

LIONESS

PDF Compressor Free Version



PDF Compressor Free Version



THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

Founded in 1919

PATRON

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

PRESIDENT

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT GCVO

VICE-PRESIDENT

Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake

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

Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake

Lieutenant Colonel J M Young

Brigadier A Field CB CBE

Lieutenant Colonel The Lady Martha Bruce OBE TD DL

Lieutenant Colonel M W Soames OBE

Brigadier Dame Joanna Kelleher DBE

Brigadier S P Nield CBE

Colonel F M Cook

Colonel E J Bowles

Major J A Freebairn

Vacant

Major J A Freebairn

Mrs A Schofield

Mrs Noreen Unsworth

General Secretary:**Honorary Treasurer:****Editor of Association Magazine:****Assistant Editor:****Typist:****ATS and WRAC Benevolent Funds****Chairman of Trustees:****Chairman of Grants Committee:****Case Secretary:**

Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake

Colonel A J Smith

Major G M Shanahan

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

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

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

Fax: (01962) 887478

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

E-mail: wracassociation@googlemail.com

Website: www.wracassociation.co.uk

Front Cover

WRAC Association Badge

Back Cover

WRAC Cartoons

Contributions for next issue by 24 June 2010

Published by the WRAC Association, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG.

Printed in Great Britain and distributed worldwide by Warwick Printing Company Ltd, Caswell Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV31 1QD.

CONTENTS

Message from the Vice President	1
Articles of Interest	2
Branch News	12
ATS Reminiscences	33
Reminiscences of the WRAC	35
Women Serving in the Army Today	40
Where Are You Now?	53
News from Overseas Members	58
WRAC Officers' Dining Club	61
WRAC Dinner Club	63
Weddings	65
Remembrance	66
Reunions	70
Letters to the Editor	73
Poems	74
Obituaries – their Final Salute	75
WRAC – Statement of Financial Activities	ibc

Message from the Vice President



It only seems like yesterday that I was talking about all the Anniversaries that were approaching – the Association 90th, the ATS 70th and the WRAC 60th and now they have all gone by! So many of you have enjoyed the celebrations over the past two years that we are hoping a few more of you will want to support the AGM on Saturday 20 March at the Victory

Services Club. We plan to start at 1130hrs with coffee followed by the AGM at 1200 and a Buffet Lunch at 1330hrs. Why not spend a pre-Easter weekend in London and enjoy a mini Reunion at the same time? A booking form is in the pull out section in the centre of this *Lioness*.

I have continued my travels around the Association 'Parish' and thoroughly enjoyed meeting up with so many of you 'at home' – this is the best part of being Vice President. I made my first visit to Marches and Mid Wales Branch in the summer – it was a great day and turned out to be a mini Reunion of Wales and the West; also a first trip to Shropshire Branch for a superb Christmas Lunch. Plymouth Branch did it in style with a 60th Anniversary party whilst Bath Branch hosted a lovely Christmas tea party. One of the year's highlights is going north of the border to the Scottish Area Reunion, this year held in Perth and to the South and South West Area Reunion held this year in my home town of Weymouth. In June, Jane and I went to Founders Day at the Royal Hospital Chelsea to see Dorothy Hughes and Win Phillips 'on Parade' for the first time. Just before Christmas, HRH the Duchess of Gloucester came to Worthy Down to present medals to serving members of the AG Corps and Marjorie (Madge) Cole, our latest arrival at Chelsea, joined us at the presentation and was introduced to HRH.

Seventy four of us paraded at the Cenotaph under the eagle eye of Major 'Mack' Maskens-McIntyre. It would be great if we could achieve similar numbers in future years and keep the Association and Army Women firmly in the public eye – it is a very moving experience. Sadly, we were very thin on the ground at our Association plot in the 'Field of Remembrance' and perhaps members who live close to London could think about supporting us there. Details are in the Remembrance section.

However, none of our Association events would be possible without the support, hard work and dedication of all of you – thank you for all your efforts on behalf of the Association throughout the year. A warm welcome too to all our many new members who joined us in the last six months – it is great to have you 'on board'. Finally, I know that you would all wish me to say heartfelt thanks to 'The Team' back at Association HQ; to Jane Freebairn, our General Secretary, who as the linchpin of all Association activities keeps the 'show on the road' whilst producing this quite superb journal in her spare time (!) ably supported by Denise Jaballah, the Chief Clerk; to Gabi Shanahan who deals diligently and compassionately with the Benevolent Fund casework and finally to Noreen Unsworth who types the *Lioness* for us. They are all stars!

My good wishes for 2010 – I hope it will be a good year for you all. Take care and keep well.

Sue Westlake

Editorial



I did wonder how we would follow the last *Lioness* – sometimes referred to as the Bumper Fun Book! It did have just over 300 photographs and not too much text. However, I should have known that you would not let me down and so many of you have submitted interesting, educational and often thought-provoking material. Thank you all.

I make no apology for giving Remembrance events a fair amount of cover. It is very obvious from individual and branch reports that Remembrance services and parades strike a real chord of comradeship and sense of duty. Sadly, current events in Afghanistan mean that Remembrance will be at the forefront of all serving and retired military hearts and minds for many, many years to come. The WRAC Association is clearly taking a full and active part in acts of commemoration and remembrance all over the country – and overseas.

Again, you will see several articles from women serving in the Army today – not just AGC but the RADC get a mention this time! Also, I note that some branches have close connections with ladies still serving so, again, the WRAC Association is playing its part in today's military environment even although we all served "a while ago!"

Could I please just draw your attention to two particular items? If you do want to come along to the AGM, PLEASE complete the proforma in the middle section. I know that time is short but the snowy weather in January certainly did nothing for the *Lioness* printing schedule! Also, please think about completing the Gift Aid form on the back of the carrier sheet. It would really help our record-keeping.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to the Vice President for her kind remarks regarding the team at HQ and I would like to add my thanks to someone who is essential in the production of the *Lioness* – Jon Clucas at Warwick Printing. Jon puts all the pieces of the jigsaw together and makes the journal look good and a joy to read. Thank you, Jon.

Jane Freebairn

Articles of Interest

THE NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION VISIT TO EDINBURGH OR "TATTOO THE NOO"

W/409817 Joan Bartlett nee Wemyss
Secretary, Aberdeen Branch

"Would two of your members like to come for three days to Edinburgh?" asked the letter from the Not Forgotten Association. The phrases – "Would we no just" and similar daft ones chased themselves through my head and in no time at all Mary McLeod and I were treating ourselves to a first class train trip to Edinburgh.

We were staying at Pollock Halls of Residence in newly re-furnished accommodation with the use of the common room and being fed in the students dining hall. Now there was an experience – 2,000 for breakfast! There were people from all over the world, moving about with trays of food looking for the coffee machine or the hard boiled eggs and nobody bumped into anyone. The food was plentiful and of an excellent standard: especially the pork in cream sauce. A quick tip for anyone going to "Halls" to eat – grab your cutlery first!



Betty McMurray, Peter McMurray and Rosie Thompson

We were welcomed by Rosie Thompson, organiser par excellence, and Peter McMurray, Committee Problem Solver, both from London who gave us the timings for the buses and a wee bit about the Not Forgotten Association. This was quickly followed by an introduction to Peter's Mum, Betty, who was dispensing the gin. Betty has been the Northern Ireland Secretary of the Not Forgotten Association for 20 years and has the dispensing down to a T(onic).

On the next day we had a trip to the Royal Yacht Britannia. This was well worth a visit. The furnishings were not as sumptuous as I thought they would be but that was not the wish of the Queen. Mary and I had tea in the restaurant on the upper deck before heading back to the Halls for a rest before the Tattoo.

We were taken right on to Edinburgh Castle Esplanade and deposited beside our seats which were at the front with excellent views of everything. The Tattoo itself was just great from the massed pipe bands onwards. The



Mary McLeod and Joan Bartlett aboard the Royal Yacht Britannia

troop from China was extremely colourful and the performers, who represented horses and whose faces were painted white and black with the ladies having red bee sting lips, were superb and all that marching and trotting was done on stilts – fascinating.

The Swiss drummers had to be seen to be believed. All that rhythm and not a note of music, illuminated drumsticks that danced in the dark and, to top it off, they set fire to their sticks before they played themselves off. I could go on about the oiled Tonga ladies with beautiful fluid hand movements – Tam o' Shanter's mare getting her tail removed by a lithesome "cutty sark", ducking when a non-existent plane flew over (honest) and the RAF officer singing Going Home. It was a real slam dunk of an evening. It was nice to sit and relax after the finale and talk to Joan Lowe and Jess MacIntosh from the WRNS Glasgow Branch about it and to watch the people file down from the heights and patiently wait to get out on to the Royal Mile. We, of course, were picked up and transferred like VIPs back to Pollock Halls. Don't tell anyone that Mary and I did not get to bed till 1.30a.m.!

After a latish breakfast we said our farewells and spent a little time in Princes Street watching the street entertainers and admiring the craft work on display. Then it was off home to recover.



Pipers in Princes Street gardens

The trip was most appreciated by both Mary and I and we have sent our grateful thanks to the Not Forgotten Association. I also thank the 37 other folk, some of whom came from Ireland, for their company and laughter during the trip. Fare thee all well.

Oh, just in the passing, Rosie Thompson is running in two marathons this year, one being in New York. She is running with two soldiers both of whom have been injured in Afghanistan. I wish them "good times".

Editor: I have had a letter from Rosie Thompson to confirm that she completed both marathons and raised a total of £17,500! She particularly thanked all "the lovely ladies of the WRAC Association" for their support. I know that many of you who have benefited from the extreme generosity of the Not Forgotten Association helped to sponsor Rosie in her efforts so thanks for that. They always receive a copy of Lioness so, please, please if you are lucky enough to be on the receiving end of their hospitality, send in a report and a photograph of the occasion. The Not Forgotten Association do like to see that their work is being appreciated and well advertised.



A happy team at United Nations after completing the New York marathon

THE NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION VISIT TO LONDON

W/169959 Louise Dick née Barr, Canterbury Branch

Four members of Canterbury Branch were guests of the

Not Forgotten Association on a four day holiday in the Union Jack Club, London in June. We arrived at lunch time, were given keys to our rooms on the 18th floor, a very pleasant room with great views of London. There were 75 of us – all three Services were represented. The Chairman of the Association, Brigadier Richard Heywood, with members of staff welcomed us in the evening before dinner at 7.30 p.m. The restaurant looked a picture and the meal with both red and white wine was served elegantly by waiters. Next morning breakfast started at 7.30 a.m. with almost anything you wanted. At 9.30 a.m. we all met up for a visit to the Household Cavalry. Here we were entertained by the Guards getting ready for their tour of duty, visiting the stables and watching the beautiful horses being shod with a talk on how the shoes and saddles are made and finally we were taken for a drink and a splendid meal in the Mess.

Then back to the Union Jack Club for afternoon tea before freshening up and dressing in our finery to see the musical "Carousel" starring Lesley Garrett at the Savoy Theatre. It was a glorious show especially as we knew so many of the songs. Next morning we were up bright and early ready for a trip on the London Eye followed by a trip on the River Thames with a running commentary about the buildings we sailed by. In the evening, there was a Gala Dinner with a talented group of singers to entertain us. All too soon our visit was over and next morning we all set off home.

This trip was definitely one "not to be forgotten" by one of our group. Monica fell a few days before the trip and broke a leg. When she telephoned to give her apologies, she was surprised and delighted when Rosie Thompson, the Events Organiser, said that provided she could get to London she would receive all the help she needed. Rosie was as good as her word and Monica had a wheelchair and a carer with her all the time; they even arranged a taxi for her to each venue so that she didn't have to negotiate the steps of the coach. Indeed, everyone went that extra mile to make sure we all enjoyed our trip to London.

LUNCH WITH THE QUEEN

W/354225 Ms Mary Fox-Clements
15 Orchard Avenue, Wakefield WF3 4PB



Land Army Days – Mary Clements and Eunice Ellis

On leaving the Women's Land Army, I joined the WRAC in March 1949. Firstly Queen's Camp, Guildford for my training and then on to Wrexham, N Wales for a clerks' typing course followed by a posting to 46(M) HAA Regt, Bulford Camp. Later on the whole Regiment moved to Hobbs Barracks, Bad Oeynhausen, Germany. I now enjoy being a member of Leeds Branch.

Editor: The following is an extract from a local newspaper:

When Mary Clements was invited to Buckingham Palace, the last thing she expected was to find herself dining with the Queen. But Ms Clements, who was picked out from thousands of former members of the Women's Land Army and Timber Corps to attend the Royal party on Wednesday, found herself sharing wartime stories with Her Majesty.



Mary Clements

Mary was among 90 guests who were also invited to a special dinner at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Ms Clements, 80, said the Queen, who attended the meal with Prince Philip, Princess Michael of Kent and other royals, spent time sitting with guests, dining at several of the tables in the ballroom at the Palace. She said she would remember the moment for the rest of her life, adding: "She sat down and asked questions, like where we were based, she was absolutely gorgeous."

THE PEA-NUT CLUB

W/410509 Miss Margaret Irvine
96 Dumbuck Road, Dumbarton G82 3NA

I asked some time ago about the Pea-Nut Club but unfortunately no one had heard of it. Since then I have managed to find my Pea-Nut Club badge which we wore



behind the lapel of our BD. I cannot remember if it cost 6d or a shilling or what it was all about.

I began my basic training at Guildford in February 1961: perhaps someone, on seeing the badge, might recognise it and remember what it was in aid of! I hope so and would be interested to find out.

A LIFETIME IN SKIRTS

W/399415 Ann Jones née Hiscox
Secretary, Staff Band Branch

I wonder how many of you have worn as many different "uniform" skirts that I have. Recalling the dreaded gymslip, I cannot imagine how it became a fashion statement in later years. Leaving the Brownie Dress behind, I don't think it was a comfortable progression to the Guide navy serge skirt; underskirts were a must if you were to avoid rubbed thighs. Hey! Here is the Rock 'n Roll era: very full dirndls, black with fluorescent painted jivers and a very full bright red tulle underskirt.

What a culture shock to go into Army khaki: not quite as rough as the Guide serge but definitely not chic. Thank Goodness for the little tailor down a Guildford alley who made even the BD jacket fit well.

Now the Green No 1 Dress was quite another matter: soft, but so heavy and suffocating in warm weather, easy to crease and when wet....! We never asked what our male coach driver thought when we were travelling to a job with our uniforms hung up round the coach and only dressed in our black stockings and suspenders and pale green shirts.

The mini skirt brought uproar, the entire establishment condemned them. I was the very proud owner of a brown suede one. It did its rounds to all the family, but seems to have been lost now. Well, uniform persisted, Civil Defence Black and straight this time, also very smart. My eldest son was a Scout and well then there was a Gang Show, then there was a Scout Warrant, more khaki, but not often a skirt. It followed on with my daughter in Guiding, so once more there was another Warrant, and blue skirts, back to Scouts, youngest son a Cub. The present Guide ones are very comfortable, lucky girls, but quite a change, little Rainbows as well as a 24 strong Guide unit.

The Royal British Legion and WRAC Association – not so cumbersome and rarely worn. However I seem to have adapted the usual uniform now – jeans!

Dreading the crimplene trousers, Ha!

NEW FOREST NORMANDY VETERANS VISIT NORMANDY

W/219080 Merville Pidgeon née Collinson
52 Castlemain Avenue, Bournemouth BH6 5EL

Once again I travelled with the New Forest Normandy Veterans to Normandy for the 6th June celebrations and as usual the week was very moving. The French people are still so appreciative of what our fighting soldiers did

that they, and their children, shake the hands of the soldiers to thank them for their freedom.



Merville with the Mayor of Caen and the CO Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

However, as I arrived in Normandy early in August 1944, when the fighting was still raging in Caen, I wondered where the other ATS were as I was the only woman Normandy Veteran in my group. Also, when I received the Bar to the Normandy brooch a few years ago, the Admiral making the Presentation seemed somewhat bemused.

At times I feel that even our own people are not aware that the ATS were behind the lines working as secretaries and carrying out numerous other duties – with male soldiers too who were not in the fighting lines. This was brought home to me last year in Normandy, when on one Memorial Service a couple of the war widows were talking to a young WRAC Cpl and mentioned that I was a Normandy Veteran, the latter turned to me and said 'Oh, I'm glad there was someone here to make the tea! If our own people do not know that the ATS worked alongside with the men on administrative work, how can we expect the French to do so?

I do hope other former ATS members were present – *Editor: see next article* – it would be nice to have company another year If there is to be one! I shall be 88 in December so I must keep my fingers crossed!

Editor: The following is an extract from the official 'Red Book' – The War Office History of the ATS published in 1949.

"In January 1944, at home, the preparations for the invasion of North-West Europe took a new turn when the organisation of the available troops into an expeditionary force began; 440 auxiliaries were posted that month for duty with GHQ 2nd Echelon, 21 Army Group and the following month they were formed into a separate ATS Group".

SEVEN PLUS ONE – NORMANDY WITH 46 BRANCH NVA

W/317140 Mrs Barbara Danter née Miller
30 Blake Road, West Bridgford, Notts NG2 3JL

What a wonderful year it has been for ATS seven plus one. We have been on T.V. and on the front page of both the Leicester and Nottingham newspapers.



With our MP at the House of Commons

We were also mentioned in a French commemorative newspaper regarding the celebrations of the Normandy D-Day landings that we attended back in June. We set off at 7 a.m. on 4th June and once on French soil we journeyed to Lisieux where we were booked into a Best Western Hotel. After a freshen up we went off in search of food and the only place available was the restaurant next door. I cannot say he was pleased to see us – he practically threw the place mats at us, but by the next day we had won him over and the order of the day was a kiss for all the ladies whenever we left his presence! We visited a number of very heart-searching war cemeteries, all those graves for young men of eighteen and others not much older – such a waste. Wherever we went, people came to thank us – it was all very humbling. The school children were very respectful too. I know the French people found it quite a novelty to have women veterans in their midst – it was like it had never happened before! On visiting the Pegasus Bridge Museum, the Curator asked me if the A.T.S. still wore suspenders or was it tights now? I replied that it was for us to know and him to wonder about! He then asked us for a photo in front of the bridge and presented us with mementoes of the occasion. A few days after arriving home we received a copy of the newspaper that he had had it printed in along with the photo. It said:

"These British female veterans visited the Pegasus memorial in uniform under the very astonished eyes



At Pegasus Bridge

of other visitors. These brave military personnel aged on average 80 plus years old, served in the A.T.S. (Auxiliary Territorial Service), the female branch of the British Army during the Second World War. They were drivers, postwomen who kept up the morale of the servicemen with letters, parcels, cigarettes, cooks and many other trades. 190,000 women served in the A.T.S. during the war, among them Queen Elizabeth, a lorry driver, and Mary Churchill, who served as her father's aide de camp."

It was a great experience and one that I would not have wanted to miss. We were there for five days and were at the beaches on the Sunday when we were presented with our Normandy badges. Our organiser of the trip had specifically asked if we could be included in the presentation as we had supported them on so many occasions and, true to his promise, we did receive this with great pride. Unfortunately that was the day when the heavens opened and we all got a soaking. We were by the beach and the sea breeze was bitterly cold, but not to worry: Mr. Brown and the other dignitaries were all under cover and not suffering much, only the veterans! We returned with lots of memories happy and sad, but pleased that we had been able to add our grateful thanks to our men who had fought so bravely for our freedom from tyranny in WW2.



Gold Beach, June 2009

We arrived home safe and sound a few days later but no time to rest as we had an Armed Forces Day to attend three days later at a nearby town and two more at Nottingham following after that, but we always enjoy those days. We have also continued with our Summer schools and the children are so good. One day they made us a wartime meatless pie, followed by rhubarb and semolina pudding. It was a good competition between schools and the winner also won £250 for their school.

We have also been to Duxford and Westminster Cathedral with our Normandy Veterans. Two of us were invited to attend the send-off for the Poppy Appeal for the County of Nottingham and also the City, so now our photo is adorning many of the shelves in the local stores where I shop, much to the amusement of my family.



Barbara Danter and Joan De Vall

We have not quite finished for the year just yet though. We still have three more events to attend and we love every moment. So what happened to that year then and more importantly, what would we seven plus one do with our time. Oh! We are so glad we chose the Army way back when.

UNDERCOVER - LIFE IN CHURCHILL'S BUNKERS

W 13890 Mrs Chris Morrison née Chisholm
2 Boyd Terrace, Uig by Portree, Isle of Skye,
Inverness-shire IV51 9YQ

During WWII, I worked in Main Building, War Office as a Cryptographer (Cipher Operator) in Code & Cipher Branch and I sometimes get invitations to go to London



Chris Morrison with daughters Marion and Laura

for the various Exhibitions in the Cabinet War Rooms and the Churchill Museum. Last year I had a letter to say that there was to be a special exhibition marking the 70th Anniversary of the start of World War II. It was to be called "Undercover: life in Churchill's Bunkers" and it would be in honour of the men and women who served in no publicity during the War. That category included my Branch – so I accepted the invitation to attend the Champagne Reception on 2 September 2009.

The Invitation included "Dress Code Lounge Suit" and the ladies were all dressed in what I would call "Afternoon Tea Dress". Therefore no-one was in uniform. On arrival, we entered a huge room packed with people. There was no seating except for odd chairs along the wall and there was no stage or platform etc. Suddenly we heard a disembodied voice coming from the centre of the room, explaining the purpose of the event and thanking Baroness Thatcher and her family and Vera Lynn and one or two others of WWII era for being there.

After the majority of people left, the atmosphere became more personal and reminded me of family weddings when we would all get together to discuss family news: the room resounded with conversation and laughter. We, the "Oldies" or Veterans, then became the centre of attention and we were asked about what happened during the War. As there seemed to be no celebrities present by then, I asked the first man who came over to speak to me if he was a Member of Parliament but he said "I am a Peer". Then his wife said "He is First Lord of the Admiralty". He then asked where I had come from and I expected him to say "Where's that?" but his face beamed and he said "You know I learned the first part of my seamanship when working on MacBrayne's Ferry at Kyle" and then he went to talk about his landlady of those days and how wonderful it must be to live in Skye. Others who spoke to us were just as friendly and, although most of them were in the 30-45 age range, they seemed genuinely interested. There was a feeling of camaraderie just like it was during the War.



With the Mayor of Westminster

Now, I apologise for name dropping but I chatted with several celebrities including Duncan Winston Sandys – the Mayor of the Burgh of Westminster where the Cabinet Offices are. He explained that his Grandmother was Diana Churchill, daughter of Winston (as he kept calling Mr Churchill) and that his other Grandfather was

Duncan Sandys, Diana's husband, who had been in the Cabinet. I also met Antonia Fraser, the novelist and historian – daughter of Lord Longford and whose first husband was a brother of "Commando" Lord Lovat. How did she manage to raise six children and write all those splendid historical books? I spoke with the delightful granddaughter of Sir Neville Chamberlain. Her husband was equally charming and later ran in the rain for a taxi for us.

A very pleasant gentleman offered to guide us around as he was one of the Trustees: we discovered later that he was General Sir John Kiszley KCB MC and recently had been Director of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom and had fought in the Falklands, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq Wars and had won the Military Cross and was wounded in the Falklands. He had also been mentioned in Despatches and was awarded The Legion of Merit (United States) and he was only 61!

In all, we had a most enjoyable time and, when I watched "The Last Night of the Proms" on TV the Saturday following, I wallowed in nostalgia remembering again the days of being a Promenader but lamenting our lost youth who didn't come home again!

A NEW IN-PENSIONER AT THE ROYAL HOSPITAL

W411789 (now 226IP) Marjorie Cole
Ward 21 Berth 8, Royal Hospital Chelsea,
London SW3 4SR



Marjorie Cole, Moira Cameron and Dorothy Hughes taken at the Tower August 2009

It is four months since I became the third lady pensioner at The Royal Hospital Chelsea and I'm still walking on cloud nine. It didn't take me long to settle in: I felt at home as soon as I came through the gate. I'd come to be part of one big happy family. No more loneliness, always someone to talk to, day or night, everyone so warm and friendly.

There are numerous events pensioners have the chance of attending. Some of the events I have attended are – "Pride of Britain Awards", "Woman of the Year Lunch", "Tribute to our Forces" Concert at Salisbury Cathedral,

Dinner at St James Palace to celebrate 60 years of NATO, opening a Village Fete, attending book launches, taking part in Ainsley Harriot's "Ready Steady Cook" and magazine interviews.

My main honours was being in the Royal Naval Service Parade at the Cenotaph and being the first lady Chelsea Pensioner to march in the Chelsea Pensioners contingent was extra special. The highlight of that morning was seeing the sea of green fleeces of the ATS/WRAC ladies gathered on Horse Guards Parade and being able to chat to some of you wonderful ladies. It was like seeing my family again.

Coming here has given me a purpose in life as an ambassador for the Royal Hospital and to help raise money for The Royal Hospital, The Army Benevolent Fund, Help for Heroes, Royal British Legion and Combat Stress. Everyday is a new experience, meeting new people, some well known, some very ordinary people, but to me all lovely and special people, like all those dear Chelsea Pensioners and the wonderful staff who look after us. My niece and family were my first visitors last month and they all said they'd never seen me looking so well and happy for many years. I said, "Yes, I feel totally happy, no worries and at peace, what more could I want?"



Four ladies (two ex ATS, one ex WRAC and one ex QARANC) came for a four day visit with a view to becoming Pensioners. We three lady Pensioners were more than happy to help make their short stay happy and I know that they enjoyed their time with us.

December will be a very busy month with a variety of invites which we have the chance of attending if we wish. Everything is voluntary. There are also the traditional ceremonies (i.e. pudding stirring ceremony, cheese ceremony, Christmas cake ceremony). These all take part in the Great Hall. Plus there will be various carol services each evening in the beautiful Chapel. I have a voluntary job as Chapel Attendant which gives me another wonderful opportunity to meet and chat to visitors. I am looking forward to visiting the AGC at Worthy Down when the Duchess of Gloucester will be there to present LS&GC and campaign medals. I also hope to catch up with Lt Col Westlake and Maj Freebairn. *Editor: She did!*

MUSTER AT THE DUNDEE FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

Isobel Gordon, Chairman of Fife and Tayside Branch

Towards the end of summer 2009, Major Frank Smith, Convener of the Dundee Festival of Remembrance Committee, phoned me to ask if the Fife and Tayside Branch of the WRAC Association would like to be represented in the Muster at the end of October. He added that the Association would be mentioned in the Festival's Programme. Fast forward to Saturday 31st October when Lily Bell, Florence Green and Helen Youngson joined me, the four of us rather nervously awaiting our instructions at the rehearsal.



Isobel Gordon – with the haversack – at Barry Buddon TA Camp – a few years ago!

Dundee's Festival of Remembrance follows the old-style Muster at the Albert Hall parade, as I knew from attendances several years ago. I had warned the others that there would be a lot of hanging about – no change there for Service parades! – and that it would be extremely hot during the actual event. All four of us opted to wear cotton tops and were very glad indeed that we had done so.

After a couple of run-throughs, the Standards Marshall seemed reasonably pleased and dismissed us until 1845 hours. I asked if the band, the Band of HM Royal Marines Scotland, would play us on to "Nut Brown Maiden", the WRAC Pipe Tune but regretfully it wasn't possible. Oh well, it was a good night.

PDF Compressor Free Version

At 1845 we turned up as instructed to find a transformation had taken place. The motley crowd from the afternoon of be-jeaned and sweated servicemen and women and the Cadet organisations were now in immaculate uniforms, brasses gleaming, knife-edge pleats in jackets and trousers, toecaps "bulled," and medals glinting. We were fourth from last to take our places at the very front of the Muster on the platform, and as we stepped off on the command of the two Marshalls, the heat hit us like a wall. There were 1,500 people in the audience, but of course the heat rose to the higher level of the Muster. Oh yes, and we were immediately behind the percussion section of the band – every beat of the drums and clash of the cymbals reverberated upwards through our feet!

It was an uplifting experience, and we like to think we did the Association proud. We were so glad to have participated, especially when we read the Programme and found that instead of the couple of paragraphs we had been expecting about the Association, an entire page had been devoted to it.

As we marched off in step – of course – the Standards Marshall murmured, "Well done, ladies!" Our chins lifted a fraction and we swung our arms straighter, a night to remember, indeed.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY PARADE – COLONEL'S REVIEW

W/435981 Janet Endean née Lake
janet.endean@btinternet.com

Two tickets were received courtesy of the Not Forgotten Association through Winchester Branch. The day came with dire warnings from the Met Office and we set off duly prepared. We were impressed to see we had front row folding seats in front of the main stands.



See the puddles

However, umbrellas were the main weapons and it was a battle to avoid being poked in the eye and drips from neighbouring umbrellas, see picture showing umbrellas and puddles! Not only was it wet but it was cold too.

The soldiers all came on parade wearing their grey greatcoats and it seemed it would be a drab affair. Imagine everyone's pleasure when the order was given to 'doff coats' and orderlies marched up and down lines collecting great piles of coats closely followed by unit land rovers collecting same. There was a great sigh of relief mingled with the wonder of how all the lovely red tunics would get dried out – and back to their original owner! We had a very tall sergeant from the Irish Guards (the Regimental Colour being trooped). This year the parade included seven Guards each comprising 3 officers and 70 men.



Very tall Irish Guardsman waiting for his greatcoat to be collected.

The parade went ahead with a 'Mexican wave' each time the Colour passed by and we had to stand to show respect. It was amusing when each Guard was lining up and numbering-off, when the 'eyes front' was given they snapped their heads frontwards and each Busby gave off a great shower of raindrops!

