curtsy but all went well.

Lt Col Westlake then spoke to Her Majesty and explained which branches we were from. I vaguely remember Her Majesty suggesting that our membership would be going down and I had no recollection whatsoever of replying! It was only later that I was told that I said, "Oh, no, Ma'am. We have over 70 members in Bournemouth". This was perfectly true and I am delighted to say that since then we have gained four more.

We rejoined the group near the refreshment marquee and enjoyed tea and a choice of dainty cakes. After that we had a walk in the vast grounds. I was struggling a bit towards the end and St John Ambulance very kindly provided a wheelchair and a "pusher" to take me through to the front of the Palace – poor soul had to push me over some very thick loose gravel! No cameras are allowed but you can buy a DVD of the occasion. Needless to say, I did but, after much scrutiny, I have only managed to get a short glimpse of the back of my hat!

In September, I was fortunate enough to attend what was probably the last of the Royal Signals Y Service Intercept Operators reunions. We met in Leicester and visited Beau Manor again where some of the group had been stationed either as SWOPS or Teleprinter Operators. Then we went by coach to the National Memorial Arboretum. It was a beautiful day and I was glad that I had pre-booked an electric buggy which enabled me to get around most of the huge site. The Y section plot has developed a lot since a group of us planted the first trees at the dedication service a few years ago. It was also good to see the WRAC Association plot. My buggy managed to take me to the top of the hill to the new Armed Services Memorial which had been unveiled by the Queen. You get an excellent view of the whole site from there.

In November, I was in a wheelchair again when one of my grandsons took me "on parade" at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. It has been several years since I was able to march and I have attended the service in Westminster Abbey instead. Despite all the chaos and delays in waiting about on Horse Guards, I was very proud to be back on parade as was my grandson. This brought my momentous year to a conclusion and I thank everyone who helped make it so memorable for me.

REMINISCENCES OF W/288433 EDNA TINGLE NÉE GILBERT

Mrs Gillian Girvan

1 Trem-y-Don, Benllech, Tynyngongl, Anglesey LL74 8TF

Editor: Mrs Girvan is the daughter of Edna Tingle and she wrote to say that, sadly, her mother had died in July. However, she kindly sent in a photograph and a copy of an article which her mother had written for a children's book called, "We were there in the 40s" by Rosemary Rees. An edited extract follows:

I started my service life in Pontefract in December 1942 where I did my initial "square bashing", was issued with my khaki uniform and was given a number and my pay

book – pay was then ten shillings a week and we had to salute the Paymaster for that!

Initially, I was very homesick especially as I had to spend Christmas in the barracks. It was my first Christmas away from home but I had Army life and made very good friends. After my three weeks initial training, I was posted to the Royal Signals to train as a special wireless operator and went to the Isle of Man. It was real bliss after barracks as we were billeted in hotels which had been requisitioned and we felt very fortunate. Our studies were interesting and included learning Morse code. Off duty time was busy and we went walking, cycling and to many dances with soldiers, sailors and airmen.



95 Squad Douglas 1944

L-R Back Row: Elizabeth Gibson, Margaret Gill, Marjorie Darbyshire, Jean Mackenzie, Winnie Johnson, Florence Hindess, Diana Clinton

L-R Front Row: Eileen Luckett, Pam Coole, Sgt Burgess, Edna Gilbert, Pat Marsh

After three months, we qualified and earned an increase in pay to 30 shillings a week. I was posted to Kent at the height of the doodlebug raids. Eight of our girls were killed as one exploded on their billet. We worked alongside civilian operators and Intelligence Corps operatives in an underground bunker somewhere in Kent. We could not talk about our work but we recorded messages which were passed on for decoding at the end of each shift. After Kent, I went to Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire. The main hall was owned by the Curzon family but was shuttered and closed to the public gaze – at that time, Lord Curzon was Viceroy of India. We were billeted in Nissen Huts in the grounds. I had leave to get married at the end of March 1945 and returned to Kent. I was on duty when the last messages were coming through from the enemy. One was decoded as "The Tommy's are coming". I was lucky enough to be able to travel up to London to join in the VE Day celebrations and especially fortunate to see the Royal Family, including Princess Elizabeth, on the balcony of Buckingham Palace.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER?

The WRAC Association now has badges to denote how long you have been a member of the Association. The badges are based on a plain version of the Association badge and the silver one is for 25 years membership and the gold coloured one is for 40 years membership.



You can buy the badges from WRAC Association HQ at Worthy Down. The silver coloured ones are £3 and the gold coloured ones are £4. Cheques should be made payable to "WRAC Association".



WRAC ASSOCIATION FLEECEES FOR SALE

The WRAC Association now has a stock of dark green Fruit of the Loom fleeces embroidered with the Association badge on the left side. They are available in a range of sizes: XS,S,M,L,XL. As a rough guide, the Small is a size 16 and the Medium is a size 18 etc. They are generous in size and a good length with two zipped pockets.

Each fleece costs £25 which includes postage and packaging.

Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, WINCHESTER SO21 2RG.



News from Overseas Members

NEWS FROM NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

W77849 Bunty Jones née Beattie
Caerlee House, 5/1 King Street, Warrawong,
New South Wales 2502



L-R: L Leen (Military Nurse), Bunty Jones, L Richardson (ATS RA), V Molloy (WAAF)

I have been very busy these past few months attending various birthdays and ex-Service meetings. I thought the *Lioness* 2/2008 was fabulous – the poems, letters and photographs were just out of this world. *Editor: Many thanks but as I keep saying, I can only print what I receive!*

On 11 November, I along with the other British girls, attended the 90th Anniversary of Peace in 1918. Our Branch of Retired Services League organised the Parade, lunch and all entertainment. I have enclosed a photograph of my friends taken at the ANZAC Day Service. I have also enclosed a wee bit about my wartime service. After basic training at Fort George and specialist training at Arborfield, I was posted to Burrow Head in Scotland for firing camp. This was an eye opener with first parade in full gear including respirators and latrine trucks driving by to empty the Hessian surrounded buckets! We were soon off to our permanent site at Cribbs Causeway overlooking the Bristol Channel. Green as sticks, we were ready to defend Bristol, Bath and the surrounding area against the Luftwaffe – we certainly matured quickly. I particularly remember the night that Manchester and Birmingham were bombed. On their way home, the Luftwaffe dumped what was left on the City of Bath. The sky was alive with planes, theirs and ours, whilst we sat there afraid to fire in case we hit our own boys. It was a terrible night and unfortunately one of many similar ones.

But we made our own entertainment and sports. One Saturday we held a sports day with football, hockey and basketball being played with cider for refreshment. At the end of a very pleasant day it was everyone into the showers to freshen up. Then ...the alarms bells went off. Trust Jerry – he was on his way. It was out of the showers, grabbed what clothes you could and straight to the gun park. Most of us had on our great coats, tin hats, respirators – and – not much else!

I have many more memories and will always value my time spent with 451,670 and 564 Btys.

PS: I never use my real name of Emily – I have been Bunty since 3 months old!

VIRGINIA VISITS VANCOUVER

Virginia Hopson
9 Newton Walk, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 ODX

Virginia writes:

I would like to thank Maj Jane Freebairn for putting me in contact with Joan James. It all began when I received an invitation to visit Vancouver in October 2008 and I contacted Jane to find out if there were any ATS/WRAC ladies living in Vancouver whom I could meet. I wrote to Joan James and was delighted to receive her letter advising me when she was free to meet up. On the day that we met, for the first time, I did a scuba dive in the morning and caught a taxi to her beautiful apartment.



Virginia after her first scuba dive

The view from the 22nd floor was spectacular – looking out of one window are the mountains and the other window is the bay. Joan kindly took me for a cosy meal and we had an absolutely enthralling time together. Thank you, Joan, for your wonderful, generous hospitality and I look forward to entertaining you when you come back to London.

Joan writes:

Now that Virginia has visited me in Vancouver, I hope that anyone else who is headed this way will either e-mail or telephone or even "snail mail" me! If my guest room is unoccupied, you can use it as your pied à terre. I only wish Virginia could have stayed longer. We had to cram a lot into a small amount of time.

I usually spend a night or two at the Victory Services Club while visiting relatives and friends in the UK so may be able to get in touch with some of you when there.

I probably won't be able to make the Grand Reunion in 2009. Timing not good for me but I wish you all a happy time.



Joan and Virginia – and a lovely pudding!

MONTGOMERY CLUB, BRUSSELS

W/185631 Phil Burr née Ketteridge
1 Coronation Avenue, Pukekohe 2120, New Zealand



The Montgomery Club, Brussels – May 1945

I have very few photographs of when I was in the ATS between August 1942 and June 1946, but this one was taken at the Montgomery Club in May 1945. We had both been stationed with 496 Mxd Hvy AA Bty Western Avenue, Cardiff in 1942. I am on the left of the photograph but, unfortunately, I cannot remember the name of the girl with me.

I would love to hear from her or anyone who was in 496 Bty, Western Avenue or Mardy Farm, Cardiff in 1942. I was on the Predictors and also spent time with 481 Mxd Hvy AA Bty Overysche, Belgium in 1944 and 2nd Echelon, Brussels in 1944. I also served in Herford in BAOR in 1945-1946.

WORLD WAR II ATS PLATOON

Frances Nunnally

7139 Cherokee Road, Richmond, Virginia, 23225, USA

Browsing through some old photographs the other night I came across a picture of my World War II ATS Platoon.

As I scanned the faces I remembered most of them, but almost all are lost to me now! After the end of the War and demobilisation we scattered. We were eager to trade our khaki uniforms for pretty dresses and shoes, eager to return to civilian life and whatever chances or opportunities it held for us.



Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

We had been a pretty "close" platoon being stationed in one place, Bury St Edmunds, for most of the war. Perhaps I should add that we were "unique", as most of us were refugee girls from Austria and Germany having escaped the Nazis in the nick of time. Our families had remained behind and in most cases we never saw them again.

We were attached to a huge training centre for troops and manned the mess halls and cookhouses, feeding many hundreds of soldiers every day. It was hard work but we were young and strong. In winter, we slept in unheated barrack rooms as snow and ice covered the parade ground outside. We formed firm friendships that we thought would last for life. Yet most of us lost contact as time passed. We married, worked jobs, and raised families. Sometimes we wondered about Mary, Betty or Joyce our wartime friends – where were they now?

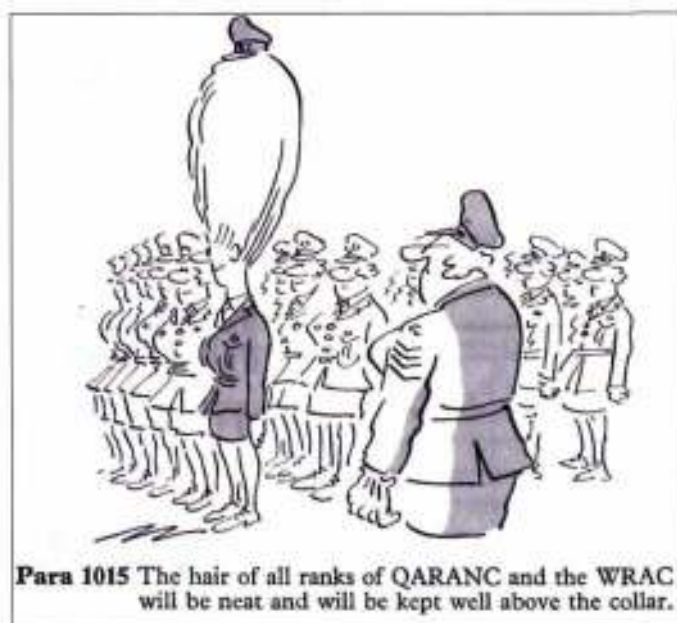
Well, one day some 50 years later, my phone rang at my home in Richmond, Virginia – the call was from Helga, a girl I had served with in the ATS. Somewhere she had come across my name and address and decided to call to find out if it was really me. Helga and I had not been close in the ATS as she was a bit younger and moved in different circles. But now, 50 years later, we couldn't stop talking. We chatted for close to an hour and remained in touch by mail. We became good long-distance friends for her home was in Oregon some 1,000 miles away.

