

LIONESS

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THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 206184

FOUNDED IN 1919

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HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT GCVO

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

Front Cover

WRAC Marching Contingent 1953

Back Cover

The Brownies!

Contributions for next issue by 15th December 2012

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 CV31 1QD.

CONTENTS

Message from the Vice President	1
Articles of Interest	4
Grand Reunion	13
Articles from Serving Soldiers	26
Branch News	31
ATS Reminiscences	56
Reminiscences of the WRAC	63
Where Are You Now?	65
ATS Dinner Club	69
WRAC Officers' Dining Club	70
Reunions	70
Weddings	71
Poems	72
Letters to the Editor	74
WRAC – Minutes of the AGM	76
Obituaries – their final salute	81

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Editorial



This Edition of the *Lioness* is being published when many public events are taking place, not least HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympic Games. Alongside these International and National events, the WRAC Association has had its own highlights including the Grand Reunion in Bristol in March and the Service of Rededication in Guildford

Cathedral in May. This edition is full of your photographs from these events and I know from all the contributions received that everyone had a fantastic time. I hope I have managed to get in a fair cross section of the hundreds, literally speaking, that have been sent in and that most of you will be able to spot yourselves in various dress. Also represented is HM The Queen's Jubilee with your events from around the UK and a couple of photographs from previous coverage in the *Lioness* from 1977, the Silver Jubilee.

The front cover shows the WRAC Marching Contingent at HM The Queen's Coronation in 1953. This photograph comes from Alison Schofield's personal album and was provided to her courtesy of Colonel Vere Fisher. I know that Alison would be pleased to see the photograph on the cover as she was one of those marching on that tremendous day and had very fond memories.

A huge thank you to all of you who responded to the plea in the previous edition for donations towards the costs

involved in publishing the *Lioness*. All donations are appreciated and will help to ensure that the *Lioness* continues as planned both in hard copy and on the Association website.

This edition will be the last one from myself as Editor and Major (Retired) Sue Hatton, Assistant Regimental Secretary, has agreed to take on the role. I am fortunate to be staying involved with the Association both as a Trustee and also as Chairman of the Executive Committee. So a final thank you to Noreen for her vital assistance with all the typing, to Tanya for her help when my IT skills proved lacking and lastly to all of you for your continued support to the *Lioness*.

Ali Brown

Message from the Vice President



Welcome to this very special Diamond Jubilee edition of *Lioness* – and what a year 2012 has already proved to be for the WRAC Association! We have really 'pushed out the boat' with a Grand Reunion in Bristol in March and the Service of Rededication and Laying Up of Standards at Guildford Cathedral in May. Over the Diamond Jubilee weekend I was privileged to

represent the Association in St Paul's Cathedral at the National Service of Thanksgiving; and what an honour to see our Patron and President passing so closely to where I was sitting, a truly memorable day.

I would like to start by thanking the Grand Reunion Team under the leadership of my Deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Jo Young, for stage managing and executing yet another superb Reunion. Those of you who were present will agree that we had a great three days. Those of you who were unable to attend were not forgotten and at the Gala Dinner we all raised our glasses to 'Absent Friends'. I need say no more as the photographic evidence in this *Lioness* is there for all to see – we had a Ball!

The Rededication Service at Guildford Cathedral was a very special day in the Association's calendar and was the culmination of many months of negotiations and preparations. Guildford is our Association's spiritual home and for us the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit is where we feel we belong. Both the ATS and WRAC were trained at Queen Elizabeth Park, Stoughton and literally thousands of our Servicewomen and Officers passed through its gates. Over the years, whilst the Cathedral was still being built, recruits were taken to the site on Stag Hill 'to buy a brick' on which they wrote their name and many still recall this experience. Many of our Association members continue to make a pilgrimage to Guildford visiting both the Queen Elizabeth Park site and the Cathedral to view our Commemorative window. In future, they will also be able to see the QMAAC and ATS Standards proudly hanging in the Cathedral Gallery

alongside other Regimental Colours. We have also been granted permission to place a Memorial Cabinet and 3 Books of Remembrance, one for each of our former Corps, within the Cathedral; it is hoped that this project will be completed within the year. It is our aspiration to hold an Association Ceremony every year to ensure our links to the Cathedral and Guildford are maintained in perpetuity.

We were honoured that the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Dame Sarah Goad, joined us for the Service as well as the current Lord Mayor of Guildford plus former Lord Mayors, Honorary Freemen and Aldermen of the Borough. The ceremony was conducted by the Dean of Guildford, who received the Standards into 'the safe keeping of this House of God', assisted by our Honorary Padre, the Reverend Susan Wing, who was invited to preach making the occasion even more memorable. Sincere thanks to Brigadier Nicky Moffat and our Standard Bearers, Tammie Kirkwood (QMAAC Standard), WO1 Helen Sleightholme RAPTIC (ATS Standard) and Sharon Joyce (WRAC Association Standard) for their impressive contribution to proceedings and to Major 'Mack' for ensuring that the ceremonial part of the Service was 'drilled to perfection'. Last, but by no means, least, huge thanks to Major Sue Hatton, our assistant Regimental Secretary, without whom the day would not have been possible – she stage managed the occasion from beginning to end.

You will recall in my last VP's Message that I said that we would be losing civil service funding for our Chief Clerk's post in April; we therefore bade a fond farewell to Denise Thompson at the Grand Reunion and presented her with a small token of our appreciation. Denise was with us for four years and I know that everyone will miss her bright, cheery voice at the end of the phone but she has only relocated to the Regimental Colonel AGC's office downstairs in Gould House, so we still see her (and sometimes hear her!). We have been joined at Association HQ by Tanya-Jayne Park, our new Office Manager; I know that Tanya met up with many of you at the Grand Reunion (a real baptism of fire for her!) and has already struck up a good working relationship with the Association Branch network. Tanya, welcome to the Team! Staying with the Team. Sincere congratulations to two of our Trustees, Brigadier Nicky Moffat CBE and Major Rowena Patrick MBE for their awards in this year's New Year's Honours List.

I end on a sad note. You will read in the Obituary section my Tribute to Alison Schofield who passed away at the beginning of May after a very short illness. Alison's contribution to the Association over the years is immeasurable. She was Assistant Editor of *Lioness* for many years and she will be fondly remembered for always capturing Association gatherings on camera. This Special Jubilee edition was her idea only days before she passed away and is dedicated to her. The Association will certainly be the poorer without her.

Sue Westlake

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. Donations can also be made on line via the Association website.

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.

Gift Aid forms are available from the WRAC Association HQ at Worthy Down. If you have made a donation in the past, and you have not sent us one before, please request one 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!

Loyal Greetings from our Patron

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BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Lieutenant Colonel S.J. Westlake,
Vice President,
The Women's Royal Army Corps Association.

I send my grateful thanks to the Council and Members of The Women's Royal Army Corps Association, (which incorporates the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades' Association) for their kind message of loyal greetings, sent on the occasion of the Sixtieth Anniversary of my Accession to the Throne.

As your Patron, I much appreciate your thoughtfulness and send my warm, good wishes to all concerned.

ELIZABETH R.

20th June, 2012.

MEMORIES OF 2002 *Two Covers from the Lioness HM The Queen's Golden Jubilee*



Articles of Interest

MEETING JOHN MCCARTHY

Jan Ford PDF Compressor Free Version

On 3rd May 2012 I met up with Sue Westlake, Gabi Shanahan and Sue Hatton for lunch at The Running Horse near Winchester. In the bar a camera crew was shooting for a TV Programme called "Britain's Lost Treasures". We were shown to a table in the restaurant out of the way and more importantly out of the sound of the crew. Whilst deciding what we were going to eat, the waitress told us it was John McCarthy Britain's longest held hostage (he was held in Lebanon from 1986 until 8 Aug 1991) featuring in the programme. I recalled to the girls of when I was duty clerk in HQBF Cyprus and was awoken very early in the morning to collect a flash signal from the comcen, the signal was saying that John McCarthy was being released from captivity and that an aircraft was to be activated to bring him back to Cyprus.

We continued chatting amongst ourselves laughing and joking about the "pink nuns" of Bristol, when John McCarthy came over to our table and said, "I understand I have a connection with one of you". He asked me to explain my story and thanked me and said how good it was to meet us all. That was a real highlight to our lunch as he was a very charming man. So all in all a very good lunch was had by all. Thank you.



Jan Ford and John McCarthy

JOINT SERVICES HOSANNA HOUSE GROUP JSHHG 507

Ruth Jennings

Photographs courtesy of Paul Robinson

On 9th May I joined Group 507 from the South West area in Plymouth's Home Park car park to go by coach to Stansted. We stayed the night in a Day's Inn and enjoyed a very good Chinese meal somewhere in the surrounding countryside. In the morning, all packed up we were off to the airport for check-in and to forage for breakfast. We also met, by arrangement, Andy Mac, a regular pilgrim with the JSHHG 507, with a group from Scotland. My carer, Susan Parr from Falmouth wheeled me around to check out the various eateries and we finally settled on a sandwich from Prêt à Manger which

was very good and an apt start for a flight to Lourdes for the 54th Annual International Military Pilgrimage. These pilgrimages are for serving, ex-service and service-dependant personnel and many regiments from Europe, Asia and the Commonwealth come, with their regimental bands, to Lourdes for the common purpose of enjoying a pilgrimage for peace and unity in the world. We joined the British contingent and they played for us at masses and at the march down to the Domain for the great closing ceremony on the Sunday. This is followed by 80 invited junior ranks joining us at Hosanna House for a farewell BBQ and sing-song; which is really great to be involved with; then from Monday to Thursday we continue our Group 507 Pilgrimage.