After an hour, the rain stopped and we had intermittent sun and clouds which lasted until the end of the Parade. The most thrilling part for me was the mounted guards parading past us in the advance position only six feet away with the leading officer holding his sword out as if 'at the charge'. As we were leaving through the crowds I passed by an extremely tall Colonel of the Irish Guards and realised he had been the 'Colonel' carrying out the

Review travelling in the inspecting carriage. I just looked up and up and up at him! (I was 4'11" when I joined up for employment with Royal Signals. I served in both 1 & 4 Sqns of 16 Signal Regt in Rheindahlen and Bielefeld between 1970 and 1973.

PDF Compressor Free Version

HEROS RETURN AUGUST 2009

W/477941 Mrs Joyce Stephenson née Eaton
3 Kilcreggan Court, Saltwell Road, Gateshead NE8 4TR

Up with the lark and leaving Newcastle, we joined other ex-ATS, veterans from all three services and carers on the coach heading for France and Belgium. We had a long journey including the channel crossing and then our visits to war graves and cemeteries of the World War 1.

Arrived in Calais on a beautiful, warm sunny day and on to Belgium where our hotel, De Oude Abdij, was an impressive stone building surrounded by apple trees. It was situated in a small village where the big old church chimed hourly; a reminder that time moves too quickly.

The hotel had an interesting past: first a brewery, then a monks' haven where wines were made in copious amounts. It was also full of memorabilia; especially neckties of various regiments. Of course there were refreshments, including a wee dram for those who preferred one. The following day we left for Dunkirk Memorial War Graves (including Tyne Cot), Ypres, Essex Farm Dressing Station then back to Ypres for the service commemorating the last post. We were honoured to take part and lay the wreaths. The service was emotional to say the least. Off to the remaining cemeteries including Vimy Ridge war graves, (Canadian) and the Black Watch in Arras. Day by day we were made more aware of the sacrifice that young, and not so young men paid. Sadly, too many graves just said, "A soldier known to God only". The graves throughout were well maintained and the sun shone upon them whilst we were there. As we left each cemetery, the exultation was said and we laid our small contribution of poppies.

Our carers helped anyone who needed it and they all did very well: we owe them a lot. My young grandson was one of them and he is now much more aware of the sad



Newcastle Branch members on their WW1 tour

history of years gone by. Homebound now but not before spending a few hours in Bruges, its historic buildings, cobbled streets, souvenirs and mostly – ohhhhh the chocolate! Time for appreciation now – thank you to Betty Herschal and George, a most excellent driver who made sure we did not miss a thing; and the National Lottery without whom our trip might not have been possible. Good wishes to all.

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS IN GUILDFORD

EXHIBITION AT GUILDFORD MUSEUM: JANUARY – APRIL 2009

W/425499 Sgt. Jane Smith née Stark WRAC Staff Band,
1965 – 1969
pjs@theharbour.plus.com

Following in the footsteps of Lynn Gale, *Lioness 2/2009* who attended the official preview of the exhibition held at Guildford Museum, I was keen to visit and managed this on 15 April – almost exactly 10 years after the service in Guildford Cathedral to commemorate the 50th anniversary. For 51 years, 1941 – 1992, Guildford was the centre for ATS/WRAC basic training and this was the Museum's first exhibition on the Corps.



No 2 Dress with the recruiting poster "Two sides of an exciting life" in the background

The wide variety of items displayed in the main gallery gave some idea of the huge scope of its work during those years. Amongst the memorabilia was a collection of Service memories from 1911 – 2004 entitled, "This is the Army, Miss Jones" which had been published and

presented by Hereford Branch and two scrapbooks setting out information on the background of the Corps with descriptions of uniforms. The uniforms themselves are always fascinating and two display cases showed an Officer's Mess Dress; a No. 2 Dress uniform; a No. 1 Dress jacket and breeches, and a No. 1 Dress uniform.

It was interesting to see the architect's photographs from the Property Services Agency SE Region, Major Maintenance and Modernisation Plan Phase 5: February 1988 – November 1989. They revealed that the redevelopment had cost £27 million and had been completed just three years before the Corps was disbanded.

As 1 July 2009 marked the 60th anniversary of the formation of the WRAC Staff Band, I was very pleased to see a whole display case devoted to Band memorabilia including musical instruments and Band accoutrements; a Bandswoman's No. 1 Dress uniform with ceremonial lanyard and belt, known in my day as "cerries," plus a selection of photographs. Guildford was the Band's permanent base so it was always "home" to us. Also, the trade of Bandswoman was the only one in which it was possible to serve 22 years in the same place!



Band items including the Glockenspiel

I particularly enjoyed the popular culture-type exhibits, for example, the print of a water colour by Ken Howard depicting WRAC personnel serving with 39 Infantry Brigade in Northern Ireland, unfortunately undated; [Editor: November 1980] an advertisement from the *Lioness* for Officers' tailored uniforms by Simpsons in Piccadilly and a striking recruiting poster produced by HM Stationery Office – again, no date.

Like Lynn Gale, I enjoyed the 1966 recruiting film entitled, "A Long Cool Look at the WRAC", the operative word at the time being "cool" presumably! I recognised several women in it, one of whom I knew very well.

While the film probably comes over today as an oddity from the dim and distant past, to me it remains a



No 1 Dress Jacket

memorial to a friend who has been dead for many years now.

Speaking of memorials, the sensitive mention of the deaths of Carolyn Slater and Ann Hamilton in the 1974 pub bombings was an essential reminder that, long before Afghanistan, women were dying in the service of their country. For the first time, the reality of this hit home in Guildford.

There was also a visitor's book to sign and some familiar names of previous visitors jumped out at me.

Overall, the Curator of Local History, Matthew Alexander and Carol Brown, Retail and Visitor Service's Officer, are to be congratulated in putting together a sympathetic and thought-provoking exhibition. My only niggle would be that there was no catalogue or even a leaflet to describe the exhibits in more detail. Of course, the assistance given by Maj Freebairn, the Curator of the AGC Museum, former members of the WRAC and the family of the late Jacquie Warsop made a significant contribution to the success of the exhibition.

This sort of exhibition is essential if the work of the WRAC is not to be forgotten. Although the National Army Museum in Chelsea and the Imperial War Museum have material relating to the Corps in their archives they have very little on display. So, all credit to Guildford for keeping the flag flying in our Diamond Anniversary year!

Branch News

BAND BRANCH

PDF Compressor Free Version

Hello to all Band Branch members everywhere. I do hope you are all well and have survived the winter wet. I am sure we are looking forward to our next reunion and branch meeting in dear old Skeggy on May Bank Holiday 2010. We are fortunate to have a member who has moved to Skegness and she will very helpfully do the research of what entertainment and places of interest will be available.

The recent anniversary of the Berlin Wall coming down brought back many memories for us as we were in Berlin before the wall was built. I was actually there the day it came down and I even have a piece of the original wall. I do recall we had rather a lot of fun in Berlin maybe a few sore heads, and the memory of Mandy?

I must thank those of you who have paid your Band Branch subs very promptly. We were running very low, but one kind member has generously loaned £200 to be repaid when we have a very successful Tombola. I also receive books of stamps from some which is very helpful as that is where most of our costs arise. Those of you who have yet to send, please do so as it is not really fair for our other members to support you.

Unfortunately, I have to report that WO1 Edward (Ted) Stevens passed away on 29 December 2009 after a long battle with cancer. Those of us who served with him will be sad to hear the news but will also have fond memories of his time as Band Sergeant Major in the early days of the Band.



WRAC Band with BSM Ted Stevens on the far right of the front row

Do get in touch if there are any questions and may I wish you health and a better New Year. My name is Ann Jones and I can be contacted on 0117 9406185.

BATH BRANCH

Bath Branch ended 2009 on a "High Note" with a visit from our Vice-President, Lt Col Sue Westlake, and our Area Chairman, Major Mack. We were very pleased to

welcome them as they both had to travel a long distance in very bad weather.



Maj Maskens-McIntyre, Lilian Lewis and Lt Col Westlake

It was an enjoyable event as the Vice President presented our former Vice-Chairman, Mrs Lilian Lewis, with a Certificate of Appreciation for her work for the branch over very many years. Lilian is a person who works quietly, efficiently and very hard for the branch in the background and we are extremely indebted to her. We had a very enjoyable Tea Party with quite a large number attending: some had travelled a long distance to be with us. Membership is quite scattered throughout Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire so we try if possible to visit each member if Bus passes allow (Please don't axe them Gordon Brown). We also recently hired a small bus to meet our Swindon member, Muriel Baker, who organised a super lunch for us: that was a very pleasing event.

Our AGM took place last November. Our numbers are reducing and we have very few ex-WRAC so we are older and, sadly, three of our members died during the year. However we have a full programme planned for 2010 and are working hard to raise funds to hire a coach to visit Southampton in June for our next Area Reunion. We are looking forward to this visit. Hopefully some of us will meet up in March at the Association AGM. We hope for a healthy year for all members in 2010 with not too many financial problems for us all.

BEXHILL BRANCH

Another year has flashed by. Where did it go? How much of it did we put to good and profitable use and how much did we squander? Maybe our New Year's resolutions will help us to put our affairs in order or maybe our end of year report will carry the dreaded 'Could do better' remark. No, the success of the Grand Reunion belies that, shining as it did from the photographs and articles in *Lioness* 2/2009. Also, a large number of us would have caught a glimpse of Lt Col Westlake in the front row of the contingent marching past the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. Her expression showed a mixture

of enthusiasm and pride. Well done, Ma'am. Jenny, our Secretary/Treasurer was also marching in that front row. Wasn't that a good and smart turnout of WRAC members? Probably the best yet!

Since our last PDF Compression Free Version very good talk from a member of SSAFA, a few interesting short talks from members about their service lives, the AGM, the Harvest baskets which were judged and then auctioned to boost branch funds and the Christmas party (two lady Police Community Support Officers turned up for that – one to introduce the other and to drink tea and eat cakes). We have got one of them down to speak to us next year so you see it works both ways – read on and all will become clear in the next paragraph. The Christmas lunch is yet to come and will be held in a local restaurant although with fewer members attending than in the past.

The policeman who was our March speaker is now our friend. We enjoyed his visit so much that we told him that tea and biscuits are usually served at about 3 pm and he would be welcome to call in if passing. He has come often since then (sometimes soon after 2pm) seldom empty handed, bringing advice leaflets, handbag alarms and general advice. He is down to give us another talk next year. He sometimes brings a colleague with him to introduce to us. He is a Police Community Support Officer and, when asked, told us that this is happening throughout the country – bringing back the copper on the beat, thank goodness. We hear that he is as popular playing rounders with the Scout Cubs as he is with us old ladies drinking tea.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Having just read through what I wrote for *Lioness* 2/2009, I see that we were about to visit Trentham Gardens in Staffordshire. We had a wonderful day provided by the Garden Trust.

In July a group of ex-ATS attended Swanshurst School – lunch was provided and groups of girls circulated amongst the different Associations to talk to members about their war time service. In August we had a visit from a nephew of Maureen Deeley who talked us through a film of himself and others mountain climbing for charity. The group are all firefighters and incredibly fit ex-Royal marines etc. We were all so impressed by the lengths that people go to in raising funds for Troop Aid/Help for Heroes.

I've missed out Armed Forces Day in June – yes, it rained again for the third year running and all in the March Past at the end of the day were soaked. Maureen Deeley and Sue Dolphin had to dry the Association and Branch Standards ready for the following day when they were paraded at the National Memorial Arboretum. Maureen has attended many funerals this year of Service personnel and we thank her for that.

October – The Committee was re-elected....maybe next year?! November we held our usual Bring/Buy. December we have already had our Christmas Lunch!

PROGRAMME FOR 2010

March	– Talk – Betty Webb – Bletchley Park
April	– Bring and Buy Sale/Quiz
May	– Birthday Lunch
June	)
July	) To be arranged – outing
August	)
September	– Final subscriptions
October	– AGM
November	– Bring and Buy Sale
December	– Christmas Lunch

Finally – our Treasurer Mary Gunning and her granddaughter have collaborated in the production of special Birthday cards for the 90th Birthday of members – some members were reluctant to give us their DOBs!

Remembrance Day – Several members went to London and in Birmingham a Poppy Wreath from the branch was taken by Frances Jenkinson as usual.

The branch is thriving at the present time but some members are suffering from various illnesses and we miss them at our meetings – we do think of them and try to keep in touch always.

Best wishes for a peaceful New Year everyone.

BLACKPOOL BRANCH

The north wind doth blow and it certainly did here in Blackpool but we were lucky compared to the people whose homes were flooded in other parts of the country. Eight members of our branch attended the North West Area Reunion at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool on Saturday 19 September. It was a very enjoyable day with an excellent buffet lunch and live entertainment all afternoon: old friendships were renewed and new ones made. Six of our members attended a Christmas luncheon party at the Marriot Hotel, Preston by courtesy of the Not Forgotten Association and we enjoyed it very much. Christmas has come and gone by the time you read this so a Happy New Year to all Association members and HQ staff.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

We wish to start by expressing our sincere thanks to all in the Weymouth and Portland Branch for hosting the South and South West Area Reunion this year which should have been hosted by us. Twelve of our members had a great day out at their event.

We are not as active as some branches, but we are here and we have a regular meeting place at the Westcliffe Premier Inn. We were entertained there recently by a retired Lancashire Chaplain who made the subject of churches, towers, graveyards and tombstones sound fascinating.

During the summer we enjoyed a minibus trip through

the New Forest. We visited various areas including the Portuguese Fireplace, which is now a memorial to a Portuguese Army unit based there during World War 1, before enjoying a cream tea at Milford on Sea. Jillian, our Treasurer and Social Secretary, was the courier and persuaded her hands to bring them home.

We are now looking forward to our first Christmas Lunch at the Premier Inn.

BRISTOL BRANCH

Bristol has had another very good six months. On 27th June, Armed Forces Day, we paraded with other veterans and had a stall in the local park where we gave out information about the Association and our branch. It also gave us an opportunity to remind people that women served as well!

Our AGM in October went very well and most of the Committee were voted back on. Our Chairman and I attended the Area Secretaries meeting at Wilton. Once again the meal was superb. It is always nice to meet up with the other Secretaries and to hear what they have been organising and perhaps pick up a few tips! We are looking forward to the Area Reunion at Southampton in June of next year but were disappointed that we could not attend the Area Reunion at Weymouth this year. Also in October, the Festival of Remembrance was held at the Colston Hall and four of our members represented us on stage.

We were also represented at Bristol on Remembrance Sunday. I was in London and it was nice to see so many at the Cenotaph Parade this year. I have decided that this was my last one and, although I will be supporting members of our Bristol Branch next year, I am sure that I will miss the camaraderie of the London one.

We have had our Christmas meeting and apart from nibbling on Christmas goodies, we held a bring and buy sale, and a raffle of hampers which raised much needed funds. We are now looking forward to our Annual Lunch in February 2010 and hope the weather is kind to us.

Our thanks to all at Headquarters who work so hard on our behalf to ensure that we are kept informed of any events that are happening and also for our *Lioness*. Best wishes to you all.

BURY BRANCH

We have just enjoyed our Christmas lunch at the old White Lion Hotel, Bury. Numbers are dwindling through age and illness but we continue with our monthly meetings.

One of our younger members, ex-WRAC Pat Oldham née Hickman represented us on Remembrance Sunday and placed our wreath at the Cenotaph. Pat served with the WRAC in Aldershot at the Mons Officer Cadet School.

On 30 November we attended with thousands of others in Bury to see the parade of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers who had just returned from Afghanistan – a very proud and moving experience especially as so many of the lads were local to this area. Bury was the home of

the Lancashire Fusiliers before reorganisation of the Army and the new Fusiliers' Museum in Bury is well worth a visit.

The feature in the last *Lioness* 'Women serving in the Army Today' was very interesting and an eye-opener. The choice of jobs they have and do is amazing. We greatly admire them.

Best wishes to everyone.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Earlier in the year in June, four Branch members enjoyed an all expenses paid trip to London courtesy of the Not Forgotten Association and you can see a report of their trip elsewhere in the magazine. In July we held our Summer Tea Party with our friends from Medway



Revd Sue Wing prepares the strawberries supervised by Kate and Barbara



They were obviously very tasty!

Branch and members of the WRAF and WRNS Associations also came along.

Sadly, due to unforeseen circumstances, we were unable to hold our annual August meeting at Mavis's beach hut but we all met at the Donkey Sanctuary to discuss our programme for 2010. October is the month for our AGM and in November Liz Cork paid us a return visit to update us on the work of the Donkey Sanctuary. Our year finished with 36 members and guests enjoying a Christmas meal in the lovely festive surroundings of the Dominican Priory where we hold our monthly meetings, usually on the first Wednesday of the month. When I took over as Secretary in 2001 (was it really that long ago?), we had at least 30 members attend meetings. However, our numbers are slowly dwindling and an average of 18 is now the norm. So, may I take this opportunity to ask our ex-WRAF members to think about taking a more active role in the branch, to continue the good work started by our ex-ATS members over 60 years ago? A plea, I'm sure, that is echoed by many other branches.

CHELMSFORD

We are glad to be able to report that the celebrations for our 19th Anniversary went off well: a nice hotel with a garden on a very sunny day made it all the more enjoyable and we pleased to welcome our Area Chairman, Mrs. Patricia Stevenson, again.

September – Following our summer break we resumed our usual meeting day on the third Tuesday of the month at the RAFA Club in Chelmsford. A competition on "Our favourite poem" produced a very good response from members and made this a really good meeting. The winning poem titled "England" was read by Barbara Rayment.

October – Our Branch AGM is held then and we re-elected our Officers and Committee. This did not take long as everyone was happy to continue serving so we got with the important bit of tea served with scones and jam!

November – Usually a cold wet and dark day but a record number turned up to listen to a speaker who told us about the origin of Christmas, mince-pies and other Christmassy "Old customs" which was fascinating listening.

December – Once more we held our Christmas Lunch at a hotel on the outskirts of Chelmsford where we always find first-class food and friendly service. Patricia joined us again and we appreciated her giving the Toast to the Queen along with a few words to members.

We look forward to the New Year and hope it is not too late to wish other branches a successful year with lots of new members. Our sincere thanks to everyone at Worthy Down to whom nothing seems too much trouble. Do please contact the Hon. Secretary if you live in the Chelmsford area and are not already a member. If you would like to join us, you will be made very welcome. Tel: 01245 251088.

CLEVELAND BRANCH

I, Robbie Emmerson, am the new "Reporter" for our Branch. Irene Maclean decided after 10 years of writing our branch report to throw in her quill and I was "volunteered" by our members. Our thanks go to Irene for all her good endeavours.



A few of our members at the North East Area Reunion

Over the last few months we have celebrated Veterans Day with a tea-party and a quiz. Eighteen members attended the NE Reunion in September at York and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves – many thanks to our Area Chairman Maj Dot Ryder and York members.

Our Standard Bearer, Ann Mahony, has had a busy time attending many parades including Veterans Day at Eden Camp where 179 Standards were paraded. She also attended many funerals and had the honour to be invited to York Minster to attend the funeral of a young soldier recently killed in Afghanistan.



Veterans Day at Eden Camp

Ann Burrows, a new WRAC member, generously donated £100 to our branch funds. It was part of her sponsorship money for running a 10K marathon with the Marsh Horse Harriers of Billingham. We are very grateful and congratulate her on her success.

Four members attended the WRAC Dinner Club in October at Solihull and as usual had a great time. On the way home they stopped off at the National Memorial Arboretum which they agreed was very impressive, the

WRAC Association plot will, in a few years time, be most colourful. Irene Maclean paraded at the Cenotaph in London on Remembrance Sunday for the second year running and met up with a lot of her pals from the Dinner Club. They looked very smart in their green fleeces.

PDF Compressor Free Version

We hope to celebrate Christmas with a luncheon at the Thistle Hotel, Middlesbrough on Wednesday 9 December and by the time you read this report it will be a distant memory, but to all readers – we wish you all a healthy and happy 2010.



The commemorative plaque at the front of the WRAC Association plot

Editor: The words on the plaque are:

This grove is dedicated to all the 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 1992. The front of the grove is based on the letter W for women. Behind that there is a more open area for seating and quiet contemplation. The trees and shrubs have been specially selected because of their names or for their grace and elegance.

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 their country and their country is proud of their service.

CREWE BRANCH

We attended the reunion in the North West held at The Adelphi, Liverpool on 19 September 2009. Seated with members from the Blackpool and Liverpool Branches, we were treated to some live music from the Plain Truth Music Club and a selection of familiar songs performed by a talented vocalist.

It was but a short train journey for us but we appreciated the excellent buffet provided and, of course, the opportunity to meet with other satisfied attendees. We also 'bagged' our fair share of the raffle/tombola style prizes, so thanks go to the organisers for arranging such a varied afternoon's pleasure for everyone.



Blackpool, Liverpool and Crewe Branch Members at their Area Reunion

Autumn Dance. Our fund raising dance was well attended on 1 October 2009 so we continue to remain indebted to the local people who turn up and impress us with their undoubted dancing prowess – together with their generosity!

Christmas Lunch. As usual, we will have our Branch Christmas lunch sometime in December. Our numbers may be small but we are confident that our appetites will be hearty! Best wishes for 2010.

DUMFRIES BRANCH

We have had a very happy and companionable year together. Three members of our Committee were extremely hospitable. Helen Jeffries arranged a lovely lunch and entertainment for us in Templand Village Hall opposite her house, Dorah Mundell entertained us to another one of her delightful Social Teas at her home and Susan Marcroft treated us to a most delicious tea, mostly baked by herself, in Dalbeattie Church Hall. Members also enjoyed other events including a day out at Gretna Gateway, sharing the coach with Dalbeattie SWRI to cut costs. *Editor: – sounds like a good idea that other branches may wish to consider.* It was most



Dumfries and Galloway Branch with Dalbeattie SWRI

successful: one member won a pair of 'Hotter' shoes and each of us received a £5 voucher. This was followed by tea at Powfoot.

Susan Marcroft represented our Branch at Westminster Abbey for the **PDF Compressor Free Version** and wonderful experience.

Some of our members have been busy baking for groups of soldiers in Afghanistan, who are up here in Dumfries and Galloway for a week's rest and recuperation. I am told they loved the home baking and had hearty appetites!

EASTBOURNE BRANCH

Members and their guests have just enjoyed our Christmas buffet lunch in as usual, the Chatsworth Hotel, Eastbourne. Numbers were down, partially because of poor transport in the area. A coach outing, organised by the Royal British Legion, Hailsham, was also enjoyed in spite of the "damp" weather. The colours at Hever Castle were spectacular.

We send our Best Wishes for 2010 to all.

FIFE AND TAYSIDE BRANCH

At the close of the year 2009 we have 24 Annual Members and 42 Life Members. The branch continues to meet on the last Thursday of each month.

On April we had our AGM which was attended by thirteen members. Quite a number of members who normally attend were absent. Our chairperson welcomed the party and opened the proceedings. The meeting ended with high tea followed by a raffle.

Our Christmas lunch was held as usual in the Royal George Hotel, Perth and eighteen members were able to attend. The meal itself was superb and we were well waited upon: again the party ended with a very good raffle.

Now we all have to have our own Christmas with families and friends but we do not forget our past comrades and we wish all the *Lioness* readers a very Happy New Year.

GRIMSBY BRANCH

Unfortunately because of age and illness, only six members of Grimsby Branch could attend the Northern Area Reunion in York. They all thoroughly enjoyed themselves and are looking forward to the next one.

After an uneventful summer we organised a fish and chip lunch in October and ten members enjoyed that. November was a very busy month with the AGM at which we saw a change of Chairman. Audrey Porter, who has held the post since 1994, retired due to ill health and Carole Tyler was elected. Monica Barnes was elected to Carol's previous post as Vice Chairman. Audrey was delighted to accept the appointment of Vice-President

and was presented with a certificate, a bouquet of flowers in WRAC colours and a small silver box in appreciation of her years of work for the branch.

We continued in November with the collection for the Poppy Appeal this year in B&Q due to health and safety issues in our usual collecting place, ASDA. The Standard attended the Grimsby Cenotaph on Remembrance Day 8 November and was requested to be at the Town Hall on Armistice Day 11 November. The Standard was on parade again on Saturday 21 November as the coffins of two of Grimsby's soldiers from the Grenadier Guards were returned to their home town. Many standards, the Mayor and civic officers, the Town Crier and thousands of people lined the route through Grimsby Town centre to welcome the heroes back home. Some days later the standard was in attendance at the two funerals and paid last respects to the "lads," Matthew and Jimmy.

Always thinking of their tummies, fifteen members went for their Christmas lunch early in December and celebrated in true style with a three course lunch and all the trimmings, starting off the festive season with a "bang", (probably a burst balloon or someone falling off a chair).

Four Grimsby ladies have been invited to a Christmas lunch by the Lincoln Branch and they are looking forward to meeting old friends in Lincoln. In the New Year we are having a branch party and have invited Lincoln Branch to join us.

We are to start a recruiting drive in the New Year to find new members to strengthen our happy band and ensure the future of the organisation. A happy and prosperous New Year to all.

HARROGATE BRANCH

September was our AGM and was attended by 17 of our ladies. Our longstanding Secretary, Sheila Pantin, requested to retire after fifteen years in the post....all that time keeping tabs on all events and organising outings and speakers. She will be a hard act to follow. Horror of



Pam Shearstone, new Branch Secretary resting on the WRAC Commemorative Bench at the National Memorial Arboretum

horrors, having been just a goffer for a while – and being the youngest member of our gang, I have been appointed as Secretary. I promise to give it my best shot and I know that Barbara Dawson, our Chairman will make sure I keep my socks pulled up and attend to the job in hand. The North East Area Reunion at York was a great success by the six of our members who managed to get there. Bus companies from Harrogate don't realise that transport is required at reasonable times for ladies who shop and lunch! But we arrived in time to say hello and to help with folding raffle tickets. We enjoyed meeting members of other branches who were seated with.

This year, I had the honour of placing our Branch Wreath at the Harrogate Cenotaph. Four of us attended the service at the Garden of Remembrance at St Peter's in November which is held a fortnight before 11 November. However, St Peter's Church has begun their long awaited new build and overhaul so our monthly meetings are returning to the Wesley Chapel. They are held on the last Wednesday of the month from 1.30 to 3.30 except in March (Luncheon), July (summer outings) and December when we usually enjoy our Christmas Lunch at the St George Hotel. We know them and they know us – also the bus passes the door so no problem there!



Wishing all branches a positive and glorious summer in 2010.

HASTINGS BRANCH

The year 2010 is now with us and we hope all our colleagues in the Association will have a healthy and contented year – may our comradeship thrive. For Hastings Branch the year 2009 followed its usual pattern of meetings, speakers, outings and our monthly luncheon club. Our strawberry tea was held in a beautiful garden in Bletchley, the home of the daughter of one of our members – Joan Duck.

We welcomed just one new member during the year, so attendance at meetings remains at an average of twelve – several members live afar and several are unfortunately in residential or nursing homes.

We were sorry our Secretary, Dorothy Dixon, had to resign from the position due to ill health. Dorothy started Hastings Branch and, in addition, to a stint as Treasurer and also Chairman, she had completed 21 years as

Secretary. Thanking her for her contribution to the Branch our President presented her with flowers and – as she had completed 40 years in the Association – the gold plated badge which she was delighted to receive as a gift from the Branch.

We are fortunate that the Reverend Barbara Hobbs has volunteered to act as our Secretary – ex-WRAC she is computer literate and not yet entitled to a free bus pass! So we send greetings to you all and should you visit Hastings in the summer, please do make contact.

HULL BRANCH

The Branch is still maintaining an average of ten – twelve members at our monthly meetings. We welcomed Mrs Jose Verbist in March, have transferred in Mrs J Meller from York Branch, transferred out Miss Marjorie Cole to HQ on her becoming the 3rd Lady In Patient at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Mrs J K (Sue) Green has moved to Banbury (and Birmingham Branch), so we now have 22 Annual members and 10 Life members – total 32.

It is good to know that both Marjorie and Sue are settling in well in their new surroundings. Several members are no longer able to attend Branch meetings but we try to keep in contact. We still meet on the 1st Friday each month except January at the Royal British Legion, 44 Beverley Road, Hull. We have book sales, "nearly new" raffles, a summer outing (more locally now), attend the North East Area Reunion and Grand Reunions and hold quizzes as well as a Christmas Lunch. We support the RBL Poppy Appeal, sell poppies and lay a WRAC poppy wreath at the Hull Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. We have attended the NVA, CESA, Veterans Parades and events as and when possible and we support each other by telephone etc between meetings.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Mrs Emma Hammond on the loss of her dear husband and others with medical or transport problems. Our best wishes are extended to all members of the Association and many congratulations on the latest edition of the *Lioness* – it was splendid.

LEEDS BRANCH

Leeds Branch now includes several WRAC members who have brought new light into our monthly meetings. The year has been overshadowed by the very sudden death in September of our Chairman, Emily Newbould, who had been a guiding member of the Branch for over 25 years so she leaves a very large gap. Fortunately, in Elizabeth Bustard, we have a hard working member who will try to continue where Emily left off. As usual all members will help in the running of the Branch to ensure its success.