Helga was a treasure-trove of information concerning our old ATS comrades. She knew who lived where and, sadly, spoke of the ones who had died. She herself passed on three years ago. I miss hearing from her but I am now in touch with two other ATS friends; one in London and one in Australia. We tell each other about our present life, our families, our children and grandchildren. And we often speak of the life that ties us together forever – our years together in the ATS.

Reminiscences of the WRAC

POSTCARD AND CARTOON

Jane Freebairn, Editor
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How many of you have seen this cartoon before? I'm sure you will remember the Army Regulation well but didn't quite think of this way of interpreting it!

Again I am grateful to Avril Williams, Secretary Cambridge Branch for sending me some items from her collection of WRAC memorabilia. The postcard with Guildford Cathedral in the background may be familiar to many of you.

25TH ANNIVERSARY - FEBRUARY 1974

Jane Freebairn, Editor



First Day Cover - 1 February 1974

I am also very grateful to W/38720 Miss C I Lawrence, 21 Orchard Gardens, Colchester CO4 0XB who kindly sent this First Day Cover with other memorabilia. It is particularly special as it has been signed by Dame Mary Tyrwhitt, who was the first DWRAC on the formation of the Corps in February 1949, and Brigadier Eileen Nolan who was DWRAC when the Corps celebrated its 25th Birthday.

I wrote to Miss Lawrence to thank her for her memorabilia. In her reply, she told me that she was, unfortunately, unable to come to the Grand Reunion. "As I am approaching 100 years of age (18 May 09), I do not go out much on my own". Our records here show that Miss Lawrence served between 1940 and 1958 and was a WO2 when she left. I am sure that she would be grateful to receive a birthday card from anyone who remembers her!

I SERVED IN THE EARLY 60s

W/413300 Dickinson P (now Harpin)
509 Rotherham Road, Smithies, Barnsley,
Yorkshire S71 1XB

I am writing in reply to your request for more WRAC contributions. I enlisted in Hull on 30 November 1961 and did my basic training in Lingfield. This was the first time I had been away from home on my own except for short holidays with friends. I soon settled into the routine and enjoyed the company of the other girls learning the ropes and getting used to the uniform, discipline and being part of a team. I still make the bed with folded corners and feel above the door for dust! I had joined thinking I could be a driver but the powers to be thought I would make a clerk as I wasn't very big.

After going on leave I started my training in Yeovil at the Driver & Clerks Training Wing passing my B3 trade test. My first posting was to FVRDE in Chertsey – I worked in the Orderly Room (I think this was the most interesting job during my working life). The Chief Clerk and Orderly Room Sgt took me under their wing, giving me the experience of dealing with all aspects of the work ready for my B2. I did this as a correspondence course and during this time I also gained my Cpl's stripes.

My next posting was to Singapore. Flying out on my own was a little daunting but I soon settled down to life in HQ FARELF. What a wonderful experience; visiting this amazing country and being paid at the same time.

SNOW IN AUGUST 1956!

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

The sudden unusual cold weather which hit many people in October 2008 caught many people by surprise. Locally, in Plymouth, we didn't fare too badly but a few miles away near Exeter there was a heavy fall of ice-like snow, in fact several feet of the stuff, which ground the village to a halt. This reminded me of 1956 when I was stationed in Woolwich and I am wondering if anyone else recalls this freak of weather happening?

I had borrowed a caravan, which was sited in the country near Guildford, from a friend for the August Bank Holiday. I went with a friend from Camp, I think it was Val Maxworthy, but I am not sure! All was well, we had a lovely weekend and on the last day we got busy packing and cleaning ready to catch the bus to Guildford and then the train for Woolwich. As we worked, the weather took a turn for the worse and became very wet and windy. By the time we were on the bus it started to snow and sleet. It got worse and the temperature dropped just before a vicious hail storm hit us. All traffic ground to a halt as the ice got deeper and deeper. We were finally rescued by a snow plough, the bus eventually made it to the station and we were soon well on our way back to Woolwich. But, we were very late and very worried because we knew we would miss our deadline back to camp. The intense storm had generated electricity in the atmosphere, so that during the night, while we were travelling, we saw that this had caused the moon to appear to have a blue shine, which was rather awesome to see. A phenomenon rarely seen, though I recall a similar moon in the late 40's, following an afternoon of continuous thunder storms in Looe Bay one summer.

Naturally, the officer IC was ready for us in the guardroom, full wrath over our absence with the charge sheet for us for being ever so slightly AWOL. I tried to explain but was warned that I was "skating on very thin ice" with a tale like that in August! I finally persuaded the WO to please wait until morning before doing anything too drastic because I was sure it would be in the news. She agreed and to our relief the whole storm was well documented in the morning newspapers.

So we were spared cookhouse duties that time! God Bless the newspapers!

I WAS ON THE BOMBED M62 COACH

Jenny McMahon
26 Albert Drive, Sheerwater, Woking, Surrey GU21 5QZ

The sister of a close friend sent me a copy of the *Lioness* 1/2007 which had been passed on to her from another friend. So it was several months later when I actually received it and was able to read through it. It included an article and photographs of the WRAC PTI Reunion held in September 2006 which I attended.

I was very touched by other items in this issue: articles in remembrance of the two servicewomen killed in the 1974 Guildford pub bombing – Carol Slater and Ann Hamilton. (The 'Horse and Groom' a Public House my mother sometimes visited for Saturday lunch). Also the obituary of SSgt Sharron Elliott killed in Basra when the patrol boat was booby-trapped in 2006.

It reminded me, not that anyone forgets, of an incident I was involved in. I was on the coach which was bombed on the M62 motorway in 1974. I have always considered myself one of the 'lucky ones' who survived the atrocity and fortunate enough to tell the tale. I spent two months in hospital with blast injuries. I never had any physiotherapy or rehab and there was no counselling in those days. You just got on with it, what I call DIY – 'do it yourself' – if you wanted to get better.

I suffered with PTSD but didn't know it at the time, but I got through it. I was well aware of the symptoms of anger, grief and disbelief that anyone could consider such an atrocity, let alone carry it out. Then I had thoughts of revenge myself. I lost my confidence, didn't trust anyone, except my family and friends, and I definitely didn't want to get on another bus or coach. It doesn't always last forever, but it does affect your life. I eventually recovered but still have the mental, physical and emotional scars. I managed to stay in the Army, completed 22 years and qualified as a Remedial Gymnast and Physiotherapist.

For the last 12 years I have been working for the MOD in the Physiotherapy Department at Headley Court which has had much media interest recently with our troops being rehabilitated there: many have been very seriously injured and many are amputees. So many would not have survived but for the medical teams in the field hospitals in Iraq and Afghanistan who are saving lives and limbs with their expertise, highly skilled techniques, dedication and care. They too deserve recognition. For me it is a most humble experience to be involved in their care, rehabilitation and recovery process. Most of them show exceptional courage and determination to regain their independence and return to a normal life as possible.

Editor: The incident was reported in the newspaper as follows:

1974: Soldiers and children killed in coach bombing

Eleven people – including 8 off-duty soldiers and 2 young children – have been killed, and 12 seriously injured, when the coach they were travelling in was blown up by a bomb. The private coach was carrying more than 50 people and making its

way from Manchester, along the M62, towards an Army base in Catterick, North Yorkshire when an explosive device in the rear of the vehicle detonated.



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The explosion happened just after midnight on the eastbound carriageway between Chain Bar near Bradford and Drightlington south of Leeds. It could be heard over an area of several miles and bodies were scattered 250 yards along the road. The coach was carrying soldiers and their families who had been on a weekend break; some of the servicemen were travelling to RAF Leeming, near Darlington. A family of 4 – Lance Corporal Clifford Houghton, his wife Linda, who were both 23 and their 2 sons – Lee (5) and Robert (3) were among the dead.

NIJMEGEN MARCH 1973

Mrs Beryl Sidebotham née Dyson
14, Ferndale Road, Peak Dale, Buxton, Derbyshire
SK17 8AY



Nijmegen marchers 1973

I was a corporal stationed at 29 Company Rheindahlen. This photograph was taken on the third day so plenty of blisters but we still had a great time. Unfortunately I cannot remember any of the ladies in the photograph.

I left Rheindahlen and went to join No 1 Training Company Guildford as a Sgt. My OC at Guildford was Captain Di Davis.

If anyone wishes to get in touch, please feel free to write or e-mail me on Sidebotham@hotmail.co.uk

Editor: believe it or not, the exact same photograph was printed in the Lioness in October 1973. The following is an extract from the article which accompanied it.

Throughout our training we had been warned of the disasters that could befall a team when marching in hot weather. Last year during the Nijmegen March we had suffered a heat wave and marching in tracksuits had been very hot and uncomfortable. This year it was decided that we would march in PT kit which at least would be cool; our only problem was that the expected heat-wave didn't arrive and we began to wonder whether, instead of suffering from heat exhaustion, we'd succumb to frost-bite and pneumonia!

The Nijmegen march is the climax of the marching year. It is a 4-day march covering, for us, a distance of 40 kms (25 miles) each day. The marches have taken place annually since 1909 apart from during the two World Wars. Nowadays there are often more than 10,000 marchers – both service and civilian – taking part from all over the world. For example, marchers come from America, Canada, Brazil, Israel and Finland as well as from Western Europe. The 4 days are like a miniature United Nations and there is a tremendous feeling of camaraderie amongst the Nations who parade, both before and after the marches, with flags flying and bands playing.

This year the WRAC had only one team which consisted mainly of 29 Coy WRAC, NORTHAG Signal Tp and 68 Sqn RCT personnel. They were led by 2Lt Margaret Davies and comprised Lt Val Batchelor, WO2 Lesley Scott, Sgts Rita Clarke and Anne Curry (from Berlin) Cpl Beryl Dyson, LCpls Hilary Fraser, Tina Hall, Anne Wilson and Ptes Liz Donkin, Diane Faulkner, Iris Ferguson, Mary Kirwan and "Carrots" Millar, ably supported (in more than one sense) by our Cycle Orderly, Pte Pauline Dudley.

In past years the WRAF have done all the administration for the British Women's Services at Nijmegen; this year, however, we were able to help out by bringing with us Sgt Corrinne Harrison as medical cover and Pte Chris Wyatt from 8 CP & CCD RE to lend a hand to the Admin Staff.

One thing that we have all learned is that physical fitness is a "Must" for marching. You can complete a march with the help of stamina and the right frame of mind, but to complete it comfortably requires a great deal of training and fitness. Our main problems this year were muscular trouble due partly to the cold, aching knee joints, the inevitable blisters and a distinct lack of voice due to over-enthusiasm when singing our marching songs!

Despite our ailments we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The atmosphere throughout the week, and more especially on the last day, is something that we will never forget. It is not every member of the WRAC who has marched through the streets of a large town to the accompaniment of cheering and shouting, not to mention wolf-whistles, from the mass of spectators lining the

route, who thrust bouquets of beautiful fresh flowers into the arms of marchers. It not only gives one a sense of pride in oneself and the team, but also in the Corps as a whole. For each marcher in our team, probably a greater satisfaction than actually finishing the march itself, was the knowledge that all had done their part, having worked together as a team.

WRAC RIDER-GROOMS AT MELTON MOWBRAY 1966-68

Lesley Kingham

Ashdene, Heskett Newmarket, Cumbria CA7 8JG

Mrs Wendy McGrath's letter in *Lioness* 2/2008 brought back many happy memories for me. It was indeed a remarkable coincidence that 20 years after serving together at the RAVC Depot and Training Centre at Melton Mowbray we should have met again in the Army Careers Office at St Albans where, as ACO Hertfordshire, I had the pleasure of enlisting her son. I am so glad that he has enjoyed such a long and rewarding career with the Royal Anglian Regiment and wish him well on his forthcoming return to civilian life.