It was very hot on arrival on the Thursday. We had a briefing from Richard Tipping, our Group leader, found our rooms and settled in, attended Mass in the lovely chapel in Hosanna House. We then had the option to remain in H.H for the evening or to go down for a visit to the grotto in the mini buses available at H.H, I joined the party in the mini bus and so our visit to Lourdes really took off in fine style. It was even hotter the next day, Friday, I opted for a rest in the morning and enjoyed going down later in the afternoon to Lourdes for Mass in the Upper Basilica, said by Bishop Richard Moth, Bishop of the Forces; this was followed by group photo sessions taken in the Esplanade. We then set the theme for the week, i.e, pilgrimage first, recreation to follow, usually at the Café Versailles for socialising while we waited for the mini buses to collect us once more for Hosanna House and rest, nobody ever seemed to mind if the bus was late!



Bishop of the Forces

Saturday morning brought a change to the weather, heavy cloud sitting on the Pyrenees plus a cold wind, happily no rain so we were able to carry on without too many problems. After 'Mass for the Sick' in the chapel we went down into Lourdes for the 'Procession of the Blessed Sacrament'; which was finalised by 'Beating the Retreat' outside Café Versailles. A couple of hours later, during which time the fittest managed a very funny 'Conga' dance around the café, we went up to H.H for supper.

Sunday dawned with mist, cold and a slight drizzle, no worries, this is the Big Day, a quiet morning, mainly due

to the weather. During the morning Debbie Wilde, ex-WRAC, asked Susan if she could escort me that day because I too am ex-WRAC, but from 5 decades ago! Down to Lourdes to assemble and form ranks ready for the March Off from Hotel Alba with our British detachment plus other ex-WRAC personnel. We were ex-service personnel all the way down to the Domain for a closing Mass in the Upper Basilica. I felt so proud and privileged to be there again and this time to have Debs behind me marching, also very proudly, to the stimulating music from the band, down the hill; across the Domain and up a steep hill to the Basilica, where the band played for us during mass. From there we went back to the Domain hoping for the closing ceremony to be held outside the Basilica of the Rosary, but due to the cold wind and slight drizzle this venue was changed to the Underground Basilica of St Pius X. Here all the bands of many regiments marched proudly into the huge arena, which holds around 20,000 people, they played as they marched and it was a sight to lift your heart. We had a quick trip up to Café Versailles, straight onto the bus and back to H.H to prepare for the BBQ. Suddenly, the cloud lifted and the sun came out for us so we were able to drift out onto the patio from the dining/social room and mingle to talk, take photos and enjoy the very good BBQ which was ready for us quite soon. We had a lovely evening and I am told that the 50 personnel, male and female, from the U.K. contingent; plus the King's Own Military Band who came as our guests really enjoyed their visit.



Splendid music

The rest of the week was still pilgrimage but with trips out in the bus to enjoy the surrounding country side, a visit to a supermarket was good, also we went to Bartrés, a village nearby. I was able to walk down with Susan, Debs, Fred, Lynn and many more from our group, we visited the lovely church there and also the café where we sat having ice cream, coffee and cognac or whatever took our fancy in the sunshine. Other trips included a moving ceremony at the Cenotaph in Lourdes to lay a wreath, we were able to visit the Parish Church of St Peter where St Bernadette was baptised and also the 'Cachot', the ex-prison building where Bernadette and her family lived for a while. We attended the 'Torchlight Marian Procession' and spent time afterwards at the Grotto to light candles etc, and one morning we followed the beautifully carved, life-sized 'Stations of the Cross' on the prairie.



Very proud

We had a lovely trip to Gavarnie in the high Pyrenees, with a photo shoot on the way, at 'Napoleon's Bridge'. My carer/companion that day was Rob. We heard mass in the little church of Our Lady of Passage which we were told is on one of the ancient pilgrimage routes to Compostella and then had a picnic on the patio of the restaurant 'Le p'tit Toy'; the owners of which allow parties to bring their own food to eat, to use their facilities and hope that we will buy drinks, we didn't disappoint them! The next day we had a visit to Lac du Lourdes, a very pleasant, tranquil spot on the lakeside where we had a coffee break before returning to H.H to pack ready for our return to the UK.



Magnificent views all around

I am sure that all of our VIP's join me in thanking everyone who organised and facilitated this pilgrimage and I thank all our carers and organisers, particularly

Richard and Sue Tipping – Group Leader and wife; Joe Guy – Secretary/fund raiser, Jimmy Green – treasurer, who also arranged our hotel at Stansted and the fleet of taxis to take us to the Chinese restaurant and then was unfortunately unable to travel with us at the last minute. We missed you. Our housewife, Missions, Ronnie Brown, who said lots of masses for us and was very good company too. Di, our nurse, Rob, Erica, Sue, Debs, Lisa, all the carers and drivers and especially Susan for all the care they gave to me and everyone on this trip.

There will be quite a lot of people in the Association who have been on the Military Pilgrimage also many who have not but perhaps would like to. So I would like to say to those who think that Lourdes is an exclusive destination for Catholics only; nothing is further from the truth, in fact, my experience from 4 trips to Lourdes is that it is usual for any group to consist mainly of a high percentage of all denominations.

SERVICE OF REDEDICATION AT GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL Major (Retired) S Hatton

On 20th May 2012 members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association (incorporating Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and Auxiliary Territorial Service Comrades' Association) and invited guests attended a Service of Rededication and Renewal of links for the WRAC Association at Guildford Cathedral. During the Mattins Service the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC) and Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) Standards were 'laid up' in the Cathedral Gallery alongside other Regimental Standards. The service was conducted by The Dean of Guildford, The Very Reverend Victor Stock and the Standards were 'presented' by Brigadier Nicky Moffat CBE. Following the service a luncheon was held in The Refectory.

Invited guests included: Dame Sarah Goad DCVO JP, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, The Mayor of Guildford Councillor Jennifer Jordan, Honorary Freeman David Watt DL, Honorary Freeman Bill Bellerby MBE, Honorary Freeman Mrs Doreen Bellerby MBE, Honorary Alderman Mrs Mary Lloyd-Jones, Honorary Alderman Bernard Park and Councillor Jennifer Powell.

The Laying Up of The Standards

Over 200 WRAC and ATS Association members took part in this unique service. As the Service began we listened to the Regimental March of the ATS played on the organ followed by the entry of the 2 standards being laid up and standards from several other branches of the Association. It was an impressive moment as the two standards were laid on the altar. We sang hymns including Stand up, stand for Jesus and the Cathedral Choir performed the anthem Rejoice in the Lord Always, by Henry Purcell. The address was given by the Association Chaplain the Rev Susan Wing.

As we left the Cathedral there was an opportunity to take photographs which we did and then moved on into the

Cathedral Refectory to enjoy a celebratory drink before sharing an excellent meal together. Sue Westlake, our Vice President who had been very busy on our behalf, spoke movingly about the ceremony. We owe her a great debt of gratitude and our thanks go to her for making it all happen so well.

The Standards now rest in the Cathedral for posterity. They are a true symbol of the Corps, in which with pride, we had the privilege of serving.

Gina Shadrack,
Hon Secretary, Chelmsford Branch

WRAC ASSOCIATION FLEECES

The WRAC Association has a stock of dark green fleeces embroidered with the Association Badge on the left side. The current range are men's sizes so tend to be on the quite large in the fit. Sizes are as follows:

XS – 34 inches
S – 38 inches
M – 42 inches
L – 44 inches
XL – 48 inches

Cost: £25 incl. P&P

Sale: We also have some XXS size fleeces available for sale at £20 incl. p&p. These are a petite size 8-10 and would suit height circa 5ft.

Fleeces can be purchased on line via the website or by post. 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 size before ordering call 01962 887575.

IEWS OF A SPLENDID DAY

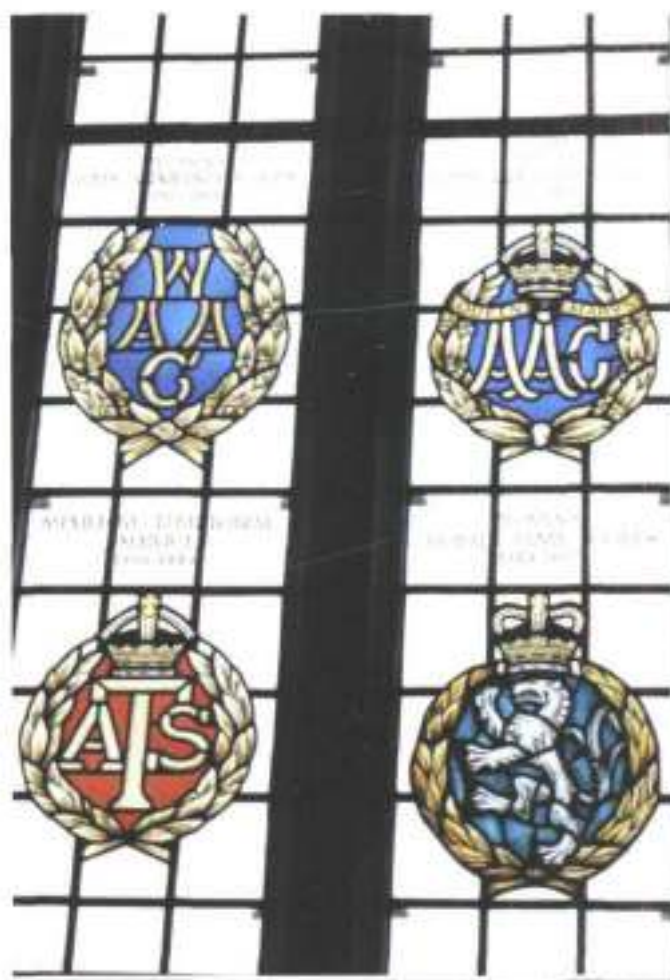
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EX W/277292 WO2 LORNA WHITE
(née ASTON) MBE
Mrs E Williams

Lorna White is my Mum. Her Service Record is as follows:

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ATS from June 1943 to December 1946 – 26 VRD, RAOC.
WRAC from September 1949 to December 1959 – 321
(TA) Btn, GHQ FARELF, HQ AA COMMAND, HQ
MALAYA, HQ SOUTHERN COMMAND (Clerical). She
was Mentioned in Dispatches in Malaya in 1957.