We have participated in the Association activities such as the Grand Reunion and Northern Area Lunch. We also had a memorable day at the National Memorial Arboretum thanks to the help of Leeds Branch RA Association. We had lunch out in Wetherby and our Christmas Lunch was a very happy 90th Birthday Party for Rosa Blewitt. Mary Clements was one of 90 ex Land

Army ladies who experienced a wonderful day in London. We joined in her pride as she recounted an unforgettable experience. June McCunn is to be awarded the Elizabeth Cross on behalf of her eldest son, a Gunner, who was killed in Northern Ireland. We look forward to hearing all about it at the Remembrance Ceremony early next year. *Editor: You may remember reading June McCunn's moving article on page 23 of Lioness 2/2009.*

We all did our bit towards The Poppy Appeal and several members attended Remembrance Parades. Our Chairman placed a Poppy on the grave of the ex Master Gunner, General Sir Martin Farndale, which is near to the grave of her husband in North Yorkshire. We wish all members a Healthy and Fulfilling 2010.

LEICESTER & NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

By the time you read this report we will have completed our first twelve months at Devonshire Place and what a difference a year makes! We regularly have on average twenty five ladies at our monthly meetings and recently have recruited four more ladies into the branch.

In June Carol Morris and I (Sue Slattery) demonstrated pace stick drill at our meeting. This raised a few laughs and a couple of members were brave enough to give it a try. Our ladies in green were once again on parade along with the Branch Standard, this time in Normandy. Branch members also attended the Armed Forces Day both in Leicester and Nottingham.

July - Our trial bingo session - what a laugh we all had at this meeting. No-one could take it seriously. Perhaps ear defenders are the order of the day for next time because of the noise, but then the caller would have even less chance of being heard. Perhaps we should all learn how to lip read! Also, this month, ten of us joined the ladies at their branch in Tamworth for a skittle match and buffet: needless to say we lost. We had a lovely afternoon thanks to Belle and the Tamworth/ Birmingham ladies.

On a sad note this month we lost one of our members, Brenda Hawkins. Several of our members attended her funeral and the Branch Standard was paraded.

August - A cake and catch up meeting. Our members certainly enjoyed the cake and the time to discuss past



All at the Sailing Club

events and the forthcoming highlight of the year. I am referring of course to our annual visit to the sailing club courtesy of Doris Doswell, Irene Bell and Sandra Smith. This was my first year in attendance and despite being involved with the preparation and then the clean up it was a great day. The food was excellent; the piled high plates said it all. The weather was warm and sunny and the boat trips were greatly enjoyed by all who cared to participate. Many thanks to all who worked hard to make this such a perfect day.

September - This month's Harvest Festival raised £70 for our funds. A well-attended outing on the Nottingham Princess on the River Trent proved a great success. We had a three hour cruise with windy but sunny weather and a very enjoyable meal washed down with a glass of wine or beer and plenty of tea and coffee. Two members were able to provide and drive two minibuses for this outing. Thanks to Carol for organising such a great day out.

October - AGM and there were no changes to branch officers this time. Two of our ladies have been poorly recently, Irene Bell, our Vice Chairman, who now appears to be on the road to recovery and Pam Richards, our Welfare Officer, who was recently in hospital for an operation. Pam is now home so we wish her a speedy recovery and return to good health.

Lyn Wenham our Standard Bearer has paraded the Branch Standard seventeen times over the past year, both in Europe and the UK. Many thanks to Lyn and all the ladies who have provided escort to the standard and supported her at different parades throughout the year.

November - the sherry/wine and mince pie meeting was a great success and it included our Christmas Fayre which raised £50. Our ladies in green - The Leicester seven plus one - and several other members, attended the Remembrance Day parade in London, seems they all had a great weekend. Also this month several members attended a social evening at the RBL Club in Oadby with the Korean Veterans' Association which was most enjoyable.

December 2009 will end with our Christmas Lunch at Devonshire Place on 8 December. January 2010 begins with a visit to the De Montfort Hall to see a production of Scrooge on the 7th. Finally, best wishes and good health to you all for 2010.

LINCOLN AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Another busy few months for the branch. The end of June saw us at Ayscoughfee Hall for the dedication of the new ATS stone in the memorial garden and what a beautiful setting. The branch was very well supported by members of the local Royal British Legion, the Leader of Spalding Council and, of course, our members and families. A lovely buffet lunch was enjoyed after the service courtesy of June Booth and Nan Waters.

Armed Forces Day was celebrated in Lincoln with a band and displays for the various Associations who belong to the Lincolnshire Ex-Services Association (LEXSA) to advertise and recruit new members. As you will see from

our photo we had a very smart stand and found three ex-WRAC and one ex-ATS. We have booked our space for next year!



At the beginning of July an evening meal was held at the Carre Arms in Sleaford and a record number of fifteen attended. We also welcomed two new members, Marie Arch and Christine Maxwell.

Wednesday 22nd July heralded a momentous event for our branch with a visit to Buckingham Palace. We received 20 invitations to attend the Not Forgotten Association Garden Party. Due to the number of members in the branch all the names went into a hat. After three pick-up points we headed down the A1 (after a fright – Joan Sharp did not have a ticket; but thanks to Anne at the NFA all was resolved) and stopped for lunch and a quick change in the Ladies in South Mimms Services for those who had travelled casually dressed. Well done to the branch members who all 'scrubbed up' beautifully for the occasion. Three members of the Royal family were in



Lincoln and District Branch at the Palace

attendance – the Duke of Kent and Prince Edward and Sophie, Duchess of Wessex, and several members were privileged to meet them. Afternoon tea, a walk around the gardens and the band of the Irish Guards Beating Retreat are all experiences we will be talking about for a long time to come. We could bore you to tears with tales of "Remember when we were at the Palace....."

Our August meeting was a culinary delight with our resident Chef, Marion Raithby, providing a super lunch with a choice from chicken curry and rice, cottage pie and vegetables or ham salad followed by apple pie and cream or trifle. We were really spoilt!

The North East Area Reunion was held at the Park Inn Hotel in York on Saturday 5th September and twelve members of the branch attended. The Area Chairman, Maj Dot Ryder said it was a 'trial run' for us as this branch is to host the event next year. A very enjoyable lunch was had by all.

Two great events in September. Firstly, the branch meeting when we held a Beetle Drive. A new member Sandy Poole visited that day and goodness knows what she thought of all the hilarity! Secondly, we were invited to Tamworth Branch for lunch and skittles. Great fun and apart from the saga of the fleeces we had a terrific time. Especially as one of our branch, Chris Corker, was the skittles champion. Thank you Tamworth – be warned we shall be back! (Maggie Purkis is responsible for the military fists on the front row!)



October saw us off to Solihull for the WRAC Dinner Club weekend. The committee surpassed themselves with finding the St John's Hotel and we are delighted that we shall be returning there in 2010. We also held a Bring and Buy sale at the October meeting and the members were again extremely generous in their 'bringing and buying'.

On Sunday 8th November, eight members of the branch were in London for the muster at the Cenotaph (we have to excuse Bimbo for marching with the RMP Association). It was a 'first' for a lot of the girls and from the comments most will be back again in 2010. One husband, who watched from the sidelines, thought we were wonderful and marched as though we had just come off drill practice. Well done everyone.



PDF Compressor Free Version

The final event to report on this time around is our Coffee Morning and Sale on Saturday 28th November during which we raised in excess of £800. Well done to all the members who came along to help the committee make it such a profitable event. Special mention (in no particular order) for Jackie Walton, Bimbo Coleman, Beryl Butcher, Beryl McKewan, Doreen Horne, Maureen West, Barbara Hudson, Joyce Gough, Christine Maxwell (plus son-in-law, Rick and grandson, Branson) and our special friend and supporter, Ann.

This will be posted before our Christmas Party and we look forward to welcoming visitors from the Grimsby Branch at that event. Best Wishes to everyone and, don't forget, visitors are always welcome.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

Members of the Branch continue to meet at the Adelphi Hotel on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Some of us meet for lunch and are then joined by other members for the meeting afterwards. As Secretary, I attended the Secretaries meeting at the Grand Reunion at Blackpool: unfortunately, I only managed the Saturday but a couple of our members, Irene Drew and Janet Vickers, managed the whole weekend and had a wonderful time. In May we went to the North West Cinema Organ Heritage Museum at Eccles. It was a very enjoyable outing and we were treated to a concert on a Wurlitzer Organ and the Organist finished his recital with a war time melody of songs in our honour.

In August the Not Forgotten Association treated us to their annual cruise on the Mersey which was enjoyed by all who were able to go. In November we entertained the Revd Bill Sandes who is Chaplain to Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service who told us about his work. As he is an operational fire fighter and an Anglican Vicar, it was all very interesting.

In September our Branch was host to the North West Area Reunion again at the Adelphi Hotel. Members came from over a wide area and everyone seemed to have a good time – we have to thank our Area Secretary, Pat Sanders, for doing most of the organising. We hope to hold next year's in Chester. Last week we enjoyed our Christmas Lunch at the Atlantic Tower Hotel overlooking the Pier Head and the River Mersey.

When we return in February after the Christmas and New Year break, we will be entertaining the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, Dame Lorna Muirhead, so that's something to look forward to.

We would still like new members to join us and enjoy some "esprit de corps", so if you are reading this and don't normally come to meetings, we would love to see you.

LUTON BRANCH

We have enjoyed our usual varied activities since last we were last in touch, in June we triumphed over the Association of Wrens, yet again, winning the annual quiz by 3 points. The old song said "The Navy gets the gravy, but the Army gets the beans" so we reckon beans must be brain-food.

July brought us a visit from "Hearing Dogs for the Deaf" which is a very interesting and worthwhile charity. All the dogs trained are either rescue dogs or those whose owners are unable to keep them for one reason or another. The speaker brought three dogs with her, all perfectly behaved, and very lovable. I don't think we had eaten enough beans in August because we lost to the Far East Vets, by just one point, in our quiz with them – there were some jolly hard questions! Alan Painter, a local magistrate, came to talk about his experiences in September – we have invited him back to enact a 'Mock Trial' next year. Our November meeting saw Paul Bullimore and his collection (a small part of it) of Old Toys, which again was very interesting. Anne brought her six year old grand-daughter along who was intrigued with some of the items. We are looking forward to our Christmas party in December and to our Anniversary lunch in January. Dot Bell née Cook, one of our ATS members, was one of the 35 ex-service personnel invited to Bletchley Park for their commemorative function on October 9th during which she was presented with her brooch by David Milliband. Dot was an interceptor and the only Army lady there although there were some WRNS & WAAF.



Sadly, since we last reported in the *Lioness*, we have lost two of our members – Georgina (Poppy) Gregory and Jean Vickers. We miss them both greatly.

PDF COMPRESSOR FREE VERSION

As our 60th anniversary year draws to a close, I think I can confidently say that our members will not only remember it for the fantastic Grand Reunion in Blackpool but also for branch events. But first I'm pleased to report that two new members worthy of note have joined us; first to arrive was Eileen Carter who had just retired from her dual positions as London Area Chairman and Trustee of the Association. Then, just before we went to Blackpool in March, Irene Hall our Area Secretary surprised me by saying that she would like to join our branch – we must be doing something right!

With our anniversary still in mind I felt we should turn our June garden party into a more special event so I hatched a plot ready to present for the members approval at our AGM. After that it was simply a case of confirming the arrangements and waiting until Lt Col Westlake decided if she could come as our guest speaker. It was by a happy coincidence that our party fell on Armed Forces Day and the weather was perfect. Our invited guests from Chester and Wirral branches arrived at Glansevern Hall Gardens near Welshpool with Pat their Secretary very much in command of the wheel of a large minibus! I invited these ladies because I wanted to thank them for the support they have afforded us (but especially me) ever since we began the branch four years ago. We hired the conference room for the afternoon and our hosts at Glansevern Hall surpassed themselves. Vases of flowers on the tables, the warmest of welcomes and a splendid buffet lunch that thirty-three members and guests were soon tucking into. We were delighted that Sue was able to join us and she gave us an informative and thought provoking talk about the Association, its future and the busy role that she plays within it.



Address from the Vice President

I personally will remember the event as 'the silly hat day.' Someone arrived with a rather small WRAC forage cap, which they promptly perched on my head. Not wanting to disappoint I did my best to keep it aloft but I was much

more comfortable with the large red one. I wore that to deliver a rendition of Jenny Joseph's 'Warning' to an attentive, but slightly bemused audience- I don't think they recognised me under the hat! To make the day even more special I recruited a new member, Maj (Retd) Chris Tucker QARANC, who had come as a guest. I don't expect Lt Col Westlake has many opportunities to personally welcome a new member but she did on this occasion. Later, a collection was made for the Association and with thanks to everyone's generosity, we were able to hand over a cheque for £165.



Marianne under the forage cap and the Vice President welcomes Chris Tucker

While some of our guests dispersed out into the gardens, others simply preferred to sit in the shade with a cup of tea or a cold beer! The raffle raised nearly £100 which will be used to send Christmas flowers to our more elderly and distant members.



Chester and Wirral enjoying the sunshine

In her letter afterwards, Sue described the day as 'a mini Welsh reunion,' well, our reuniting didn't end there. Our autumn meeting was a trip to the seaside so that Monica, who is unable to travel very far, could join us. Just two weeks before the event, shrewd Monica advised me to change the venue as the food had 'gone downhill' at our chosen one and she recommended the superb

Trefeddian Hotel which sits on the side of a hill overlooking the sea at Aberdovey.

Eighteen members and guests were soon reuniting: Kath from Pontypridd with Gwenda from Dolgellau; Nancy from Tywyn with Gwenda from Dolgellau; Lizzie, also from the Marches, with Monica from Tywyn; Pat and Terry from Pwllheli with me from the Marches. I always enjoy seeing those two as I served with Terry at Shorncliffe back in the early 60s, and finally, Nerys from Rhyl who came as a guest to be reunited with us all as she had been left out on a limb ever since Rhyl branch closed. We all sat at one long table to tuck into what can only be described as a celebratory feast. It was difficult to choose from the extensive menu but I'm still talking about the lunch I had on that day. Smoked salmon and shrimp followed by roast breast of guinea fowl, then rounded off with a huge dish of fresh strawberries and cream, and all for just £13.95! We discovered that one of the ladies serving our meal was none other than 22-year-old mother of two, Sgt Kyli Williams, the Tywyn Army Cadet Force Commander. I've promised to keep in touch with her.



Sgt Kyli Williams – a better fit for the forage cap!

If you are reading this as an Association member living in our area, but you are not yet a branch member, now you know what you are missing! You will be very welcome to join us. The branch AGM will be at The Longmynd Hotel, Church Stretton at 11am on Saturday 27th March 2010 followed by a 3-course lunch at 12.30pm.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH

All of us who went along to the Northern Area Reunion held in York in September had a wonderful day out. Congratulations to all concerned in making it such a great occasion. The food was lovely and I met lots of new people. The entertainment was not quite my cup of tea, (I would have preferred the Tremeloes) but I know the ATS ladies thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Sadly we have lost three more of our members: firstly our Chairperson, Mrs Mabel Bolton née Dee who died on 3rd September, we then found out Mrs Kath Hart had

died on August 14th and our most recent was Mrs Eleanor Bowden née McAll on 20th November.

On a brighter note we have three new members: Marjorie Douglas née Whitfield, Jane Benn and Rae Sharland. We are loving their company at our meetings.

Best wishes to all branch members.



Newcastle ladies at the Northern Area Reunion

NORFOLK BRANCH

This summer most of our meetings have been outdoor ones – the weather each time has been superb. First, a coffee morning in my garden at Meadow Rise. The next month, a sumptuous lunch prepared by Deanne in her garden, where we were serenaded by a musician who played all our long-remembered war-time tunes (they don't write 'em like it any more) and we were reluctant to leave, full of nostalgia, gossip and with loosened belts.



Madge Freeman, Lorna Lansdowne, Marjorie Spears, Doris Galbraith and Peggy Bell at Deanne's

In August Beryl kindly arranged a very pleasant afternoon of tea and cakes, including a treasure hunt and the opportunity to wander round her extensive and beautifully-kept garden. We have already dropped hints that next summer it would be very nice to have our meetings outdoors again.

We spent our next meeting day visiting Sheringham, the idea being to sunbathe a bit, perhaps have a paddle, but the lure of the Saturday market deflected the majority. It was just *so* convenient for the coach to stop. After lunch we went on to the Muckleborough Collection (the old Weybourne Castle) where there is a collection of army and RAF memorabilia and really needs a whole day to see it all.



*Beryl Manthorp in front
Standing L-R Liz Winter, Florence Galbraith, Lorna Lansdowne, Audrey Judy, Madge Freeman, Irene Warren, Joan Awbery, Joan Whittingham, Lyn Hatch and Audrey Told*

Back to indoors – and in November we had an unusual talk entitled “Idle Women”. We did not know there were any. We were right in one respect as none of us had heard of their work. During the war, when the men who had manned the canal boats on the Inland Waterways were called to arms, women took over the strenuous and dirty work of running the canal boats. The initials had been very unfairly allocated. They had the exceptionally hard job of manning these boats, carrying essential commodities, mainly coal and flour, to various points of distribution along the canal network. Our speaker described graphically the cramped and unhygienic conditions which the women endured in these constrained places, reading us extracts from an account written by one of the women so employed and showing photographs. It seems that fresh aspects of life in that time are still being revealed.

We are now looking forward to our Christmas tea-party on December 12th, inviting our WREN friends and arranging our annual lunch in Norwich on January 16th when we hope to rally a strong contingent.

Two of our members have ‘gone to print’. Rosa Riley has published a booklet of poems which first appeared in the North Elmham News. If you would like a copy, do telephone me, 01603 455070 and I will put you in touch with Rosa. Also, Beryl Manthorp, although she hasn’t yet ‘gone public’, has written of her life as a PTL. During her ATS life she travelled the length and breadth of the country. Her memory for places, people and happenings is almost photographic, so it makes a most interesting

read. If not so much as now, surely in the distant future these accounts of women’s service during ‘The War’ will be of great interest to those to whom those years are really ancient history.

The September *Lioness* was indeed a Bumper Fun Book which was greatly appreciated and it was so good to have news from women serving in the army today. Keep up the good work!

Too late to wish everyone a Happy Christmas but not too late to send New Year greetings to everyone and good health in 2010.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

The Summer and Autumn of 2009 were as busy as ever; we celebrated the 60th WRAC anniversary in July at the Royal Fleet Hotel with a buffet lunch, which could have been a disaster due to a mix-up with dates, but the manager, receptionist and barman managed to produce a credible lunch for us, though not the lunch we had hoped for! Our honoured guests, Lt Col Sue Westlake, Maj Jane Freebairn and Maj Maskens-McIntyre kindly said that they would not have realised about the catering problem if we hadn’t told them. We all enjoyed the afternoon just socialising and chatting which was very nice and relaxing.

The Veterans Week at the end of June was celebrated in Plymouth in style with our ladies manning our ATS/WRAC display stall in the Guildhall. We were between the tables displaying memorabilia of the ladies in munitions during the War on one side and the WRENS tables on the other side. The following day, Sunday, we attended the RAFA Parade and Service of Thanksgiving and Wreath Laying on the Hoe which was followed by many military displays in the sunshine that followed the morning rain. Our cadet, Katie McGee stood proudly with our standard and did not appear to notice the rain.



2nd Left: Katie McGee with our Branch Standard

Evon's garden party in August was once more dogged by bad luck because she was not well enough on the day and had to cancel it. She did, however, raise £115 from her loyal supporters for Cancer Research. Also in August we were invited by the WRENS to join them on a coach trip to Sidmouth. **PDF Compressor Free Version** Prolonging our lunch in a variety of pubs and cafes that we had individually dispersed to, the rain was not too much of a problem.

The Merchant Navy's Atlantic Day Parade on 6 September was held this year in St Andrew's Church. Seven members attended and were invited to the Stonehouse Social Club afterwards for a very good hot/cold buffet. We weren't able to attend the annual RAFA Battle of Britain Parade because it was on the same day as the South and South West Area Reunion in Weymouth. Six of us rattled up in a 16 seater mini-bus and four came by car for a very good lunch and a chat before and after!

Our AGM resulted in most of the existing officers being returned. However, Mrs Doris McCoy, our Vice-Chairman, who has worked for the Branch in many capacities for over 30 years, including Standard Bearer, Escort and Chairman as well as tea lady when required, finally has stepped down. We all welcomed Mrs Jane Evans, ex-WRAC, into her first appointment with our Branch as our new Vice-Chairman. We are fortunate this year because we have another new volunteer, Mrs Pat Fox, who has signed in as assistant to our Treasurer, Mrs Mary Davis.

In October I went to the South and South West Area AGM at the Wilton Bowls Club where we were once more grandly fed from several huge dishes of corned beef hash followed by treacle tart, à la war time memories, prepared and cooked for us by Joan, the Area Secretary. Unfortunately none of us were able to go to the WRAC Dinner in Solihull this year – hopefully we may be able to go in 2010.

The Festival of Remembrance has returned this year, thanks to the Federation of ex-Services who have been raising funds through the year in stores etc to make sure the Festival could be held. Cadet Katie McGee will parade our Branch Standard for us with Mary and Evon as escorts.

Our Christmas lunch will be at the Masonic Hall in Stoke as usual and I'm sure it will be a great success; Major Mack has kindly agreed to join us and we will be welcoming some of the WRENS Association and we will be going to their Christmas lunch too.

We have two new ex-WRAC members: one lives in Babbacombe and the other in Camborne; both towns that are too far for an easy commute to Plymouth but we hope to see them whenever possible.

Our Committee have a meeting in January 2010 and ten of us are looking forward to the AGM at the Victory Services Club in March.

We have our meetings in the Royal Fleet Club – 1.30–4 p.m. on the 1st Monday of the month, except when there is a

Bank Holiday, the meeting then is moved to the 2nd Monday. There is no meeting in January. Please feel free to join us anytime. Contact telephone number: Ruth Jennings, Secretary – 01752 363118.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

Portsmouth Branch now has 52 members. We have not had such an active year this time. A party from Portsmouth went to the Grand Reunion at Blackpool: not as many as usual because it was a long way to travel, but everyone enjoyed it. We did not attend the Area Reunion at Weymouth as it was just a bit too far for a day trip. Hope to go to the one in 2010 if it is nearer home. We held our AGM in July and had 13 members present – more than usual.

Events were planned for the year. We still hold coffee mornings on Saturday mornings in member's homes in various areas as the branch is very spread out. We attended several veterans' parades and our Standard Bearer, Sally Watson, went to two parades in July. Two members attended the parade and reception of The County Regiment March to the Guildhall, just back from Afghanistan. A big crowd welcomed them – a very moving occasion especially when a wreath was laid in memory of one of the soldiers who had been killed that week.

The last parade was Remembrance Sunday and we managed a few members – three watching, one wreath layer and three on parade, led by our Assistant Standard Bearer, Phyllis Price who managed to get her photograph in the local paper even if it was a small one. Two last coffee mornings in October and November were in Gosport. The November one was well attended at Elizabeth Court, a sheltered block of flats, where one of our members Grace Foster, 93 years old, lives.

SALISBURY BRANCH

Once again our branch has been quite active and we have gained three new members! In June, Alison gave an illustrated talk about her recent holiday in Indonesia and Java. We visited the Army Air Corps Museum at Middle Wallop in July which was most interesting.



Salisbury Branch and visitors

We all look forward to our annual garden party in Val's garden and we were very lucky to have a fine day (quite unusual last August!). We were also fortunate to welcome Maj Jane Freebairn, the General Secretary, and Maj Gabi Shanahan, Benevolent Fund Case Secretary. We also welcomed two new members, Julie and John. Jackie Clark.

Carol Ederle's brain-taxing competitions were won by Chris Overy and Major Shanahan. The competitions and sale raised £71. On behalf of the members Gladys Pope thanked Val for her hospitality and presented her with a large bird feeder.



Sadly our September meeting was cancelled so that members could attend the funeral of Veronica Dodkins who had been a popular treasurer for the branch for over 40 years. We held our AGM in October when the committee was re-elected en bloc. Joan Freeland thanked them for all their hard work, keeping the Branch together with enjoyable monthly meetings. There were plenty of suggestions for next year's programme and our secretary will circulate the list later.

On the 20th September sixteen members attended the South and South West Area Reunion hosted by Weymouth Branch. A lovely meal, a good raffle, lots of chat to friends, what a splendid way to spend the day. Thank you Weymouth.



Jenny Exton, Clare Edwards & Suzanne Gordon at the Area Reunion

At our November business meeting, final plans were discussed for our own Christmas Lunch. We are also fortunate to have been invited by the Royal Artillery at Larkhill to a Veterans' Lunch, so we shall soon be full of Christmas pudding! Gladys Pope reported on the WRAC Association's participation at the Remembrance Parade in London and her visit to the Albert Hall for the afternoon concert. We then had a general discussion which included Elsie Sanderson recalling her time as an instructor at Guildford in the 1950s. This didn't really match the memories of some 1950s recruits!

Thank you Headquarters for the last bumper issue of the *Lioness*, much enjoyed by us all.

SCOTTISH AREA

The year of 2009 has been much quieter for the Association in Scotland compared to the excitements of the latter part of 2008. However, as 2009 was such a significant anniversary for both the WRAC and the Association, we decided the least we could do was to treat ourselves to a cake at the AGM. The main problem on the day however was who was going to cut it? Having gone through all the different ideas and combinations it was agreed we should go for the oldest and youngest present on the day.



Jean Clark and Irene Waterson cutting the Anniversary cake

The picture shows on the left, Jean Clark of Glasgow branch flying the flag for the over nineties and on the right, Irene Waterson of Stirling Branch, flying the flag for the under fifties. Sue Marcroft from Dumfries brought along some lovely cake boxes which she had made for the occasion and these, plus paper napkins were used to take pieces of cake back to those who could not be present – not a scrap was left!

It was Remembrance Sunday a few weeks later and the first year we were able to place poppies on our plaque in

St John's Kirk. Unfortunately, I had agreed to march at the Cenotaph in London without thinking about who would lay the poppy spray. As I walked out of the door to travel south the baton was handed to our honorary Scottish Area Association member, alias my husband Roddy, who kindly agreed to do this for me. Well,

PDF Compressor Free Version



The plaque surmounted by a spray of poppies. Note the very artistic reflection of the altar in the centre of the photograph

I would like to thank Florence Green from Fife and Tayside Branch for suggesting the idea of a spray rather than a wreath. It looks wonderful and has been greatly admired. I promise to get myself rather better organised next year and have a bona fide Association member placing the poppies on our plaque. Having said that, I know Roddy will have done very good job even if it did raise a few eyebrows at the time!

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

Best wishes to everyone, wherever you are – have a Happy and Healthy 2010. We still meet at the "Main House", Lowe Court, High Street, Wellington on the first Wednesday of the month – 2-4 p.m. No meeting in January.

Our year 2009 was much the same as the previous year. In June we went to Veterans Day at RAF Cosford viewing the many aircraft in the museum and having lunch. At the July meeting, Sadie brought delicious cakes for us to scoff and celebrate her 85th birthday. We welcomed a new member – Carol Wilkinson née McPherson, ex Lt P507109. Camberley, Catterick, Bordon – 4 years in WRAC. Another WRAC we ask ourselves – could this be a forerunner of the coach-load of WRAC we are wishing for? Two new WRAC this year, it's getting exciting!

In August we attended the Annual Service and Parade of The Royal British Legion in Wellington. Several of us

belong to the Wellington and Oakengates Branch. We had a buffet in the Church Hall afterwards. Still in August some of us, who are also members of the Shrewsbury Branch of the RASC Association, went to their very nice luncheon at the Wingfield Arms Montford Bridge – a good time was had by everyone.

September was rather eventful. Remember we said in our last report "someone was going up in the world". Nancy took to the skies in a "Glider Flight" at RAF Cosford to raise funds for the Association and Shropshire Branch. She was supported by members and friends. The flight was fantastic – thanks to Cosford for being very helpful, especially getting her in and out of the glider, legs being the trouble!



Just a bit of "man handling" to get on board!



With the Support Crew

We were pleased to welcome our Area Chairman, Maggie Purkis and Area Secretary, Irene Hall to our AGM. After many, many years of service to us, Beryl Lane retired as Secretary. Thank you, Beryl for all you have done. We presented Beryl with something she wanted, a "Special Pillow" guaranteed to stop nightmares concerning the branch! After voting, we elected Denise Fuller as our new Secretary. Thank you, Denise for taking on this appointment for us.

On 19 September four members travelled by train to Liverpool for the North West Area Reunion at the

Adelphi Hotel, where we had a nice time. Before going to the Reunion, we had a memorable journey around Liverpool in the magnificent (no, not the flying machine), but the "Yellow Duck Marine" sightseeing by road, and cruising in the water round the docks. Everyone was singing – or trying to – to the tune of "We'll sing in a yellow duck marine"! Yes, we did get wet, maybe due to our singing, which alone would have sunk a battleship!



Shropshire members with their Yellow Duck Marine

In October we really enjoyed our day at The Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury, the Committee Meeting and lovely lunch – seven of us went. On the 28th we had our usual yearly invitation from the REME Association to their social evening at the TA Centre, Dawley Bank. We had a great time, I think we all won on the horse racing – we were certainly first past the post for the excellent buffet afterwards.

November, the month for Remembrance and we went to the service at the Garrison Church, Donnington. Sandra carried our Branch Standard and Denise laid the WRAC Association wreath. Afterwards we had a very tasty lunch in the Sgts' Mess. In the evening we went to the service at Oakengate's Ceremony of Light and many Royal British Legion Standards were paraded. Whilst 100 names were read out, corresponding candles were lit by Cadets and the Abraham Darby Band played for the evening.

We have our usual Christmas Lunch in December and we are looking forward to visiting Chester Branch on the 9th for lunch.

Our Committee now is:

Chairman – Nancy Tipton
Secretary – Denise Fuller
Treasurer – Brenda Adams

Once again the year has flown by so quickly. We thank HQ for all their endeavours – keeping us all together, especially through the *Lioness* which we treasure.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Hello to all our friends far and wide, we wish you all the best for the New Year.