My one regret from the two years which I spent as OC WRAC at Melton Mowbray is that I never succeeded in becoming even halfway as capable a horsewoman as the then Pte Crawley and her fellow rider-grooms. I remember in particular a Musical Ride choreographed and led by Captain Andrew Turnbull RAVC, the finale of which required the RAVC and WRAC riders to unbuckle and remove their saddles at the canter, prior to jumping a fence bareback with the saddle held aloft over the right arm and all achieved with a smile. Despite their everyday work being so physically demanding with its long hours in all weathers, coupled with the disadvantage in those days of no postings and precious little chance of a promotion, there was a wonderful camaraderie and sense of job satisfaction among the rider-grooms and kennel maids which made it a pleasure and a privilege to work with them.

I enclose a photograph taken at Melton with some faces which will be familiar to Wendy. Not having looked at it for years I realised with a shock how much of a museum



DWRAC, Brig Dame Mary Anderson (later Pihl) and Capt Lesley Kingham with WRAC rider-grooms on parade

piece it has become 40 years on, in a world in which the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery not only welcomes horse-loving servicewomen into its ranks, but is happy to appoint on merit both a female Officer Commanding and a female Adjutant!

40+ YEARS SERVICE TA AND REGULAR

Miss Sylvia Pratt, Norfolk Branch

I started my Army life in the mid-50s when I joined 303 (Kent) Bn WRAC where I learned to drive. In the early 60s the TA underwent one of the inevitable changes when the Battalion folded and we all went over to 44 (Home Countries) Signal Regiment. My TA service finished in 1963 when I changed to a Type 'R' regular engagement and became a PSI with the Signal Regiment.

In 1965 I changed my engagement to a 22 year regular one and was posted to 262 Signal Squadron in Cyprus. From Cyprus I went to Germany and served with 16 Signal Regiment and Northag Signal Troop.

1971 saw me with the TA again, this time 38 Signal Regiment. Although the HQ is based in Sheffield, I was sent to 46 Signal Squadron in Derby and six months later was moved to the detachment at Leicester. Following this I went to 242 Signal Squadron in Edinburgh and two years later to 10 Signal Regiment. I served with both 1 and 3 Squadrons of this Regiment.

On being commissioned in 1981, I headed back to Catterick for six months and then posted to 240 Signal Squadron in York. I finished my service in Colchester with 239 Squadron in 1991. While there, I was one of the first to be cap-badged directly into Royal Signals.

I had a very enjoyable career but very different to what the girls are experiencing today with their postings to Iraq and Afghanistan and the dangers they must be facing.

WRAC DEPOT - GUILDFORD

Monica Ellis née Quick, Chairman, Hastings Branch

Returning to the UK after a tour of duty in Jamaica, I was posted to the Depot as a Captain and OC of No 2 Training Company; some time later I was asked if I would take over as Adjutant - this I did and in all was at the Depot roughly between 1952 and 1954. I cannot remember many details except I seemed, between both jobs, to spend a lot of time on the Parade Square!

However, one or two events do stick in my memory. As Adjutant I met many visitors and I enclose photographs of three of those events.

A gift of a mounted Tui Bird from the Army ladies of New Zealand to those in the UK (WRAC). I marched the Tui Bird from place of assembly to the Depot Museum and around the Parade Square supported by a Platoon of WRAC personnel and the WRAC Band. The photograph shows Brigadier Coulshed DWRAC receiving the Tui from..... Here I regret I do not remember the lady's name but seem to think she was the wife of a New

Zealand VIP possibly from the New Zealand Embassy in London. I hope the Tui Bird is safe in the National Army Museum.



*Visit of the Queen Mother – Guard of Honour
The Queen Mother wore pink and it was a lovely contrast against our dark green uniforms*



Visit of HRH The Princess Royal – Guard of Honour



Presentation of Tui Bird



A Tui bird taken from the cover of a book about New Zealand birds – perhaps it does this large and widespread honeyeater of New Zealand a bit more justice!

FROM TECHNICAL STOREWOMAN TO MAYOR

W/411497 Mrs Wendy Wall née Dee
20 Bulmer Court, Normanby, Middlesbrough TS6 0NJ
Tel: 01642 457254

I have been a member of Cleveland Branch for some years now. I joined the WRAC in August 1961 and left in June 1963 and was technical storewoman stationed in COD Donnington. I did my basic training in Guildford and went on a course to Catterick. I then moved back to Guildford on the permanent staff at the time we moved to East Grinstead and I helped to get the camp ready for the first intake of recruits. Lastly I moved to do trade training in Aldershot and finished my service in Donnington.

I met fantastic people and would really love to hear from anyone who remembers me, especially June McLean, Mary Green, Bertha Hill, Pam Gregson, Denise Dawson. Many more names I cannot remember.

Whilst in COD Donnington we had the Cuban crisis and I will always remember the day that Kennedy told Khrushchev to dismantle the rockets or he would blow them out of the sea. Believe me, it was very scary indeed and we all thought that it would be the end of the world. All were on standby and I could not let my family and friends know how serious the situation was. When we all boarded the trucks to take us to the Ordnance Depot to send and pack equipment, many were in tears and, even now when I think of it, I really do feel sad. At the present moment my heart goes out to all our military who are serving over in Iraq and Afghanistan and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

I am now a member of Cleveland Branch and have also been fortunate enough to spend a year as Mayor of Redcar and Cleveland from May 2007 – May 2008.



Mr Wall; Ann Mahony, Standard Bearer; Mayor of Redcar, Wendy Wall and MP for Redcar, Vera Bird



2008 – Yorkshire Regiment. Freedom of Borough Redcar & Cleveland. Irene McLean, Wendy Wall and Gwen Friday

ETHE GERMAN CYCLING TOUR 1967

W/421152 Pte Pam Ashenden née White
3 Durham Road, Eston, Middlesbrough,
Cleveland TS6 9NG

Apart from "claiming" my son, I thought you might be interested in the following experience I had whilst serving in the WRAC at Rheindahlen in Germany. In 1967, I was



My son is the RSM on Page 19 of Lioness 2/2008! Here is a photograph of him in civvies. He is on my left and my other son, Russell in on my right.

picked to go on a cycling tour to Heidelberg some 125 miles away. There were six of us: five Ptes and one Lcpl. We could all ride a bike except the LCpl, Maureen, who had to learn to ride a week before we were due to leave, which was hilarious to watch, although not for her.

Off we went, our clothes in the panniers either side of the back wheel. This took a bit of getting used to as you had to make sure you were properly balanced, and also remembering if you peddled backwards it was also your brake which poor Maureen never quite got used to which often caused her to end up on the road with the bike on top of her. This caused great amusement for the rest of us.

We had to ride a certain amount of kilometres each day staying at Youth Hostels each night which had been arranged before we left Camp. By the time we arrived each night we were absolutely worn out – not being used to all the exercise up and down banks and the weather was red hot and flies buzzed round your head.

One day we were in a Post Office posting postcards home when a man started talking to us – it turned out that he was a Vicar and he invited us to his house for a strawberry tea which we readily accepted. His wife and children were there. Everything was going well; the tea was delicious and we were chatting about all sorts of things when, out of the blue, the Vicar's kids started swearing their heads off – in English of course. We sat there open-mouthed! When we explained about the swearing, they just sat there with a big grin on their faces knowing exactly what they were doing. After a while we left the Vicar's house and, when we got outside, we looked at each other and fell about laughing. I'm still smiling about it 40 years later!

WRAC TRAINING INSTRUCTOR

Miss M J Baldwin

11 Russett Close, Orchard Hills, Walsall WS5 3DP



Lcpl Baldwin in 1954

During the time I was in the Service, I held the rank of LCpl Training Instructor. The early part of my service was spent in Chester and Richmond Park Camp in Kingston-on-Thames. I do hope some of my former colleagues receive the *Lioness* and recognise themselves on the enclosed photographs. I would be delighted to hear from any of my former colleagues,

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Both photographs are of No 3 Training Company. During my time in the Army I represented the WRAC in athletics. I was champion of Western and Eastern Command/Home Counties District and Inter Services Athletics Meetings. I was also the proud owner of several winners' medals. In 1952 I entered Western Command Championships and beat Captain Audrey Wilkinson who won an Olympic Silver Medal coming second in the 1948 Olympics against Fanny Blankers-Cohen!



Lt Baldwin is fourth from the left in the front row

THE DEMISE OF WRAC DRIVING INSTRUCTORS

1957/58

Miss M E Barker

13 Pirrie Close, Southampton, Hampshire SO15 7QA

I thought you might like to publish the enclosed in the next issue of the *Lioness*. It was written in 1957/58 when civilian male driving instructors replaced the WRAC driving instructors at Drivers and Clerks Training Centre, Yeovil. If my memory serves me right, it was a joint effort and sung to the tune of "We will make love".

As one of those DIs it was a very sad time. However there are many happy memories to look back on of our time there. I hope this might bring back memories to some of the readers.

The Redundant DIs Lament

We're DIs it's true, but oh! What a blow
We've been made redundant – as everyone knows
Just standing around with nothing to do
There's ole Donkey Bray and Charlie Boy too

Oh yes Charlie Boy too...

We have all our Sgts; we know you'll agree
They do a good job of making the tea
But ole Higgy's off to the north so cold
She's still mad at Scotty for not doing as she's told

Oh yes not doing as she's told...

There's hair raising Collison and Eartha hell bent
They're off to TA – roaming wilds of Kent
This leaves Ann Older a Sgt so bold
Trying every known trick to stop growing old

Oh yes to stop growing old...

Whilst Pobby with her curls so fair you'll agree
Is chasing the DIs that used to be
But all us old has beens are wise to her game
We all think her orders turn out so tame

Oh yes turn out so tame...

There's ole Bertie Boy to Rosie is wed
Split up the Company – how our hearts bled
There's an 'A' and a 'B' and weather forecasts too
And civvy DIs driving trucks that we knew

Oh yes trucks that we knew....

Now we're gathered tonight to drink lots of ale
Have lots of fun, probably end up in jail
But why should we worry and why should we care
We've been here too long, now we're all going spare

Oh yes all going spare...

Our future is doomed, our posts a dream
But just hang about, they may be revealed
They'll have to give in and give us our fling
It's goodbye to Yeovil and Driver Training

Oh yes DRIVER TRAINING
Oh yes DRIVER TRAINING.

**MEMORIES OF 28 COY WRAC
HQ MEC STEAMER POINT (MAY 1965-DEC 1966)**
W/421565 Cpl Anne Henderson
20 White Lodge Gardens, Fareham, Hampshire
PO16 7UR

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I read, with great interest, the article written by Anne Scott and Catherine Corley in *Lioness* 2/2008. Oh yes, I remember Aden well and would like to share my experiences there. I had been in Aden a few weeks when my MFO box eventually turned up. Unfortunately the MFO store was broken into and all the boxes opened and anything of worth stolen. Fortunately for me I did not have anything of any worth – but I did have an umbrella which the thieves left behind. It caused great amusement, and the question was asked, “why bring an umbrella to Aden”? Well, you never know!

I worked in the Unit Pay Office at Fort Morbut which had a panoramic view of Steamer Point. I actually worked with the RAPC by default. I had been posted to Aden from the RAPC Training Centre at Worthy Down so it was assumed that I was a pay clerk. When I arrived, I told them that I was not trained as a Pay Clerk, but they had waited for quite some time for a clerk and were not going to let me go. Fortunately I was a quick learner and picked up the unit pay work quite easily going out on weekly Pay Parades with my box of pay books. I had learned to put names to faces and was always able to call the next person up to the table for their pay. They would march smartly up to the pay table and, yes, you remember the rest.