We are all very proud of her and thought she might be worth a mention. A woman who has spent more than 40 years serving the community says she is humbled to have been included on The Queen's Birthday Honours List. Lorna White has been made MBE in recognition of years of dedication to Redditch which began shortly after moving to the town in 1969 when she joined the Woodrow Residents' Association.

Over the years she has been involved with a number of voluntary organisations including 8 years as a case worker for the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association and since 2002 has been Secretary of Redditch Older People's Forum. And when the 86 year old has time she raises money for the blind and the League of Friends at the Alexandra Hospital.

She told the local newspaper: "I am proud of course, but also humbled and embarrassed to be truthful. There are so many people in this town doing the same thing we never get to hear of, it's a shame there's only one to go around. I shall be glad to accept this on their behalf".

THE OLYMPIC TORCH

Sally Purnell

Editor's Note: The photographs for this article are courtesy of Phil Cook from Sturminster Newton, Dorset.

Sally Purnell carried the Olympic Torch past the Fovant badges and enjoyed the support of friends and family on an unusually sunny morning in July. Also cheering her on that day was the group of women who carried the torch through Fovant in 1948.



Carrying the torch



The Fovant 48ers

Sally's Nomination Story

Sally is an inspirational, committed and capable woman who has led from the front throughout her life. Her successful career in the Army showcased success for women. The first woman to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Military Police, she carved out a path of professional, first class service in often dangerous operational theatres including Iraq as Force Provost Marshal, Kosovo and Bosnia. In all environments she has led from the front and been a part of Britain's commitment to making a difference. Sally has led the way for women clearly showing how to achieve success in a world traditionally led by men. She has demonstrated that skill, talent and commitment to being the best can achieve real results. Sally represents to young women that a desire to succeed can make a difference. Sally left the Army in 2007 and now has a much more leisurely lifestyle working for Dorset Registrations Services delivering wedding ceremonies for couples.



On the move



Olympic torch bearer 2012

Grand Reunion

WRAC ASSOCIATION GRAND REUNION

(Incorporating WMAAC and ATS Comrades Association)
23rd to 26th March 2012

What a wonderful happy weekend it was, the Marriott Hotel Bristol was superb, with nice clean rooms, very comfy beds with billowing pillows that our weary heads just sunk into each night, the hotel staff were lovely, helpful and polite throughout the hotel, and the catering was excellent.

Entertainment on the Friday evening with Kim and Jake was as usual "Simply the Best", their singing is first class and the energy they create in the ballroom is very special, with music that is exactly right for us and has everyone up on the dance floor as soon as they start singing, and which continues that way all evening till we can dance no more. Kim and Jake connect with us so well, they seem to love being with us and that makes the evening even more special. We very much look forward to seeing them each year at the WRAC Dinners.

Friday evening's fancy dress was a hoot, the nuns rendering of "Happy Days" was absolutely brilliant and better than any West End Show! The diversity of the fancy dress outfits for the theme "Women in Uniform" were a feast for the eyes and almost too much to take in.

I wish the evening could have been in slow motion so we could savour it a bit more and the happiness in the ballroom that evening was contagious. The fun on the dance floor was as though we were those young army girls once more with everyone joining in together, everywhere you looked there were happy faces and the wicked sense of humour made the whole evening hilarious.

Sightseeing in Bristol was great with the sun shining all weekend we were blessed indeed. A good parade on the Sunday morning through the park bathed in sunshine rounded the weekend off brilliantly.

Thank you so much to the Grand Reunion Committee for all your hard work, you made the weekend really good in order that we can all meet up and enjoy each others company, and it is all very much appreciated.

Here's to the next Grand Reunion in 3 years time.

Carol Traynor

Thanks must go to all of you who sent in photos but specific mention must be made of Cath Munro, Karen Radford, Vinnie Vincent and Margaret Grant MBE.

WOMEN IN UNIFORM















GALA DINNER









THE PARADE









Articles from Serving Soldiers

TASK FORCE HELMAND ENGINEER GROUP

Serial: Toni Scoins AGC (SBS)

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The Task Force Helmand Engineer Group on Herrick 14 consisted of elements from 24 Commando Engineer Regiment and 32 Engineer Regiment. Each Squadron had a Chief Clerk employed in the Main Operating Base Lashkar Gar J1 Cell, Engineer Group Headquarters and with the Rest & Recuperation Liaison Officer.

As the Chief Clerk of 59 Commando Squadron I am located in the Operations Room in Camp Bastion. The majority of the Sappers are based in and around the Coalition Forces Nad Ali (North) and Coalition Forces Nad Ali (South), area of operations.



Shaun Gilvear, Darrel Mortimore and Nancy Kuva with a few marines

As well as all the normal administration that comes with being a Squadron Chief Clerk, one of my main jobs on tour was to sort and distribute up to 50 sacks of mail a day. Other roles include carrying out guard duties and duty driver, usually to ferry personnel or to take sacks of mail to the flight line. I often wonder if the buzzard purposely books the mail on early hour flights.

At the beginning of the tour I was loaded on to a quad bike course. After a few hours of cross country, which was scary enough, we decided we were ready to try something a bit more adventurous and proceeded to drive in the dead ground around the perimeter fence at maximum speed. I was hanging on to the bike while it was flinging me around like a rag doll. Our instructor had said at the start of the course "whatever you do, don't fall off.....these things can do a lot of damage". So it was inevitable that if anyone was going to pull a stunt, it was going to be me. I remember thinking as my quad was heading toward a huge rut in the ground "oh dear, this is going to hurt". With that, the bike flipped sending me and the seat catapulting through the air. I think the rest of my group were more scared than I was, although an involuntary scream did come out. When the dust cleared, all they could see was four wheels in the air and a pair of legs sticking out from underneath it. Luckily all was well, although I had a nice shiner for a few days and the lads thought it was hilarious.



Toni Scoins jumping the quad

I participated in the Commando 10km road race and was determined that I wouldn't come last, and finished ahead of a few Commando and Parachute trained blokes. Not bad for a 31 year old.



Toni Scoins smiling after the accident



Jamie Trevvarthen and Michael Thorne enjoying a more relaxed ride in a rigid raider



Personnel for 24 Commando Engineer Regiment out on a rigid raider

AGC TRIPLE CROWN COMPETITION

Courtesy of the AGC Journal

The competition attracted a record number of entries once again, continuing the trend of recent years. There were 560 competitors in the March and Shoot and 108 entered the Military Skills competition. The event had representatives from all branches and guest teams from the Royal Air Force and the Corps of Army Music. Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester visited the event and presented the prizes.

During the planning stages, many potential problems were addressed with a key factor being the unpredictable weather. The current policy restricts military training competitions in warm weather. These restrictions start to impact at only 17°C and increase as the temperature rises further, ultimately reaching a point where all activity has to stop. As you can imagine this gave the organisers a few headaches in relation to devising contingency plans and a potential restructuring of the scoring system.

Fortunately the temperatures just stayed within the allowable limits and the competition took its normal format with a slightly earlier start and an increase to the number of teams setting off at each start time.



Ready to go!

The day started early with the Directing Staff, Marshalls and the Quartermaster's staff parading at the 'Olympic Village' at 0530 hrs for breakfast and final co-ordinating briefings. The Charlie team (March and Shoot) event started at 0600 hrs and the Delta team (Military skills) started at 0630 hrs. Both competitions were fiercely contested as always in the attempt for glory.

The prizes were presented to the winning teams by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester in the early evening sunshine. The day ended with a barbecue and an evening of entertainment provided by the Corps Band.



Presentation of prizes



And time to relax

The event continues to gain in popularity every year and remains a great opportunity for Corps personnel to demonstrate that they are 'Soldiers First' and can compete in the toughest of physical and military competitions.

JOINT CORPS OPERATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION

By Lieutenant Laura Robinson-Brown AGC (RMP)

On 1 April 2011 two teams from 5th Regiment Royal Military Police deployed to Pirbright in order to train and compete in the Joint Corps Operational Shooting Competition. Team A was a 114 Provost Company and Team B was a composite team from 114 and 101 Provost Company personnel.

Both teams arrived at Brunswick Camp and shooting began immediately that weekend, with zeroing at Longmoor Ranges followed by rehearsals for the matches. All personnel were very keen to learn and Sergeant Mick Brown AGC (MPGS) spent a great deal of his time and patience guiding efforts.