Southampton Branch is doing very well and August saw us at the Eastleigh Carnival. Audrey, Hazel and Penny work very hard to get our table up and running. Sadly, Audrey is retiring from organising this event so we are looking for another hard-worker to take over to collect and store the items that we gather during the year. Many thanks to Audrey for all her hard work these past years.

September we went off to Weymouth to our Area Reunion. It was a great day with the weather being very good. We were made very welcome and Southampton did a good job of trying to take all the raffle prizes home. The following photographs show us enjoying ourselves.



Our branch meetings are well attended and the guests that we have are really great. Penny's quiz is a yearly

delight with just about everyone taking part. Barbara Bennett's brother-in-law Ron brought in his replica of the Enigma machine and gave us a detailed account of it. This was really nostalgic especially for Ruth Baxter as she served at Bletchley and could show us the type of work she did. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

October was our AGM and the members must like us because they voted for us to carry on. We also have an American supper at the October meeting which goes down very well. November we decided to have a fish and chip evening which was a first. We have a chippy just around the corner and we will be repeating this very soon. The members also give us plenty of ideas for trips and guests for next year.

I would just like to thank all our members for the things they do to make my life easier e.g. helping to tidy the room at the end of a branch night, enjoying the events and making an effort to go on trips etc.

STIRLING BRANCH

The Stirling Branch has three life members and thirty annual members and together this amounts to 15-20 members who attend the monthly meetings. They are held in the Allan Park Hotel on the last Saturday of every month and we have a bar lunch and a lot of chat. We are given very comfortable accommodation in the conservatory and menus are adjusted to suit our requirements.

We were invited to take part in a project, which has been organised in Central Scotland by "Going Carbon Neutral" and "Keep Scotland Beautiful". At our meeting each month we are asked to answer – truthfully – such questions as "Do you make sure you have a full load before switching on your washing machine?". Up until now, if the truth be told, we are 'keeping Scotland beautiful'.

In October a group from our Branch attended the Scottish Area AGM being held in Perth. This celebrated the 60th anniversary of the WRAC and the 90th Anniversary of the Association itself so we were looking forward to this special occasion and enjoyed a wonderful lunch – and cake!

In November the Royal British Legion has invited a deputation from this Branch to attend the Falkirk Festival of Remembrance in the Town Hall and it is hoped that at least three members will attend. The same weekend, there will be a Remembrance Service in the Church of the Holy Rude in Stirling and a parade to the War Memorial. Hopefully the Branch will be represented here too.

It must be said that *Lioness* just gets bigger and bigger and the Editor surpassed herself in the last edition with the stories and pictures of the Blackpool Reunion. How we all wish we could have been there but at least we always see someone in the photographs that we have met before. Perhaps next time it will be our turn. Keep up the good work!

SUFFOLK BRANCH

In October we had our AGM which was well attended and our current Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer were all voted in to serve another year.

June, August and September we had our usual Chat and Raffle, along with quizzes compiled by Sylvia Johnson and myself. The September quiz was "Voices from the Past": many from the war years (politicians, singers, comedians etc). Sylvia must have some very old records and films in her collection! Our July meeting was about the day our most senior members went off to war. A real eye opener for them all and a dramatic change to their lives.

At the end of August several members went to see "When the Lights Go on Again" at the Spa Pavilion in Felixstowe which was a trip down memory lane for many members – not me, I'm too young! The show was about life during the war and had lots of the more popular war songs for the audience to sing along with the cast. The show was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

At our November meeting we replaced the usual Raffle with a Christmas Gift Raffle and also enjoyed some home baking with our afternoon cuppa or tippie along with general chit-chat.

Until the next time, hope 2010 is good to you all.

TAMWORTH BRANCH

We are growing as a Branch and have been busy fund raising so we can buy our Standard as soon as possible. We hold our meetings at the Royal British Legion on the last Wednesday of the month at 7.30 p.m. and everyone is welcome. July was a busy month for the Branch. On 11 July, twelve of our member visited the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas – it was a lovely day and we had a great time looking around and also enjoyed lunch there.



Tamworth ladies at the National Memorial Arboretum

On Friday 17 July we held a skittles match and invited Birmingham, Leicester and Stafford Branches. Nancy

and Belle made a buffet and a great time was had by all. Maureen Deeley from Birmingham went home with the trophy.



Maureen Deeley with her trophy

Then, on Wednesday 29 July, instead of having a meeting it was decided to hold a coffee morning to raise some more funds. Belle suggested everyone come to her house. The Tuesday weather was perfect but on Wednesday it poured all day but it did not dampen our spirits as about 30 of us gathered and had a fun time. We had a tombola table, a raffle and, of course, coffee and cakes supplied by Nancy and Belle. We raised £180 which was great and any of the cakes that were not used were snapped up by our guests so everyone went home happy. In August we had our meeting and, as it was holiday time, we didn't have many members attending: just eighteen of us. September saw us at the Royal British Legion again for skittles, this time with Birmingham and Lincoln Branches, also Maggie Purkis and Irene Hall, Area Chairman and Secretary respectively attending. The buffet was consumed and Chris Corker went home with the trophy this time.



Victorious Chris

On 30 September we had a Bodyshop demonstration. Then it was time for the WRAC Dinner Club weekend at Solihull. Three of our new girls attended and really enjoyed themselves and on 28th we had our usual meeting. On Monday 9 November, ten of us met in the British Legion to pack boxes for the girls in Afghanistan. We had been collecting for the boxes for weeks and we sent off 84 boxes in total. We have received two letters thanking us for taking the time to do this. The letters said that they can get everything they need out there but it is the fact that people at home take the time to fill the boxes that they appreciate. We will be having another coffee morning but this time at the Royal British Legion on 9 December. I'm not risking it this time.

ULSTER BRANCH

Warmest greetings from the members of Ulster Branch. We are in the middle of sorting out the Branch Christmas lunch which we are having on Saturday 12 December in Beechlawn Hotel and our annual trip to the pantomime Aladdin in Belfast Grand Opera House on Thursday 17th December. The pantomime should be quite a riot as they tell me everyone who attends is given 3D specs in order to see everything the genie gets up to. From memory, the last time I was given 3D glasses was in a cinema in Belfast when I came up from the country to see the movie South Pacific a very, very long time ago. I have had a sneak preview and the magical genie certainly seems quite a character. We intend to arrive armed with our favourite chocs and a little Bailey's Irish cream for the interval and I have no doubt that we will all have a great time. My family have told me that pantomime is for kids, but let's face it – you are as young as you feel and the Ulster Branch are without a doubt just about as 'young in heart' a group as you could find.

We held our AGM in September and everything continues as usual. The officers were voted back into office but we now have a new Chairman, Mary Wilson. Mary is a keen attender of our meetings and functions and is very interested in our branch. Indeed, when I have the odd wee problem I ring either Mary or Alison Warnock who have both been secretaries in the past and they always give me sound advice. Prior to the meeting which was held in the British Legion Building in Lisburn, we had a superb lunch in Pizzarelli's restaurant. This is a small restaurant but it is just around the corner from the Legion Building and is therefore very handy for those of us who arrive by public transport. We had our usual 'bring and buy' sale prior to the meeting to help boost funds. The sale is always run by two of our committee members, Florence Logan and Marie Jenkins, who have the knack of selling you just about anything that's put in front of them and are without a doubt the right people to have in charge of our sale.

We laid our wreath at the Cenotaph in Belfast on Remembrance Day. I was accompanied this year by Mary Wilson and Sylvia Connachan. Following the ceremony we had a very welcome cup of tea etc in Belfast City Hall where we met Sylvia's sister who was there in her capacity as President of the Women's British Legion in Ireland. The City Hall has been refurbished and it is a

fitting background to the poignant ceremony of remembrance. There is something very, very wonderful and special about those who paid the ultimate price. We feel it is an absolute privilege to meet at this time every year to honour their great sacrifice.

PDF Compressor Free Version

I was reading through the various branch activities in the *Lioness* and one branch in particular had a very successful car boot sale. We are always trying to think of things which will contribute to funds and most of us, particularly those of us who like to hoard things, have loads of bits and pieces around the house, so what would be better than to put them to good use i.e. at a car boot sale. I just can't wait to put this idea to our members when I next see them and I am sure they will be very keen on the idea.

We do hope everyone has a Happy New Year but we must take time to spare a thought for those who are no longer with us or who are unable to be with us due to illness or frailty.

WILMSLOW BRANCH

The members of Wilmslow Branch send you our best wishes and hope that 2010 will bring us sunshine instead of rain. In June we celebrated our 15th birthday by having a very pleasant lunch in a local hotel but for Christmas we have planned a more formal meal in a very nice restaurant closer to home so transport will not be a problem.

Our numbers are quite small, averaging eight or nine, but we are a faithful band and though age and mobility means we can't do all the things we used to do, we still enjoy our meetings and think ourselves lucky to be as active as we are.

3 September 2009, 70 years since war was declared, turned out to be an unusual and interesting day. We have a dear friend who organizes outings for the local branch of the Lions Club and she invited us to go with them to visit the National Memorial Arboretum near Lichfield. Four accepted the invitation and each took a companion, one took her son, one took her husband and the others took a friend. On boarding the coach, they found it was almost full of elderly Chinese people from Manchester. Their organizer could speak English so he introduced everyone and on learning the identity of these ex forces the Chinese were all smiles and applause.

A packed lunch had been prepared and, as there was no room in the restaurant, they had to sit outside. Unfortunately there was a cold wind blowing, but that didn't deter these ex soldiers and the lunch soon disappeared. Hot drinks were very much appreciated.

The electric scooters that are on loan enable those who find walking difficult to be mobile, so our party made their way to the ATS statue for photographs – 'our little girl' our secretary calls her. After visiting the War Memorial and other sites of interest it was back on the coach to Wilmslow where they said farewell to the Chinese party amid smiles and applause again.

A few years ago at this time we would have made plans for our visit to London for the Remembrance Parade but this year we attended our own Church and civil services but our thoughts were with all those who were fit enough to be in London and we congratulate you all. Unless you have taken part in the Parade you will never have known that marvellous feeling of camaraderie with those who, like us, had been part of that fight for freedom, of being on the same side with just one objective. It's a wonderful atmosphere.

Some of our members also attended the North West Area Reunion in Liverpool in September.

We miss Betty, our member in Spain at Christmas, but enjoy drinking her health – she kindly sends us some money in lieu of cards, for which we send our thanks. By the time the next *Lioness* is delivered we will be in 2010 and Christmas will be just a memory so we send our best wishes to Joan in Australia and close with the words of Tiny Tim 'GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE'.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

Where has the year gone, the Grand Reunion is a distant memory and Christmas 2009 is also long gone. Apart from Blackpool the branch has had a very quiet second half of the year. In Sept we held our AGM at the Golden Lion Pub – now established as a favourite venue and the staff did us proud by providing us with an excellent buffet. We were a few short on the night but that meant all the more food for those that did attend. The AGM part was very chaotic (even more so than usual). We did vote on all the important bits but as usual we were too busy chatting to pay much notice. The night was made even better by the unexpected arrival of one of our still serving members, Rowena, on a flying visit from Nepal, so we had a lot of catching up to do.

November saw us undertake a new venture: that of a quiz night. With the generous support of the Worthies Social Club who kindly waived their hire fees for the night, nine intrepid branch members set out to do battle



Denise, Hermé and Lynn on the London Eye

with teams from Worthy Down and the Social Club. On what turned out to be a night of pouring rain and high winds, everyone who actually made it is to be congratulated. An excellent fish and chip supper was supplied by the Kings Worthy Chippie – thanks to them for the discount! The grand sum of £260 was raised from the Quiz entry fees and a raffle, £200 was given to the ABF and £65 to the Benevolent Fund as well as £40 from the sale of Association Trolley Coins.

Non Branch events that were open to all and enjoyed by some included a trip to the Trooping of the Colour for Janet thanks to the Not Forgotten Association. (Report on that can be found elsewhere). Denise, Lynn and Hermé had a trip on the London Eye and then sightseeing. The trip from Westminster Pier to Waterloo Pier by Tuk Tuk was very interesting, downhill – no brakes – swerving to avoid manhole covers. Maggie went to the Windsor Royal Military Tattoo and Hermé and Maggie paid a visit to Bletchley Park.

WORTHING BRANCH

Apart from one very sad event, it has been another good six months for Worthing Branch. On 27/28 June we made £450 at our stall at the West Sussex Armed Forces weekend which was held here in Worthing right next to our meeting place. We decorated our stall with help from HQ by way of stickers and we wore special T-shirts.



Worthing Branch at their stall

During the weekend, we were asked by a visitor if we would like to have an original framed recruiting poster which belonged to his mother, Freda Ann Joan Bean who had been a staff car driver in the ATS. Although he would have been quite happy for us to auction it, our members felt that it would be better off in the Museum. On 14 July several of us had a trip to the AGC Museum in Winchester and handed the framed poster over and they were delighted to receive it as they did not have one in such good condition.



Handing over the poster

Our monthly meetings continue. The Lay Preacher at the church whose hall we use remarks how nice it is to always hear us laughing. That pretty much sums us up. We are the friendliest group you could meet: all new members are greeted and treated as friends.

We finished the year with a Christmas lunch at the Chatsworth Hotel. The hotel is next to the gardens where Armed Forces weekend is held and they could not have been more helpful that weekend so they deserved our custom. They gave us a wonderful meal and happily put up with our rowdiness.

Our funds are now in a good condition, thanks to our Treasurer, Greta, and some of our ladies who like to make things – thanks Janet Jam!

Our year unfortunately finished on a very sad note. One of our first members, Rose Southern, who had been closely involved with everything we did, developed cancer and it took her from us far too quickly. Her last four weeks were spent in the Queen Alexandra Hospital Home, and we are grateful to them for the wonderful way they looked after her. We said goodbye to her in their lovely little chapel.

COPY DEADLINE

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

24 JUNE 2010

ATS Reminiscences

1 PLN, D COY, 7 TRG CEN 1943

W/185146 Betty Davies née Wild

149 Inkerman Road, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey GU21 2BQ



*Rusty Lovegrove, Jumbo Jordan (Ivy) Phil, Nicky and Cpl Beryl Widger from 671
Hazel Hartnell (Irons), Mary Jones, Sybil, Margaret McKenzie from Weyhill*

At last, after nearly two years, I managed to get my Mother to sign the form to allow me to join the forces. Thoughtless of me really, as Mum already had four sons in uniform. But here I am at Guildford Queen's Camp in January 1943. I can put some names to faces. Remember our first injections? What a sorry lot you were. I seemed to be the only one able to attend to the majority who took to their beds! I think there was one other not too poorly, otherwise the whole lot needed their rest – then there was the 'ablutions', quite a walk "not run" to the washroom etc, perishing cold too and the very large mess (dining room).

On the parade ground – learning to march even into a brick wall, until the Sgt Major shouted, "Say something even if it's only 'Goodbye'". Barracking: Our beds – three biscuits to the bed head, blankets and sheets folded exactly right so all labels were in line, like the good soldiers we were – the blue striped pyjamas, various underwear? Also, later on for me, 'long johns'.

Then it was off to Parkhill Camp, Oswestry followed by 671 Battery BHQ Section 4 HAA training practice – then to Ty-Crois Anglesey – then on to CPO Wareham – Lychett Matravers – and Chesil Beach. When we arrived we had to quickly vacate our first hut as it had previously stored CS gas – a nasty experience. Later met our first Yanks, they had arrived overnight in fields just below us, and down the lane, which happened to be our only entrance and exit from our camp – interesting!

Then on to Weymouth, 671 Battery Nothe Gardens – very busy there. Later I was transferred to REME Weyhill as Technical Storewoman. So a few AWOLS followed by fatigues and jankers – this never bothered me. But I really enjoyed my ATS days – love to do it again, but for different reasons of course. Why, oh why, did I ever come out? That's another story. Now I am very proud to wear my ATS and Veteran's badges. Good health and best of luck to all who read this informative and interesting magazine.

REUNION AFTER 60 YEARS

W/188576 Betty Buck née Smeed

3 Mill Close, East Grinstead RH19 4DE



Betty and Rosemary – then and now

I thought you might like to see this little photograph which my granddaughter has put together of my old friend Rosie and I – how we were then and now. I am on the left. We discovered each other after nearly 60 years when I saw she was looking for old pals in the first *Lioness* I received a few months back. We were both in 584(M) Heavy Ack Ack Battery. She was Rosemary Flemming now Haffenden and I was Betty Smeed now Buck. We are both in our 80s as most of us are I guess – but still young at heart and like talking about the "good old days".

COMING FULL CIRCLE

W/42300 Betty Mitchell

50 Revell Park, Plympton, Plymouth PL7 4EL

In 1938, I was 18 and my father planned that I should train as a teacher. But I had a different idea – to exchange my school uniform for an ATS uniform. At first he refused to sign the consent form – I was under 21. But in 1940 things changed: France surrendered, the Dunkirk evacuation took place and Britain stood alone. Princess Mary, the Princess Royal, appealed on radio for girls to join the ATS. Then Winston Churchill said, "Let the women come forward." Meantime my father had joined the Local Defence Volunteers (later Home Guard) so I was able to say, "You are helping the war effort and so can I." Reluctantly he acknowledged that even I might make a difference!

So, in summer 1940, I trained at Aldermaston which did

make a difference to me. Then I was posted to Command Pay Office Southern Command. I would have liked something more active, but my service released a man to fight. Ironically my father was so proud of me when I was promoted to corporal then sergeant. (He only made corporal in WW2)

PDF Compressor Free Version

Time moved on – my father died in 1942. I married, had two children, and took a few part time jobs. Then in 1963 our local training college asked for women to come forward and train for teaching. I was 43 but decided to apply and much to my surprise I was accepted.

At my interview the principal of the training college said, "Senior NCOs make the best teachers because they can give orders and take orders!" She had trained many ex-service personnel at the end of the war on the one-year emergency training scheme in 1946, so she should know.

I just wish my father had lived to see me as Head of the Infant Department in a large Primary School, but he didn't – as they say, "That's Life".

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**

EXTRACTS OF STATEMENTS BY WD DRIVERS ON TRAFFIC ACCIDENT REPORTS 1944/47

1. Cow wandered into lorry; I was afterwards informed that the cow was half-witted.
2. The car was pinched and I set up a human cry but it has not come back.
3. She suddenly saw me and lost her head.
4. A lorry backed through my windscreen and into my officer's face.
5. Dog on road applied brakes causing a skid.
6. I left my car standing unattended for a minute and whether by design or accident it ran away.
7. I heard a horn blow and was struck in the back – a lady was evidently trying to pass me.
8. I consider that neither vehicle was to blame but if either vehicle was to blame, it would be the other one.
9. If the other driver had stopped a few yards behind himself nothing would have happened.
10. Three women were all talking to each other and when two stepped back one stepped forward, I had to have an accident.

Submitted by Col (Retd) Frankie Cook who wrote "As a TMT Clerk one of the things I handled was Accident Reports and gems usually went the rounds. One I had great difficulty in persuading the driver to alter was a lorry driver who somewhere on the A5 near Atherstone had an accident. "I felt a squeak and heard a bump and found a hound under my back wheel." The Atherstone Hunt was out in full force."

WRAC ASSOCIATION FLEECE

The WRAC Association now has a stock of dark green Fruit of the Loom fleeces embroidered with the Association badge on the left side. We now have them again in all sizes but if you are unsure, please check first. The ones left from the original batch are very generous but the new ones are more realistic. If you are in any doubt, please ring before placing an order. 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.

If you want to check the actual sizes before placing an order, ring 01962 887478



Reminiscences of the WRAC

WRAC COLLEGE

PDF Compressor **Free Version** FINAL PHOTOGRAPH - MARCH 1984

Editor: I am very grateful to Lt Col (Retd) Mary Woollard MBE for sending in this photograph. Although she was on the staff of the WRAC College at the time, she is not on the photograph as she was on an FTX in Cyprus with Victory College, RMA Sandhurst. Tough, eh?



She also sent a small booklet of black and white photographs of the WRAC College and I hope those of you who may have served there or attended a course or two during your career there will enjoy the following:



Officer Cadets Mess and College Assembly Hall



Junior Ranks Club and NCO Students Accommodation in background



Hairdressing Salon



Sergeants' Mess and Instructional Block in background

**AN EVENING WITH FRIENDS REMAINS ONE
OF LIFE'S PLEASURES - MEMORIES OF
12 BATTALION**

W/406423 Mrs J M Knight

27 Manby Road, Great Malvern, Worcs WR14 3BD

PDF Compressor Free Version

Travelling back to 12 Battalion WRAC Richmond Park in June 2009 was quite an experience and did bring back the following reminiscences like an enjoyable evening out with good friends in Kingston upon Thames - The Crown was our favourite hostelry. Afterwards we would walk back to Richmond Park and 12 Battalion our Camp up Kingston Hill. We would never miss the opportunity for fish and chips from a totally unique shop where the most memorable portions of fish and chips ever were devoured.

Fast forward now to June 2009. Can you imagine, now almost 50 years later, to my amazement, I discovered that the shop is actually still there on Kingston Hill - now a Chinese Takeaway?



Ladderstile Gate

The photograph is of Ladderstile Gate with my son, daughter and grandchildren. If you look through the gate, on the left hand side, you can see the Watchman's Hut. It was quite eerie and it felt as if Tiny would appear at any minute.

I often wondered what had become of 12 Battalion Camp and now I am pleased that I have visited and "walked the walk". The trees surrounding the 12 Battalion site are now home to flocks of green parakeets. The park has a tranquil feeling even although many people visit it to enjoy the lovely surroundings with cycling groups, running groups, horse riders - and the inevitable motor cars.

**DO YOU HAVE PLATOON PHOTOGRAPHS
FROM 1951?**

W/374987 Mrs Phyllis Neal née Woolley

5 Merrow House, Merrow Street, Guildford GU4 7AD

Tel: 01483 456526

Congratulations on a brilliant *Lioness*. I lost touch about 2002 and rejoined as a Life Member on moving here last

December: living here with all its connections to the WRAC is lovely. The exhibition in Museum early in year sure brought back memories and excellently done. I joined in 1951 and did my Signals trade training in Catterick as OKB (Teleprinter Op). My maiden name was WOOLLEY, I married David of 1st Bn Coldstream Guards in Sept 1954 at Coxton Hall in London as we were both stationed there. I was with 4 AA Gp in Rutland Gate, Knightsbridge and David was attached to HCR as an officer's groom across the road. A group of us used to go along to the Nuffield Centre for evenings out along on Strand/Trafalgar Square where lots of serving personnel met: it catered for all three services.



Phyllis Woolley

Do you know if it possible for anyone to obtain my "squad" photos of our era? I gave mine at that time to my Mum to look after: sadly like all things it's disappeared. None of my sisters knows its whereabouts. I am happy to pay!

My sister-in-law, Sylvia, was a cook in Pirbright. She married Vic Bennett, 3rd Bn Coldstream Guards, and was always full of beans and laughter but sadly, she died in January aged 86. We did attend the final WRAC Band Concert in the Guildford Civic Hall in 1992. I remember that all the previous Directors of Music took it in turns to conduct the band. It was a lovely evening to celebrate the WRAC Band before it was rebadged as the AGC Band.

I regret not being able to attend Blackpool Grand Reunion; it seems to have been a great success.

FROM WRAC CAMP TO HOUSING ESTATE: QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK 1998 – 2009

W/425499 Sgt. Jane Smith née Stark, WRAC Staff Band,
1965-1969.

pjs@theharbour.plus.com

PDF Compressor Free Version

As 2009 saw the 60th anniversary of the formation of the WRAC and also the complete transformation of the site at Queen Elizabeth Park from a WRAC Camp to a housing estate, it seemed to me time to conclude the series of visits I've made over the last 11 years which were reported on in *Lioness* magazines between 1998 and 2003.



The original approach along Little Street off Grange Road

So, on 26 June 2009, off I went to Guildford for the last time. My first impression was that nothing had changed; the entrance to the camp site, off Grange Road, along Little Street looked almost the same. Once I got to the end though, I realised that the entrance driveway, the Map Depot and the guard room had been replaced by houses. There was also a new supermarket which would have been a great help to us instead of the over-priced NAAFI and YMCA with their very limited stocks.

Walking further on into the estate, initially it felt very strange to be able to wander around at will after the tight restrictions of the camp as to where you could and couldn't go. After a while though, it stuck me that overall, the developers had done a good job. The sympathetic landscaping with plenty of trees and open grassy areas retained something of the original atmosphere, so much so, that several times I half expected to turn round and



An example of the lovely landscaping – this view is towards the site of the Parade Ground

catch a glimpse of our familiar 1960's barrack blocks through the trees instead of a mixture of modern housing.

I was very envious of the new Health Club and its lovely swimming pool. If we wanted a swim on a sports afternoon in the 1960s, we had to be bussed to Aldershot. The we had to wait upstairs in the gallery of the local Army pool for the squaddies to finish trying to pull each other's swimming trunks off in the pool down below!



The former Museum building

Do any of the original buildings remain? Just the one – the former Museum building which is now used by the Guildford Detachment and Surrey ACF Military Band Cadet Force. The one remaining commemorative plaque on the site is on the base of the flagpole. The inscription reads, "This plaque commemorates the opening of the Depot and Training Centre, WRAC, in Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Guildford, by Her Majesty the Queen on 30 October 1964."



What would it be like to actually live on the estate? Well, for me, it would be full of ghosts, but for families who wanted a pleasant home, it would probably be ideal. However, the site is miles from anywhere so a car is essential and the road signage is poor. The promised community centre has not to be built.

PDF Compressor Free Version

I was amazed to see a number of obelisks set among the groups of houses. It was almost as if they were intended as memorials but memorials to what? On a closer look, it was obvious that they had no inscriptions and were perhaps installed to try to give the estate a character of its own. I also came across some bizarre wooden totem poles in the grassy areas which seemed even more inappropriate.



View showing one of the obelisks between the houses

As Queen Elizabeth Barracks were the first all-women Army barracks so they have become the first and only all-women barracks to be converted to a housing estate. Are there any plans for a memorial on the site? I understand from Guildford Borough Council that the developers have no plans for one. In any case, there are all sorts of problems involved with the commissioning of memorials not to mention their funding and long-term maintenance. We certainly would not want a repeat of that monstrosity in Whitehall!

Thankfully though, the tradition of naming the roads after previous Corps Directors has continued. For example, there is Railton Road, after Dame Mary Railton, Director WRAC 1954-1957; Gwynne Court and Vaughan Court after Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, first Director of the ATS, 1939-1941 and Rivett-Drake Close after Brigadier Dame Jean Rivett-Drake, Director WRAC 1961-1964. Our royal connections are acknowledged too with: Duchess of Kent Close, after our Controller Commandant 1967-1992; and Princess Mary Close, after the Princess

Royal and Controller Commandant until her death in 1965.

Five roads have specific WRAC Band connections. They are Goddard Close, after Major Frederick Goddard, Director of Music, 1949-1955; MacDowall Road, after Captain Jean MacDowall, Director of Music, 1955-1962; Michael Lane, after Captain Michael Lane, Director of Music, 1971-1974; Hopkin Close, after Major Lynette Hopkin, Director of Music, 1974-1984 and Forster Road after Major Ena Forster, Director of Music, and 1984-1992.

Queen Elizabeth Park may have disappeared from view, but our history still lives on. What the local residents make of it all is anyone's guess!

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS PHOTOGRAPH?

Mary Santer

74 Walkern Road, Benington, Herts SG2 7LS

I enclose a photograph which I would like you to publish in the next *Lioness*. I wonder what the occasion was and who was not in step? Perhaps the standard bearers could identify themselves?



Editor: I expect you will all recognise Sue Westlake, our Vice President as the Lt Col in the front as Parade Commander. The photograph was taken on 16 April 1994 and the standards were about to be marched past HRH the Duchess of Kent. This followed the service in Guildford Cathedral to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the Association in 1919. The standards on the front row are the QMAAC (the blue and white one) carried by Mrs Norah Kendall, the National Association Standard carried by WO1 Sandy Barclay and the ATS one is on the right and was carried by Mrs Edith Francis. The others are individual Branch standards. As far as who was in step or not when I showed the photograph to Lt Col Sue Westlake, she correctly pointed out that, as she was the Parade Commander, she was certainly in step and anyone who was not in step with her was certainly out of step! Who would argue with the Vice President?

REUNION OF COMMISSIONING COURSE 49

Bobbi Chilton
r.chilton@btinternet.com

PDF Compressor Free Version



Commissioning Day – 14 August 1969

From L to R: Ilona Thwaites, Jane Reid, Bobbi Ridley, Cheryl Lockwood, GOC Scotland, Mo Rankine, Anne Reyner, Jane Cowan and Suzanne Campbell

Five of the eight members of WRAC Commissioning Course No 49 held their 40th Commissioning Reunion in Ridgefield, Connecticut, at the home of Suzanne Birch who is now living there with her husband.

The actual commissioning date was 14 August 1969 but we all met up in Ridgefield on Friday 16 October for a five day celebration. There was just so much to talk about having only met up once a year or so for the last twenty years and we had a wonderful time seeing New England in the Fall, plenty of eating and drinking, lots of retail therapy and, above all, even more catching up on what we had all been doing over the last 40 years!



From left to right: Suzanne Birch née Campbell, Bobbi Chilton née Ridley, Jane Reid née Wilson, Barry Birch, Ilona Mathie née Thwaites, Cheryl Mendham née Lockwood and Roger Mendham. The following members of the course could not join us – Jane Ingham née Cowan, Mo Barton-Fox née Rankine and Anne Sloan née Reyner

Sadly, three members of the course were unable to come but, hopefully, they will be with us for our 41st re-union.