I did many Checkpoint searches over the 19 months I was there. One duty began at 4am when we were collected from our fenced compound at Steamer Point. We were going to the dreaded Crater. This township was routinely out of bounds to personnel but this morning was different. We were on a mission to take the community of Crater by surprise and hope to impound any hidden weapons, ammunition or any suspicious objects. I am sure that the Army achieved success that day, but my memory lets me down as to the actual outcome of the operation. I personally found nothing on the females who were rounded up and sent to wait in various rooms around the place. I entered a room of about 20 women and children, which was quite a daunting prospect – but to be quite truthful I was more afraid of the rats and cockroaches which scurried away as I went up a rickety staircase to the upper rooms in one house.

My office at Fort Morbut was in the same corridor as the RSM. One day, whilst having a chat to him, I challenged him to take some of the WRAC onto the ranges. He soon arranged a morning on the ranges for a selected few WRAC. SSgt Pat Halfpenny, Cpl Jean Whittaker and myself were amongst those who went along and we were featured in an article in *Soldier Magazine* in January 1967. They showed a photograph of us firing the Sterling Sub-Machine gun.

I loved the work, thoroughly enjoyed my time in Aden and did not want to go back to the UK. I applied for an extension of three months and only got one so, instead of going home in November, I left in December 1966 in time for Christmas. My parents had moved to the Isle of Bute so I not only had the long train journey to the west of Scotland but I also had the ferry crossing to Rothesay. After so long in the Middle East I found it perishing and it was not long before my gorgeous tan fell away to reveal what I had not seen for many months – white skin.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF REUNIONS AND THE
WRAC ASSOCIATION**

W/400212 Cpl, Miss E Crook (also known as Jean or Crookie)
3 Southern Close, Weston Mill, Plymouth, Devon



*Cpl Crook in Cyprus
1961-1963*

I was pleased to read a letter in *Lioness* 2/2008 from Mrs Pat Carter née Sgt Hanna titled ‘I have discovered Postal Branch Reunions’. I remember her whilst I was stationed at Richmond Park after returning from Cyprus in 1963. I am happy she has joined the WRAC Association after all these years – I also only discovered the Association by accident.

I sincerely hope we will gain more WRAC members to enable us to carry on the work of the Association for many years.

If anyone out there remembers ‘Crookie from Richmond Park’ 1959-1961, Cyprus 1961-1963, Mill Hill 1963-1965 please contact me – I would like to hear from you, especially Cpl M V L Smith in Australia.

HRH THE DUCHESS OF KENT
Editor

This photograph shows Babs Blay, with glasses, who sent me the postcards of the WRAC Centre on the front cover. The whole badminton team was presented to HRH the Duchess of Kent who was Controller Commandant WRAC and is still the President of the WRAC Association.



WRAC Dinner Club

GIRLS NIGHT OUT

Mrs I L Howe née Chamberlain W/369460
133 Corn Close, South Normanton, Alfreton,
Derbyshire DE55 2JE

My John, who I have known for two and a half years came to the Adelphi Hotel with me this time. I am afraid he will not be attending any future events regarding the ATS or WRAC. "Am I bowvered"? – he found us too noisy! I did miss him even though he was there, especially as he went to bed at 10.30pm and I at 12.40! At last he knows that we "girls" know how to enjoy ourselves. I look forward to our Grand Reunion in March ALONE. He will not see the *Lioness* if this is printed. He was never in the Forces, too young, can you believe it? He is five years younger than me so it wasn't compulsory for him. He has his family and I have mine – the WRAC.

WRAC DINNER CLUB – ADELPHI HOTEL, LIVERPOOL – 3-5 OCTOBER 2008

Editor: Many thanks to Chris Corker, Carol Traynor and Julie White for the following photographs taken at the WRAC Dinner Club Weekend.



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WRAC DINNER CLUB 2009

The next WRAC Dinner will be held on
Saturday 10 October 2009 at the Jury's Inn
Hotel, Birmingham

This event will celebrate the 12th
Anniversary of the WRAC Dinner Club and
the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of
the WRAC

An application form to join the WRAC
Dinner Club is in this copy of the *Lioness*
so, if you are not already a member, find it
now and send it to the Membership
Secretary.

WRAC Register

WRAC REGISTER

Ann Deakin

14 Ash Rise, Ashflats Lane, Stafford ST17 9HE

I wonder if you could publish the latest "additions" to the WRAC Register which I would normally have sent out in January 2009. I am sorry to say that for several reasons, I have decided that I cannot run the Register any longer.

I set the Register up in 1995 and those who joined between then and 1999 did not pay any fee. Since 1999, the one-off fee has been £2 for UK and £4 for overseas members. However, funds have really dwindled and I cannot afford to subsidise it any more. During the last few months I have spent many hours on the telephone trying to compile a list of e-mail addresses so I could send the list via the Internet but I was getting so many unobtainable or wrong numbers that it made the task virtually impossible. I also know that a large proportion of the e-mail addresses I already have are out of date as people often change them when they change providers.

I am really sorry to come to this decision but I cannot really see any practical way of continuing.

Editor: First of all, I am sure that all those of you who did receive Ann's regular updates of the list would like me to thank her very much for having the foresight, energy and generosity in setting up the Register in the first place. In 1995, there was simply no other way of finding out where other ex-WRAC colleagues may be. Nowadays, with the huge innovations in technology, there are so many websites providing such a service. Also, there is the Association itself! Sadly, not all of those who registered with Ann are members of the Association, but there is no doubt that more ex-WRAC are finding out about us and applications for membership are increasing. Since Lioness 2/2008 went out with the details of the next Grand Reunion, we have had nearly 180 new members! Also, I should mention the increase in membership of the WRAC Dinner Club (Ann was also a founder organiser of that!) Again, that event has helped tremendously in encouraging ex-WRAC to "re-une" on a regular basis. I know that Ann gave her decision much thought and she was really disappointed at having to make it but I think she should be proud and pleased of all the friends she managed to put in touch with each other over the years that she organised it.....they will certainly have appreciated her hard work and commitment. Thanks, Ann.

ARMY NO	NAME/TRADE	TRAINING	POSTINGS
371568	Pte Josephine Berringe Waitress/IC Silver Room 1951-1953	Guildford	Watchett Camp - 1951 Becket Hall Shrivenham - 1951
388373	Lcpl Jean McKay Telephonist 1954-1959	Guildford Catterick	Aldershot - 1955 Moscar Egypt - 1956 Episkopi Cyprus - 1957
394897	Pam/Simmy Sim O.O.M. 1958-1961 Admin NCO 1970-1974	Guildford MOD Stanmore	Calvary Bks Hounslow - 1958 Tanglin Bks Singapore - 1959 Richmond Park London - 1961 Army School of Languages 1971 COD Bicester
399402	Cpl Cicely Boyle Storewoman 1958-1965 Deceased November 2008	Guildford Bicester	COD Bicester - 1958 16 Ind CAD Kineton - 1961
411232	Sgt Phyllis/Phyl Cox Clerk GD 1961-1967	Guildford Yeovil	16 Ind CAD Kineton - 1961 Hobbs Bks Lingfield - 1962 27 Ind Coy Cyprus - 1964 Guildford - 1966
414732	Lcpl Carol Ederle Comcen Op 1962-1966	Lingfield Catterick	Sig Cen Boddington - 1962 Catterick - 1963 Sig Cen - York - 1964 Sig Cen Hong Kong - 1965
416853	Pte Brenda Green Hairdresser	Lingfield Guildford	HQ Coy Hobbs Bks - 1963 27 Ind Coy Dhekelia Cyprus - 1963
423220	Pte Patricia/Wallacey/Wallace Tech Clk 1964-1966	Guildford Blackdown	Guildford - 1964 24 Sig Regt Catterick - 1965 Guildford - 1965 Blackdown - 1965 COD Donnington - 1965 15 ABOD (Rear) Belgium - 1966
444804	Sgt Patricia Sanders Data Telegraphist/Cryptographer 1973-1980	Guildford Catterick	Hounslow - 1973 Catterick - 1974 HQ Scotland - 1976 Hong Kong - 1978 Hounslow - 1979
455871	Sandra Wood Chef 1975-1984	Guildford Aldershot	CMH Aldershot - 1975 WRAC Centre Guildford - 1977 HQNI Lisburn 39 Bde/RMP - 1980 FOD Dulmen BFPO 44 - 1981 WRAC College Camberley - 1983
465602	Cpl Lesley Sanders-Wilson Staff Clerk 1979-1986	Guildford Blackdown	RAEC Centre Beaconsfield - 1979 Mech Docs Team Blackdown - 1982 44 Sqn RCT Sandhurst - 1983 29 Coy WRAC Rheindahlen - 1983

COPY DEADLINE

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

20 JUNE 2009

STOP PRESS - WRAC EXHIBITION

There is an exhibition about the WRAC in Guildford Museum, Quarry Street, Guildford GU1 3SX which will be open until 19 April 2009. It concentrates on the relationship between the home of the WRAC at Queen Elizabeth Park and the town. Tel No: 01483 444865 for further details.

Where Are You Now?

WOULD LIKE TO CONTACT OTHER ATS GIRLS

Mrs Stella Hill, ex-Pte W/18829
35 McKee Road, Finglas, Dublin 11, Eire

I would love to have contact with other ATS girls – I am in contact with Nellie Dodds from Chatham and would appreciate if anyone else who recognises my name might like to contact me.

WHO ARE YOU?

Mathew Trump
1 Glenbeck Road, Whitefield, Manchester M45 7WN



Ready to parade in London

Please find enclosed a photograph which I found on a tram in Manchester a few months ago. It was accompanied by the enclosed train tickets, which were purchased in Clitheroe for cash – so I am unable to find out who bought them. The lady seemed to have travelled from Clitheroe via Manchester to Bristol Temple Meads on 17 July and returned on 24 July. There is writing on the back of the photograph which reads “me in my Territorial uniform prior to catching the train to travel to London to parade before the Queen in Hyde Park”.

If this photograph is yours, please write to the Editor, *Lioness* Magazine.

LOOKING FOR BEST PAL AND BRIDESMAIDS

Dorothy Archibald née Johnson
9 St Helen's Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NL

I was in the WRAC from 1951 to 1954 stationed at Beckett Hall, Shrivenham 1951 to 1953, then in 1954 in Bad-Oeynhausen, Germany. I was an Assistant Cook. I have tried for years to find my best pal who was with me

in both places. She is Susannah Elizabeth Dodd (Susan). I would also like to contact my bridesmaids Alma Melville and Elaine Cosgrove.

I was married on 8 May 1954 at the RC Church in Bad-Oeynhausen. Perhaps you could publish the photographs and names in the *Lioness* – it's my last resort! Thank you very much.



Wedding Day



Bridesmaids and guests

WERE YOU IN 'G' COY 1ST ANTI AIRCRAFT GROUP?

W/56351 D M (May) Stapley née Wheatley
25 Shepherds Close, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex
TN39 4SQ. Tel: 01424 845413

I went to ATS Clerical School at Strathpeffer in 1941 and the 21st NCOs School on a course at Nevilles Cross, Durham in 1943. I worked in 'G' Coy 1st AA Gp office with J/Comd Margaret Leach and I am seeking anyone who knew me at The Woodlands Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex and Southfields and Wimbledon.

I remember Pam Johnson, Grace Harvey, Dorothy Loveday, Bessie Tabbera, Helen Staff from Worthing, Vera Jones, Audrey Kettle and Doris Havers – who I have

always kept in touch with and is now 92 and I am 89. We left the Service as CSM Havers and Sgt Wheatley (also changed my name to Bates in 1945). I was demobbed in 1945.

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Sgt May Wheatley August 1941

I belong to the Bexhill Branch and we meet once a month. It is so nice when we all get together and we talk about old times. I am wondering if anyone will remember me.

DO YOU REMEMBER CPL JEAN COWLEY?