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After a full seven days practice on the ranges, the teams enjoyed a well deserved rest over the weekend before the main competition. The 114 Provost Company A Team was comprised of Second Lieutenant Tom Bartle, Corporal's Steven Dickens, Neil Dewar, and Lance Corporal Sonia Foster and the B Team included Corporals Alexander Harries and Graham Tinkler, Lance Corporals Pete Maguire and Sergeant Jamie Shutler. The results of the competition speak for themselves and are a reflection of the hard work and effort from those that took part.

In the team championships the A Team achieved 3rd place overall and 2nd place in the Rifle and Pistol. The B Team achieved 3rd place in the Pistol. In the Whitehead, Roupell, Graham, Army 100 and Fleeting Encounter matches, the A Team achieved 2nd or 3rd places. Individually Corporal Steven Dickens won Best Young Soldier, Second Lieutenant Tom Bartle achieved Best Young Officer and Corporal Alexander Harries achieved Best RMP Pistol shot. In addition Corporal Neil Dewar won 3rd place in the Light Support Weapon Championship and Second Lieutenant Tom Bartle won 2nd place in the moving target competition, moving on to represent the AGC Inter-corps team, who came 2nd in the Methuen Cup. Special mention also goes to Lance Corporal Sonia Foster, who put in a very determined and impressive performance.

The competition was a fantastic opportunity to gain valuable shooting and marksmanship experience. On



Winners with their trophies. Standing left to right: Steven Dickens, Sonia Foster, Neil Dewar, Tom Bartle. Kneeling left to right: Pete Maguire, Alex Harries, Graham Tinkler

average each member of the team after the full two weeks had fired 3,500 rounds. Lance Corporal Pete Maguire finished the competition and travelled straight to Longmoor to begin the Close Protection course, which was excellent preparatory training for him. Corporal Steven Dickens also went straight from the competition to conduct pre deployment training his third close protection tour. All at 5 Regiment Royal Military Police wishes them both the best of luck and looks forward to next years event.

LIFE IN THE FEMALE ENGAGEMENT TEAM

By Private Rhian Russell AGC (SPS)

As a sub-unit clerk in an Infantry Battalion we can be expected to do a variety of other jobs. This can be anything from providing an extra crewman, or as a female we could be involved in female searching. In my case I was informed that I would be part of the Female Engagement Team (FET) on Operation Herrick 14.

My fellow team members were Second Lieutenant Harriet Haslam-Greene and Private Emma Newbold and we attended a three day course to learn the necessary skills such as working with an interpreter and how to host successful shuras/jirgas. We also conducted human terrain training and built up our situational and cultural awareness.



Rhian Russell at a Briefing Shura

We left for Afghanistan in April 2011 and went on to complete the full Reception Staging and Onward Integration (RSOI) package with the infantry soldiers, which was fun because we got to do exactly as the lads did. After RSOI I completed a three day patrol Pashto course and being really interested in learning new languages I took to it with relative ease.

When we moved to Lashkar Gah, the initial progress was slow, from building up new relationships, finding out who to go to for advice and feeling a little constrained due to the fact that the FET commander and I were in double-hatted roles. We were put on another FET course in LKG which involved lessons from the Afghan Affairs Advisor, Sippi, who gave us her personal specific view on Helmand. We also had briefings and undertook tasks

with a number of people from the agencies who could advise us.

There is a misconception that the FET is only here to engage with women. This is incorrect as our first engagement involved only men and was just as successful as our engagements with women and children. The people we have engaged with have kept our engagements going for longer than normal, proving that a relationship is not hard to build and trust soon follows. The way I see it, FET are broadening the boundaries imposed by male only patrols by having a female presence who interact with the population who are female.

Our first major tasking was in the Bolan area doing a Veterinary Engagement alongside a Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) shura. It went extremely well as the C-IED shura was on before us and we noticed the attention span was nil. However, when we began engaging the interaction was much more, and a nicer atmosphere was brought to the compound.

We have been working closely with the US Marine Corps FETs for our entire tour. I loved this part the most as we could take ideas and share things we had done together. The comparisons are far greater as they had done three months of FET specific training and I feel I have gained a lot from working with them. Another personal gain I have had from this experience is learning Pashto, which has made me genuinely interested in taking my language training further, possibly looking into becoming a military linguist in the future.

Working with children and locals was not only inspirational and fascinating but challenging. Living with a 9 and 12 year old back home I know how much energy children get over the years and running after the children of the people we are engaging was extremely fun and great interaction. I met one child called Fahid who spoke very good English and dreamed of becoming an interpreter. This was truly a child who knew what he wanted in life and he acted as my interpreter when I was engaging with the children. That one experience itself has topped off a wonderful and memorable tour. I hope to definitely have this experience again.



The Female Engagement Team

GUTERSLOH HALF MARATHON

Lance Corporal Michelle Harrop AGC (SPS)



The author

The Gutersloh Half Marathon is an annually held race around the soul destroying airfield in Princess Royal Barracks. The RAO, Captain Hilary Grandison, asked the SPS Detachment if anyone else was up for the challenge and a handful volunteered themselves.

Due to usual unit commitments some of the volunteers had to drop out and it was difficult to get sufficient training as a group. However, we did manage to do a couple of runs as part of our detachment training that we do on Thursday afternoons. There were a few more other members of the detachment that wanted to do the run, but because of the Triple Crown competition coming up at Worthy Down they didn't want to risk injury or get the dreaded blisters.

As we met up early on the Saturday morning I couldn't help but think I should still be in bed. But as we set off there was a mixture of nerves and excitement as we spoke about what times we wanted to achieve. Between us we talked about past running events we had taken part in. For me, the last time I had done a half marathon was before I joined the Army, so I was a bit apprehensive of what to expect but was hoping to beat my previous time.

When we arrived in Gutersloh there were already a lot of people there, many in fancy dress, registering and joining in with the atmosphere. Once there we met up with Bruno Kantiki, Captain Hilary Grandison and Sergeant Shay Vaughan and made our way to the start line ready for the 2011 Gutersloh Half Marathon to begin.

The run started at 1100 hours and we all wanted to achieve less than 2 hours as the weather was not too hot and was good for running. After the initial crowd disbanded at the start everyone soon got into their stride. It was a good route and we all arrived at the finish line within minutes of each other and had our pictures

taken as we passed the finish line. It was a good feeling achieving 13 miles in less than 2 hours and we all had some well deserved Haribos at the end. Overall everyone put in a great effort and were happy with their times.

As a detachment we have been keen on their running. Hopefully in future we will be able to put in a strong team and get in some good training beforehand for any other events that come up. Events such as this brings the detachment together and improves our team building as we learn each other's strengths and weaknesses.



From l to r: Shay Vaughan, Hilary Grandison and Michelle Harrop ready for the start of the Gutersloh Half Marathon

EXERCISE WANDERING CLERK Captain Gemma Smith AGC (SPS)

After Exercise Askari Thunder 4 and a Unit Move there was a lot to be said for retreating on Adventure Training. A multi-activity week in the Lake District was what we needed and it seemed to provide a good distraction from the fast approaching Mission Specific Training (MST).

Two very packed mini-busses made their way up the M6 to the Ambleside Hut for a week of fun in the sun. When you think England and Adventure Training, rain is what normally comes to mind. However, the sun was shining for the week and it was sunburn and not wind burn that had us going red.

The main feature of the week was walking, with the team taking in Wansfell Pike, Harrison Sickle and Helvellyn all ably led by Adam Santos-Carey, Lorraine Gibbons, Sharon Smith (kindly borrowed from 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment and who needs some remedial pub quiz training) and myself. The walking came as a bit of a shock to the system as the difference between a fitness test on the flat and steep walks up a mountain was brought home early on the first day. The views were spectacular and the evenings refreshments were well deserved.

Jase Rees took the detachment out for a day in Canadian Canoes on Lake Windermere and made every effort to get every person into the water either by will or by force. There was some precarious balancing on the side of the boats and some excellent capsizing that made the kayaking a great day out although surprisingly hard work.

The activities didn't stop in the evenings. Helen Jones proved to be spider woman on the indoor climbing wall, surprising everyone despite her fear of heights. Guardsman Palzor Lepcha (who is an AGC (SPS) hopeful transferee) showed us all how it was done as he transformed into Robin Hood during the Archery, despite never having picked up a bow before.

Our two chefs were often to be found in the Hut's tiny kitchen in the evenings providing us with excellent food. The chefs were even given a night off as our resident Gurkha colleagues offered to do a curry night. Sabin Rai proved his culinary abilities are as good as his JPA ones and he was ably assisted by Dipendra Shrestha while Ganesh Limbu supervised.

Finally there was water zorbing, an unexpected experience that left us feeling like hamsters in a washing machine. It's one to get your head around floating in a giant inflatable cylinder and then trying to run. It was exhausting work but left everybody in hysterics for both the participants and the watching public.

As with any week away there were moments of sheer genius that shouldn't be glossed over. After finishing the first walk one of team announced "I don't half feel like that Grizzle Bear". After some funny looks Annabel Farrar said "Do you mean Bear Grylls?" To prevent embarrassment the team member will remain nameless. The week was a great success and as the old adage goes 'a change is as good as a rest', bring on MST.



The team taking a break to pose for a photo

Branch News

ABERDEEN BRANCH

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The Aberdeen Branch has added a new member to our ranks. Her name is Mhairi and she is the longest serving member of the forces that we have – 22 years! With all that experience and her rank (3 stripes and a crown) she coped no bother at all with the questions that flow her way – she is needless to say, most welcome.