WHAT SENIOR CITIZENS ARE WORTH

Did you know that we old folk are worth a fortune? We have silver in our hair, gold in our teeth, stones in our kidneys, lead in our feet and gas in our stomachs. I have become older since I saw you last, and a few changes have come into my life. Frankly, I have become a frivolous old woman. I see six gentlemen every day. As soon as I wake up Will Power helps me out of bed and I go to see Jimmy Riddle, and then it is time for breakfast with Mr Kellogg followed closely by the refreshing company of Mr Tetley or my other friend who I only know by his initials as P. G.

Then comes someone I don't like at all – Arthur Itis – he knows he is not welcome, but he insists on being here, and what is more, he stays the rest of the day. Even then he does not like to stay in one place, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a hectic day I am glad to go to bed with Johnny Walker. What a hectic life.

Oh yes I am flirting with Al Zheimer. The Vicar came to see me the other day and said that at my age I should be thinking of the hereafter. So I told him I did it all the time. For no matter where I am, the bedroom, kitchen, sitting room or the garden, I ask myself "Now what am I here after".

Well I'll close for now and I hope that Will Power is your constant companion too, but do make sure that his friend Emma Royd does not creep up on you from behind and watch for that crafty one – Gerry Actric.

Submitted by Jo Anscombe, Hereford Branch.

HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY OR ARE YOU ABOUT TO MOVE?

PLEASE let us have your new address as soon as you can and help us to reduce the number of *Lioness* magazines which are returned undelivered.

Mrs/Miss Initials.....

Surname

First line and post code of old address

New address:

Post code

Tel. No.

E-mail

Send to:
WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down,
WINCHESTER SO21 2RG

Women Serving in the Army Today

FOUR "FUN" RUNNERS

Lynn.hines684@med.uk
PDF Compressor Free Version

We are four great friends that meet regularly to enjoy good food, wine and a catch up on life in general. It was at one of these gatherings in March this year that we decided to join the WRAC Association. We all joined the WRAC between September 1990 and September 1991 and are all serving WO1 Movement Controllers in the RLC.

Teddy Bray the Portsmouth Branch Secretary contacted me within days of my cheque for life membership arriving at Worthy Down and it was that chat with Teddy that inspired me to raise a few pounds for the WRAC Benevolent Fund by taking part in the Great South Run. Immediately contacted the girls, less Alli Chippendale who was in Iraq at the time, and although a surprise to some but not to me, they signed up for the run straight away. Alli did attempt to enrol in the run on her return but to her immense disappointment there were no places left so she was subsequently appointed as IC Admin Support and photographer.



*Before:
WO1 Lynn Doubtfire, WO1 Jo McCue and WO1 Lynn Hines
Photographed by WO1 Alli Chippendale*

*What a wonderful advert for the T-shirts available on
www.zazzle.co.uk Visit today!*

Our race preparations took on several different forms due to our being spread across the UK and work commitments and in my case a sense of denial, but with our T-shirts having arrived from Zazzle and a few pep talks from our Admin Support, we were ready by the day of the race. The most unsettling thing about the whole build up was the night before. Jo McCue and I cooked a carb laden dish for the girls and the stark realisation dawned upon us that in the 18 years we have all known each other, it was the first time we had all been together and not imbibed in a few beverages! We managed on cups of tea until the News at Ten when we all went for an early night to get maximum rest.

We decided not to go for a racing snake time but in keeping with the Corps motto we were resolute in our determination to get to the finish with Lynn Doubtfire and her heart rate monitor setting the pace. It was a glorious day and a great achievement whilst at the same time raising a few pounds for the Benevolent Fund. *Editor: They were extremely generous and donated £450!* After the run? Of course we made up for the night before in several establishments in Old Portsmouth to celebrate.....



*After:
Lynn, Jo and Lynn with Royal marine – name unknown!*

ENGR REGT EXPEDITION TO BOLIVIA - 2009 Maj Lorika Strickland RADC

On a grey January day, at a Royal Army Dental Corps meeting, during "parish" notices, the question was raised; "Who wants to go to Bolivia?" The Scientific Exploration Society (SES), under the leadership of Colonel John Blashford-Snell O.B.E., was planning to take a team, providing humanitarian aid, to Laguna Rojo Aguado, part of the Beni region.

The Beni region lies in the north-eastern corner of Bolivia, close to the Peruvian and Brazilian borders. Our

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

PDF Compressor Free Version

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:

PLEASE DO WHAT YOU CAN TO SUPPORT THE ASSOCIATION

PDF Compressor Free Version

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A T SHIRT WITH THE ASSOCIATION BADGE?

We often get requests for a tote bag. We have taken the opportunity to tie this in with the Grand Reunion.

Visit the website www.zazzle.co.uk and search for WRAC items

There you will also find tote bags, insulated coffee mugs, mouse mats and postcards and notelets with the Association Badge. There are also postcards with the Corps Prayer printed on them. PLEASE visit and buy – the WRAC Association is given a small percentage.

WWW.buy.at/WRAC

Have you tried this yet? If you shop online, visit this website first and connect to your usual favourite shop through this website.

IT IS LEGAL and IT IS NOT A SCAM. Go on – check it out.

Again, if you shop by connecting through this website, the WRAC Association gets a small percentage.

IT IS A VERY SIMPLE WAY TO SUPPORT YOUR OWN CHARITY.

A great number of high street companies use it e.g. NEXT, M and M and Marks and Spencer. If you shop at amazon.co.uk or HMV or hire your films online PLEASE go to www.buy.at/wrac NOW and see how it works. You will be able to buy your normal purchases at the usual online prices AND the Association will receive anything between 4-6% of the amount you spend.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS
ASSOCIATION

PDF Compressor Free Version

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

The next AGM will be held at the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, London on **Saturday 20 March 2010.**

The programme for the day is:

- 11.30 Arrival and coffee
- 12.00 AGM
- 13.30 Hot Buffet Lunch
- 16.30 Tea

Provisional Agenda for the AGM:

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of Minutes
4. Business Arising
5. Trustees Report
6. Financial Report
7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal
8. Reports of Committees
9. Motions of Urgency
 - a. Council Resolutions
 - b. Branch Resolutions
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

Numbers for the buffet lunch will be restricted to 200 so please notify your intention to attend by returning the proforma below by – **at the very latest – Friday 12 March 2010. NO PROFORMA – NO LUNCH!**

To: WRAC Association. Gould House, Worthy Down, WINCHESTER SO21 2RG

I do wish to attend the AGM and the Buffet Luncheon on 20 March 2010 at the Victory Services Club:

OR

I will only be attending the AGM.

Name:

Address:

.....

..... Post Code:

Tel No:

**NIL RETURNS ARE NOT REQUIRED BUT REMEMBER –
NO PROFORMA – NO LUNCH!**

PDF Compressor Free Version

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

Application for Membership

Membership No: DC/.....

Present Name:
(Miss Ms Mrs Rank if serving)

Christian Names:

Known as:

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
Ms Carole Austin, 20 Redcar Road, Blackpool, Lancs. FY1 2LR
Tel: (01253) 352259

I wish to join the WRAC Dinner Club and enclose:

Initial joining fee	£ 3.00	£
5 Years Membership	£10.00	£
Life Membership	£15.00	£

(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'

team would ultimately consist of 23 volunteers; doctors, nurses, engineers, an archaeologist and geologist, two Army dentists (I and Maj Alex Jess), logisticians and communication experts. We would be known as Kota Mama VII and would forge close friendships during the short seven weeks in the remote village of Beni. The main effort was the geological exploration of a crater that was noted on aerial maps and our destination to set up base camp was the small village on the lake shore of Lake Rojo; Coquinal. Maps of the area were unreliable, with Coquinal not always shown.

Team members, from as far as Australia and the Bahamas, assembled in Santa Cruz on 21 July, ready for our adventure to begin. We had a day to shake our selves out, buy essential items that could not be flown in and pack for the long journey north. The expedition was planned for the dry season, but a severe "surusu" (Antarctic cold front bringing in wind and rain), had blown in on the night before departure. We woke up to rain and bone chilling cold, a dramatic over night change from the previous day's temperature of high thirties and eighty percent humidity.

Due to flooding caused by the unexpected surusu, our journey north became a "fight against the MUD." Our convoy of 4x4s and a monster truck loaded with food and kit, arrived tired after an epic journey crossing swollen rivers on rickety wooden pontoons. Finally we reached Trinidad, the last large town before we would leave civilization as we knew behind. From there we flew into Coquinal, chartering a small aircraft: my pilot unnervingly had the youthful appearance of a fifteen year old. During the flight, we could see ancient raised cultivation grounds dating back to Inca civilization.



Arrival at Coquinal

Base camp was pitched and our team was divided the next day, with the main party departing on horseback. I was to remain at HQ and would join several excursions on small boats, on foot and also horse back to reach small communities around the lake and on estancias (cattle ranches). SES also negotiated the sinking of three new bore holes.



Chewing coco leaves – not an abscess

Our days started at 6 a.m. often with a morning swim in the lake (yes I did spot a Cayman on occasion), a quick breakfast and hands to tools at 8 a.m. I was truly humbled by the bravery of my young Spanish patients who had no regular if at all access to dental treatment. They often presented with several rotten teeth; often with more than one abscess festering away. During the next five weeks I would extract 170 teeth and do as many basic restorations with hand tools in very basic conditions and an ever present audience.

The opportunity to step into another world, much simplified in pace of life, occasionally dining on exotic creatures such as tapir and piranha (caught some myself), was a deeply enriching experience. Living very close to nature, experiencing hospitality with people you have never met insistent on sharing their humble meal with you, made South America a country I can not wait to return to.



Catching piranha for dinner

LIFE AS A JUNIOR HUMAN RESOURCE SPECIALIST

LCpl Dau AGC(SPS) with 2 Sig Regt

My name is Lance Corporal Dau and I am currently serving as a Junior Combat HR Specialist within Support

Squadron, 2 Signal Regiment in York. Since joining the Regiment in September 2008, I have been employed as the Command Military Administrator along with my current post of Sub Unit Administrator in Support Squadron. Support Squadron is extremely busy as we administer 11 PDF Compressor Free Version Quartermaster Department to Light Aid Detachment a total of 207 personnel. I am married to a soldier and we have two small children so it is a constant balance to juggle my work and family life.



LCpl Dau

From May 2009, my Senior Combat HR Specialist was involved in the AGC Recruiting Team in York and Exercise LION SUN in Cyprus, which left me alone to administer 207 personnel. My job entails checking individual personal details on Joint Personnel Administration and making sure all administration ranging from Squadron Orders to Identity Discs are correct. I am also responsible for checking if individuals are receiving their correct entitlement for pay and allowances; as pay is always an emotive subject I pay particular attention to that area.

Manning throughout the Corps has been a sore point. As with the majority of units, we have to work with the additional pressure of covering gapped posts. However, the move to the higher pay range was a massive morale boost which was welcomed by all.

In addition to our day to day tasks, we partake in Detachment Training at least one day every month; this allows each member of the Detachment to conduct Joint Personnel Administration presentations and an opportunity to set up discussion groups on various current affairs issues. This has helped to consolidate and enhance our knowledge of Joint Personnel Administration and current affairs which boost our confidence and knowledge.

We had our Assurance and Operational Readiness Inspection on 1 December 2009 and, thanks to all the hard work that everyone put in, we managed to obtain a green in all areas.

The whole squadron recently deployed on Exercise JORVIK STONE for two weeks to Edinburgh. The exercise was based around training for our operational deployment to Afghanistan in August 2010 but also included a visit to Edinburgh Castle which was enjoyed by all.



2 Sig Regt Paintballing day

The pressure of day to day Squadron life does not keep us from other activities such as visits to the RAF in Linton on Ouse, the Prisoner of War Camp at Eden Camp and, not forgetting, our Paintballing day: extremely good fun and it helped in team building and the upkeep of morale in the AGC Detachment.

AGC LADIES RUGBY TEAM LEAD THE MEDICS A MERRY DANCE IN ALDERSHOT



Victorious AGC Team

The AGC Ladies led by skipper Capt Kelly Douglas AGC(RMP) took the field at a rain swept Queens Avenue to take on the AMS Ladies in the first round of this year's Corps Championship. The new format means all 6 Corps teams playing round robin games at Aldershot over the

season to determine the two finalists for the Corps Championship play off finals in March 2010.

Under the watchful eye of the AGC Regt Colonel, the AGC under dogs knew that they would have to pull off the shock of the first Corps Championship final. The AMS who boasted Army No 8 Maj Kat Woods and several other experienced players.

As the game unfolded it was in fact the AGC Army pairing of Douglas and LCpl Alvie Beanie AGC (SPS) who set the pace. The ubiquitous Douglas tackled all that moved and encouraged the hugely inexperienced pack to do the same. Beanie directed traffic outside and within



Other photos of the AGC Ladies Rugby team in action

six minutes, Sgt Kris Pierson-Taylor scored out wide. Beanie failed to convert. **Score: 5-0**

From the re start the AGC gathered the ball and started to make short but strength sapping burst around the AMS fringe defence. The AMS skipper and her back-row colleagues were up to the challenge and long stretches of play saw the AMS knocking the would be AGC attackers back. Captain Karen Russell AGC(RMP) a former Army cap then took on the role of battering the AMS into submission. Her charging runs were making their mark on the AMS line and only a monster hit from Woods stopped her having to run much further than a tight head prop should have to! The AGC scored a further three tries before halftime through (P-Taylor, Mosley & Beanie) and Beanie was successful with two kicks at goal. **Score: 24-0**

The second half saw the AMS regroup and using the advantage of the wind and slope pin back the AGC. A couple of half breaks saw the AMS forwards threaten the line but some great tackling by Pte Lloyd AGC(SPS), Cpl Chantell Pretorius AGC(SPS), LCpl Sarah Kibble AGC(RMP) and Capt Jen Connell AGC(ALS) saw the line remain intact. The AMS were now beginning to feel the pace and the AGC outside backs were starting to get themselves into space. Full credit must go to the AMS players for the ferocity of their tackling as the AGC stretched their lead further with tries from (Malhotra, Connell and Douglas) and two Beanie conversions. **Score: 43-0**

A period of AMS pressure brought the reward of a penalty from AMS who were unfortunate not to have scored from AGC indiscipline and finally got the scoreboard moving for the AMS. **Score: 43-3**

The last ten minutes was all AGC as the AMS finally ran out of steam and Douglas, Beanie and Russell continued to punish the AMS tacklers. Three scores followed: Beanie, Mosley and Pretorius with Beanie slotting a further conversion. A truly great start by the AGC.

Final Score: 60-3

LIFE AS A JUNIOR STAFF OFFICER IN THE DIRECTORATE OF STAFF AND PERSONNEL SUPPORT (ARMY)

Captain Vicky Howell AGC(SPS)

I joined the Army in 1996 as a soldier in the Royal Military Police and spent the first six years of my career serving in London, Northern Ireland and Cyprus before taking the plunge and attending the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. I was commissioned into the AGC(SPS) in 2003.

I spent my initial time at Regimental Duty serving in a number of roles in Canada, Cyprus, Iraq and Afghanistan. This included two years as the Regimental Administrative Officer of 16 Medical Regiment; part of 16 Air Assault Brigade; I commanded my Detachment in the UK and on operations in Afghanistan. Thereafter, I decided that it was time to put my head above the parapet and apply for a post as a Staff Officer within the

Directorate of Staff and Personnel Support (Army) in Worthy Down.

The Directorate can be a little intimidating at first: it is an open plan office that is populated by not one Lieutenant Colonel as with the Regiment but for a while I was led by Brigadier Nicky Moffat, who has three Colonels as her Assistant Directors. The pace of life is hectic and our focus is firmly set upon supporting the Field Army and in particular our colleagues who are deployed on operations.

The work in the Directorate is very different to that at Regimental level and at times I almost feel as though I have joined the Army all over again! My appointment is Staff Officer Grade 3 Operations and Deployment/Communications. I work as part of the Operations and Deployment team which is the lead for all of our Branch liability, structural and establishment lines of development and has responsibility for manning, recruiting, retention and career structure policy. The team comprises of: a Lieutenant Colonel, a Major, myself and the Branch Regimental Sergeant Major. I am also responsible for disseminating information and taskings to the Functional Chain of Command.

On a few occasions, I have also had the opportunity to stand in as the Executive Officer, whose role is to disseminate and coordinate taskings that come in to the Directorate and control the Director's and the Assistant Directors' schedules. This is a very responsible and busy role that I am lucky to have had the chance to do – lots of exposure to the hierarchy, which can be a double-edged sword!

Although the pace of life is hectic, there is time to do physical training and I have been able time to take part in events such as the Army Steeplechase. The Directorate is also extremely social at different levels, from team building in the form of Go Karting and parties at the Director's house, to formal dinners attended by HRH the Duchess of Gloucester.

I am married to a serving officer, who is currently with 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery as a Battery Commander in Colchester. This means that we are unable to live together during the week, but he is able to come home most weekends; our only dependents are two rescue cats. Life is busy for us but we are both committed to the Army and what we do.

I have only been in the Directorate for four months and still have another year and a half here. I really enjoy my job and the people are fantastic, I have learnt so much already and hope to develop further as a Staff Officer.

ARMY LADIES GOLF ASSOCIATION: TOUR TO VIRGINIA USA AND COACHING IN SOMERSET

Lt Col Ishbel Thomson AGC (SPS)

It all started so promisingly. Fourteen of us – ten serving, two retired, our Team Manager, and our Golf Professional coach – pitched up at Heathrow. We were heading to Virginia for 10 days, to practise our golf skills and improve our capabilities, play against US military

teams, and of course, have a great time while doing so. This was our second venture to the States, and Maj Daisy Mundy – the Army Ladies Captain, and Diane Walters – our manager, both ex-WRAC, had again lined up a fantastic programme of coaching and matches.

We got to Washington – pitch dark, throwing it down with rain – and with a 3½ hour drive south to Langley Air Force base, we were keen to get moving. Unfortunately the American immigration and car hire staff had different ideas, and the delays mounted. Eventually two drivers made it back to the terminal to pick up the luggage and others. But where was the third van?? Suffice to say that the correct route out of a car hire place is where it says 'EXIT'. Don't follow the shuttle buses otherwise, you, like WO1 Fee Stapley (also ex-WRAC, but now the Master Photographer for the Army) might get four burst tyres when anti-theft defences are automatically deployed. Now known as 'Stinger Stapley', she was awarded the 'Dork of the Day' for the week – with its daily \$5 contribution to the team fines box.

Things could only get better – and they did! Finally we all got to Langley, and the next morning made our way to the golf club which was to be our base. What a fantastic bunch of people – delighted to welcome us, gave us the run of the place, allowed us to do as much coaching as we wanted and could not have been more helpful. They even put on a daily aerial display of the F-22 fighters that are based at the airfield.



With the Fort Eustace ladies

Over the next eight days we had three matches – one at Langley, one at Oceana Naval Base and one at Fort Eustis Army Base. To a person our American opponents were very welcoming and really pleased to see us. We were very satisfied that we won all 3 matches against them. We also played another 3 courses, with the highlight being the Golden Horseshoe course, one of the top rated Virginia courses. Each day we had several hours of coaching, covering all aspects of the game.

One of our aims was to improve our esprit-de-corps and the games evening organised by WO1 Helen Sleightholme (ex-PTI, now a recruiter) and Kym 'Lofty' Lofthouse (also ex-PTI, now a teacher) did just that. Amazing what you can do in 1 bedroom with 14 people.... And we proved again that age and guile will defeat youth and enthusiasm. Over the 10 days, we all got to know each other far better, our idiosyncrasies, and strengths and weaknesses.

Amongst us were established players, such as Maj (Retd) Jayne Errington and Sgts Bev Dickson and Clare Singleton – all ex-WRAC. But we are a very inclusive bunch and want to improve the standard of ladies golf in the Army community overall. One of our aims is to bring on beginners. We took delight in the performances of the three 36-handicappers who had been playing for less than a year – one of these was Sgt Dawn Buckley who left the Army to have children and rejoined a few years ago. Clearly having a golf professional – Karen Nicholls from Somerset – with us for the whole time was hugely beneficial.



Practising at Langley

Fast forward five weeks to Nov, and this time we were in a very wet Somerset at Millfield School for some intensive weekend coaching by Karen. Twelve of us, luckily under a covered range, hit a few balls, and Karen videoed us for later analysis and embarrassment. We were well represented by ex-WRAC – see the photo attached. Unfortunately the precipitation precluded us doing much chipping, pitching, or putting, but we had a really useful time nevertheless. In the evening we had a quiz, (with a chocolate and golf bias), the winners being Jayne Errington, Chris Ronan and Dawn Buckley. Now all we have to do is practise throughout the winter.



Daisy Mundy, Clare Singleton, Ish Thomson, Dawn Buckley, Sue Barker, Chris Ronan, Jayne Errington, Jo Killip and Beth Neve – all assure me they are members of the Association!

Overall, we have had a very good autumn, but you may be wondering – what is the Army Golf Association, Ladies Section all about? (This is the recruiting bit....). Many of you may remember the strong golf tradition in the WRAC and the Meechie Shield is still awarded to the female Army Golf Champion. That tradition has been maintained with the focus of golf in the Army being the AGA. We are actively recruiting new members of all standards and would love to see some of our existing members again – many of our members were WRAC. We run coaching sessions, overseas tours, and organise matches and internal competitions. You can join us (£15 annual fee) if you have ever served in the Army (incl TA, FTRS etc), work for the Army as a civil servant, or are a dependent of an AGA member. All our events are open to everyone. In 2010 we are planning a mini-tour to Northern Ireland and, in 2011, have our sights set on South Africa. If you are at all interested in joining us, please contact Diane Walters on 01252 348582, email: dwalters@ascb.uk.com. You will be very welcome indeed!

OPERATION HERRICK 10 WITH UK WKS GP RE LCpl McRoberts AGC (SPS)

On 14 March 2009 I was finally given the chance to deploy for the first time on Op Herrick having already served six years in the British Army I was deployed as the Chief Clerk in support of UK Works Group Royal Engineers along with 66 Works Group Royal Engineers (and other elements of 170 (Infrastructure Support) Engineer Group who are based in Nottingham. I was unsure of what expect in Afghanistan but I found it to be much better than I had imagined. Due to my six month stint being through the height of summer it was extremely hot; temperatures soared past 35°C.

The personnel who were deployed with me were excellent to work with and I would definitely deploy with them again if asked to. My six month tour was spent in Kandahar along with a component of the Wks Gp. Other components of the Wks Gp were in places such as Camp Bastion, Gereskh and Lashkar Gah. During the tour I managed to escape the confines of Camp only once when I made the long journey to Camp Bastion.

The Engineers kept me extremely busy with booking flights and updating the Personnel Location Report which are two of the most important tasks I was responsible for whilst on tour. The personnel I worked with had many tasks to complete whether they were on Camp or in one of the Forward Operating Bases (FOBs).

Before deploying on Op Herrick I completed the Endurance Training Leadership (ETL) Course which authorised me to take personnel on Physical Training when a Physical Training Instructor (PTI) was unavailable – which was all of the time! Due to the blistering heat, we did our physical training at 0600 hours to prevent dehydration and heat stroke.

Because Kandahar is surrounded by mountains we were almost certain that we would receive Indirect Fire (IDF) from the Taliban which at first was terrifying. However, after receiving IDF everyday it became normal. During

our six month tour of Afghanistan the Wks Gp were extremely fortunate not to lose any of our personnel through death or injury.

MY CAREER PAGE AND THE GREATNESS OF A FEMALE ROLE MODEL

LCpl G Moore AGC(SPS)

I have been in the army for just over seven and a half years now and my time has been very eventful and different. I joined in September 2002 and went to the Army Technical Foundation College in Aborfield which has now closed down. I completed 28 weeks basic training and also got the chance to complete a Key Skills Course which at the time I thought was pointless but I have come to appreciate it as its got me out of so many things on courses. The training I enjoyed as this was the first opportunity I got to compete at Army level with my athletics.

Then I moved to the School of Royal Signals at Blandford to start my trade training as an Area Systems Operator. The most I remember about this place and the training was how big and boring it was. Sitting in a classroom for 8 hours a day behind a desk was not my idea of being in the Army. I was used to running round in mud and being out doors Although I became a fully qualified member of the Royal Signals, I never made it to my first unit as I soon was to discover that I was pregnant. Our son, Declan, was born in August 2004 and I spent time on maternity leave wondering what to do. I wanted to continue in the Army – but not with Royal Signals



Sgt Brown and LCpl Moore in Kenya

Then I met a Sgt Debbie Brown, also on maternity leave. She was married to a serving soldier in 33 Engr Regt (EOD) – the same unit as my husband- and had also transferred from Royal Signals. After many chats and coffee (well, diet coke for Debbie as that all she ever drank) I too decided to transfer to the AGC (SPS). This was to be the start of a really good friendship and the fast paced career I have to day: the best decision I ever made.

I completed some time at 33 Engr Regt (EOD) in

Wimbish doing some good old work experience and learning what my new job would be like. I then went to Worthy Down and completed my new trade training and came out with flying colours (top geek). I returned to Wimbish to start my post as a Military Clerk and learned that it's a lot harder than it looks.

My first big challenge was to run a Sqn of 187 who were about to deploy to Telic 7 (my husband was going too). I was a Private soldier running this Sqn and coping as a single mum while my husband was on Tour. Later that year I was to discover that all my hard work and stress was to pay off as I was awarded a Commander in Chief Commendation. When my name was read out on the New Years Honours List I had already fainted and was sitting at the back of the Gym. On the announcement of this I suddenly jumped to my feet. I was amazed!



Presentation of the Commendation

The tour at 33 Engr Regt took me to Kenya: a hot and dusty country. Again my friend Debbie Brown was here yet she seemed to get the nice accommodation and a decent toilet! The hardened campers among us were up in the desert in tents with no showers and only buckets for toilets. I did point out to my OC that civilians paid money for this experience and I was doing it for free. Why would you pay for such an experience? I don't know. Being woken by hyena at 4am was great and with only a thin bit of barbed wire between us, it was quite an experience. I really enjoyed it: those six weeks were life-changing.

The next year flew by and I found myself posted to my current role as Sub Unit Clerk at 10 Fd Sqn in RAF Leeming. I also had a friendly face but this time she was higher up the ranks. **Capt** Debbie Brown was my new Det Comd! This time we had a more formal working relationship because of her rank but we still remain great friends in and outside of work. Debbie she remains a great influence and female role model to me. I owe a lot to this former WRAC soldier: without this strong female influence I may have not made the decisions she helped me with and I could have been stuck in a job I didn't like.

I am now to due to leave my current role as I have been selected for promotion to Cpl and I am looking forward

to these new challenges that I face. I hope that one day I can influence a fellow female soldier as strongly as Capt Brown has influenced me.

PDF Compressor Free Version

MY TOUR WITH 1 RIFLES LCpl Ruth Venning AGC(SPS)

I was 18 years old when I joined the army and even though it was what I wanted to do, I didn't realise exactly what it involved. It was my first time away from home. I went through phase one and phase two training and to my surprise, I coped well. There were other trainees in similar circumstances and that helped.

The big shock was yet to come however, when I was posted to a Rifles unit. As soon as I arrived at 1 Rifles, I deployed to Belize with the riflemen. As I later discovered, it was a combat version of a tropical breakaway. There were only three females. We lived in the jungle and slept in hammocks. We joined in some of the patrols, went for tabbing and had a role in the platoon attacks. Our main task however was to man the radios. It was difficult and uncomfortable to wash in the river with all the riflemen around. We enjoyed working with the lads and I'm sure they enjoyed our company too. The highlight for me was when one of the officers offered to pack my bergen. While at it, he inquired why I had a small bag full of pink t-shirts. 'No Sir,' I replied without thinking about it, 'those are my under wears'. Needless to say, he quickly shoved them in the bergen.

I came back after a month's tour, feeling more grown up as a person and more experienced as a soldier. There was however no time to put my feet up as I went straight to OPTAG and then straight to HERRICK 9. At first I was very conscious about being one of a few females in the battalion but I soon relaxed as I found my footing. The whole experience at 1 Rifles has been a huge learning curve and an eye opener.

J1 CELL AT CAMP BASTION WITH 1 RIFLES W1053355 LCpl Komen AGC(SPS)

When I transferred to the Adjutant General's Corps, (AGC), I had no idea that within weeks of finishing my Basic Military Administration Course (BMAC), I would be in a Tristar to hot, sunny Afghanistan, with a team of 200 odd infantrymen!



LCpl Komen

That was the turn of events in September 2008; I was posted to 1 Rifles in Chepstow and just about managed to move into the SFA, find a school and nursery for our two boys and do OPTAG before I was whisked away to HERRICK 9. This being my first operational tour, I felt anxious and apprehensive of what my experience might be for the next three months. We arrived in Camp Bastion in the early hours of Sunday morning and were greeted by the sight of troops sweating it out on a squaded run. Hardly a warm welcome. In the RSOI accommodation where we were for the next three days, I must have been the invisible female as the lads walked straight past the big sign on the door: 'female ablutions' and were halfway through their business in the loos before realising there was a female around. They would apologise and rush out half naked and that was hilarious.

RSOI over, it was time to get down to business. I worked in J1 Cell, which is the administrative focal point for Camp Bastion. On a daily basis, and with a team of 14 others, we did move and keep track of everyone arriving or leaving Camp Bastion, booked flights for R&R, cashed cheques and coordinated the Operational Welfare Package. We were busy and worked long hours. Despite the tight schedule, we always managed to sneak in volleyball on Sunday morning. This meant though that we had to give up our 7 o'clock lie in on Sundays.