Mrs B Harbron née Crawley
3 Jubilee Close, North Hykeham, Lincs LN6 9RP

I have been trying to trace a WRAC girl for years but without success – her name was Cpl Jean Cowley and we were at Bicester together in 1958. I got married and she was promoted to Sgt and posted to Cyprus – the last I heard was that she had got married and moved to Australia. She used to live in Hove, Brighton which was her home town.

It would be nice if I could find her or even given her home address in Hove. I understand she left the Service around about 1961-1962. I myself joined in March 1953 and, as a Technical Storewoman, I served in Woolwich, Catterick, Chilwell, Gibraltar, Guildford and Bicester before I got married and left.

SEEKING ANYBODY FROM 294 CAR COMPANY OR YORK MILITARY HOSPITAL 1945/1946

Pamela D Barton MBE
A1126 New World Apartments, TST Kowloon,
Hong Kong. Tel. 852 2313 6516
e-mail: pambar@netvigat.com

I have lived in Hong Kong for 49 years and moved here with my husband CSM Skinner. I divorced him in 1963

and returned to Hong Kong with my two children.

I have kept in touch with many of our group in 294 Car Company and, for many years, I would come home to celebrate my birthday with them. Our CO was Lt Houseman and I visited her shortly before she died at the age of 93 – a wonderful woman. Although I am very active and working on a voluntary basis for the SPCA and Salvation Army for over 40 years, I retired from my fashion business in 1998. Some of my friends are not so well, have suffered recent deaths in their families and do not feel inclined to go to Blackpool. I would very much like to go so if you find anybody registering from 294 Car Company or the company at York Military Hospital 1945/46, I would be most happy to be put in touch with them.

I have been trying for many years to find my bridesmaid Megan Osborne – I think her married name was Ling – but so far I have been unsuccessful.

Grateful thanks to you all for continuing to unite veterans and serving members of our Association.

WERE YOU STATIONED IN MONCHENGLADBACH 1963-1967?

Robert Feist
E-mail: RobertFeist@talktalk.net

I was a Trooper in 1 RTR and I was stationed in Monchengladbach in Germany, BFPO 40. Are there any of the WRAC who worked in the Officers' and Sergeants' Mess during 1963-1967? My name was Bob (Lofty) Feist and it would be nice to hear if any of you ladies remember the nights in the NAAFI – lots of laughs, plenty of beer...hope to hear from anyone.

ANY GIRLS STILL AROUND?

Mrs R D Haffenden née Fleming
48 Manor Road, Harwich, Essex CO12 4DY

The Colchester Branch which I used to attend is now too far for me to travel to and has now been closed. I miss the once a month meeting with all the comrades but we are all getting older now. I wonder if some of the girls I served with are still around?

W206293	Ivy Godbold	Essex
W188603	Dorris Symonds	Kent
W188576	Bette Smeed	Surrey
W219607	Vicky Fernengo	London
W160141	Vera Baily	Folkestone
W175354	Rene Woodensow	Kent
W184474	Betty Bell	Dorset
W184502	Phyllis Searle	Dorset
W183580	Mary Beck	Yorkshire
W206333	Joy Wood	Luton
W140930	Phyllis Stanfield	York
	Cathy Reeves	Sussex
	Joan Thompson	Yorks
	Vera Mathers	London
	Janet Scott	Scotland

If you are still around, I would love to hear from you.

Reunions

WRAC POSTAL BRANCH ASSOCIATION

20th REUNION

Margaret Smith nee Rivers

51 Marlborough, Rugby CV22 6DD

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Postal group at the hotel

The Reunion was held during October 2008 at Glasgow. It was the first reunion held in Scotland and a wonderful time was had by all. We saw all the important places by travelling on the open top tour bus and we could jump on and off as we wished. Also, the tickets were usable over two days.

Our organiser, Margaret Grant MBE, arranged everything for us and we presented her with a beautiful photo frame in appreciation for all the hard work she did for the reunion. Everyone enjoyed the hotel, the staff couldn't do enough for us and the food was superb. We even had a Scottish themed dinner on the Saturday and the haggis, tatties and neeps went down well.

The entertainment ladies led by Laura Meacher made £112 for the Rachel House Children's Hospice at Kinross in Scotland. This included our £10 lottery winnings. Thanks were given to Laura for her hard work. Thanks also to Isobel Duffy for entertaining us with her various costumes and her off key singing.



Isobel Duffy, Margaret Grant and Laura Meacher

The hotel gave Margaret Grant a raffle prize of a weekend in any of their hotels and this was won by Pat Gray.

Two of our members have passed away since we all last met so a minute's silence was held at our AGM in respect of them – Mrs Josie Steunenberg and Mrs Betty Keightley.



Margaret Smith, Margaret Grant MBE and Sylvia Knowles. All three ladies have attended every one of the 20 Postal Reunions

60s 16ers REUNION 16th – 19th OCTOBER 2009

Members of 16 Signal Regiment who served in Germany during the 1960s will be holding their annual reunion on the weekend of 16th – 19th October 2009 and it will be at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. The expected cost will be £149 per person for the three nights or £119 for 2 nights. The website for the 16ers is <http://www.the-60s-16ers.com>. If you are interested in attending the reunion and/or joining the 60s16ers please contact one of the people below:

Bill White – Chairman: RWhi227@aol.com
Tony Teague – Secretary: apr.teague@ntlworld.com
Martin Boizet – Treasurer: mboizot@talktalk.net

We always have a wonderful time and it is great to catch up with old friends again as well as making new ones. We hope to see you there.

WRAC PT REUNION 2008

Capt (Retd) Kate Bettison

The sixth WRAC PT Reunion Weekend held in Aldershot in September was well attended by members travelling from afar as Greece, Spain, Cumbria, Yorkshire and Cornwall.

We began on Friday evening with a tribute to Major Dora Nightingale MBE who sadly died in 2007. Pat Rosewell

and her team had been busy all afternoon decorating the walls of the Falcon Hotel with many photos from Dora's collection. Her sister, Mrs Florrie Donavon, and niece, Glynis, were invited to meet 'Dora's Girls' and to be part of the weekend. We had a buffet supper, followed by a video taken by a fellow club of Army sports occasions, featuring many of us in our green tracksuits! It was a very special evening culminating with a presentation from Florrie. On our behalf, Lt Col Sue Westlake received a superb glass crystal rose bowl dedicated to Dora which will now adorn our table at dinner nights.



Kate Bettison presents Florrie, Dora Nightingale's sister with flowers



Lt Col Sue Westlake receives the rose bowl

On the Saturday morning we all assembled at Fox Gymnasium for the biennial netball match. This fixture has become a great attraction of the weekend, mainly because the serving girls have never yet managed to beat the 'Old & Bold'. Was this year going to be any different we all asked?

As the game got underway it was very apparent that the skills of the warriors were superior. Leading from the front was the dynamic shooting duo of 'Darby & Jones' alias Pat Darby and Beryl Puddy (née Jones). They were ably supported in the centre court by the accurate passing of Karla Rayment and Lynne Greer and the lethal

defending of Chris Jones and Kim Lofthouse. Although maybe a little less 'fleet of foot', the warriors' passing was exemplary and almost telepathic. The APTC ladies in return never gave up and their enthusiasm and fitness knew no bounds. In their defence however, it is sad to note that netball is no longer on the training curriculum, although there were some murmurings about having it reinstated. Anyway, the result of this very entertaining game was another victory for the 'Old & Bold' by 23 goals to 6. The Senior Master at Arms, Lt Col Nick Challinor APTC, presented the Janet Pegler Trophy to victorious team captain Chris Jones.



The victorious netball team

After the match we all gathered in the Memorial Garden at the ASPT to plant a rose donated by Florrie in memory of Dora. It seemed very strange not having Dora with us for the first time but she will never be forgotten and will always be remembered with fondness.

In the afternoon a golf competition was held at the Army Golf Club. The event was organised by Sue Barker and there were nine players who were drawn into teams of three. Although the result was close, the eventual winners were Kim Lofthouse, Judy Hinton and Sally Cranwell-Child.



Ladies who dine

On Saturday evening, Dinner at the Falcon Hotel was another successful occasion with 35 ladies dining. We were able to welcome Sheila Pantin (ATS) and Di Milner to their first reunion. Our guest speakers this year were two very brave ladies who, in different ways, are lucky to still be alive. Jenny McMahon spoke very movingly of her involvement in the 1974 coach bomb explosion on the M62, when she was serving as a Cpl in Catterick. *Editor: See Jenny's own account elsewhere in the journal.* She described her injuries and the long haul back to fitness, but emphasized how useful her experiences had since been at Headley Court, where she now works, in helping with the rehabilitation of injured soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Our second brave lady was Sheila Lloyd Graham who had just recovered from a very serious illness. She wanted to publicly thank all the PTIs who had been so supportive with cards and messages of goodwill throughout a very worrying period.

The weekend concluded after a very full and busy two days with the traditional APTC service at the Garrison Church of St Andrews followed by lunch in the Officers' Mess. Our next reunion will be from 17 – 19 September 2010 when we will be helping the APTC celebrate their 150th Anniversary.

WALES AND THE WEST AREA REUNION

Mrs Maggie Purkis, Area Chairman

The 2008 Wales and the West Area Reunion was held at the Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury on Saturday 13 September. Once upon a time, each Branch within Wales and the West Area took a turn to host the reunion but, for the past three years, the function has been held in Shrewsbury. The Lord Hill Hotel has an ideal function suite on the ground floor with easy access from the car park. Each year our numbers are fewer but we were delighted to welcome fifty three members including two from North West Area.

The hotel also offers us a private meeting room for the Secretaries' meeting. The first business of the day was to elect the Officers and I am delighted and very proud to report that Edith Francis, Irene Hall and I remain as Area Vice Chairman, Secretary and Chairman respectively. The Branch Secretaries agreed to send copies of their news to the *Lioness* although most reported that it was becoming more difficult to sustain monthly meetings and some had decided to meet less frequently.

Five years ago, the Secretaries of the branches in Wales and the West agreed that there should not be a full-blown Area Reunion in the same year as an Association Grand Reunion. This year, it was confirmed that the Area Reunion next year would be scaled down to include a General meeting followed by lunch for Branch Secretaries and as many members as would like to attend on Saturday 24 October 2009 at the Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury.

Our guest of honour this year was Mr Daniel Kawczynski, MP for Shrewsbury and Atcham – at 6' 7" he is the tallest MP in the history of the British Parliament. Daniel, despite obviously having his own party affiliations, spoke for about twenty minutes without any political bias and

then took questions for about quarter of an hour. He was a very popular guest and delighted the membership by winning one of the raffle prizes.



*Irene Hall, Daniel Kawczynski and Maggie Purkis
Maggie and Irene are standing up, honest!*

Because ours is such a large geographical area, many of those attending had to set off soon after lunch.

Large scale fund raising is virtually impossible so I am indebted to the branches in the area for their kind donations. I would especially like to thank Hereford Branch whose members raised a whopping £100 without which we would not be able to hold an Area Reunion.

SCOTTISH AREA REUNION AND PLAQUE DEDICATION

Lt Col Jo Young, Area Chairman

October 2008 was a busy month in the Scottish Area with two very significant days in our diary. On Saturday 18th we held our Area AGM at the Queens' Hotel in Perth. To celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the ATS, the Provost of Perth and Kinross, Mr John Hulbert and his wife Sara were invited to open the meeting. John Hulbert is a very keen supporter of veterans and they were delighted to be given the opportunity to meet some lady veterans for a change as 2008 had been rather dominated locally by the Farewell to the 51st Highland Division! They enjoyed a cup of coffee and chat with the ladies before having their photograph taken with all the ATS present.



The ATS ladies at the AGM with the Provost of Perth and Kinross, Lady Provost and Scottish Area Chairman in the centre of the back row.