We have changed our meeting place to a “free venue”. Free being no rent but buy your own coffees and scones. The Music Hall is slap bang in the middle of town and means that most of the ladies just have to take one bus. The atmosphere is fine but we have no real privacy, but when the rent is more than the Branch can afford we will just make the best of it. There is a bright side though – we are not restricted to being out by a set time. The phrase “swings and roundabouts” comes to mind.

We had our May lunch at Soul. This is a converted Church and the stained glass windows have been retained making the front part dark and showing off the candles in their red motives to good effect. Fortunately there is a bright modern bit at the rear for those who like to really see what they are eating! We all enjoyed it.

The Scottish AGM is again on in Perth in September and the Competition is on the Jubilee. It is open so I am really looking forward to seeing what the ladies come up with.

Our member Mary Newton had her 92nd birthday and we sent her a card which was made by another member Irene Thomson. Mary lives out of town and does not come to meetings, but we keep in touch.

With best wishes to all Branches.

BAND BRANCH

Hello Band Ladies, it seems someone has forgotten to tell the weather it is summer!

I did however really enjoy watching the wonderful celebrations of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, made me very nostalgic watching the marching bands. I am glad to say our offer of well wishes was gracefully received by Buckingham Palace.

I am very proud of our Carole, she has received another well-deserved acknowledgement of all her hard work from the Police Force. Carole McDonagh was in the WRAC Staff Band 1957-1959 – she is pictured here with the Chief Constable of Humberside who is presenting her with a certificate for all her work she has done with the Police. She is also currently the Chairwoman of the Blue Lamp Club for ex-Police members.

Add to that Carole is a case worker for the Royal British Legion and Chairwoman for the Grimsby WRAC Association Branch. Such a busy person – well done Carole.



Carole McDonagh with the Chief Constable of Humberside

Are there any more of you who would like to share your “spare time” activities with us? Do let me know.

I still have a few of the very pretty trinket boxes for you and the hotel at Stratford has made an offer of a few more times. Please contact me.

I am delighted to add that I had a very nice surprise from a telephone call from Canada from our ex-Drum Major Margaret Davy, she regrets not being able to join us but asked to be remembered to you all that knew her. I did send her all our best wishes.

Again from Canada a message from Joyce Shaw (Fiske) asking for all the goodies I could find and her niece will be taking them over for her. I do enjoy these far away contacts including one in South Africa; I collect some very exotic postage stamps for charity. May I close hoping you will have an enjoyable summer anyway.

BATH BRANCH

The Bath Branch now in its 65th year continues to meet twice a month albeit with smaller numbers attending as old age takes its toll. This year we have changed our venue after very many years, but we are now only minutes away from the Rail and Bus Station which has made it easier for members and we also have a Café attached to our meeting room which means we can have soup and a roll or tea etc before meetings commence.

We have had a variety of events since the beginning of the year and much to our surprise we won the sum of £200 in a competition sponsored by the local Press in March. The competition was open to a very large number of “Community Groups” across the city which included schools and doctors surgeries etc. We were filmed at our various meeting places and this was published in the local Press with details of our activities so we had plenty of free publicity – alas no new members though. Two of us were invited to a Gala Dinner which was excellent, where the films of the various groups were shown and we were presented with our cheques. This was used to take 16 members to a “High Tea” in a Bath

hotel where we were made quite a fuss of by the staff. It was a very pleasant time particularly as we had members present who are in residential homes etc, so quite a pleasant occasion.

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Members of the Branch in the Community Competition March 2012

We also had the Olympic Flame passing through Bath so as our member Roma Tomkins lives in Pultney Street, which of course is very famous, we were able to view it in comfort! No standing for hours in crowds!

We were also invited in May by the President of the Town's Women's Guilds in the Somerset and Bristol area to their celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in the Guildhall. Seven of us were present for a day of celebration which included a talk by our MP on his role as a Privy Councillor, a member of the staff from Buckingham Palace gave a talk with slides on pictures which had been purchased by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The TG's President was also present and gave a resume of her meetings with Princess Anne who is their Patron. When we were invited we were asked if we could turn up in our uniforms! They were told that sadly our figures had altered somewhat since the 1940s! Has anyone still got their uniform - we only have our cap badges!

Future events are a visit to the Army Flying Museum at Middle Wallop on Salisbury Plain. It is not possible for us to fill a coach, only with inviting other Ex-Service Associations to join us - most of them are like us experiencing diminishing numbers and no new members joining, but we are very pleased.

We do have a new member and we are very pleased to welcome Ailsa Jean Simpson, née Done who left the Service in 1981 and lives in Corsham. She is still working so we will not have the pleasure of her company at meetings unfortunately, but we hope she can join us for some of our events. We do meet up for Coffee and Lunches between meetings.

We send our thanks to the organisers of our Grand Reunion in Bristol and also to our Area Chairman Major "Mack" who made the long journey from her home to be with us recently at our annual lunch. We held this in the local Technical College's Restaurant, where we are served and waited on by the students. We are also sure of an excellent lunch and by our presence we are helping

them with their training.

We wonder if our Branch holds an unusual record! We have 2 members living at what at one time must have been orchards. We have Mary Bazett (née Marsden) ATS living at Hobbs Orchard, Coaley Dursley, Glos; Dorrie Rich (née Fitt) ATS at Carters Orchard, Sevenvale, Quedgeley, Glos and Nan Webb (née Cox) ATS living at Spencers Orchard, Southway Park, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts. It is unfortunate that they all live too far from Bath to attend meetings regularly!

We send best wishes to all members and especially to the new members of our HQ staff.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Here in Birmingham we have been enjoying ourselves keeping busy. It would be terrible if we found ourselves with more than a couple of spare minutes.

Since we last reported to you we have had a talk by a lovely guy called Niall Murphy from SSAFA. He told us all about the work of SSAFA and how we can access it should we need to. He answered all our questions without losing his thread and enjoyed joining us for lunch. Several of us managed to get to Bristol for the Grand Reunion and had a thoroughly good time. We were very impressed with the hotel and the general organisation of the whole weekend. Congratulations to all concerned. A different band on the Saturday night might have prevented some of us rushing from the room on their first note and heading for the bar but otherwise it was great. The parade through Bristol Park made us all proud as we marched along to the strains of the band. You never forget! Roll on 2015.

We held our quiz in April and several other Branches sent members to take us on. It was a riotous affair with Julia Calder crawling round on the floor trying to hear the answers from other teams. Bad girl Julia!

Several of our members attended the St George's Day Parade at St Pauls in the Jewellery Quarter and enjoyed the service and parade.

May was an exciting month for Brum Branch. We held our annual Birthday Lunch and invited several dignitaries, including Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake, Major (Retd) Gabi Shanahan, Irene Hall and the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Anita Ward. Other Branches able to attend were Tamworth, Stafford, Hereford, Leicester, Phoenix and Cambridge, along with members from Marches and Mid Wales. The Marches girls stayed in the Britannia Hotel and were made very comfortable. The photographs were taken by Cathy Munro from Cambridge Branch and you can see from them that it was a smile fest. The Lord Mayor spoke to us and even managed to negotiate her way through a bit of banter from our very own comedian, Joan Baldwin. Sue Westlake told us about a few WRAC Association matters and her claim to be called a Brummie, having lived here during her younger days. The Lord Mayor promised to visit our stall at Armed Forces Day. There were 50 of us sitting down to lunch and the hotel did us proud again.



A Great Birthday Party



We are very happy in our present accommodation. Whilst we were arriving for our get together one of our new members, Debbie Ashton heard that she had been selected to represent Great Britain in the European Dragon Boat Championships. We were all thrilled for her and very proud. She was beside herself with excitement when she had her hand shaken by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham.



On 23rd May we descended upon the National Memorial Arboretum to have lunch with Phoenix Branch. Our walking tour with a guide was very informative and we all came away knowing much more than we had at the beginning of the day. Lunch in great company left us all feeling warm inside. We are all looking forward to doing it again next year.

Always remember, you can count on Brum Branch. We have an abacus.

Our June meeting was given over to hearing our members talking about their experiences during their service. We were pleased to welcome our guest Barbara Green, author of *Girls in Khaki* who appeared to have had a good time too. By the time you read this we will have marched through the City Centre as part of the parade of Veterans on Armed Forces Day and no doubt we looked very smart.

Many of you know Maureen Deeley and are aware that she has been having serious problems with her back and leg for a couple of years. Despite that, she still carried the National Standard until she surrendered it at the Grand Reunion. It was an emotional moment for her when Sue Westlake made a special presentation to her in recognition of her years of service as standard bearer. Birmingham Branch are very proud of her. Unfortunately, since the Grand Reunion she has been in hospital. She has kept the nursing staff on their toes with her lively banter and cheek. Her stubborn determination has seen her go from totally bedridden to walking along parallel bars. She is an inspiration to us all.

We have been experimenting with holding evening meetings every three months to enable members who cannot attend at lunch times. The evening meetings are on the second Wednesday of March, June, September and December at 6.30pm but we are going to review the situation to see if it is worthwhile. Our monthly meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month except January at the Britannia Hotel on New Street in the City

Centre. We start to gather at about 11am and partake of a lovely 2 course cooked buffet lunch. Please feel free to join us if you are in the area.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

Bournemouth Branch rounded off 2011 with Christmas Lunch at the Premier Inn. This was enjoyed by 25 branch members and Major 'Mack', our S&SW Area Chairman. The branch New Year started in February with our winter Bring & Buy which raised some funds for the Branch. In March members met socially in the Premier Inn and then, in April, a group of members accepted an invitation to the School of Signals at Blandford. We were hosted like Royalty, having morning coffee on arrival, lunch in the canteen and afternoon tea in the Officers' Mess, in between a complete tour of the camp and visits to the female accommodation and the electronic indoor firing range. We were all presented with a photo to remind us of our visit, where you can see us all with our hosts.