Long queues at the scuff house (for a 3 course meal), Operation MASSIVE (get fit at the gym) and EFI (for world class pizza)... these were absolute extras. For me, the week's highlight was Sunday evening mass at St Luke's which doubled up as the Padre's office. The one place I could take a breather, chatting with friends and Jesus. This may sound awkward, but trust me it was heavenly. Some people habitually turned up at the end of the service. We later discovered it was for tea, biscuits and cake that they came.

Life in Camp Bastion, even though intense, was routine and repetitive. Working closely together in a small space was bound to produce a heightened sense of humour and at times inflamed tension. I experienced the later with one of the JNCOs; as he pulled rank to constantly task me. This was out of line as I ended up doing his work for him. My conclusion was either he didn't know what to do or was simply lazy. On the whole, it was interesting to work with people from different units and even more so with the marines and RAF personnel. I learnt strange terms

from the marines like asking for a wet instead of a brew; but was intrigued by their deep sense of camaraderie and absolute attachment to the corps. We of the AGC (SPS) could do more to enhance our sense of esprit de corps and corps ethos. However, I understood better the importance of **PDF Compressor Free Version** the same. The job was demanding and high tempo.

Despite these conditions, I had to remain focussed and under the leadership of the RAO, Capt Denton, we delivered quality service. On one occasion, I made a 10 minute road trip to Camp Sharobak. During the return trip, I swapped my position inside the Land Rover SNATCH with the rifleman doing top cover. As soon as I positioned myself behind the L7A2 GPMG, I felt the adrenaline flow. It was a mixture of cold sweat and excitement. My prayer was that nothing happens along the way. But I was well aware of the drills should it 'kick off'! Anyhow, we arrived safely back at Camp Bastion and I had done top cover. From there it was a count down towards going back to UK. The last one week was the longest one week of my life.



Life with the riflemen

I got back on 23 December, just in time for Christmas with my family, but also just in time not to do Christmas shopping. But what can I say; it was a life changing experience!

MY FIRST ASSIGNMENT - 16 REGT RA

Pte Caroline Duffy AGC (SPS)

I joined the Army in March 2008 as a Staff and Personnel support Administrator and following training in Worthy Down, I found out my first assignment was to 16 Regt RA. The Regiment is based at North Luffenham in Rutland: a very quiet county, full of sleepy little market towns with thatched cottages and quaint country pubs. The barracks are tucked out of the way, so if you need to go anywhere, a car is essential as it is several miles to the nearest town.

The Regiment's role is Air Defence. 16th Regiment is involved in two enduring operations: one battery is constantly deployed to the Falkland Islands to provide the Rapier capability, and another to Afghan providing

the Counter Rocket Artillery Mortar (CRAM) capability. So with sub-units constantly rotating between these theatres, the SPS detachment is well and truly kept on its toes.

During my time with 16 Regt, I have achieved a lot and participated in a few activities like attending a look at life course which involves teaching secondary school teenagers about Army life; I regularly compete in cross country running for the Regiment; I have been through my driving training and on an operational deployment to Iraq which has been the highlight of my Army career so far.



Pte Duffy strikes a pose

When I found out I was to be deployed to Iraq, I felt both excited and anxious at the same time: I didn't know what to expect as it would be my first overseas deployment. My operational assignment was to be with the regiment's joint-service CRAM Bty which provides indirect-fire warning and intercept capability for the Contingency Operating Base (COB) in Basrah. In a few months, this would all be history as British troops will have withdrawn from theatre, handing over to the Americans. I felt fortunate to be witnessing the final Op TELIC.

Just 48 hours after finishing my OPTAG Training, I anxiously set off for Brize Norton for the 6 hour flight to Kuwait, followed by another flight in a Hercules before we eventually landed at the COB. I was relieved to arrive, as I am a nervous flyer in any case and a flight in a Hercules is far from settling, but nevertheless, it was an experience.

It was a shock to the system when I found out where I

would be sleeping; the bed space I had been allocated consisted of breeze blocks in a shape of a rectangle, a sheet of steel and sandbags on top. This arrangement, with typical Army humour, is known as a 'coffin' and is designed to give maximum protection from indirect fire. It made me slightly claustrophobic but I had a choice not used to my new 'home'. My working routine was very different from what I'm used to back in camp, although thanks to Cpl Kenesia Woodhouse, my boss, mentor and chaperone, I learned quickly and soon adapted my in-barracks trade knowledge and experience to the different procedures that I was now faced with.

It took me a while to get used to the extreme heat and PT lessons were a real shock to the system! However, after acclimatising I managed to get a place on the RA's female team in the COB 'Super fit Challenge', involving a multitude of exercises and activities, which we won.

By far the biggest challenge was coping without my mobile phone! However, to compensate I had my half-hour per week phone card allowance; although this was still far short of what I'm used to. There were some good welfare amenities within the COB that I wasn't expecting to find on operations, such as an internet suite, phone kiosks, café, Subway and shops selling electrical goods, unusual gifts, rugs and clothing; without these I think I would have gone mad in my spare time.

The Café in the 'welfare village' that we often visited served the sort of food I am used to eating, which relieved the monotony of the cookhouse American-style 'deep fried everything' food. It was very noticeable that

the Americans were taking over the COB and they certainly wasted no time making their mark on the food choice. As well as palatable food, the café sold the most amazing milkshakes which cooled me down immensely from the heat.

Thankfully, for most of my tour there were no indirect-fire attacks on the COB. However, one night in late May the sound I had dreaded filled the air: The attack alarm; CRAM had sensed incoming indirect-fire. I had felt nervous at the back of my mind all along about how I would react if this happened; I was worried I would panic or get something wrong. However, drills learned in training just kicked in and I found myself reacting, as if on 'auto-pilot'. I was much shaken afterwards; no amount of training can truly prepare you for such an event. I was glad that I had been well trained for the event and that I did carry out the correct drills; two hours later when the next attack happened I was much calmer and more confident. However, it's not an experience I'd like to repeat again.

During my spell in Iraq, I have gained a lot of valuable experience and knowledge in a very short period of time, as an SPS administrator and soldier. I am proud to have served with the deployed troops of the Army, Navy and RAF on the last Op Telic. The highlight was marching through the streets of Oakham on the Regiment's homecoming Parade in June, where the support of the public for what we had done was overwhelming: it gave me a massive feeling of achievement. I am now looking forward to my next operational tour.



32 Bty 16 Regt RA at COB Basra

Editor: I "borrowed" – with permission – the following article from *Torch* – the RAEC Journal. You will understand that Sister Vivien was actually a member of the ATS even although she was employed by the RAEC!

PDF Compressor Free Version
**BUBONIC PLAGUE, AN EDUCATION CENTRE
IN AN EX-BROTHEL AND INSTRUCTIONS
ON BATH CLEANING – LIFE IN THE RAEC
AT THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO**
Maj Trudi Bailey AGC(ETS)



The Beeston area of Leeds is, sadly, best known as the area where the July 5th bombers came from. But it was in Beeston that I met Sister Vivien Bowman, a member of the Sacred Heart Community. She is a softly-spoken, well-read lady who was 85 in May and who has an interesting story to tell.

Sister Vivien hails originally from Inverness-shire. In 1943 when the country was 'on its knees', she joined up. Her initial training was in Dalkeith; then, having trained in a Domestic Science College, she was sent to the Army Catering Corps. Having taught on 'how to keep a house' at a local school, it seemed like the ideal route to support one's country. On arrival, she was told to forget all she had learnt in college and was sent to Aldershot to cater for two and half thousand troops. Having had a relatively sheltered upbringing, one can only imagine what impression Aldershot had on a young woman in those days – or indeed even today. It was here that Sister Vivien was introduced to the backbone of the British Army – the Sergeant who 'treated us like slaves'. She recalls producing vast vats of porridge – it was not quite catering college. The work was extremely hard and there was little time for anything else. There was, after all, a war on. She moved to Salisbury Plain to cater for the Pioneer Corps (and she was pleased to hear that that Corps is still in existence and as essential to the Army today as it has ever been). On the Plain, she encountered the familiar soldier attitude of complaining whenever possible; when served with jacket potatoes, the soldiers were furious that the chefs 'could not be bothered to peel them'. Just imagine those poor girls, producing wholesome food with little resources and struggling

under the weight of the big black pans. But although life in the Army was dull, there was always enough food and the girls were not conscious of what the outside world was experiencing.

Feeling that she had more to offer, Sister Vivien applied for the War Office Selection Board. This was held in an old convent in North London where she recalls all the rooms were named after saints. Sadly she failed selection due to 'lack of ambition' which was the War Office's loss and the RAEC's gain.

She was sent to Bristol to 'wait for a ship' and she waited for about 3 months. It was only then that she realised that she had been 'switched' into the Royal Army Educational Corps (it seems that internal transfers were a lot less complicated during the War than today). She eventually set sail for Europe, having been given 'stripes' as you 'could not be an Educator without rank.' The voyage, during which peace was declared in Japan, took her to Haifa and Egypt, eventually landing in Taranto on the Italian coast. Although keen to see the delights of the city, they had to keep away as there was an outbreak of Bubonic Plague. She was taken by truck (driven by Polish drivers) through Naples to Perugia. It is only when you look at a map of Italy that you realise the distances involved – and these were not highly maintained highways, especially after several years of fighting and the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the same year.

Perugia was her destination where the British Army had taken over the whole university. The aim was to train people before they returned to civilian life back in the UK – as she said herself 'how foresightful' of the Army. The courses had two aims – to give service personnel an opportunity to get away from work for a brief spell as well as provide a skill for later life. The courses and the associated break were gladly received and appreciated by all. Sister Vivien was accommodated and worked in a villa outside of Perugia – Villa Spinola – which had been used as a brothel by the Germans in the war. It was here that her military teaching duties began – teaching service women how to run a house, how to cook and how to clean a bath, amongst other domestic duties. She remembered, with a wry smile, a senior female Major in the Intelligence Corps being sent along to attend the course. After all, what use is code breaking when you have a house to run with rationing on? Naturally teaching cooking was a 'breeze' after her experiences with the Catering Corps but it felt wrong to be teaching how to make suet pudding when in the middle of Italy. Fortunately two Italian girls assisted with the catering and taught Sister Vivien how to make pasta, so the time was not wasted. She learnt Italian in the local village, taught by a German woman who had married an Italian. Being Catholic, Sister Vivien was keen to attend Mass but the region was very rural and, as the locals had duties all day, the services were held, literally, 'when the sun rises'.

Domestic duties was not the only subject that the RAEC delivered. On the ship out, Sister Vivien had met two girls who were travelling with a large model of a pre-fab house. As so many houses had been bombed during the war, the government had designed pre-fab houses to be

erected quickly and to last only 20 or so years. These had not been seen by many of the forces serving in Europe so the 'team' were required to do a 'roadshow'.

Eventually Sister Vivien came home to Inverness-shire on sick leave. She had a letter from a policeman arrived on her family's doorstep to declare her AWOL! Her defence was that she had not been told when to report back! She subsequently reported to Battle Abbey where the RAEC asked her to teach a course on how to run a hotel. Although she had no knowledge of this topic, in true RAEC style, she borrowed some notes from a friend and got on with the job!

After leaving the RAEC in 1948, Sister Vivien spent a year in Inverness-shire learning how to weave and then joined the Sacred Heart in 1949.

I feel most privileged to have met and spent time with Sister Vivien. Although officially retired, she still visits 'the elderly' in the local area. Successful treatment of cancer last year has not affected her love of the outdoors and enjoyment of walking, although now more gently. She is incredibly well-read and keeps up with current affairs much better than many Army officers. On the drive back from Catterick where she had joined ETS 2 Div for Education Sunday, we discussed the situation in Afghanistan. Her knowledge and analysis of the situation was evidence of her clear views and most lucid appreciation of the world today – she would give the Officer Tutor cohort a challenge or two. In an email received after Education Sunday, she said that she found it 'very inspirational all that [the ETS] are doing in education for those in the army'.

I think that Sister Vivien, with her positive outlook, lucid memory and overall contentment with life is, in turn, an inspiration to us all.

TRIUMPHANT RADC NETBALL TEAM Cpl Bridgeford-Rae RADC, Dental Centre, Waterbeach Barracks

After months of Thursday lunch time training at Defence School of Transport (DST) Leconfield, the team were selected to play against six other teams in the 2 Div Region; this was going to be our first Netball match against other teams, with the event held at the Harrogate Foundation College. All the team were feeling very anxious as we had never played together before, but we actually won all our games and were subsequently crowned as The Winners.

This gave us confidence for our next team event at Aldershot, the RLC Tournament which consisted of all the Corps' units in the UK and Germany. Also, the RLC were scouting for their A and B Teams for the Inter-Corps Championship which was to be held a few weeks later. Again, we were crowned as The Winners – plus, a few of the girls were selected for the RLC Teams.

This encouraged me to get a Royal Army Dental Corps (RADC) team together...which wasn't easy, as not many girls had played since school. My first point of contact was the Army Sports Control Board to see how much I

needed to scrounge from the RADC Secretary to enter a team; the secretary had never heard of a RADC netball team before and therefore he happily supported us. My next scrounge was to get a Netball Strip; as my new unit didn't have many females, from them it was therefore a NO; from my previous unit it was the same story; hardly any RADC females and nobody to play against. In the end, I ended up borrowing from RMAS Sandhurst, who very kindly provided us with balls, kitbag and a snazzy outfit, and even washed it for us too...thank you.

So the time of the Inter Corps Championships came round; some of the team met up at Clayton Bks in Aldershot the night before and the others met on the Day...all of us looking very worried as most of us hadn't played since school. When they gave me the positions that they played, we had a lot of defenders and not a lot of shooters...we were certainly in trouble! Never mind, we were at the Championships and were going to give it our best shot!



*Triumphant RADC Netball Team at Aldershot
Back Row L-R Pte Holliday, Pte Morton, Maj Strickland,
SSgt Cochrane, Sgt Richards, Cpl Bridgeford-Rae and Cpl
Baleiwai
Front Row Pte Ashya and SSgt Tutty*

Our first game was against the Royal Signals; we were just finding our feet and the positions that we were comfortable with. However, we got thrashed 17-0, it couldn't get any worse, could it? Second game, we went on to play the Intelligence Corps who were of a similar standard and the result wasn't too bad, a loss 4-0, but we were still to score. Third up, the Royal Artillery were our next challenge; here, we finally scored despite losing, thus moral was high and the team was coming together. The fourth challenge was the Royal Logistic Corps A Team, most of whom I had faced in the RLC Tournament a few weeks earlier so I knew the effort that they had gone to get a great team together; so, again we lost... we were getting used to this, but still enjoyed the event! Finally, our last game was with the Adjutant General's Corps who we had a really good match against and scored some more goals.

Well done the RADC Team! WE look forward to building on this year's experience and making a real impact in 2010!

I WORK AT THE INFANTRY BATTLE SCHOOL

W0807018 SSgt Beverley CAPEL AGC (SPS)

In May this year I was posted to the Infantry Battle School (IBS) in Brecon, Wales as the Finance Systems Administrator. IBS is the Infantry's centre of excellence, the training delivered here is by high quality instructors. The School delivers competent and confident commanders for the Field Army by running command and leadership training, infantry tactics training, weapons training and live firing range qualifications. In addition, the School provide specialist training teams to assist foreign forces in their development, and also allows places on their courses for overseas students. Since my assignment commenced I have been fortunate enough to accompany the Platoon Commanders' Division (PCD) to Belize on two occasions, employed as the Rear Link Detachment (RLD).

PCD runs the Platoon Commanders' Battle Course (PCBC) which consists of a ten week Tactics course followed by a five week Live Firing Tactical Training (LFTT) phase for newly commissioned Infantry Officers. The Tactics phase includes deployment to Belize on Battle Camp which is the framework giving the young officers a Mission Rehearsal Exercise, expeditionary; immersion training; challenging terrain/climate and realistic live firing.

I am in the activation party, and we depart five days prior to the students and instructors to set up in the British Army Support Unit Belize (BATSUB), BATSUB is conveniently located just next door to the Belize International Airport and is also the home to the Belize Defence Force (BDF). The BDF partake in the IBS PCBC. As part of the Memorandum of Agreement, there is also a five man team sent out with the IBS Main Body who are the Short Term Training Team (STTT) delivering training to selected BDF soldiers.

The Main Body are put through an MCCP in Brecon by the RAO staff prior to their departure to Belize to ensure that all documentation is updated for each individual. Once it is collated, manual copies of emergency contacts etc are

produced and transferred to me in theatre for use in compassionate cases. As the RLD, I hold the passports and identity cards of all those who deploy into the jungle. The reason again is for compassionate and casualty evacuation purposes. If a student is evacuated and his ID/Passport is in the bottom of his bergen in the jungle it can cause obvious problems. I also work along side Movement Control to maintain the fit manifest.

Besides responding to casualty evacuations and compassionate cases, of which there can be many, as RLD, I am responsible for co-ordinating G1 and Q4 duties as and when requested. Basically, I remain static in Price Barracks (BATSUB) as the rear link from the Exercise Control (EXCON) in the jungle to BATSUB/ BDF and I am required to be contactable 24/7 by mobile phone. However, communication in the jungle is by satellite which can be intermittent. Dependant on which mission is being run, fluctuating comms and the support required, it can go from very quiet to very busy in a short space of time.

BATSUB is a fantastic facility for the exercise as it has all the support e.g. QM Dept, Med Centre, etc. so there is only a requirement for me as the rear link. BATSUB also houses an impressive outdoor pool that is open 12 hours a day, and has its own island, St George's Quay where the military personnel can gain water sport qualifications in a relaxed Caribbean environment. In the short time I have been posted to IBS I have thoroughly enjoyed my new experiences. Who knows what the next Battle Camp will bring?

OVERSEAS PAYMENTS

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

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

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".



Where Are You Now?

DO YOU REMEMBER JULIET ALLAN

PDF COMPRESSOR Free Version
gingertypething@hotmail.com

My name is Juliet Allan and I am looking for anyone who might remember me. I started my basic training at Guildford on 22 November 1982. After Trade Training with the ACC at Aldershot, I was posted to Chertsey in June 1983 and left the Army in November 1985. I am looking for Mary Abbott, Fay Flanagan, Chris Edge, Janet Loftus, Julie Drabble, Kay Docherty, little Scottish Maggie and anyone else who remembers me. I would love to catch up, so please contact me on the above e-mail.

SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT MISS BENNETT

Lucy Stewart
will.lucy@btopenworld.com



Portrait of Miss Bennett

I have recently bought a portrait of someone and I have discovered that she was the OC of a troop of about 100 ATS personnel billeted near Bradford in 1945. She was called Miss Bennett and was about 35 years old. The portrait was painted in 1945 by Joyce Platt. Miss Bennett was billeted with Joyce's family and Joyce's father was Wilfred Platt. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

LOOKING FOR DORIS HARTLEY

W/272805 Mrs Esther Armagon née McMorris
19 Meadowlands, Oxted, Surrey RH8 9BG

I am trying to locate an ATS who was very kind to me when I arrived from Jamaica in 1944. We were on a Wireless Operator course in Edinburgh and she kindly invited me to spend Christmas with her – her brother was in the Navy so I could have his room. Her name was Doris Hartley and she resided at 42 Clive Street, Burnley, Lancs. It would be wonderful if she could be located. I left the ATS and trained as an SRN at Hammersmith Hospital. Following that, I became a midwife at Lewisham Hospital. Trusting you will be able to help.

ATS TRAINING CAMP – FORT WILLIAM 1942

Miss Elisabeth Bolter
28 First Avenue, Teignmouth TQ14 9DJ
Tel: 01626 770058



Joan Bolter née Richards 1942

I am writing to ask if you would kindly include in your next *Lioness* the enclosed copy photograph of my late mother, Joan Bolter née Richards and a friend taken at the above Training Camp. My mother is on the left of the photograph. If any reader recognises my mother and/or friend I would be pleased to hear from them and if possible, of their memories of the Camp. I hope you will be able to do this.

W/15849 AND P/227929 ANN BICKERTON WILLIAMSON NÉE DICKSON

Miss Kate Williamson
Lane End House, Meadle, Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire HP17 9UD
Tel: 01844 346105

Editor: Miss Kate Williamson wrote to say that, sadly, her Mother had passed away. She included the following about her Service and wondered if any readers remembered her Mother and the Ripon incident.



Ann Dickson

This was used in a programme for one of the SME's Concert Parties in 1944.

My mother was born on 10 March 1918 in Wideopen, Northumberland and joined the ATS as a volunteer on 28 June 1939 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne at the outbreak of War in 1939 and was attached initially to the Tyne Electricals. She was also stationed at Brancepeth with the Durham Light Infantry and then went to OCTU in Egham in 1942 where she was in 4 Pln A Coy.

According to her Commanding Officer, Miss McFarlane,

she was highly respected and popular, to the extent that Miss McFarlane wrote to the Group Commander, Durham and North Riding ATS, requesting that she be returned to Brancepeth following commissioning, as she would be of "valuable assistance in training up" recruits to the Company.



With her Red Setter "Beauty"

However, instead of returning to Brancepeth, Ann Dickson was posted to the School of Military Engineering at Ripon as a Junior Commander where she remained for two years. During that time she met her future husband Lieutenant Donald Williamson who, as a Royal Engineer, was undergoing training. They married in April 1944 and she eventually left the Service on becoming pregnant.



Ann Dickson with her Company at Ripon

On one occasion, she had been appointed "Runner" to Princess Mary, The Princess Royal, when she made one of her visits. My Mother noted that Her Royal Highness was particularly interested in the condition of the womens' toilets! On another occasion, this time at Ripon, she and some of the ATS were called to the camp, coming from Ripon to find that there was a fire at the camp. They raised the alarm and helped to organise evacuations, but it was my mother who saw that the fire was dangerously close to the hospital huts and remembered that there was one patient left in the hospital. She raised the alarm and he was safely evacuated. The patient was the artist Terence Cuneo who wrote about the incident in his book "The Mouse and His Master". Cuneo says that he was overlooked in the evacuation but thanks to my Mother's action, he was not.

At Ripon, Jean Roseigh was the other Junior Commander and Alec Waugh, the author and brother of Evelyn Waugh was also stationed there.

DID YOU SERVE WITH RUBY GRAY?

W/248604 Ruby Gray
Tel: 01387 263834

Ruby Gray, who has been a member of the Dumfries Branch since it began, was in the ATS between 1943-1946 with the RAOC at Sherwood Forester Barracks in Derby. She has been in touch with Margaret Garrett in Leeds and would dearly love to hear from other colleagues who were with her during those years.

JUNIOR COMMANDER OLIVE PATTEN née WALSHE

Lt Col (Retd) Gerry Fahy
Eastwell, 38 Blackmore Road, Malvern
WR14 1QT

Mrs Olive Patten recently celebrated her 90th birthday with a party attended by 60 of her friends and relatives. She herself organised the celebration luncheon with military skill and efficiency.

I first met Olive Walshe, as she then was, in 1942, in Holywood: not the venue of the stars, but Palace Barracks, Holywood, Co Down, Northern Ireland. Olive was then a second subaltern ATS and my platoon



Olive Walshe - seated with dog - 6th from the right Gerry Fahy - just behind the OC - first row standing - 7th from the right

commander and I was a lance corporal. Our respective military paths then divided and we fast forward some 40 years.

In 1982 I was requested by Corps Headquarters to make contact with an ex-servicewoman, a Mrs Olive Patten, who with her husband Tony had just moved to Malvern and near to my own home. This I did and to our mutual astonishment recognised ourselves as the erstwhile second subaltern and lance corporal of the Holywood days. What a co-incidence - thank you Corps Headquarters. We became firm friends, but sadly Tony (a former captain in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers) has since passed away.



Olive and Tony

Olive is a life member of the Association and takes an interest in all Service matters, especially the ATS in which she served until 1946, retiring as a Junior Commander. Although sadly now registered blind, Olive is an example to us all. She is active in many local affairs, has been an artist of considerable ability and is a member of our local Women's Institute. In her youth she was a good athlete and won the Army Women's high jump in Northern Ireland District. Olive has indeed lived up to the Corps motto - *Sauviter in Modo, Fortiter in Re* (Gentle in manner, Resolute in deed)

Are there any ex-ATS who served with Olive? She would love to hear. Please contact me in the first instance and I will pass your details on.

DO YOU REMEMBER ME - VAL LAYCOCK?

Val Laycock
10 Beverley Close, Ash GU12 6NP

I met so many old/new faces at the WRAC Dinner Club and discovered that a lot of them had met through "Where are you Now?" in the *Lioness*. I thought I'd like to try to find some friends from my past.

I have to admit that as a very unhappy Cpl stationed at Hindhead in 1962, I and two other Cpls, namely Stella Dawson and Maggie (whose surname I cannot recall) went AWOL in my battered old Austin. We set off for Yorkshire and got as far as Guildford when the blessed thing broke down. We then hitchhiked to Yorkshire

where Stella and I both lived, but after a week or so we were regretting our actions and decided to return to face the consequences before we were arrested.

PDF Compressor Free Version



Sgt Laycock in Rheindahlen

We all got a 'severe dig' on CO's orders: a regimental entry that delayed my LS and GC Medal for many years. However, all was not lost as very shortly afterwards I was promoted to Sgt (presumably to keep me out of further trouble) and posted to 68 Sqn RCT Germany. I think Stella ended up emigrating to Australia and I lost touch with Maggie. I had a really fun tour in 68 Sqn and two of many friends I met whilst in BAOR were Maeve



Val with Maeve

Fergie PTI and Emily Laird, a Sgt Clerk in the "big house" – as HQ BAOR was fondly known as.



.....and Emily

If Maeve, Emily, Maggie or Stella are reading this, it would be great to see them again or just email and swap stories of the old days. So, where are you now?

SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION, PADERBORN PAY NCOs COURSE NO 13 – NOVEMBER 1947

W/51553 Patricia Mary Rankin née Lucas
'Southcroft', Evenlode Road, Moreton-in-Marsh,
Glos GL56 0JB



Paderborn 1947

I joined the ATS in November 1945 and served until June 1949. I was employed as a driver and then as a Pay Clerk and I reached the rank of Corporal.

I did my initial training at Glen Parva and then spent time with 582 Coy RASC in Preston, Penrith, Carlisle and Blackburn. Between 1947 and 1949 I was with 721 Coy RASC, GHQ(M) CAR BAOR. I completed my Pay NCOs Course in November 1947 – 4th from the right in the middle row – and was finally demobbed from 46(M) HAA Regt RA, Bulford.

SEEKING EX-WAITRESSES FROM SHRIVENHAM

W/352221 LCpl Norma Kinson née Ransome
15 Cotswold Drive, Skelton-in-Cleveland TS12 2JN
Tel: 01287 653153

PDF Compressor Free Version



Becket Hall 1951

The enclosed photograph shows 2 shifts of waitresses from the Military College of Science, Becket Hall, Shrivenham. I am on the right kneeling with three NCOs 1951-1952. If anyone remembers this photograph, I would love to hear from you.

W/297570 CPL EITHNE SWANTON

Barrie Walters
62 Ashington Road, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RE
barrie@sirco-controls.co.uk

I am trying to trace relatives of the above, killed in action aged 28 on 21 November 1944. Eithne is buried in St John's Roman Catholic cemetery, (Row 2 Grave 1) in Goirle, Holland and is the only female casualty buried there.

A contact of mine in Holland has set up a website to honour those Allied Casualties who lost their lives in the Liberation of Goirle. His name is Gerrit Kobes and he is a Dutch historian who lives in Goirle. He would like to include a photograph of Eithne on his website. Regrettably, I do not know where Eithne Swanton originated from or her parents names, as the CWG Commission Honour Roll does not include this information. I have a feeling she was from Northern Ireland and have tried appeals to local NI newspapers but no response.

Please, can any of your members help us? Many thanks.

WERE YOU IN THIS CHOIR?

Joan James
2204 Douglas House, 1600 Beach Ave,
Vancouver, BC V6G 1Y8
joanieajames@gmail.com

I would love to hear from anyone who recognises themselves or anyone else in this photograph of the Royal Army Pay Corps Choir taken in 1942, I believe. We were a group of soldiers, ATS and civilians, all working together at the Corn Exchange in Reading, Berks. We

were billeted in homes in Reading and Caversham. I am in the second row, third from right. At that time my name was Joan Smith, but in 1944 I married a Canadian soldier, Eddie James, and came to Canada in 1946.



RAPC Choir 1942

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDERS

Are you an annual member? If so, your membership runs out at the end of September. If you belong to a geographical Branch, please you're your Secretary or Treasurer your subscription renewal in good time. If you belong to Headquarters Branch then you must send your subscription directly to WRAC Association, AGC Centre, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG.

Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and arrive as soon as possible after 1 October.

It is very important that you renew your membership in good time. If you leave it too late, you will not receive your *Lioness* at the right time and it will cost more in money and time to update your membership records accordingly and to post out your *Lioness*.

PLEASE HELP US TO ENSURE YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS KEPT UP TO DATE

PS Why not become a Life Member and then you will not need to worry about renewing your subscription each year? A bargain at £50. Why not ask your family and friends to club together and buy it for your Christmas or Birthday?

News from Overseas Members

MEMORIES FROM THE LAST LIONESS

PDF Compressor Free Version
pippajarman@locallink.co.za

Hi from Knysna, South Africa! Just finished reading, cover to cover, the latest *Lioness* what a great success the Grand Reunion obviously was – well done!