Photograph courtesy of DC Thomson & Co Ltd

Mr Hulbert then opened the AGM extending a warm welcome to Perth, congratulations on reaching such a significant anniversary and expressing support and best wishes for the future. The Provost and his wife then judged the 'best decorated wooden spoon' competition and presented it to Mrs John Scott of Fife and Tayside Branch. They then departed for another engagement and we got on with the business of the day which included a talk by Maj Jane Freebairn who, funnily enough, always seems to be in Scotland on holiday at the time of our AGM! *Editor: Can't think of a better place to be at that time of year!*

On Thursday 30th October, Association Members met again at St John's Kirk of Perth to mark the dedication of a brass plaque. The service was conducted by Rev Sue Wing, the WRAC Association Honorary Chaplain and Rev Peter Thomson, the Interim Moderator of St John's. Joining the ladies were guests; Brig Mel Jameson the Lord Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross, The Provost of Perth and Kinross, Mr John Hulbert and the Lady Provost, Mrs Sara Hulbert and the Vice President of the Association Lt Col Sue Westlake. Association members in Scotland had decided that they wanted to have a permanent memorial to all the Scottish women who had served in the Army from the formation of the WAAC in 1917 to the disbandment of the WRAC in 1992. The wording on the plaque was based on that used in the WRAC Association Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

This plaque was commissioned by the Scottish Area Women's Royal Army Corps Association (incorporating the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps, Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Women's Royal Army Corps) on the 90th anniversary of the formation of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in 1917. It is dedicated to all the Scottish women who served in the WAAC/QMAAC in the First World War, the ATS in the Second World War and the WRAC from 1949 until April 1992.

Between 1917 and 1992 nearly half a million women joined these Corps. They served in every continent and in over 35 trades and employments. More than 1,200 died in Service. Whatever their role, their commitment and sense of duty have never been questioned. They were proud to serve and their country is proud of their service.

During the dedication all attending gathered around the plaque which had been placed in the shrine and when Rev Peter Thomson paused after reading out the words the silence in the Kirk was deafening. It was a lovely service which saw the guests, Association members, family and friends along with two serving ex-WRAC officers, Liz McKinney-Bennet and Andrea Magowan, join together in remembering those ladies who had served in the past and those still serving with special mention to their families. The readings were read by Maj Isobel Gordon, Chairman of Fife and Tayside Branch and Lt Col Sue Westlake. Lt Col the Lady Martha Bruce, a Life Vice President of the Association and Mrs Jessie Low, a member of the Fife and Tayside Branch read a prayer and poem respectively. At the conclusion of the

service the Regimental marches of the ATS and WRAC were played which rounded off a wonderful occasion.



Gathered around the plaque. Rev Sue Wing, Annie Smart, Rev Peter Thomson, Lord Lieutenant, Lord Provost, the Lady Martha Bruce, Jo Young, Liz McKinney Bennett, Sue Westlake and the Lady Provost
Photograph courtesy of the Perthshire Advertiser

Cameras from Scottish TV news were present and a short video including interviews with Lady Martha Bruce and Mrs Annie Smart of Fife and Tayside Branch appeared on the local news that evening. Local newspapers also carried articles and photographs about the service. Any Association members, families or friends who would like to see the plaque are more than welcome. The Kirk is open daily during the summer months and by arrangement during the winter months.



Jessie Low and Lady Martha reading their poem and prayer. Photograph courtesy of the Perthshire Advertiser

After the service, Association members and their guests gathered at an adjacent hotel for a buffet lunch which was enjoyed by all. Both the Lord Lieutenant and Provost gave warm, generous and amusing short speeches which were very well received and thanks were given to the hotel and the Association members who had organised the day. So as you will see October 2008 really was a wonderful month for the Association in Scotland and the Dedication Service something really special. As we all said at the time, we are only going to do this once, so let's make it really worthwhile – and it was!

Remembrance

REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE –

THE CENOTAPH, LONDON
Chris Corker

I wonder how many of you have sat and watched the Cenotaph Parade on TV and thought to yourself, "I would like to be there". Well, this year I did just that and I went. I can honestly say it was one of the most awesome and amazing things I have ever taken part in. There were a number of "first timers" and we all felt the same. Maj Maskens-McIntyre had us all organised and Lt Col Westlake carried the wreath. There were quite a few green fleeces worn and this made us stand out plus of course the wonderful ATS ladies in their uniforms.

This year is the 60th Anniversary of the formation of the WRAC and wouldn't it be amazing if we could have a really large squad marching: not only to pay our respects to the fallen, but also to display the pride we feel in belonging to such a special and exclusive club.

So, come on ladies put this date in your diaries and get your branch Secretary to look out for the form from Worthy Down to book your ticket. See you there.



Sunday 8 November 2009 – Horse Guards Parade

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Irene MacLean

i_maclean@sky.com

Once again, the Tanglin Signallers decided it was time to go AWOL and the Remembrance weekend in London was top of the list. We managed to get tickets for the Saturday matinee performance at the Royal Albert Hall and also for the Parade on Sunday morning. All was fine until one of the girls felt ill due to the extreme height of our seats. The staff however were extremely helpful and fixed up a seat for Sue in one of the "boxes" so she kept giving us the Royal wave all through the performance! We all cried buckets as the programme was so very emotional and once again we all fell in love with the dear old Chelsea Pensioners.



Irene, Carol and Rose at the Albert Hall

Sunday morning saw us all up at the crack of dawn to get to Horse Guards in good time and we were not disappointed. The sparkling medals were gleaming all over the place and the chaps were more than ready to tell us their war stories and thanks to the Salvation Army we were all able to have a welcome hot cuppa. Finally at the far end of Whitehall the order came to march off. When we passed the massed bands by the Cenotaph, we were all in unison with the help of Lt Col Westlake's quiet voice "left right left right" and Maj Maskens-McIntyre leading out in front – something special happened. We were all those young girls again in harmony enjoying every moment of the parade on a crisp cold November morning – leaves falling from the trees all around us.



Many things will stay in our memories from that day – the lovely smart Ghurkas, the sense of comradeship and pride – all the smart ex-Servicemen and women who cheered, clapped and shouted encouragement on Horse Guards Parade before the march. Then, on our return, when we were **PDF Compressor Free Version** of them all, it was a wonderful and overwhelming end to the Parade. Of course, we know that our ATS sisters have done this wonderful parade many many times, but sadly their numbers are dwindling due to health and age. Its up to us ex-WRAC now to swell the ranks and pay our respects to those men and women who gave their all for our freedom.

YES, WE DO REMEMBER THEM



FLEECES AT THE CENOTAPH

Jackie Naysmith, Secretary Bristol Branch

Editor: Joel runs the company which produces the WRAC Association fleeces. He was "discovered" by Jackie and, again, I thank her very much for all the hard work she put in to getting our fleece into production.

Joel and his Mum watched the Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade on television and he told me that they were thrilled to see so many of the ladies wearing their fleeces. He said that the badge really stood out and as his mum said, "They were so colourful". He is going to display copies of these photographs in his shop.



BROUGHTON HOUSE

Established in 1916 to care for the wounded coming back from the trenches, Broughton House is situated in a quiet residential area of Kersal, Salford. The



Home is surrounded by magnificent, extensive gardens and offers a secure and comfortable environment for ex-Service personnel in need of care. The Home is beautifully decorated; accommodation is of the highest standard and consists mainly of single rooms with spacious en-suite facilities.

Broughton House has strong military links and traditions that make it a special place to live where comradeship, among the residents, staff volunteers and others who support them is uppermost; thousands of veterans have been helped over the life of the Home. In 2006 the Trust Deed was changed to enable the Home to open its doors to women.

Broughton House is dual registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection with 50 beds available. The objectives of the Trust Deed are to provide nursing care and a comfortable home for ex-servicemen and women who, through disability, age or chronic illness can no longer fend for themselves. The nursing and care staff is headed by a qualified Matron; medical cover is provided by local doctors who make regular visits; there is a physiotherapy unit and a dentist, optician and chiropodist are regularly in attendance.

Every applicant is assessed on an individual basis to decide whether their clinical and care needs can be fully met. Top up fees are not charged so the Home provides excellent value for money.

Further details can be obtained from:
Chief Executive, Broughton House, Park Lane,
Kersal, Salford M7 4JD. Tel: 0161 740 2737

Wedding

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

FRED AND MARY DEELSTON

17 Campion House, Hobgate Road, Heath Town,
Wolverhampton WV10 0PX

My brother was in the RAF and when he got married I asked if he had any pals who could be a date for me. His pal turned out to be Fred and we have been together ever since. We were married on 18 September 1948 and we celebrated our Diamond Anniversary with a party for family and friends. Everyone enjoyed themselves – my niece organised it.

Our local paper the *Express and Star* printed our photograph and a short article about us. I was recognised when I was in a shop and asked if I was the Diamond Lady! – I guessed what she meant and said yes – she gave me her congratulations. We also received a greetings card from HM the Queen – we are the lucky ones!



Fred and Mary with their card from the Queen

SOME WISE ADVICE?

1. Always remember you're unique. Just like everyone else.
2. Never test the depth of the water with both feet.
3. If you think nobody cares whether you're alive or dead, try missing a couple of mortgage payments.
4. Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes.
5. If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
6. If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.
7. Some days you are the bug; some days you are the windscreen.
8. Good judgment comes from bad experience and most of that comes from bad judgment.
9. A closed mouth gathers no foot.
10. There are two theories to arguing with women. Neither one works.
11. Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving.

Poems

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Sometimes, in the silence of the night
You come to me in a dream with your arms outstretched
And I, forgetting The Great Divide which lies between us
Run to meet you.

Sometimes, we are young again and sitting together by a
Water-lilled loch, or walking hand-in-hand over the heather
Trying not to disturb a nesting moorhen...

Or perhaps we are both in Uniform under a war-torn sky
Snatching a few precious days together before returning
To "Battle Stations"

Or perhaps you are as on that last day
Coming home to a favourite meal and a chat about our
Children and everyday things – or preparing our
Fishing gear for a trip to sea in our boat

Nothing of this seems impossible to me until I am
Awakened by the sounds of the morning
Then I feel the emptiness of a home bereft of its
Beloved....and my heart bleeds!

Submitted by:

Mrs C J Morrison, 2 Boyd Terrace, Uig By Portree,
Isle of Skye, Inverness IV51 9YQ

HEROES

"He died a hero" – not any solace for a grieving mother
Or for his distraught widow; sister and his brother,
So many times such tragedies are repeated again and
again

Achieving the objective but causing so much pain.

Can it compensate the children for their grievous loss
To see his name in granite, a poppy on a cross?
Men and women side by side have given of their best
And watched in silent anger their comrades laid to rest

The dead will never age to see their children grow
Nor know it is for them that the teardrops flow.
Little comfort for the limbless or if they've lost their sight
For freedom on a foreign shore they volunteered to fight.
The older generation has seen it all before
Politicians sacrifice the young to yet another war,
The least of men in politics, the best of men his pawn
The least of men endure, the best forever mourn.