Well looked after by our hosts

After that, in May, came the icing on the cake – the Not Forgotten Association Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, where the host was HRH the Duchess of



Ursula Troke meeting the HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

Gloucester. This was a great experience for twelve branch members, and everyone enjoyed the day, most especially Ursula Troke who had been selected to meet the Duchess. Ursula is now moving to Winchester so it was a great farewell for her. We had afternoon tea in the Marquee or on the lawn with the Band of the Scots Guards playing under the trees, and finally Beating Retreat by the Band on the Palace lawn. Ursula is pictured meeting the Duchess. We hired a luxury coach to take us up from Bournemouth on what was one of the hottest days of the summer. It was a long, slow journey as many of the London roads were closed in preparation for the Jubilee celebrations and the Mall and Palace approach were like a building site, but this did not detract from the enjoyment of the day. In fact, we were privileged to see London decked out with flags and bunting.

Our June meeting will be very seasonal with a visit from Purbeck Ice Creams and hopefully some samples to taste. This will be followed in July by our annual cream tea, this year in the Hermitage Hotel overlooking the Bournemouth pier and beach. Several of our members made it to the Grand Reunion in Bristol, which will doubtless be covered in depth elsewhere in this issue.

BRISTOL BRANCH

Bristol meetings have been very well attended. We were all looking forward to the Grand Reunion, we hope you enjoyed your visit, and hope that many of you will make a return. We were blessed with good weather, which is always a bonus. Our parade in the Park was brilliant, the band were first class and it was great that so many of the members were marching.

We started our year with our Annual Lunch in February we had a Jubilee theme, so I think we must have been one of the first to celebrate. Lt Col Sue Westlake and Major Mack joined us for an excellent lunch. We did have a photographer from the local press who did a report and took photographs. As usual Bristol City Marriott did us proud.



A Jubilee celebration

Of course as previously mentioned the Grand Reunion was in March. Thank you to Council for all the arrangements made ensuring that it was a successful weekend. An added bonus was receiving Bristol Blue paper weight complete with a little display holder.

Apart from our normal meetings we have had a day at Weston super Mare where we all enjoyed a Fish and Chip lunch. The Manager asked us if we could go back

the next day, because when people saw us enjoying our meal, a queue readily formed. We have promised to go back 'next year'. At our last meeting we had a Jubilee Celebration, with fancy cakes, various rolls and strawberries and cream with scones. We did not have any food left, which is a good thing.

We are busy preparing for Armed Forces Day and we are having two displays on the 23rd June. One is being held at Weston super Mare, which is being manned by our ladies who live in that area, and one in Kingswood in South Gloucestershire. We are parading on 23rd June and will also have a stand in the park. Our ladies have been invited once again for the Flag Raising which is on Tuesday 19th June.

On Sunday 24th June we have been invited to Weston super Mare for a service which is culminating with a 'Fly Past'. We have also received an invitation from Lord Lieutenant of Bristol Mrs Mary Prior, to a Jubilee Concert at Bristol Cathedral. In August we are going on a boat tour round Bristol City Docks, we will make sure that we have a 'dry' day.

This is a year to remember, It doesn't seem like 10 years ago that we celebrated the Golden Jubilee and paraded down the Mall. I thoroughly enjoyed that day; it was brilliant.

We hope you all have a very good summer, just hope that this rain eases off and we have get to see the sun. Best wishes to you all.

BURY BRANCH

This will be a short report. I was 'volunteered' to be the scribe for the group at the April meeting. I was on holiday for the May meeting and June's meeting wasn't a meeting!! Instead we had a Jubilee Buffet Lunch to celebrate HM Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee. It was held at the Old White Lion in Bury, where we have our meeting on the second Tuesday of every month. We are treated well by the licensees and this time was no exception. 15 of us attended and had a great time. Good food and good company, what more could we want? We were sorry that Maureen Simpson and Marilyne Preece could not be with us. Maureen was ATS and her daughter, Marilyne, was WRAC and is a member of

Birmingham branch. They were at the North West Reunion on the Saturday but on the Sunday Maureen was taken ill and admitted to hospital. We missed them on the Tuesday.

We had a red, white and blue theme and there was a prize for the best-decorated hat, a fun hat in our national colours. First prize went to Wendy Stevens and second prize to Carole Nuttall.



First and Second Prizes - well deserved

We average around 13-15 members at our meetings which is a higher number than in previous years. We seem to be getting more known about, which is a good thing. We have younger members, in their 50s, right up to our older members from the ATS and they are in their 80s and 90s but still come to meetings when they can and it is a credit to them that they still get to the meetings.

One of our ladies lives in Australia but frequently sends little gifts to use as raffle prizes or to sell and put the money into our funds. This time there was a super little Koala backpack. It was won by Susan Feeney who, I'm told, won about three prizes at the NW Reunion just a few days earlier. I wonder if she will be doing the Lotto?



Dressed for a party

Two of our members, Kathleen Kirtley and Susan Feeney, decided to start having get-togethers at the Toby Carvery in Oldham so that people who could not make daytime meetings did not feel left out. The first meeting caused a bit of apprehension, not knowing how many would turn up. But even people turned up and the evening was a great success. It is now a regular monthly get-together, on the third Wednesday of every month. I think the first one was in March so our fourth one is coming up and that is on 20th June. We are hoping that a photographer from the local newspaper, the Oldham Evening Chronicle, will be there to take a photograph to accompany an article that is being written about the WRAC Association. Watch this space!

Several members are going to the Dinner in October at Nottingham and they are very much looking forward to it. I would like to welcome Elsa McGhee and Carole Nuttall to the group, they are our newest members.

CANTERBURY BRANCH

As I type this report it is raining heavily but the weather hasn't dampened the spirits of the many thousands of people greeting Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee. No doubt many of us remember that it also rained during her Coronation in June 1953.

On to news of Canterbury Branch. We continue to meet at the Dominican Priory in the centre of the city on the first Wednesday of the month at 1.00pm. Our first meeting of 2012 was held in February when our chairman, Susan Wing gave us the sad news that one of our members, Rosina Lock had died. Rosina had been a staunch supporter of the Association for many years and was instrumental in having a bench installed in Margate memorial gardens in memory of all those who served in the ATS and WRAC.

Three members were able to travel to Bristol for the Grand Reunion in March. Sadly, I was unable to attend due to health reasons and it seems I missed out on an excellent weekend. Roll on 2015 for the next one!

April saw us enjoying our fish and chip lunch. At our May meeting we were very pleased to welcome a new member, Cherry Buchanan (ex-WRAC) from Margate. We soon realised that we had both been at Lingfield at around the same time and before long the two of us were reminiscing. Our ex-ATS members joined in and a lively discussion followed with much laughter as we swapped memories of our days in training.

In June we look forward to welcoming a speaker and in July we hold our annual strawberry tea party when we hope our friends from Medway Branch will be able to join us along with some of our less mobile members who make the effort if the weather is kind.

Finally, if any member would like to come to one of our meetings do please contact me, Sue Foulks (Secretary) or drop in at the Dominican Priory, St Peter's Lane, Canterbury on the first Wednesday in the month at 1.00 pm you when can be sure of a very warm welcome.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Our Branch has enjoyed various activities since we met in February. We meet as usual at the RAFA Club in Chelmsford on the third Tuesday of each month and talk over things "official like" with a cup of tea before settling down to enjoy a speaker or other planned item.

February – We were not disappointed when one of our members Margaret Kliskey gave us another fascinating talk, this time on the Life of Clementine Churchill. How Margaret manages to speak on so many subjects so knowledgeably is remarkable and we always enjoy listening to what she has to say.

March – This meeting was a social one and we had a trip down memory lane hearing of members experiences of service life (did we really get up to these things?!).

April – Members enjoyed a real treat today. One of our members Diane Rensch is a much travelled lady and with her husband has made many visits to far off places. The illustrated slide presentation by Mr Rensch on the Pitcairn Islands was so interesting we could have listened to it all over again had time allowed; and we are grateful to both of them for this insight into somewhere so remote and unspoiled.

May – Another member Margaret Tebbutt brought along a collection of medals and memorabilia belonging to an Aunt who had served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. The medals inscribed with her name are a special treasure to Margaret and we thank her for sharing them with us.

Also in May – The Hon Sec attended the Laying up of The Colours of the QMAAC and the ATS on 20th May in Guildford Cathedral.

We are holding our Branch Anniversary Lunch on 17th July and we hope for a good attendance at that – it is usually a happy occasion with good food (and wine).

During the year, 3 new members have been allocated to our Branch. We should be so pleased to see them if they are able to come along to any meeting. (Contact – Tel: 01245 251088).

CHESTER BRANCH

What a start to the year; March saw the Chester Branch off to the Grand reunion and an excellent weekend was had by all. Meeting up with old friends and outings meant a very busy weekend. We are looking forward to the next one in 3 years.

We have had a couple of outings, the Race Day at Shropshire was great fun, Chris Powell is doing an excellent job as Secretary and the ladies made us feel very welcome. Our secretary even wore a dress and hat, something we have never seen before and she has said we won't see again.