Pippa Jarman – July 2009

As I started turning the pages I recognised no-one, then WHAM – Colonel Hazel Powell – and I was reduced to a 58 year old quivering jelly! In 1970, when I served with her, I was always in trouble but she did teach me one important thing that I never forgot: when reprimanding anyone, you stay sitting and keep them standing (very unnerving!)

A few more blank pages and then: Thank heavens for the 'Jocks' (as in APTC) – Jackie Whitehead and Budgie Rosewall. I'm back on the ball (or Spring Board) – then Page 15.....who is holding the flowers...??...I think I know, but please tell me. *Editor: Maggie Purkis*. Page 57, Cpl Fry – I wonder if she remembers that I was her Platoon Commander in No 1 Coy at Guildford? Any news of Sue Bonavia et al?

Page 58 – Memories come flooding back of service with RSM Wolstenholme and Helen Meechie – so special to everyone who knew her.

What also sparked my memory into ignition was Page 81 – Cathy Birtwistle. (I saw far too much of your back when racing) and Bobbi Chilton (one of my four senior cadets when I was in training at the WRAC College) and Cas Bolland – my Aldershot days. Page 82 – Leslie Scott and Jackie Whitehead, unchanged and entirely recognisable! I feel complete.

Now I've emigrated to South Africa, it is almost more important to remember which paths I've walked (or run!) along throughout my life. The WRAC was a particularly formative path with memories that are pretty important to me: both Sue Westlake and Bar Crabbe have the DVDs to prove it! I'm still in touch with several friends

from the 'Good Old Days' although some, sadly, have gone to a Parade Ground in the skies.

I am proud to have served in the WRAC for 12 years. Like many, I regret the passing of the WRAC – although I served with R Signals, Int Corps, RAVC, and RA, I still belonged to our Corps. Thank you to the *Lioness* for reviving the memories.

PS if anyone wants to visit Knysna, check out the Apartment I rent out on www.karibuapartment.com Any member of the WRAC Association can rent it for £450 p/w (which is about a 50% discount!)

THE TUI BIRD

Editor: I promise you that this is the last of the Tui Bird!



Monica Ellis, who sent in the above photograph of the presentation of the Tui Bird has also kindly sent in the following biographical detail about Baroness Freyberg. There are two amazing coincidences: one is that Monica's brother on holiday from Australia, and who used to live in New Zealand, immediately recognised Baroness Freyberg from the black and white photograph of the presentation. Secondly, it seems fitting that she was married and laid to rest near Guildford – not far from where she presented the Tui Bird.

Baroness Freyberg GBE (died 24 September 1973) was a British peeress. Born Barbara Jekyll, she was a daughter of Col Sir Herbert Jekyll. On 20 July 1911, she married the Hon Francis McLaren (Liberal MP for Spalding, the second son of the 1st Baron Aberconway) and they had two sons, Martin John McLaren (1914-1979) and Guy Lewis Ian McLaren (1915-1978). Barbara's husband was killed in action in 1917 and on 14 June 1922, she married Bernard Freyberg (later Baron Freyberg) at St Martha-on-the-Hill, near Guildford, Surrey. They had an only son, Paul, a year later.

During World War II, Barbara was a welfare worker in Cairo, was mentioned in despatches and awarded an OBE in 1943. When her husband's term as Governor-General of New Zealand ended in 1952, Lady Freyberg was awarded the GBE a year later. She is buried in the churchyard of St Martha-on-the-Hill with her husband at her side, and their son who was awarded the Military Cross, at the end of their graves.

WINSLOW GUN SITE 1940

W/18979 Cpl Jo Small née Crampton
27A, 14th Ave, Bay-of-Plenty, Tauranga 3112,
New Zealand

I joined the ATS in Reading in March 1939 and was called up on 4 September. We were in Croydon for a few days and then sent to Totton Gun Site, Southampton – 251 HAA Battery of the 80th Regt were there. Doreen King née Bates and myself were put in the Officers' Mess to cook and it was all under canvas. We were billeted in the village. It was a very wet autumn and we were up to our knees in mud. We were moved many times but ended up at Winslow Gun Site where we had our first Christmas. It was so cold that the water on the



Winslow Camp, West End 1940

fire bucket froze inside the Nissen huts. The raids on Portsmouth and Southampton started while we were there and some of us then went to Fort Fareham to learn plotting. Later that year, 1940, we went to Signal School, Kingston-on-Thames to learn the BBX then returned to Fort Fareham.

In November 1941, I was chosen with twenty other ATS to join a recruitment drive which took us all over the UK. We demonstrated our different skills in the large department stores. Unfortunately, while in Manchester, I broke my leg and was in hospital for five months. I returned to Fareham and was then posted to Chichester where I met my New Zealand husband. We were married in 1944 and I sailed for New Zealand on 8 May 1945 – VE Day. I also had a time in Brighton and Chatham.

It was 21 years before I was able to make a trip to home, having had 5 children, but I was able to catch up with some ex friends. My son who lives in England ordered the *Lioness* for me and I do so enjoy receiving it. I then pass it on to another ex-ATS who lives in Greymouth. We are both always so disappointed not to see anyone we know. I thought if I left it any longer to write it would be too late as I will be "The Big 90 in March".

WAR MEMORIALS IN AUSTRALIA

Barbara Dawson, Chairman, Harrogate Branch

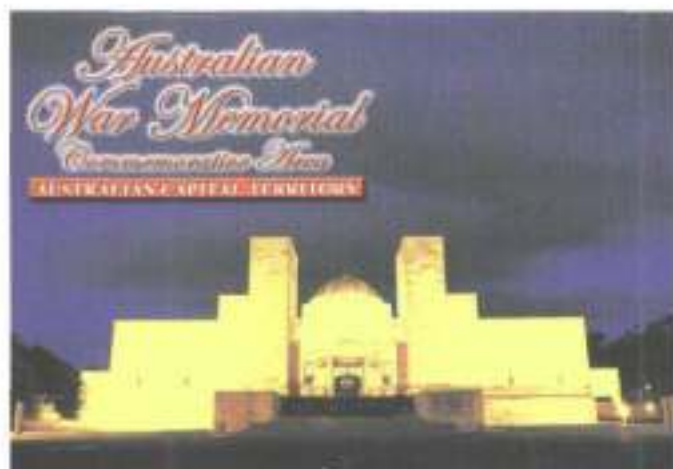
Although I am now fully domiciled in UK, I revisit Australia every year to visit friends and relations and thought that *Lioness* readers might be interested in the following two memorials. The first one is in Esperance



which is about 40 miles south of Perth on the south coast. It is a wonderful War Memorial and I have not seen another like it. The way the Australian flag is draped over the top is very effective: it has been beautifully carved. I particularly liked the way the gum (*Eucalyptus* tree) is carved into the top of the memorial badge – most unusual. Around each side of the memorial are plaques naming all the conflicts the Australian forces have been involved in. This was especially moving as I lost an uncle in Singapore and a friend in Korea.



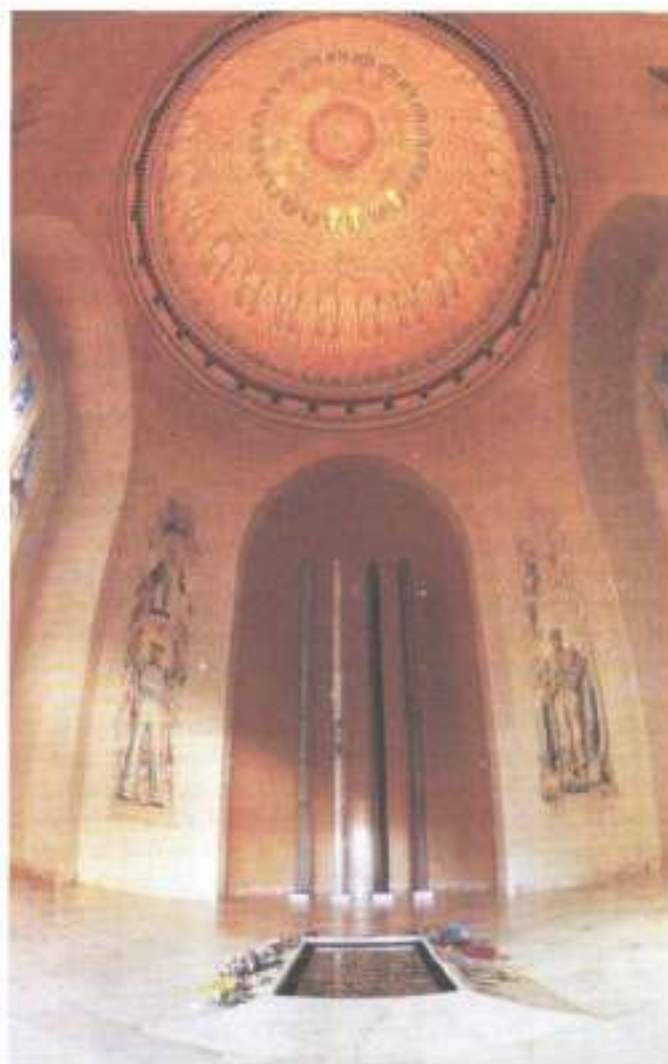
Secondly, I am sending you some leaflets about the Australian War Memorial which is very impressive.



The Commemorative Area



The Pool of Reflection and the Eternal Flame



The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier within the Hall of Memory

On 11 November 1993, an unknown Australian soldier from the First World War, who had been exhumed from a cemetery in France, was re-interred in the Hall of Memory. He was one of 46,000 Australians who died on the Western Front during the First World War and one of 18,000 Australians killed in the war who have no known grave. Meticulous records kept by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission allow us to be certain that he was an Australian killed in action.

The Tomb within the Hall of Memory is an official war grave and visitors are invited to lay a poppy on it.

COPY DEADLINE

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

24 JUNE 2010

WRAC Officers' Dining Club

DINNER AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB
SAT 14 NOVEMBER 2009
Jane Freebairn

One hundred and ten Officers and guests had a thoroughly good evening at the Annual WRAC Officers' Dinner in November. The Regimental Colonel of the Adjutant General's Corps, Colonel Jon Ward, was our guest and we were entertained musically by a quintet from the AGC Band. The highlight for many – and indeed the bandsmen themselves – was when Jean Collyer took the baton to conduct the WRAC Corps March. As Capt Jean MacDowall, she was the Director of Music of the WRAC Band and arranged the medley of Early One Morning/Lass of Richmond Hill as the Corps Quick March in the early 1950s. Of course, she also had to contend with everyone singing along! In her Thank You letter she wrote, "Also, I wanted to thank you for spoiling me so much. Allowing me to conduct the Band – they did very well and so did the choir!" The pleasure was all ours Jean and we look forward to a repeat performance next year.

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB
LUNCHEON IN LONDON
MAY 2009
Jane Freebairn

Those who attended the Luncheon in the House of Commons are still talking about what an excellent occasion it was and I am grateful to Kate Bettison for sending the following photographs to remind us all, nearly a year on, how enjoyable it was.



On the way to the reception



Elizabeth Laurence-Smith and Col Barbara Laverack



Isabel McCord, Vivien Brighton and Sue Westlake



Col Frankie Cook, Jackie Whitehead and Gerry Fahy



A smiling table!

It would appear that, overall, most prefer the Luncheon to be held in London and so it will be again in May 2010. The location will be equally special and it is hoped that, even although the WRAC is not celebrating its 60th Anniversary, that the location will be inviting enough to encourage you to come along.



The ceiling of the Members' Dining Room

LUNCHEON

Saturday 15 May 2010

The annual luncheon will be held in the State Apartments of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The cost is likely to be about £60 – the same as last year. If you are a member of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club, you will receive an application form. If you are not a member, please ring the General Secretary on 01962 887570 for further details.

There will only be 90 places available so, if you are interested, please apply as soon as possible. Priority will be given to existing members of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club, and, if necessary, there will be a waiting list.

DONATIONS

Did you know that you can send a donation to the Association at any time? We are often asked if this is possible and the answer is, "Yes, of course it is." Many branches send us donations in memory of members who have sadly passed away but it is possible to make a donation at any time for whatever reason. You can specify whether you want your donation to go to the main Association account – please make cheques payable to WRAC Association – or, if you want it to go to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund then make your cheque payable to ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. It is important that you do make out your cheque to the right account.

Whatever you decide to do, PLEASE make sure that we have a Gift Aid form from you. If you pay tax, the funds can reclaim the tax and it adds to the donation you have made without it costing you any more.

A Gift Aid form has been printed on the back of the carrier sheet which had your name and address on it. If you have made a donation in the past, and you have not sent us one before, please complete it now.

If you have never sent us a donation, perhaps you would be kind enough to think about it now and send it in with the Gift Aid form.

Even if you are not thinking of making a donation now, why not fill in the form anyway and send it back. We will file it and have it to hand if you should be kind enough to make any donations in the future. You will not have to look out the form and we can reclaim the tax!

WRAC Dinner Club

WRAC DINNER CLUB REUNION

W/382522 Mrs Pam Shearstone née Johnstone
133 Corn Close, South Normanton, Alfreton,
Derbyshire DE55 2JE

What a wonderful WRAC Dinner Club Reunion it was – lovely hotel and the entertainment was “SIMPLY THE BEST” (no offence) “BETTER THAN ALL THE REST”.

Thank you so very much to our wonderful organisers, our committee, a toast to you all. Each year you exceed yourselves.

Thanks also for the younger generation “especially table 10.” From what I can see there is no age discrimination – we are all family. Hopefully they will continue in our footsteps and continue the bond we have for each other as the years go by. Welcome to our family.

WRAC DINNER CLUB

W/382522 Mrs Pam Shearstone née Johnstone
herons-seat@hotmail.co.uk



Pam Shearstone at the Mail Room, Birmingham

Solihull 2009! What a grand spot – just the right size for a wander and a coffee. Bus trip to Birmingham – visited the Mail Box/posh shops plus the BBC Centre. Watched the Service from St Paul's Cathedral on their large TV screen. Barbara picked up a leaflet with the information regarding a Group being shown around the workings of the studio. An idea for 2010 – any takers?

Looking forward to 2010. Same time, same place, same new friends on table 13 – brilliant weekend! Many thanks to the energetic organizers.



Barbara Dawson, Chairman of Harrogate Branch, never misses an opportunity to recruit!

Editor: A few more photos of the “usual suspects” clearly enjoying themselves: thanks again to Carol Traynor and Chris Corker. The Dinner was held in Solihull and was voted the “Best yet”. I understand that the Committee plans to hold the function in the same hotel again.

With my General Secretary's hat on, I want to thank Carol Traynor and Jenny Nelson who arranged a “bucket collection” for the Association during the dinner. The Dinner Club itself presented the Vice President with a very generous cheque. The total amount donated was £610 which is very much appreciated and will be used to support the Association in all its efforts to maintain the esprit de corps amongst its members. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.





GENTLE THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

The older you get the tougher it is to lose weight because by then your body and your fat have become really good friends.

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

If you can smile when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame.

There is a lot to be thankful for if you take time to look for it. For example, I am sitting here thinking how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt.

Weddings

BLUE SAPPHIRE WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
(65 YEARS) STANLEY WALKER
AND ELSIE WINDSOR
 Flat 9, Arlington Court, Becton Lane,
 New Milton BH25 7AH



Stanley and Elsie on their wedding day in 1944

Stan and Elsie celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary on 20 September 2009. They married in 1944 when they were both members of 518 H(M) AA Bty RA. They were helped to celebrate this splendid occasion by their son and daughter, a granddaughter and 2 great granddaughters.



A few years later!

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY -
IVOR ANNETTS AND PAULEEN RIVERS
 3 The Dene, 17 Forest Road, Poole, Dorset BH13 6DP
 Tel: 01202 760912

Pauleen and Ivor met in Chester when the Staff Bands of the WRAC and Royal Signals met to rehearse for a joint concert at the 1956 Edinburgh Festival. The Director of Music of the WRAC Band was Captain Jean MacDowall who attended their wedding.



Wedding Day 26 March 1960

Over the years Pauleen (Trombone) and Ivor (Cornet) have enjoyed playing together within The Salvation Army. They have 3 sons and 5 grandchildren. Pauleen and Ivor now enjoy retirement in Poole, Dorset.



Pauleen just after joining the WRAC Band

**GOLDEN (PLUS THREE) WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY**

STAN MUNT AND JEAN ORCHARD

10, Hathersage Avenue, Long Eaton,
Nottingham NG10 3EB

0115 9794488
PDF Compressor Free Version



A very musical Guard of Honour

I was a member of the WRAC Staff Band and played clarinet and piano. I was married at the WRAC Centre, Guildford on 27 January 1958 and had a lovely Army wedding. My husband, Stan, was the Camp Butcher. The CO gave me away as sadly my family wasn't interested. Captain Jean MacDowall, the then Director of Music, and all the Band came and it was truly an amazing occasion. My Bridesmaid was Pauleen Rivers whose Golden Wedding appears above.



Capt Jean MacDowall and Jean Munt at the Reception

Remembrance

REMEMBRANCE

General Secretary

As usual, I am grateful to those who sent in photographs of the Field of Remembrance and Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph: Carol Traynor, Irene Maclean, Jackie Naysmith, Gladys Pope, Lyn Wenham and Chris Corker. I could not use them all but hope that the following will give you an idea of the marvellous weekend it is. PLEASE remember that you can also take part. There are two main events:



Field of Remembrance. Each Association has a small plot in the grounds of Westminster Abbey. On the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday, there is a ceremony when

a member of the Royal Family places a poppy at the main site and then walks around the whole Field of Remembrance. NO tickets are required – just be there by 10.30am. We do need your support at the Association plot. I know that some you do go to the Field of Remembrance and stand at other plots and some of you visit on another day – it is open for about a week – but you would be more than welcome at the WRAC Association plot. We are very grateful to the local ATS ladies who have supported the plot for many, many years but it would be nice to see some more of you there.

Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade at the Cenotaph. This year we had the largest contingent for a long time – over 70 ex-ATS and WRAC represented the Association in London. If you want to take part this year, you **DO NEED A TICKET**. Please let Association HQ have your details in early August so that you can be included when we bid for the tickets to the Royal British Legion. If you can, speak to someone who has taken part so that you can get a real feel for what is required.

I WILL REMEMBER THE FESTIVAL OF REMEMBRANCE

W/428136 Lyn Wenham

14 Sycamore Drive, Lutterworth, Leics LE17 4TP

Six of us from Leics/Notts branch attended the afternoon performance of the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. It was a lovely service enjoyed by all.

On leaving the Royal Albert Hall we decided to walk down towards Harrods. All of a sudden there was a crash, bang, wallop and there was Barbra Danter on the ground and very quickly surrounded by the lovely MET Police. They were so kind and helpful in getting an ambulance to take Barbra to hospital. Barbra has my love Joan De Vall. Barbara had a cut above her eyebrow, a black eye and a fracture of the left wrist.

The remaining four carried on and went to Harvey Nichols, onto the escalator, and then I heard, "Help me! Help me!" On looking back there was Vi Rawlins having fallen backwards but still holding onto the handrail with all her anatomy being bounced about! I managed to get back down the escalator and held Vi's head so she did not hit it and then the escalator was stopped. Store staff and a first aider took us to a room and treated the cuts to Vi's legs with blue plasters which she loved.



Barbara Danter ready for Parade

On the Sunday morning both Barbara and Vi were on parade, nothing was going to stop them. I am very proud of my ATS ladies. Will I go to London with them again after this? Yes, I will – it was a day I will remember for years.

MY FIRST TIME MARCHING AT THE CENOTAPH

W/531895 Sarah Povey
sa.povey@virgin.net

I just wanted to write and say thank you so much for getting me a ticket to go to the Cenotaph this year. I had an absolutely amazing time. This is the first event I have attended with the Association and I was bowled over by the welcome and friendliness of all. I turned up on my own and left on my own, but I marched with a very

proud and supportive group of women. I was very moved to line up in Whitehall by the Memorial to the Women of World War Two and was struck by how important it was for the Association to be marching as a separate and distinctive group of women, bringing attention not just to those of us present on the day, but marching as a reminder and in memoriam of all women that have given their service and continue to give their service and sometimes their lives in so many aspects of war past and present.

I particularly enjoyed being drilled again by Major Maskens-McIntyre and would love to do more of that at any opportunity!



Editor: Whether you like it or not, it's nice to know that it does get dusted from time to time! I took this photograph after leaving the Field of Remembrance ceremony on the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday.

IMPRESSIONS OF REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE 2009

Carol Traynor
Traynor189@aol.com



Early one morning just as the sun was rising (artistic licence!) the girls in green walked across an eerily quiet

Westminster Bridge, the sense of occasion was palpable in the damp air and there was a threat of rain which we hoped would stay away at least for a few hours. The crowds got larger as we walked past Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament and along Birdcage Walk with groups of men and women in their smart uniforms and Sunday best all heading towards Horseguards Parade Ground. Then it was a matter of finding our column amongst all the thousands of ex servicemen and women all gathering for the parade: what a wonderful sight and atmosphere.



We were sized off by Major Maskens-McIntyre, WRAC side by side with ATS. We salute you ATS ladies who take part in the parade every year no matter what, even when one of your ladies had a nasty fall the day before she was still on parade complete with black eye and broken wrist in a sling!



Into Whitehall we marched with the public lining the route and giving great support, left, left, left, right, left: memories of our service days came flooding back to us as we marched along swinging our arms proudly, eyes left at the Cenotaph to the ones who gave so much enabling us to be there that day. To march along Whitehall with the massed bands playing, the buildings towering each side and the public clapping and cheering is simply overwhelming. Onwards then around Parliament Square with the crowds even deeper each side of the road and round the corner again onto Horseguards approach past St James's Park on our left and a smart eyes right to Prince Andrew's salute.

Back onto Horseguards Parade Ground with the crunch, crunch of our footsteps on the gravel as we marched still in perfect step and then lining up to await and cheer the other columns of men and women as followed us on to the parade ground.

Then came the dismissal by Major Maskens-McIntyre and an end to a very thought provoking morning and a very special weekend in London.



At the Festival of Remembrance



- FANYs and Grannies





And finally – just to prove we did form up as a very smart contingent – all in step and excellent dressing:



Reunions

2009 ATS DINNER CLUB ANNUAL REUNION,
BOURNEMOUTH
W/307335 Joy Balmain née Green, Chairman
joybalmain@hotmail.com



Taking the train to the beach

Fifty members were welcomed at the Bournemouth Britannia Hotel on Monday 28 September 2009 for a four day autumn break. On Tuesday they travelled on the Hengistbury Train Service to the local beach. The trip was provided by the kindness of Joyce Faris the owner of the service and – coincidentally – a member of the ATS Dinner Club! The coaches had all been decorated with the ATS cap badge giving the ride even more appeal. The day too was kind to these old bones bearing in mind all the travellers were over 80 years old. After the ride a cup of tea or coffee was enjoyed at the Happy Hiker café.

Wednesday was free until the Gala Night and a special meal in our own dining room with music provided. There was a raffle and a photographer on hand to take group and individual photographs which were printed out at speed and at a reasonable cost. On Thursday we went by coach to Longleat: it was another fine day driving through lovely countryside. The visit was enjoyed by all who went and in the evening we enjoyed another good dinner.

All too soon Friday came and it was time to say farewell to all friends reunited by the ATS Dinner Club. The party broke up and everyone went their separate ways but the break was such a success that I have already booked the hotel for next year.

17TH INDEP COY WRAC
W/388700 Janet James
janetjames@ukgateway.net

Further to my letters to you in 2008 hoping to trace former WRAC members who were stationed at Shoeburyness. I hope that you will not mind having a little more feedback on additional contacts who came about as a result of (I think) the second letter – failing that, back copies of the magazine must be pretty durable.

I had mentioned previously that I had been contacted by five former members as a result of my first letter to you. Partly as a result of the second letter that number eventually rose to eight.



The girls gathering after dinner



Jo Crutcher with Katie Kerridge (1942) and Mona Card (1940) at the top table

Thus, at our 9th reunion in October 2009, which we held in Stafford, whilst not all our new contacts could make it this year, we were delighted to greet two former members of the ATS who had been at Shoeburyness from the beginning of ATS service there, from 1940 and 1942 respectively. This meant that we were represented by former members of the service from all the decades between the 1940s until the 1980s and, within those decades, probably from most years of the existence of the unit.

Perhaps there are still even more friends out there....?

KINE REUNION 2009
W/83342 Gladys Stapylton née Tulett
98 Paignton Avenue, West Monkseaton,
Whitley Bay NE25 8SZ

In early August 2009, a small group of former Kine theodolite operators met at the Victory Services Club for a buffet lunch. We were joined by one husband, one son, one daughter, one daughter-in-law and one non-kine friend as well as three Chelsea Pensioners. John Shuter, the widower of one of our colleagues, is now at the Royal Hospital and he brought two of his friends, Dorothy Hughes, one of the first Lady Pensioners, and Bill Lennard. We were delighted to meet them and especially pleased that they agreed to wear their scarlet coats. Both Dorothy and Bill, like us, had Royal Artillery connections so we had plenty of common ground. John kindly told us a bit about life at the Royal Hospital, which we all found most interesting and showed us copies of the Tricornie, the very professional Royal Hospital magazine which he edits.



*Back Row: Chris Coxon(Allen), Margaret Puddy (Stevens), Sue Clark(Holt), Eileen Skeeles (Gould), Mary Wilkin, Muriel Webb(Shaw), Tim Webb, Nancy Webb (Farrow)
Front Row: Nita Organ(Erskine), John Shuter, Gladys Stapylton (Gulett), Dorothy Hughes, Bill Lennard*

The photograph shows a very happy occasion – the average age was about 87 and we all look quite good for that!

**WRAC POSTAL BRANCH ASSOCIATION
WEEKEND REUNION AT HARROW
IN MIDDLESEX**
W/383053 Miss Margaret Grant MBE
mgrant2009@live.co.uk



Reunion group at BFPO

We had a great reunion this year again and went on an official visit to the new British Forces Post Office which opened our eyes. The big difference was that when we were employed there we had many many staff now it is



Three WOs: Andy, Margaret and Amanda

many many machines instead. We had a great tour by two Warrant Officers and refreshments were laid on for us.

During the day on Saturday visits were made to the London Eye, Covent Garden, Chinatown and various shopping expeditions. On Saturday evening before dinner we had a fancy dress competition which was excellent and a good laugh.



Joan and Pat



Prize Winners: Val and Pam

During the weekend we played Bingo and Quizzes etc and made £120 for charity. Because one of our Members, Mrs Beryl Sandy, had just passed away, it was agreed to send the £120 to the Hospice that looked after her so well.

On Sunday, after a few farewells, we showed photographs and remembered stories from the past good old days then on Monday it was time to go back home.

WRAC PT REUNION SEPTEMBER 2010

The Seventh WRAC PT Reunion will be held from 18-20 September 2010 in Aldershot. The weekend will also include the 150th Anniversary celebrations of the APTC and the opening of a permanent display of the history of PTIs in the ATS and WRAC within the APTC Museum.

All those PTIs who have attended previous reunions will automatically receive details, but should there be anyone who would like to attend for the first time, they can be assured of a very warm welcome among many familiar faces.

For further details please contact: Kate Bettison – either on Tel no: 01252 873174 or katebettison@tiscali.co.uk

VETERANS LAPEL BADGES

Across the UK, thousands of veterans have been seen proudly wearing their HM Armed Forces Veterans Lapel Badges. The Veterans Badge was launched in May 2004 and was given to those First and Second World War veterans travelling back to the battlefronts that year under the Heroes Return Scheme. The badge soon became so popular that the Ministry of Defence decided to extend eligibility to other veterans. It has now become a symbol, identifying veterans as a distinct group within the community and one that deserves special recognition and thanks.

The badges are issued by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency from their offices in Blackpool. Demand is high and to allow the process to be properly managed, entitlement has gradually been extended in steps. However, since January 2008, **anyone who has served in the Armed Forces can apply.**



How to apply:

- Telephone:** Call the Veterans-UK Helpline on 0800 169 2277 (UK only) or 0800 169 3458 (Minicom users). The helpline is also a source of help and advice on any other issue or problem faced by veterans.
- On line:** visit www.veterans-uk.info
Click the Veterans Lapel Badge button on the homepage. Complete the application form, sign and date it then either fax it or return it by post to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency.
- Email:** lapelbadge.team@spva.gsi.gov.uk
- By letter:** Write to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency at:
Veterans Badge, SPVA, Room 6108, Norcross, Thornton-Cleveleys FY5 3WP.

4 INDEP COY WRAC SINGAPORE

Editor: Thanks to Madge Evans, Luton Branch for the following photograph in answer to the "Last of Singapore" which appeared in 'Lioness' 2/2009.

You will note from the enclosed photograph, that when we had our picture taken as members of 4 Independent Company, GHQ FarELF, we had to wear our berets/caps! Memory being what it is, I can't recall many of the names but a few I do remember are Mary Freckleton, Lt (now Col) Cook, Sherry Bartlett, Capt Shovelton, Jo Hirst, WOII Friend and Peggy Apps. The back of the billets seems to have been the favourite location for taking these photos but the palm tree doesn't seem to have filled out a lot. Singapore was a great place to be stationed – the ratio of WRAC to British ORs was 1 girl to 11 men – great choice!



Letters to the Editor

ARMED FORCES DAY AT CHATHAM DOCKYARD

W/4215 Helen (Nell) Dodd
26 Forge Lane, Higham, Rochester ME3 7AS

Dear Editor



Helen Dodd at Chatham Dockyard

What a day. Over 30,000 people paid tribute to our Forces! A really great day with so much going on and I had the honour to represent the Medway Branch of the WRAC Association. The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester attended as did Gordon Brown and Sarah, his wife. Simon Weston was also there.