Composed by:

Madeleine Cross née Rees ATS, W/128587
1 Tankerton Court, 221 Tankerton Road, Tankerton,
Whitstable, Kent CT5 2AY

THE 455th

It happened in July of nineteen forty one
When Europe was being trampled by the Jackboot of the Hun
When bombs crashed down like thunder, our cities racked
and torn
Amidst those scenes of stirring strife the 455 was born

Just born an innocent toddler, that struggled hard to walk
We reeled around disjointed by Oswestry's Army talk
For 3 months there we struggled, till one September day
When the 455 won through and passed out on its way
For we had learned the laws of the game how to defend us
from our foes

Now we must go to practise camp on the shores of Old Ty-
Croes

The guns were barking loudly, coarse voices shouting
"sleeve"

We took part in this new game with a zest hard to believe

So off we went to seek a home, upon a Scottish thistle
To show of our abilities at a place called Donibristle
But our fame must have proceeded us, for not a chance we
got
To shoot a Nazi plane down or fire a blooming shot

We moved around old Scotland's Sites, we felt an idle crew
Just doing Bull and Bull eyes there was nothing else to do
So off we went to England our fortune there to try
And our first round fired in anger, burst in the Yorkshire sky

After months in Yorkshire they took us down to Kent
Straight from a cosy Nissan Hut to a leaky tent
The 455 at last was allowed to bear the brunt
We held our place right proudly in England's Southern Front

For our prey was the Buzz Bomb brainchild of Adolph the Rat
Who blustered to his people that they'd knock old England
flat

But they'd reckoned without the 455 and the drill we knew so
well

For almost every bomb they sent was burst before they fell

We played the game right boldly there's no one can deny
We kept our records spotless and held our heads up high
Then they brought us up to London when they heard about
our fame

And they changed us from our Regiment but things don't
seem the same

Yes we cherished many memories, no matter where we be
Even tho' its in the muddy fields, far across the sea
They may take our hearts and break them, but as long as
we're alive

We'll ne'er forget the Boys and Girls who made the 455.

Now the 455 is finished they are tearing us apart
Tears glisten in the brightest eyes, there is grief in every
heart
The pals we made we will recall in the days of Auld Lang Syne
We'll ne'er forget the 455 the Pride of the 129.

By Kerr and Jordan

Submitted by:

Daisy Cation, 197 Wellesley Road, Buckhaven,
Fife KY8 1DU. Tel: 01592 712383

Letters to the Editor

PRESENTATION OF MODEL GUN

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Mrs M Pagan
Hillside Lodge, The Drive, Godalming GU7 1PD

Dear Editor

I did enjoy the *Lioness* 2/2008 and was interested to see the article on page 5 about the Presentation of Model Gun. Although wearing two stripes at that time I was Orderly Sergeant that day so had to make an "extra effort" as you would say! I was pleased to be part of such an important and historic occasion.

AROMAS IN KNIGHTSBRIDGE DINING ROOM

Mrs Freda Lyon née Bailey
11 Westbourne Gate, Grosvenor Road,
Bournemouth BH4 8BW
Tel: 01202 767717, e-mail: fredalyon@dsl.pipex.com

After reading in *Lioness* 2/2008 that Greater London Branch meetings are held at Knightsbridge Barracks, I was reminded of my posting to Leconfield House, Curzon Street, Mayfair with London District from 1945-46 as a Clerk, having been with Ack Ack Command in the 93rd Searchlight Regiment from 1943-45.

I wonder if there is anyone out there who remembers that we lunched at Knightsbridge Barracks in a dining hall, which if I remember correctly, was over the stables and the odour as we ate was very pungent! The food was good though. This was of course in the original Knightsbridge Barracks – I believe that the Barracks were rebuilt a few years ago.

Maybe this could be printed in the next edition of the *Lioness* please – it may jog a few memories of other ex-ATS members who were stationed in the Knightsbridge area at that time.

FUND RAISING

W/401658 Jill CS Hunt
2 Cunningham Close, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9PJ

Dear Editor

Pleased to say we raised £200 at our Car Boot Sales/Garage Sales. The grand total was made up by my dear friend Bronwen (ex-WRAC) – thank you. We hoped to raise more; unfortunately the weather was against us.

All proceeds to go to the WRAC Association.

Editor: Thank you so much for all your hard work on behalf of the Association. This was an extremely generous donation and very much appreciated.

MEMORIES OF RSM MARIE 'SAM' SIMON

Sandra Elliott
E-mail: subiaha@dsl.pipex.com

I was really shocked to read the obituary for Sam Simon and I would like to share my more informal memories of her with other readers of *Lioness*. I was posted to COD Bicester in November 1978 just after leaving driving training and Sam was already there as the Commandant's driver. I always remember Sam saying that, when she picked Brigadier Cook up in the morning, she reversed up to his front door so that the car was turned around before he got in – all good staff car drivers knew that officers should not be seen going backwards! Unfortunately, he complained that the exhaust fumes were getting through the letter box and he told her not to do it again! He also told her that he could tell if she was speeding through Arncliffe village by how fast the flag on the bonnet of his car was flapping.



Back Row: Di Newton, Aria ?

Front Row: ?, Gwen Hussey, Marie Naples, Sandra Elliott and Sam

Sam was always superbly smartly turned out and her black 1800 staff car was immaculate at all times. She was someone to emulate and I envied her knowledge of all the depots we had to drive to and function venues we had to find. I will always remember her friendship, sense of humour and she was an excellent role model.

Missing from the photograph is Tracy Dodd who ended up as Sam's second driver and must have been out with the Brigadier when it was taken. I also covered as second driver for Sheila Jansen who drove the Commandant at Craven Hill. We all spent many hours waiting around barracks and Messes for our bosses to appear – no matter how late that was and how long it took us to drive home, we were always expected to be bright eyed and bushy tailed the next morning. And we were!

Obituaries – their final salute

MISS WINNIE THOMSON

25 FEBRUARY 1915 – 1 OCTOBER 2008

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Winnie Thomson, who died in Stirling on 1 October 2008 aged 93, was a pioneer member of the ATS and a staunch supporter for many years of the WRAC Association.

Born in Callander, she later moved to Dunoon into a house at the top of the town with views stretching down the Clyde Estuary. There Winnie developed her life-time love of the sea. In June 1939 she joined the ATS and was posted to Stirling, then to Doune, where the main role of the girls seems to have been to make breakfast for the men billeted at Inverardoch House, and then to Faslane, now the site of the naval base.



Winnie is second from the right



Winnie on left with Mrs Terry O'Day

Early in 1944, Winnie volunteered to join General Eisenhower's staff as a clerk and orderly at Bushy Park on the outskirts of London. It was then known as Camp Griffis and was where the invasion of Normandy was planned. Following the capture of Paris, she moved to Versailles as a member of the Headquarters Command of SHAEF then to Brussels and finally to occupied Germany.

She remembered attending a concert given by Glenn Miller, coming under fire in Germany and later attending part of the Nuremberg Trials. In 1947, she signed on for a further 2 years, attracted by the comradeship of Army life and the excitement of foreign travel. Almost all this time was spent in Germany, working as an orderly and as a cook. Even when she left the Army in 1949, she did not abandon it entirely. For many years afterwards she remained an active member of the Territorial Army. Later, she regularly attended the lunches given by the WRAC Association held in Perth and elsewhere, along with some of her closest and oldest friends.

After leaving the Army, Winnie moved to Blair Drummond, near Doune, to stay with her old Army friend Mrs Parker whose husband was a tractor-man on the Blair Drummond estates. She worked for a time in the Deanston cotton mill before changing occupations in 1952 and becoming housekeeper to the Clough family (recently returned from India), first in Blairdrummond House and then, for many years, in Dunblane. Initially the learning curve was steep for both sides. But very quickly, through her warm heart, decency and good sense, she moved from being housekeeper and nanny to a cherished member of the family. In 1985 she officially retired, but over the next two decades she remained busy as a beloved unofficial grandmother and invaluable helper to generations of Cloughs. At her funeral in Doune, members of this extended family mingled with Army friends to celebrate the life of a truly exceptional person.

Mrs Terry O'Day

MAJOR (RETD) D M ATHOE 10 APRIL 1928 – 24 AUGUST 2008



Margaret was commissioned on 6 March 1957 for duty with the RAEC and her first posting was to 12 Bn WRAC

at Richmond. As well as her normal duties Margaret, who had a strong contralto voice, organised and trained the unit choir for the various church festivals throughout the year. One of her fellow WRAC officers at Richmond remembers Margaret's dedication in teaching her young Army students. She met her friends by train, underground or bus, visiting her military pupils who were working all over the London area; there was no Army transport supplied in those days! There was no respite at weekends either as Margaret was also a keen sportswoman and played hockey for Eastern Command.

Margaret then returned to the WRAC School of Instruction where she made most of her lifelong friendships. So many of the WRAC Officer Cadets who passed through the school during the early 60s still remember Margaret with the greatest affection. One of her cadets wrote 'arriving in Hindhead in July 1962 to a very strange environment and rather harsh regime, Margaret, as the Education Officer, was a breath of fresh air. Although she had to observe the party line on the strict culture for officer cadets, she always was very kind and human'. Margaret was again put in charge of the choir and the compulsory choir practices before Church services and Commissioning ceremonies were apparently 'almost fun' with Margaret wielding the baton – even to those cadets who were tone deaf – and years later, at our WRAC Association functions, she would still pull ex cadets' legs about their lack of vocal prowess no matter how senior they had become in the meantime.

During her tour at Hindhead, the WRAC School of Instruction moved to Camberley to the newly built WRAC College. As the chapel member Margaret decided to get some new kneelers made by anyone she could persuade to do so – and, of course, the officer cadets were detailed or 'volunteered'. Whilst at Camberley, Margaret had to go into the Cambridge Military Hospital for an operation. The then Major Eileen Nolan was OC Cadet Wing and learned that Margaret did not have a bed jacket. She was horrified at the thought of an officer having to sit up in bed in her nightie and either being cold or unsuitably dressed! Consequently Maj Nolan sent one of her bed jackets to Margaret and the following evening she went to visit her accompanied by one of her junior officers. As they entered the ward they were greeted by a very cheerful Margaret wearing dark tailored pyjamas (definitely no-nonsense attire suitable for a fire practice or alarm in the night) but on the top she was wearing the frilly, peach ruffled bed jacket so thoughtfully provided. The whole effect was hilarious and Margaret carried it off with aplomb!

In 1967 Margaret left Camberley and postings followed to York, Singapore and Bicester. In 1975 Margaret was posted to the WRAC Centre Guildford as OC WRAC Selection Centre and SPSO responsible for placing new recruits into the right trade or specialism. From there she was posted back to Beaconsfield for her final posting, where she returned to her RAEC roots, before retiring in June 1983.

Margaret was a character and a great contributor who was much loved and respected. Her generosity, thoughtfulness and kindness coupled with her charming modesty endeared her to all. Always good company, she

never failed to entertain us with her many anecdotes and stories. As well as hockey, she loved tennis, both playing and watching, especially Wimbledon. Whilst at the WRAC College in Camberley she would hop on the train to catch the evening play at Wimbledon, frequently being fortunate enough to receive Centre Court tickets handed to her by spectators leaving. Ahead of her time, as such tickets have now to be handed in and paid for!

She was a staunch supporter of the WRAC Association and we last saw her, in fine form at the Officers' Lunch in May. She showed great devotion to her military friends and great insight and sensitivity in her natural ability to communicate with people of all ages and ranks.

Sue Westlake

MRS MARJORIE RATCLIFFE née FOSTER

Marjorie joined the ATS in 1942 and served with the RAOC mainly in the Nottingham area. There she met her husband Reg and when she left the ATS in 1946, she was a Staff Sgt. She joined the ATS Comrades Association in 1948 and was a founder member of the Cleveland Branch. She served on the Committee since the formation of the Branch. She was proud of being the only ex-ATS Comrades Association member and never missed the chance to show off her original badge with great pride. She went to all reunions and for many years paraded in London at the Armistice Parade. She always met someone she had known, in fact she kept in touch with girls she had served with – I have no names or addresses to contact anyone but hope they will read this note. Marjorie will never be forgotten.

Gwen Friday – Secretary Cleveland Branch

MARION McDONALD



Marion is on the front row – last on the right

Marion McDonald, who looked forward to every issue of the *Lioness*, died in a Veterans Home in Dunedin, New Zealand on 9 October 2008. We met in 1947 when I was SOPT/ATS in BAOR and she was a PT Sgt posted to BAOR to be my assistant. Our friendship lasted until her death. Marion emigrated to New Zealand in the early

1950s to take up a very successful nursing career, but her interest in Army matters continued to the end of her life.