June saw us off on an outing to a factory that made mustard gas in the Second World War, it was very

informative and interesting, then we had lunch unfortunately we spent that much time chatting we missed going to Boddeleywydden Castle so will have to do that another time. We finished off with a quick drive around Kimmel Bay Army camp then onto a visit to the Marble Church. **PDF Compressor Free Version** A lovely gentleman gave us a talk on the history of the church, well worth a visit.

The Reunion went very well, we had many visitors from other Branches, the buffet was delicious and there was a lot of merriment over the quizzes. I promise to get them right next time.

I would like to thank Ann McCartney for taking the photos for us, they are very professional.



Good food and good company

On a very sad note, Vera Hamblet who has been a member of our Branch for many years and was Secretary for a long time before ill health stopped her from attending the meetings passed away in May. She will be sadly missed by all the members.

If anyone would like to join us at our meeting at Chester Military Museum on the 2nd Monday of the month please contact our Secretary Pat Sanders on 07733 270567 or email psand444@btinternet.com

CLEVELAND BRANCH

It looks as though we have all had two brief summers this year-March and May! Rain is due tomorrow (29th May) so we have been making the most of the glorious sunshine here in the North East. Our branch is still meeting on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Settlement Centre, Union St, Middlesbrough.

Like many of you our numbers are still reducing but we do our best to keep lively. One month we had a keep fit session-our deputy Standard bearer did her best to keep us in control-we were in "fits" of laughter so I think we were a lost cause!! So we had a NAAFI break with a nice slice of cake instead. Our meeting this month was Afternoon Tea to celebrate our Patron's Diamond Jubilee. We had lots of lovely food, a little Royal quiz and music from each decade of the HM The Queen's reign.



Tea and celebration

We are very proud at our Branch of our Standard bearer and our deputy Standard bearer, Ann Mahony has been awarded two awards for her work with our Standard. Our deputy, Ann Burrows, has been selected to carry the Olympic Flame on 17th June, so we are going to cheer her on-maybe wearing our green fleeces! We also have a stall again in Stockton on Tees on Armed Forces Day. It is always a good day especially if the troops parade through the High Street. It is a great way to advertise our Association and we hope to have some photographs for the next *Lioness*.

We hope everyone enjoys the Jubilee celebrations wherever you are.

A Few Days In the Life of our Busy Standard Bearer

My name is Ann Mahony and I have proudly carried Cleveland Branch Standard for years. Here are a couple of my latest exploits!

Saturday 21st April 2012 saw me in London at the Royal Hospital Chelsea with my Standard and my local Artillery Branch for Gunners Sunday. We paraded in front of the Chelsea Pensioners with our Standards and were inspected by Maj Gen Milne and Maj Gen Currie before going to a service in the Chapel. After performing a Guard of Honour outside we were then invited to lunch.

Having survived this trip to London I was off to Blackpool for the Gunners weekend. My Women's Royal Army Corps Association Standard is always given a very warm welcome at these events; they are always pleased to see us. We were all lined up on the Saturday morning to be inspected by Major General Milne who was deputising for the Master Gunner-he was at Windsor with HM The Queen. We marched into the meeting and laid up our Standards. During the meeting various awards were given out and lo and behold they called my name!! I marched to the front to meet Maj Gen Brearley who awarded me with both the Regional and National certificates of Commendation for the work I do with the Standard. In the evening we had the Sunset Ceremony and then dinner.



Being awarded the Certificates of Commendation



Assembled standards

The following morning was the Standard bearers Competition. There was ten of us entered and I was No.5 as we marched in. I heard a male voice say, "It's a woman" mmm-clever man!! I did not win but was happy to take part. It was a great weekend and I heard a rumour that I was going to apply to be a NUN – not true!!! I am too busy travelling about the area and beyond with my trusty Standard to be enclosed in a Nunnery. Along with Cleveland Branch Association I am also a member of the Royal Artillery Association and I am honoured to represent these Associations. Long may I continue.

AND FINALLY.....

Our Deputy Standard Bearer, Ann Burrows was selected to carry the Olympic Torch through Sedgefield Co Durham today. Its other claim to fame is that Tony Blair, our ex PM, was MP for this small but lovely town. The rain stayed away, the streets were all flagged up and some of Cleveland Branch went to join in the fun and cheer on one of their youngest members. Ann does a great deal of Charity work especially Help for Heroes. Our Branch is only small at present but we had a good turnout and even managed to find an ex WRAC in the crowd so we recruited her (hopefully)!



Olympic celebrations

FIFE & TAYSIDE BRANCH

The year seems to have flown past. The Group still meet every month in Perth at the Salutation Hotel. We held our AGM on 16th April 2012 and 13 members attended. The weather was not ideal for the occasion.

The Scottish AGM will be held in The Queens Hotel, Perth on Saturday 29th September 2012 and our Branch winter meeting will be held in November at the Salutation Hotel. Our membership numbers stand at 14 Annual and 37 Life members.

Some of our members managed to get down to the reunion in Bristol.

HEREFORD BRANCH

Hereford Branch kicked off 2012 with a "Festive Meal" at the Axe and Cleaver in Much Birch. 25 plus Branch Members attended some of which hadn't seen old friends since June 2011. Several of our members have difficulty attending monthly Branch Meetings so use the two annual lunches (June/July and Jan) to catch up. Andy and his staff looked after us in true tradition and a lovely day was had by all.

We traditionally do not hold a meeting in February as the weather usually is awful in rural Herefordshire.

It is with sadness that in March ATS member Marion Powell who lived in Longtown Herefordshire passed away aged 89. Marion was an active member of the branch in its early days and supported the branch when ever she could. Marion will be missed. The Branch Standard was taken to the funeral.

We all got together in March for our first meeting of 2012. The main topic of conversation was the "GRAND REUNION" at Bristol. Wow what a great time was had by all. Twelve members attended and we are "still" talking about it. The fancy dance evening was awesome; it really was a case of "what wasn't there". The weather was kind to us and stayed fine for the parade on Sunday most of those attending marched. I had the honour of parading the National Standard and Jo Foster paraded the Hereford Branch Standard.



At the Grand Reunion



On parade

In April we were invited to Birmingham for a Quiz. Two members of our branch attended. A very enjoyable day was had by all. In May Birmingham Branch invited other branches to join them for their 24th Birthday Party. Six members from Hereford went. We had a lovely time. Thank you Birmingham Branch.

At the Rededication Service at Guildford six Branch members attended, Jo Foster paraded the Branch standard and Sharon Joyce paraded the National standard.



And again.....

Also in May nineteen members joined The Phoenix Branch at the NMA at Alrewas in Staffordshire for their annual lunch. We went to the chapel for the 11am service of Remembrance, very moving, followed by a short guided walk to the WRAC and ATS plots and other plots of interest. At the time of the visit, which gave members who had not been before to go to the National Memorial which is very humbling, especially the blank walls awaiting names.



Enjoying the atmosphere

June is a busy time in Herefordshire. At Wormelow near Hereford we have the museum to Violette Szabo, the secret agent who gave her life during WW2; they made the film "Crave Her Name with Pride" about her. We celebrate her birthday each year; her daughter attends with other dignitaries plus British Legion and Forces Association standards parade. The Branch standard will also parade at the RBL County Rally at Madley near Hereford.

July will be our Veterans/Armed Forces/Jubilee celebration meal. Again 25 plus members will be attending. This is a time when many of our members can meet up and catch up.

August will see us all at Queens Wood near Leominster for our annual Picnic and Summer Draw. The weather for the last two years hasn't been brilliant so we are all hoping this year will be dry, warm and sunny!!!! Watch this space.

LEEDS BRANCH

Another six months have flown by. The weather was kind to us so we managed to meet in February, and hold our Bring & Buy Sale. This brings in a small amount of money for the Branch Funds. During our March meeting we talked about the forthcoming Grand Reunion and some of the changes taking place within the Association.

Four members enjoyed a wonderful time at the Reunion, it's always good to have the chance to meet with friends and make new ones. The hotel was placed in a very good position for visiting Bristol and the many places of interest. Well done to all the people who did a sterling job keeping things running over the weekend.

The snow returned just for one day in April keeping many of the ladies away from the meeting. Once again we enjoyed our lunch at the Thomas Danby College in May during which we had a 90th birthday celebration.



Socialising once again!

Our August meeting will be our trip to Wetherby for a pub lunch, this is always an enjoyable occasion. We hope the weather will be kind to us this year so that we can have a walk down by the River and around the pretty Market Town. We are looking forward to the Reunion in September when we meet up with members from the North East Area. If you are reading this and wondering what it's like to attend meetings why not come along, you will receive a warm welcome and make new friends. Our meetings are on the First Wednesday of the month at 12.30 in The New Headingley Club, 56, St Michael's Road, Leeds, LS6 3BG or ring me on 01226 201628 for more details.

LEICESTER AND NOTTS BRANCH

It does not seem many days since I was putting pen to paper for the last report, but the older we get time appears to pass more quickly as many of you will agree.

We have welcomed three new members to the branch but sadly have lost Sheila Grewcock and Ellen Ward, who will be sadly missed by their friends and comrades.

Following a busy end to 2011 with the November poppy appeal events and various parades to mark Remembrance Day, our year finished with Christmas lunch at Devonshire Place, where as usual they did us proud. This also gave us the opportunity to make a presentation to Olive Grieves for her forthcoming ninetieth birthday. As most of you are aware this is where we hold our monthly meetings and our numbers vary between twenty six and twenty eight each meeting.