The younger members of Cadets – Army, Navy and Air Force, entertained us with immaculate marching bands – pipe bands etc. The dear old Lancaster Bomber, Spitfire and Hurricanes flew over the river three times, also the Red Arrows (gone in a flash!). All elements of Forces had stalls – SSAFA, British Legion, WAAF's and WREN's (but no WRAC I was sorry to note). The Royal Marines Commando held an unarmed combat display. There was a wonderful parade through the town with many Standards and a drumhead service. The River and Air display by Princess of Wales's Regiment was great, "Tigers Freefall" team parachuted into the river to be rescued by helicopters – quite exciting to watch.

The day ended with a wonderful Beating Retreat and Ceremonial Sunset. Far too many events for me to describe – but a day I will always remember.

THREE QUESTIONS

W/397567 Brenda Parry née Morris
Rhos Goch, Pen-y-Cefn Road, Caerwys, Mold,
Flintshire CH7 5BG

Dear Editor

It was good to see you all on TV on Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph. I have a number of questions and I hope you don't mind.

1. Back copies of *Lioness* – can they be bought through the Association? I have asked at the meetings but members seem a bit reluctant to part with them. I only have the last five and would love to have more so if anyone is prepared to part with there back copies, please contact me at the above address.
2. Is there any way of finding out the name of an RSM who was in 4 Coy WRAC, Tanglin, Singapore in 1959-61? She broke her leg and I was an "escort" for her when we flew home. We had quite an adventurous journey – and I have recently been in touch with someone who wanted to know more about it.
3. Do you have any idea where I could get hold of a copy of the 1960 Recruiting film of the "WRAC at Work? Many of us in Singapore were on it but have never seen it.

I do hope that *Lioness* readers can help me out.

ARMED FORCES PARADE - LONDON 2009

W/444049 Wendy Hooton née Barton
wendyhootonski@aol.co.uk

Dear Editor

Just a short e-mail and hopefully I have attached the photograph of me marching over Tower Bridge for Armed Forces Day.



Marching over Tower Bridge for the first time – ever!

It is the first time anyone has marched over the bridge in its 110 year history! Julie Silver was there too – she was on the other side to me. It was a great day and a real privilege to represent the WRAC on such an historic occasion.

Poems

PDF Compressor Free Version

QUESTION AND ANSWER

"You are old, Auntie Betty," my great-niece said
"And your hair has become very white
Did you really belong in the Army
Did you really wear khaki and fight?"

"In my youth," I replied to this curious young lass
"Young ladies didn't often leave home
But the war changed all that, and we joined up in droves
We longed for new paths to roam."

"You are old," said my niece, "as I mentioned before
Can you really remember it all?"
"Oh yes," I replied. "I remember the fun,
And the fear – England's back to the wall."

"We trained for three weeks, that sorted us out
Doing jobs never tackled before
We were drilled on the square till we got it just right
After all – WE were fighting this war."

"Now you're old," said my niece, "do you really think
That those years were wasted for you?"
"Oh no," I replied. "I learned such a lot –
How to mix, how to cope, to get through"

Submitted by: Betty Mitchell, Chairman Plymouth Branch

OLD AGE!

I look in the mirror –
An old woman looks back –
She is me!
I blink in dismay
But can only admit
I am she.

Youth sadly still lingers
In the mind's eye within
Viewing bright eyes now clouded
And cheeks falling in
Surrounded by lines
And a denture-filled grin

Old age creeps upon us
Accept it with grace
But why does it make
Such a mess of my face!

Submitted by: Mrs H E Forrester

A SECRETARY????

Honorary Secretary I've become!
Oh woe is me – what have I done?
At AGM someone just said,
"Sec's gone and taken to her bed".

I'm more than willing – Will I do?
Has our poor Sheila got the flu?
With smiling face, all turn and stare
"Good egg" shouts Barbara from the chair.

Rash decision – dare I say
As pens and paper come my way
Lists for this and lists for that
I need a secretary's hat.

A hundred words whirl through my brain
Same words go round and round again
Names out front I can't remember
What did I do that last September!

Submitted by: Mrs Pam Shearstone –
the new Secretary of Harrogate Branch –
well volunteered, Pam!

GENTLE IN MANNER, RESOLUTE IN DEED

What is there to say about the world today?
Perhaps I can comment and write it my way

What a world we live in
With so many involved in fighting
Each day we turn on the radio or TV
And there it is for all to hear and see

A mixed up society with its directions all wrong
And inflation upon us with everything going for a song
It is of man's own making you know
So he shall reap as he sows

Oh why, oh why, can't brotherly love prevail and serve
So that everyone can once more be happy in the universe

One's daily motto should always be
"Gentle in manner and resolute in deed"
Then we will do away with all lust and greed
Kindness, loving and caring doth always succeed

And so this old country of ours
Will once more enjoy its finest hour
I think we all have a part to play
We each are put on earth for destiny to have its way.

Submitted by: Jean Moore, 1 Dower Court, Old Torquay Road,
Paignton TQ3 2RT

Obituaries – their final salute

MILDRED INEZ CAROON BAILEY
BRIGADIER GENERAL (USA RVN)
18 APRIL 1919 – 18 JULY 2009



Brigadier General Bailey

Mildred C Bailey, 90, a retired Brigadier General who directed the Women's Army Corps in the 1970s, and who was the third woman in the US military to reach the rank of general, died on 18 July 2009 at the Knollwood military retirement facility in Washington.

General Bailey was Director of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) from 1971 to 1975 during a turbulent period marked by the Vietnam War, social change and demands for greater equality and opportunity for women. At the time, Army women were concentrated in nursing and clerical roles and were prohibited from applying for hundreds of jobs open to men. With the elimination of the military draft and the creation of the all-volunteer Army in 1973, women could work in practically any military specialty, excluding combat. Many other traditional barriers to women in the military vanished under Gen Bailey's leadership.

During Gen Bailey's four years as Director WAC, the number of women in the Army grew from 13,000 to 39,000 – the highest number since World War II. For the first time women were allowed to command men. All-female units were abolished, women became eligible for campus ROTC programmes and dress codes were relaxed. Gen Bailey, who spent much of her career in the intelligence service, long maintained that women were as fit for combat duty as men. She said in 2000 that she looked forward to the day, "when gender, race and religion will have nothing to do with whether you have equal opportunity in life".

Those of you who served in the 1970s may well remember the strong links which were forged between the WRAC and the WAC. Brigadier Eileen Nolan, then

DWRAC, played a significant part in that and she and Brig Gen Bailey became firm friends.

Lt Col Tania Worsley AGC (SPS) represented the Corps at Brig Gen Bailey's funeral service. She said "It was a privilege to attend a funeral at Arlington with full military honours. To the last man and woman they were hugely appreciative of my attendance. I saw Brig Nolan's chair at the War Memorial and have been asked to speak at a number of WAC events. Everyone spoke of the strength of the links between General Bailey and Brigadier Nolan".

LT COL (RETD) ROSEMARY SUTTON ARRC MATRON AT WRAC CENTRE

Rosemary Sutton was known as Matron by hosts of ex-WRAC who passed through Guildford over a ten year period in the 1970s and 1980s. Sadly, she died peacefully at her home in Godalming after a protracted illness on 25 July 2009 at the age of 92.

Rosemary trained as an SRN and midwife during the Second World War in Croydon. In 1949 she joined the QARANC and served for 33 years in UK, Egypt, Malta, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Berlin, and finally at the WRAC Centre, Guildford. Although very different from her previous postings, where she had worked with mainly male staff and patients, Rosemary enjoyed her time at the Centre. She was there when the IRA were very active and there were many bomb scares. Rosemary helped nurse some of the WRAC who were injured and very distressed by the bombing of the Horse and Groom pub in which they were celebrating a birthday when two of their friends were killed. It was during her time at Guildford that she received the Associate of the Royal Red Cross medal from the Queen Mother at Buckingham Palace.

Many of her fascinating experiences during that long nursing service are humorously and often movingly, recalled in her very interesting autobiography "Tales of a Lady in Grey, with a touch of Scarlet".

Rosemary remained in touch with many people whose lives she enriched either by friendship or medical help – and often both. She never married but lived with a life-long friend, Marjorie Bullard, who was a huge support to her in recent years when her health failed. Rosemary's life was a blessing to many people worldwide through her nursing service and she will be greatly missed.

Joan Garwood

WO1 JEAN MCINTOSH ATS 1940-1945 and WRAC 1963-1981

Jean McIntosh had wartime service in the ATS and after a spell in civilian life she joined the WRAC in 1963. She first trained as a dog handler at Melton Mowbray and

then served in Sennelager before transferring to WRAC Provost. After HQ & TE WRAC Provost, she served in 200(Singapore) Pro Coy RMP followed by a tour on the training staff at the RMP Trg Centre in Chichester. She was then selected as RSM and filled that role at 12 Coy WRAC and the RAOC Depot at Blackdown from where she retired in 1981.

Jean had a commanding presence, was an excellent organiser and had a kind and sympathetic personality. After her service, and the death of her dog 'Spot', she settled in Ingoldisthorpe, Norfolk where she quickly became involved in local life, including being Poppy Organiser for the local Royal British Legion for 15 years. Her steadfastness and commitment were recognised when she received the Mayor of Hunstanton's award for Voluntary Service in 2001. Jean died in March 2009.

Janet Lawson

RSM DOROTHY MAY HEDGES NÉE BROWN



In the summer of 1938, May learned that women were to be recruited into a new Territorial Service. Having long been interested in her brother's involvement with the TA, and always believing in 'going to the top', she wrote to the War Office. In due course she was informed that a Company was planned for Tamworth – to be known as the 41st Staffs ATS Company. A day or so later she received a letter from Miss Wint who had been appointed Company Commander and a meeting was arranged. The upshot was that May was appointed Senior Leader (CSM) and recruiting began in earnest. Parades were held weekly in the Drill Hall and the Drill Sergeant of the 6th Bn North Staffords instructed the girls how to march etc. In late August, the 41st Staffs were mobilised and reported to the Drill Hall twice a day until, on 30 August, orders were received to report immediately to

Whittington Barracks where preparations had been made for the reception of Reservists recalled to the Colours.

May immediately set out to learn all she could about Army procedure from the ORQMS. In 1941, shortly after her marriage, she was sent on the first course for potential WO1s at Brockenhurst – and came top of the Course! She was immediately posted to No 17 ATS Training Centre in Lancaster with the appointment of Regimental Sergeant Major – the very first in the ATS. No 4 ATS TC merged with No 17 to become No 4/17 ATS TC and May remained there until 1943 when she was posted to Y Signals ATS working with WOYG at Beaumanor Park where she remained until the end of the War.

May always laughed when she recalled an incident at Whittington Barracks in 1940. The North Staffords had a hockey match against an RAF team but on the day found they were three men short due to postings. May immediately volunteered herself and two of her sergeants. The Team Captain reluctantly agreed. The RAF team could not believe their eyes and started the game showing great gallantry to the ladies. They quickly realised their mistake – the ladies were playing to win!

Back in civilian life, sport continued to play a major part in her life and she taught games and PE and umpired hockey for many years. Whilst also teaching shorthand at Tamworth College, a student, who was the daughter of an Army sergeant, said her father had told her that, 'A spot of good old fashioned Army Drill would do the girls a lot of good'. Therefore, she asked if Mrs Hedges would please teach them how to march? So she did – to the astonishment (and amusement) of the College Principal. The girls themselves loved it!

Although sport played a major part in her life she also loved music, particularly opera, and was an avid reader of crime novels. Her many friends ranged in age from 2 years old to 88 and she was always particularly interested in the activities of the younger ones. She died peacefully on 3 February 2009, aged 98, and will be sadly missed by all her many friends who feel privileged to have known her.

W/13113 Doris Williams née Buttery

SSGT IRENE THORLEY

SSgt Irene J Thorley was late joining the Territorial Army but still managed 22 years service receiving both a Territorial Efficiency Medal and a Volunteer Reserve Service Medal to join her Queens Golden Jubilee Medal. She served with both



WRAC and RLC in a number of Units but is remembered for her work in the Regimental Recruit Training Team where she was feared by many who later became firm

friends. The photograph shows her after the Reserve Strategic Movements Staff last supper at Bisley prior to the Units Disbandment in 2006.

Her final attendance was at 160 Transport Regiment's Dinner Night at the 160th Regiment's 60th Anniversary in Grantham and it was the only known occasion she was able to wear her miniature medals. On 15 November 2008 no one present will forget her fighting spirit as she attended with her oxygen handbag decorated with tinsel. Having retired at 55, she fought first breast cancer and then lung cancer and finally succumbed on 15 February 2009.



The funeral service was at St Anne's Church, Grantham and was packed by teenagers from her last year as Head of Science at a local school.

*Maj Graham Davison TD RLC
davisongm@googlemail.com*

**WO1 SHEILA COLLINSON
9 SEPTEMBER 1944 - 12 MARCH 2008**

Sheila hailed from Burnley in Lancashire and joined the WRAC in 1963 to train as a PTI. She served at Lingfield, Guildford, Army School of Physical Training and BAOR before retiring as a WO1 in 1974.

When she left the Army, Sheila went to Pinderfields Hospital in Wakefield where she trained as a physiotherapist before becoming a Tutor. In 1982, she opened her own Practice in Barnsley, named Roundwood Clinic, employing a staff of 12, before retiring in 2002.



Sheila was a delightful and well respected lady with a wonderful sense of humour. She was an excellent and gifted instructor who trained many PTIs during her time at the PT School in Aldershot. She excelled at Army Fencing and was a member of the Inter Services team which won the Championship in 1970. When Sheila returned for one of the PT Reunions, she bounced through the Mess doors as though she had never been away. All her friends were so thrilled to see her.



In September 2007, Sheila was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour which she fought with great bravery. All her PT friends were devastated to hear of her death and she will be remembered by them with great affection.

Kate Bettison

ANNE VERONICA DODKINS NÉE LLOYD



Veronica Lloyd enlisted into the ATS in July 1943 and served until January 1954. She did her basic clerical training at Wrexham and Golders Green and then served

at numerous locations as a GD Clerk/Education Instructor. From 1946 she was stationed in Brussels, Herford, Lubbecke, Gottingen, Hamburg and Bad Oeynhausen. She returned to the UK in 1948 and served in London until her discharge in 1954, having attained the rank of WO2. She was a member of the British WRAC Association in 1966 and was appointed Treasurer in 1972 – a post she held until September 2001. In 1993 she was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by Brigadier A Field.

Veronica was a stalwart supporter of Salisbury Branch and carried out her duties as Treasurer most diligently. She contributed a great deal to all Branch activities and rarely missed a meeting. Regretfully, during 2007, her health started to deteriorate and she could not attend as often as she wished. She died on 12 September 2009.

Val Trout

CAPT (RETD) BARBARA GRATTON WRAC



Barbara was always a very private, self-contained young woman, but as for so many women of her generation, her life was to be transformed by the War. She was in a reserved occupation in an aircraft factory which she hated. Unbeknown to her parents, she joined the ATS in 1943 in Wolverhampton. Her mother never forgave her.

Barbara was not called for basic training at Pontefract until February 1944 but from then on things moved rapidly. She was posted on 6 April to No 1 MTTC Camberley, a small challenge as she could already drive. Postings to Kent and promotions soon followed. In 1945 she passed her motorcycle trade test, qualified to drive solo and passed her driver mechanic trade test, coming top of the mixed course.

In 1946 she was promoted to Sgt with a great reputation for exceptional organisational skills. On 21 March 1949 she re-engaged into the WRAC and was posted to 14 Bn in Berlin. In 1949 she was promoted to SSgt. Berlin was in a sorry state at that time as it was just after the Berlin Airlift. She avoided going into the Russian sector but found the two-day journey from Harwich to the Hook and then by train very trying. Usually being the only WRAC

senior rank on the military train she would be locked in a compartment on her own. Going through the Russian sector, chains were put around the door locks and blinds had to be securely closed. Armed Russian soldiers searched the train at stations and sidings and everyone was much relieved when the train finally reached the British sector.

On her return to the UK in August 1951 she was promoted to WO2 and posted to Chester, then in Sept 1953 to Huron Camp, Hindhead as an instructor in WO&NCO Wing. She was there until Oct 1954 when she went to TA Bns in Southampton and Taunton. By special request she had another period at Huron camp and while there was promoted in March 1956 to WO1 and appointed as the youngest RSM at only 32 years and 3 months of age.

Postings followed to WRAC (TA) battalions in Liverpool then Leicester. (TA Bns had a regular RSM when there were over 100 women.) Any former WRAC Band members may remember that it was 308 Bn in Leicester which presented the glockenspiel and Barbara, as RSM Gratton carried it for the presentation.



Presentation of the Glockenspiel on 24 September 1960

Her final posting was to HQ 48 Div (TA) in Shrewsbury where she completed 22 years service on 24 Feb 1966. The very next day, she was appointed to a TA Commission and posted as Capt PSO to 48 (S.M) Sig Regt (TA). Shortly afterwards following yet another TA reorganisation she was posted to 35 (S.M) Sig Regt(V) in Birmingham. During her time with this Regt, which had a BAOR role, she did return to Germany several times for annual camp and found the journey much improved: this time travelling by air some 25 yrs later.

Barbara was a mentor to all ranks of the WRAC and was a meticulous holder of various regimental accounts – a vital cog in the well being of the Regt. Throughout her varied service, she was always fair and looked after those under her command. Barbara retired on 31 March 1984 very proud to have served her King, Queen and Country loyally and expertly for 40 years and 39 days.

I am very proud to have known her for over fifty years. Anyone who knew her will recall that she loved her Jaguar cars which she had from 1953 until she passed away: she was driving until just three days before she died.

Her funeral was held at Holy Trinity Church, Hadley, Shropshire (her home county). Barbara had very few close relatives and her two younger sisters had pre-deceased her so it was a great comfort, particularly to me, that fifteen ladies from Leics/Notts Branch and three from Shropshire Branch attended. Our Branch Standard was proudly carried by ex-WO2 Lyn Wenham.

Doris White

**WO2 MARION LEWIS
26 NOVEMBER 1936 – 3 DECEMBER 2009**

Marion was born and brought up in Wales and joined the WRAC at age 18. In total, she served for 23 years with postings to Cyprus, HQ BAOR, Singapore and Bangkok as well as the UK. I first met Marion in 1960 when I

replaced her in Cyprus in the post of Coy Pay Clerk. Marion was posted to HQ BAOR and nearly two years later I too was posted there and we became firm friends. Marion's next posting was to Singapore and about a year later I followed her there too. We shared some lovely holidays visiting Hong Kong, Malaysia and Australia and, from then on, we always kept in touch.

When Marion left the Army, she settled in Wales and worked as a carer in a residential home for patients with mental problems. On retirement from that, she spent some time helping with meals on wheels. Sadly, she passed away on 3 December 2009 just a week after her 73rd birthday. She had had a two year battle with bone cancer.

W/399889 Jean Le Vaillant née Moffitt

THE ELIZABETH CROSS – DIED ON OPERATIONS RECOGNITION AWARD

This new award has been created to provide national recognition for the families of Armed Forces personnel who have died on operations or as a result of an act of terrorism.

Background

The Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll are granted to the Next of Kin of UK Armed Forces personnel who have died on operations or as a result of an act of terrorism in national recognition of their loss and sacrifice. The Elizabeth Cross is not a posthumous medal for the fallen but an emblem demonstrating tangible national recognition for Service families for their loss.

The first Elizabeth Crosses and Memorial Scrolls are to be granted from 1 August 2009 (and will be retrospective to the end of the Second World War). All eligible Next of Kin of those who died between 1 January 1948 to date are strongly advised to apply, although the MOD Medal Office will endeavour to establish contact with the more recent eligible families, where up to date contact details are held.

Eligibility

Eligible personnel to be remembered in this way are those who were serving with, or former members of, the Regular and Reserve Armed Forces or the Royal Fleet Auxiliary when deployed in direct support of a designated operation.

The Next of Kin of eligible personnel whose deaths fall into the following categories are to be recognised:

- Those who died from whatever cause whilst serving on a medal earning operation. Medal earning operations are those in which deployed personnel received a Campaign Medal, General Service Medal or Operational Service Medal which demonstrated the risk and rigour involved. Operations where a UN, NATO or other international body or other nations' campaign medal was accepted for wear, in the absence of a UK medal also qualify.
- Those who died as a result of an act of terrorism where the available evidence suggests that the Service person, whether on or off duty, was targeted because of his or her membership of the UK Armed Forces.
- Those who died on a non-medal earning operational task where death has been caused by the inherent high risk of the task.
- Those who died a subsequent and premature death as a result of an injury or illness attributed to the circumstances outlined above.

In addition to recognising future operational deaths in this way, deaths in the circumstances outlined above that occurred after 1 January 1948, or as a result of service in Palestine since 27 September 1945 will be recognised retrospectively. These dates reflect the fact that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission attributed deaths up to 1 January 1948 to World War II service (with the exception of Palestine).

Recipients and How to Apply

Next of Kin can apply for both the Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll. For retrospective claims and when the Next of Kin is deceased, their legal successor may apply. Only one Elizabeth Cross is granted for each death recognised.

Application forms can be found via www.veterans-uk.info or tel: 0800 169 2277 and should be returned to: MOD Medal Office, Building 250, Imjin Barracks, Gloucester GL3 1HW



ANSELL Mrs M, née Wright, of Ickenham on 2 Apr 2009, ATS

BEAL Miss Irene, of Malton on 21 May 2009, ATS

BERRY Mrs Patricia, née Rignold, of Huntingdon, WRAC

BOLTON Mrs Mabel, née Lee, of Gosport on 3 Sep 2009, ATS

BOURNE Miss Beryl, of Aldershot in Nov 2009, ATS/WRAC(TA)

BOYCE Mrs Mary Catherine, née Marren, of Stoke in Jul 2009, ATS

CALEY Mrs Joy Olive, née York, of Catford, ATS

CASSEY Mrs Kathleen L, née Murphy, of Salisbury on 7 Dec 2009, ATS

CONSTANDUROS Mrs Helen Francis, née Parr, of Marlborough on 16 Mar 2009, ATS

COOPER Miss Irene Joan, of Egham on 12 Jun 2009, ATS

COWLEY Mrs M C, née Huges, of Broughton on 23 Nov 2009, ATS

CREAGH OBE TD JP DL Miss Mary, of Formby on 14 Sep 2009, WRAC/ATS

CULLEY Miss Vera Josephine, of Nether Poppleton on 15 Aug 2009, WRAC

DALGLIESH Mrs Margaret Audrey, née Vizard, of Douglas on 19 Jul 2009, WRAC

DAVIDSON Mrs Eileen Rose, née Beard, of Maidstone on 15 Aug 2009, WRAC

DE BOURBEL DE MONTPINCON Miss Elizabeth, of Mackworth on 14 Sep 2009, ATS/WRAC

DODKINS Anne Veronica, née Lloyd, of Salisbury on 12 Sep 2009, ATS/WRAC

DUNCAN Miss Elizabeth, of Taunton in Feb 2009, WRAC

EARLEY Mrs Gloria Kathleen, née Burge, of Weymouth on 15 Oct 2009, ATS

EVIDENT Mrs Mary Ada, née Haswell, of Bexhill on 22 May 2009, ATS

FINNERTY Mrs Ethel Mabel, née Gerry, of Benfleet on 27 Dec 2008, ATS

FORSYTH Mrs Eva, of Aberdeen on 29 Dec 2009, ATS

GARDINER Mrs Phyllis Elsie, née Larkin, of Wootton Fitzpaine on 12 Aug 2009, ATS

GIBBS Mrs Phyllis May, née Smith, of Croydon on 12 Aug 2009, ATS

GREEN Mrs Helen Jane, of Costessey on 20 Jun 2009, ATS

HARDIE Miss C E, of Aberdeen on 25 Aug 2009, ATS

HART Mrs Kathleen, of Newcastle on 14 Aug 2009, ATS

HAWKINS Mrs Brenda, née Cook, of Leicester on 22 Jul 2009, ATS

HILLIER Mrs Elsie Mary, née Hover, of St Leonards on Sea on 1 Dec 2009, ATS

HOLLIDAY Vera, on 30 Aug 2009, ATS/WRAC

ISDALE Mrs Alice May, née Craddock, of Birmingham on 7 Aug 2009, ATS

JENNER Mrs Erin D, née Massey, of Altrincham on 11 Dec 2009, ATS

JONES Miss Julia Dillis, of Cromer on 16 Jul 2009, ATS/WRAC

JONES Mrs Ruby, née Crawford, of Telford on 21 Jan 2010, ATS

KELLY Mrs Elizabeth (Betty), née Ellis, of Bridlington on 21 Jul 2009, ATS

KEMP Mrs Betty, of Southampton in Oct 2009, ATS

KIDGER Mrs Winifred Gladys, née Field, of Lancing on 31 Oct 2009, ATS

KNIGHT Mrs Jane Constance, née Sandy of Maidenhead on 31 Dec 2009, ATS

LARMAN Mrs Alma Barbara, née Swales, of Leicester on 2 Dec 2009, ATS

LEACH Mrs Fiona, née Dennis, of Church Crookham on 27 Aug 2009, WRAC

LEWIS Miss Marion Mary Noreen, of Newtown on 3 Dec 2009, WRAC

LYCETT-GREGSON Mrs Norah, née Dugard, of Walton-on-Thames, on 17 Mar 2009

McFALL Dorothy May of Blackpool on 19 Jan 2010, WRAC

MOORE Mrs Edna M, of Royal Cambridge Home on 6 Dec 2009, ATS

NEWBOULD Miss Emily, of Barwick-in-Elmet on 17 Sep 2009, ATS

NISBET Mrs Margaret Alice, née Lewis, of Wincanton on 16 Jun 2009, ATS

PEARSON Mrs Rachel, née Crane, of Dundonald, Belfast on 24 Apr 2009, ATS

PICKALL Miss H, of Soberton Heath, ATS

POVEY Miss Winifred, of Canterbury, ATS

QUARRIE Mrs Irene, née Hand, of York on 12 Dec 2009, ATS

READER Mrs Hilda Maude, née Roberts, of Sittingbourne on 23 Sep 2009, ATS

RIGBY Miss May, of Birkenhead, ATS

RYDER Miss Joan Mary, of Kingsleighton on 15 Sep 2009, WRAC

SOMERVILLE MBE Miss Mary, of Haslemere in Sep 2009, ATS

SOUTHERN Miss Rose, of Lancing on 30 Nov 2009, WRAC

SUTTON Lt Col Rosemary, of Guildford in Aug 2009, QARANC Matron WRAC Centre

SZEWCZYK Mrs Helena M, née Jones, of Wrexham on 15 Sep 2009, ATS

TARR Mrs Constance, née Poole, of Beaminster on 12 Sep 2009, ATS

TASKER Mrs Audrey, née Beresford, of Guiseley on 17 Jul 2009, WRAC

VICKERS Mrs Myra Jean, née Welling, of Luton on 4 Oct 2009, ATS

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for the year ended 31 October 2009

	Notes	Unrestricted			Total 2009	Total 2008
		General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds		
INCOME & EXPENDITURE						
Incoming resources						
Incoming resources from generated funds:						
Voluntary Income	1	17,745	3,500	6,834	28,079	55,027
Activities for generating funds	2	33,966	-	-	33,966	-
Investment Income	3	15,793	-	167,186	182,979	200,463
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4	63,905	-	-	63,905	58,305
Other Incoming resources	5	2,098	3,211	730	6,039	6,573
Total incoming resources		133,507	6,711	174,750	314,968	320,368
Resources expended:						
Cost of generating funds:						
Cost of generating voluntary income	6	23,702	-	24,220	47,922	33,579
Charitable activities	8	66,186	-	178,171	244,357	255,525
Governance costs	9	2,100	-	2,599	4,699	6,525
Total resources expended		91,988		204,990	296,978	295,629
NET INCOMING/OUTGOING)						
RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS						
		41,519	6,711	(30,240)	17,990	24,739
Transfers between funds	14	3,211	(3,211)	-	-	-
NET INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR						
		44,730	3,500	(30,240)	17,990	24,739
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES						
Gains / (losses) on investments:						
Unrealised		41,172	-	551,218	592,390	(1,351,402)
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	17	85,902	3,500	520,978	610,380	(1,326,663)
Fund balances brought forward at 1 November 2008		432,124	30,921	4,124,208	4,587,253	5,913,916
Fund balances carried forward at 31 October 2009		518,026	34,421	4,645,186	5,197,633	4,587,253

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.

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET for the year ended 31 October 2009

	Notes	2009	2008
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments	10	4,920,464	4,327,074
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock of badges, souvenirs & standards		4,351	4,555
Debtors	11	42,559	39,084
Cash at bank & in hand	12	233,842	241,019
		280,752	284,658
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	13	3,583	24,479
NET CURRENT ASSETS		277,169	260,179
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			
		5,197,633	4,587,253
FUNDS OF THE ASSOCIATION			
Restricted funds:			
The Benevolent funds	15	3,953,124	3,484,121
The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund	16	692,062	640,087
Unrestricted funds:			
General funds		518,026	432,124
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund	14	7,563	6,863
Lioness life subscription fund	14	26,858	24,058
TOTAL FUNDS	17	5,197,633	4,587,253

WRAC of all-trades

PDF Compressor Free Version

*With apologies to the WRAC
who rightly prefer to be called W-R-A-C
and not "wreck"*

by DIK



VEGETABLE WRAC



HAT WRAC



SHIP-WRAC



WRAC AND RUIN



WRACMANINOV



PIPE-WRAC



WRAC WITH PINION



TORTURE WRAC



TENNIS WRACETTE



ANNAWRAC