The enclosed photograph is one of several I have received from her friends in New Zealand, they may be of interest. Unfortunately I cannot identify any individual other than Marion, but they may jog some of your readers' memories.

Eva Hughes

8 Fairfield, Oakleigh Park North, London N20 9AW

JOAN MARY MORGAN NÉE MOON



Joan Morgan in July 1994

W/45801 Joan Moon joined the ATS in October 1940 and served until September 1944 reaching the rank of L/Cpl. Having completed her basic training at Aldermaston and her trade training at Bulford, she spent her entire service at the Army Gas School, Winterbourne Gunner.

Joan joined Salisbury Branch sometime in the late 50s and was elected Branch Secretary in November 1964 serving in this post until November 1970 when she was elected Vice Chairman until 1976. She was then re-elected as Branch Secretary and carried out those duties until 2000. Throughout her time, Joan did an excellent job, worked extremely hard and was totally committed to the Association as well as to the Branch.

Despite failing health, Joan remained a steadfast member, attended most meetings and was always very supportive. To say that she will be sadly missed by us all at Salisbury is an understatement.

TIPS FROM THE WEBMASTER

In this time of financial restraint it is important that you keep an eye on your finances. To this end here are a couple of suggestions for keeping track of every thing using Money Managers.

1. Happy with having everything online and you have a broadband account – try www.kublax.com. It's free to join but once signed up you can aggregate all your financial data in one place, with most UK banks, credit cards and loan companies supported.
2. If you want to monitor your incomings and outgoings, schedule payments and monitor stocks and shares then try AceMoney Lite at www.mechcad.net. The Free Lite version will only let you have one account but that's enough for most people. There is also a paid for version.
3. If all you really need is help with balancing at the end of the month and keeping track of outgoings try Money Manager Ex at www.codelathe.com/mmmex. Quite a large download if you are on dial up but the program will run off a USB drive as no installation is required. (A bonus on this website is 3 games and a puzzle maker.)
4. Easy Cash Manager can be found at www.moor-software.com and is as easy to use as its name implies.

Don't forget, the most difficult thing about any money manager is setting it up when you start to use it. Getting the initial settings correct can often take time but the only way you will get useful information out is to put good information in.

I like the idea of running off a USB drive, all the information is in one place and offline – an important consideration with Identity Theft being a growing trend.

ARMY TIMEKEEPING

Jack retired in his early 50s and started a second career. However, even though he loved his new job he just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Each day he was 5 or 10 or sometimes 15 minutes late. But he was a good worker and really sharp so his boss was in a quandary about how to deal with the situation. Finally one day, his boss called him into the office for a talk.

"Jack, I must tell you, I truly like your work ethic; you do a bang-up job. But your being late for work nearly every day is quite annoying to me as well as your fellow workers."

"Yes, sir" Jack replied, "I know I'm truly sorry and I am working on it."

"That's what I like to hear" his boss said. "However, the fact that you consistently come to work late does puzzle me because I understand that you retired from the Army and they have some pretty rigid rules about tardiness. Isn't that correct?"

"Yes, it is and I'm very proud of my Army Service."

"Well, what did they say when you came in late?" asked his boss.

"They said, 'Good morning, General!'."

ADAMS Miss Annis, of Scaldwell, Leicester on 26 May 2008, WRAC/ATS

BARRETT Mrs Sarah Janet, née Barnard, of Stockport on 26 Oct 2008, ATS

BARRY Miss Margaret Stella, of Walton on Thames on 23 Oct 2008, ATS

BILHAM Mrs Irene (Wendy), née Blazeby, of Norwich on 21 Sep 2008, ATS

BOCHINSKI Mrs Dorothy, née Basnett, of Australia on 15 Sep 2008

BRACE Mrs Hilda May, of Plymouth on 4 Sep 2008, ATS

BRAGG Mrs Sybil, née Ottiwell, of London on 23 Dec 2008, ATS

BROCK Mrs Mary Elizabeth, née Hobday, of Thornton Cleveleys in Aug 08, WRAC

BURKE Mrs Joan Louisa, née Connor, of Essex on 24 Aug 2008, ATS

CAMPBELL Mrs Mary, on 1 Nov 2008, ATS

COLBURN Mrs Joan, née Hatton, on 7 Aug 2008, ATS

CURRIE Mrs Myra Joan, née Sterling-Hill, of Stowmarket on 10 Mar 2008, ATS

DENNY Miss Pamela Ivy, of Reigate on 12 Nov 2008, ATS

DONALDSON Miss Marie Jean, of Leicester on 19 Dec 2008, WRAC/ATS

EAMES MBE Mrs Elizabeth, née Graham, on 20 Sep 2008, ATS

EDWARDS Ms Yvonne, of Shrewsbury on 24 Sep 2008, ATS

FLIPPANCE Mrs Agnes, of Ryde on 23 Oct 2008, ATS

FURNISS Mrs B J C, née Lambert, of London on 7 Mar 2008

GILES Mrs Cynthia, née Rowley, of Guernsey on 3 Dec 2008, ATS

GODIN Maj Brenda Mary, of Chaldon on 26 Aug 2008, ATS/WRAC

GRINYER Mrs Olive Eileen, née Rawding, of Hailsham on 3 Nov 2008, ATS

HALL Miss Edna, of Cannock on 2 Jul 2008, ATS

HALL Mrs Kathleen Mary, née Burke on 15 Aug 2008, ATS

HIGGINS Mrs Dorothy, née Gibbins, of Rochester on 27 Nov 2008, ATS

HILL Maj Irene, of Oxford in Oct 2008

HILL Mrs D M, née Durose, of Somerset on 8 Aug 2008

HUNT Mrs Ida Florence, née Jowett, of Hereford on 7 Jan 09, ATS

JAMIESON Mrs A, née Linsdell, of York on 14 Oct 2008, ATS

KEIGHTLEY Mrs Elizabeth, in Sep 2008, WRAC

LANGMAN Mrs Eileen Clare, née Dempsey, of Gloucester in Dec 2008, ATS

LINDSAY Mrs Catherine D, née McCallum, of Glasgow on 13 Nov 2008, ATS

LINNARD Mrs Verona Joan (Vicky), née Tarsey, of Bournemouth on 14 Aug 2008, ATS

LONGHURST Mrs Grace, née Dickin, of Wandsworth on 21 Oct 2008, ATS

LUSCOMBE Mrs Irene, née Edwards, on 4 Oct 2008, ATS

MACKIE Mrs Minnie Arthur, née Hamilton, of Llanybydder on 22 Sep 2008, ATS

MARSH Mrs Betty Sylvia, née Webb, of Lancing

MARTIN Ms Maureen J, of Fareham on 2 Dec 2008, ATS

MASON Mrs Joan, née Thomas, of Porthcawl on 14 Sep 2008, WRAC

McDONALD Miss Marion E A, of Dunedin, New Zealand on 9 Oct 2008, ATS

McILWRAITH Mrs Sheila K, née Howard, of Chichester on 13 Dec 2008, ATS

MERSON Mrs Dorothy Mary, née Martin, on 15 Aug 2008, ATS

MORGAN Mrs Joan Mary, née Moon, of Salisbury on 2 Nov 2008, ATS

MORRISS Mrs Joan Margaret, née Ellis, of Hove on 9 Sep 2008, ATS

NIGHTINGALE Mrs Annie, née Carr, of Florida on 5 Dec 2008, ATS

PARSONS Mrs J M, of Exeter in Oct 2008

PERFECT Mrs Kay, née Cowell, of Canterbury on 31 Jul 2008, ATS

PHILLIPS Miss Sybille Phyllis, of Somerset on 6 May 2008

PIEROTTI Mrs Muriel Alice, née Wakely, of York on 8 Sep 2008, ATS

PIRIE Miss Elizabeth Mary Julia, of London on 2 Sep 2008, ATS

POLLACK Mrs Peggy, née Locke, of London on 5 Oct 2008, ATS

RATCLIFFE Mrs Marjorie, née Forster, of Billingham on 9 Oct 2008, ATS

RATTUE Mrs Ivy, of Billingham on 4 Dec 2008, ATS

RYAN Mrs Jillian Elizabeth, née Warker, of Andover on 12 Aug 2008

SIMMONS Mrs Joan, Eileen, née Hoare, of East Sussex on 7 Aug 2008

STEUNENBERG Mrs Josephine (Josie), née Beatts, of Canada on 14 Nov 2007, WRAC

STORAH Mrs Lillian, née Wardle, of Stockport on 7 Nov 2008, ATS

STRAW Ms Beryl, Chaplains Assistant on 8 Jul 2008

SYMES Mrs Audrey Iris Joan, née Manfield, of Plympton on 23 Nov 2008, ATS

TERRY Miss Susan, of Croydon on 19 Jun 2008, WRAC

THOMSON Miss Winnie, of Stirling on 1 Oct 2008, ATS

THOMSON Mrs June, née Reynders, of Bristol on 10 Aug 2008

TINGLE Mrs Edna, née Gilbert, of Anglesey on 18 Jul 2008, ATS

TROSSER Miss Gwen, of Southam in Nov 2008, ATS

WALMSLEY Mrs Muriel, née Blackledge, of Lancashire on 9 Jun 2008

WARSOP Mrs Jacquie, née Fox, of Carterton on 8 Dec 2008, WRAC

WHITE Mrs Audrey Joyce, née David, of Bournemouth on 21 Dec 2008, ATS

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
for the year ended 31 October 2008

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	Notes	General Funds	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2008	Total 2007
INCOME & EXPENDITURE						
Incoming resources						
Incoming resources from generated funds:						
Voluntary Income	1	33,980	4,700	16,347	55,027	81,453
Activities for generating funds	2	—	—	—	—	—
Investment Income	3	23,183	—	177,280	200,463	197,628
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4	58,305	—	—	58,305	55,639
Other incoming resources	5	2,406	3,203	964	6,573	2,425
Total incoming resources		117,874	7,903	194,591	320,368	337,145
Resources expended:						
Cost of generating funds:						
Cost of generating voluntary income	6	7,349	—	26,230	33,579	28,195
Charitable activities	8	65,192	—	190,333	255,525	247,731
Governance costs	9	2,766	—	3,759	6,525	10,123
Total resources expended		75,307	—	220,322	295,629	286,049
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS						
		42,567	7,903	(25,731)	24,739	51,096
Transfers between funds	14	3,203	(3,203)	—	—	—
NET INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR		45,770	4,700	(25,731)	24,739	51,096
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES						
Gains/(losses) on investments:						
Unrealised		(113,556)	—	(1,237,846)	(1,351,402)	200,594
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	17	(67,786)	4,700	(1,263,577)	(1,326,663)	251,690
Fund balances brought forward at 1 November 2007		499,911	26,221	5,387,784	5,913,916	5,662,226
Fund balances carried forward at 31 October 2008		432,125	30,921	4,124,207	4,587,253	5,913,916

The net movement in funds for the year arises from the charity's continuing activities.

No separate Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses has been presented as all such gains and losses have been dealt with in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BALANCE SHEET
at 31 October 2008

	Notes	2008	2007
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments	10	4,327,074	5,678,476
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock of badges, souvenirs & standards		4,555	5,183
Debtors	11	39,084	35,063
Cash at bank & in hand	12	241,019	205,239
		284,658	245,485
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	13	24,479	10,045
NET CURRENT ASSETS		260,179	235,440
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		4,587,253	5,913,916
FUNDS OF THE ASSOCIATION			
Restricted funds:			
The Benevolent Funds	15	3,484,121	4,557,414
The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund	16	640,087	830,370
Unrestricted funds:			
General funds		432,124	499,911
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund	14	6,863	5,923
Lioness life subscription fund		24,058	20,298
TOTAL FUNDS	17	4,587,253	5,913,916

Approved by the trustees on 22nd January 2009

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**WO & NCO WING WRAC COLLEGE, CAMBERLEY
WARRANT OFFICERS' CONVENTION, 1973 OR 1974**