January was our usual nibble and natter which gave us time to discuss future outings and events for the forthcoming year. Two favourites were the National Memorial Arboretum, Chatsworth House/Gardens and our yearly outing to the sailing club. Many thanks to Pam Richards and her team who make visits, send cards and

flowers to members who are ill and unable to attend meetings. This team maintains a very important link between all members of the branch.



Birthday celebrations

February saw our scheduled meeting cancelled this month as our branch standard and twenty one members attended the funeral of Sheila Grewcock. On 8th March HM Queen Elizabeth II visited Leicester at the start of her Diamond Jubilee tour and visited numerous places in the city, one of which was St. Martins Cathedral to which six of our ATS ladies were in attendance outside the main entrance. Both The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh spoke to some of the ladies. Although they were not invited into the service they all felt privileged to have been invited on this royal occasion, despite the weather which was rather cold. This months' bring and buy meeting raised £80.

The Grand Reunion at Bristol was attended by nine ladies, well almost, as Carol Morris did not make it until Saturday afternoon as a result of her vehicle breaking down, but passengers Sue and Ellie did manage to travel the last sixty miles by taxi and arrived late Friday afternoon. A great weekend from start to finish; great entertainment, music, dancing, excellent food and a time to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. The weather remained fine for the parade on Sunday. Many thanks to HQ and all the team for organising such a great weekend.

In April Sylvia Scofield's husband Peter gave us a talk about his mother's service in the ATS. A very interesting talk thanks Peter. The Birmingham Branch invited our ladies to their luncheon and quiz but only one person (Jacqui) was able to attend and thoroughly enjoyed the day. Lyn our standard bearer attended Victoria Park for

the ANZAC Day service and she managed to make the 0700 start despite wet and cold weather conditions.

May saw another invitation from the Birmingham Branch for their birthday lunch and it was attended by three ladies. The Branch meeting this month consisted of a quiz organised by Jessie and Pam. Unfortunately Jessie was not able to attend as she was in hospital having her second hip replacement operation.

On 20th May our standard and six ladies attended the Guildford Cathedral rededication service and lunch; all had an enjoyable day.



A very proud day

Thanks to Barbara Danter who has sent a card from the branch congratulating HM The Queen on her forthcoming Diamond Jubilee. I am sure we will be looking forward to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, street parties etc in our towns, villages and also on the TV.

From June onwards our event calendar will be very busy, including numerous parades, visits, services and outings which will be covered in our next report.

LINCOLN AND DISTRICT

2012 began with a change of committee at the branch and members thanked the outgoing committee for all their hard work over the past year. Special mention must be given to Gwyneth Stratten who had held the post of Social Organiser for 5 years and had arranged some wonderful excursions and events. Thank you Gwyneth for all the effort you put into the role.

Our visit to the Grand Reunion in Bristol in March was a major event and the branch was very lucky to acquire Lottery funding courtesy of the hard work of our Treasurer, Jackie Walton. The branch is very appreciative of all the time she spent on this project. It did mean that some of us had to travel by coach. Jackie has written a separate article.

Our 5th Anniversary lunch was held at the beginning of April having been moved from its date in January and in the hope that the weather would be kinder to us. Nineteen members attended a very successful lunch at the Carre Arms in Sleaford where we welcomed new members Shirley Dawe, Joyce Forrest and Jenny Quirk (please note Jenny that I kept my promise!).



Happy to be in the pub



Which way? This way!

We have held one of our walks in Nottingham following the Beeston Canal and the River Trent with a watering hole at the Hungry Horse and lunch at the Riverbank on Trent Bridge.

Several members of the branch attended the Rededication Service at Guildford Cathedral on Sunday 20th May. A lovely moving experience which was well recorded by snapper Cathy Munro and here she is in action:



Recording events for prosperity

The remainder of the year will see us attending the NE Area Lunch in York, a trip to the Tramway Museum in Crich, skittles in Tamworth, a walk in Grantham and a visit to the IWM Duxford Museum. Also there will be a visit to Nottingham for those who are members of the WRAC Dinner Club on the first weekend in October.

Sadly our Standard Bearer, Nora Jones, is standing down and we thank her for the sterling work she has done carrying the standard on behalf of the branch. Thank you to Jean Evans who has volunteered to deputise on occasions but we are still looking for a permanent standard bearer.

We would like to wish Bimbo Coleman great success in the new chapter of her life at the Royal Chelsea Hospital where she moved to at the end of May and hope that she will behave herself and have a wonderful time. We are very proud that she wishes to remain a member of the branch.

We have moved to our new venue – The Central Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Lincoln LN5 7PR but still meet on the third Tuesday of the month between 1200 and 1400. If anyone is in the area please pop in and see us as you will be made very welcome.

By the time you read this article depending on the date I shall probably have been or just about to go to the Paralympics as a member of the Great Britain team. I was either demoted or promoted (not sure which) from the Anti-Doping Team to the Transport Bus Support Team, which is the largest team and has a workforce of 15,000. On 1st May I travelled to London with great difficulty, thanks to a strike by the ASLEF train drivers union, for my training session. Forty volunteers attended and it was great fun. I sat on a table with seven others and at the end of 4 hours we felt that we had got to know each other very well. My next visit will be to the Athletes Village for venue training and then to collect my uniform, accreditation and travel pass. Hopefully, I shall manage to complete my 8 hour shifts as it has been 7 years since I last did one of those!

GRAND REUNION BRISTOL

Jackie Walton



All smiles!

In June 2011 the Branch began to organise their trip to the Grand Reunion with 24 ladies acknowledging their intention of wishing to attend. Our plan from the start was to raise funds to enable members to travel by Coach, this we did with our usual Car Boots and other fund raising events. By early August our Treasurer Jackie Walton, in her capacity as a fund raiser for her local Museum, had attended a seminar run by the National Lottery 'Awards for All'. This seminar gave Jackie ideas for applying to National Lottery for a grant to assist the branch in getting to Bristol.

Having visited the 'Awards for All' website Jackie read the instructions and completed the necessary application form in September, a grant was applied for to cover the cost of a coach from Sleaford with pick up points at Lincoln, Newark and Tamworth. Hotel costs for 3 nights plus the £50 that each member had to pay for the Gala Dinner, we also had three ladies who travelled by train and two who travelled by car and their expenses were also included in our application. By January 2012 our application was given the green light and the appropriate funding paid into our Branch account.

Eventually our numbers were reduced to 20 individuals, and this enabled us three weeks prior to the event to

offer spare seats in the Coach to the Tamworth Branch, 6 of their members joined the happy band of travellers.

The 'Awards for All' Lottery grant has enabled several of our Branch members to attend a function they would not normally attend due to financial or travel constraints. It was a not an easy task to undertake, the Lottery committee do require you to answer searching questions but with patience it was well worth the effort. All our members who attended had a wonderful time, meeting up with old friends and meeting new ones. In our report we have included a photograph to prove this.

Jackie Walton is willing to assist anyone or give advice on the 'Awards for All' application or you can access the website www.awardsforall.org.uk

Editor's Note: Applications for grants must not use the Association's Charity number.

LUTON BRANCH

After our annual appearance on our local Remembrance Day parade, we had our usual Christmas party at our venue in December which as usual was great fun.

In January, to celebrate the Branch's anniversary, we made plans to have lunch at a recently opened restaurant in Luton. We duly arrived at 12 noon only to find we could not gain access, neither could we attract anyone to explain why we couldn't get in! One of the bright sparks in the group decided to phone them on her mobile and with that someone finally came to the door and explained what was to do. Their air-conditioning unit had gone on the blink, so they were unable to accommodate us, or anyone else for that matter. Undeterred we descended en masse on another eatery in the vicinity, who did us proud.

We had nothing out of the ordinary planned for February so we just had a good old natter and chatted about the forthcoming re-union at Bristol – which was a resounding success. Several of the Branch members attended and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, especially the fancy dress on the Friday night. I did notice the one glaring omission from the "Women in Uniform" theme – a NAAFI girl – wish I had thought of it.

A very amusing talk by Paul Healey, a local Historian, about the "Dark days of Dunstable" took place in April, we have had talks by Paul in the past; he loves his subject and is very knowledgeable, so we all enjoyed it.

On 19th May we took off for the day to Bedford where we met up with the members of Cambridge Branch. What a jolly lot they are. Everyone jelled together very well and we had a good meal at the Bedford RAFA Club.

Forthcoming attractions:

16 June – "The National Trust" – talk with Pauline & Barry Wolsey.

21 July – a return visit from former TV cook Zena Skinner.

15 September – our annual battle with the Far East Vets Assn, for the Quiz shield.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the ~~Regimental Secretary~~ **Regional Secretary Version**
WRAC Association
Gould House, 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:

GIFT AID DECLARATION

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WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

AND

**AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE & WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS
ASSOCIATION BENEVOLENT FUND**

Details of Donor

Title: _____

Forenames: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

I confirm that I am a UK tax payer and I request that the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) Association and the ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund treat all donations I have made since 6 April 2000, and all donations from the date of this declaration, to either the WRAC Association and/or the WRAC Association Benevolent Fund as Gift Aid Donations until I notify you otherwise.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Notes:

1. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year.
2. You must cancel this declaration if, in the future, your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and/or capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year.
3. You may cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the WRAC Association and/or ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund. The declaration will longer apply to donations you make on or after the date of cancellation or such later date as you specify.
4. Please notify the WRAC Association and/or the ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund of any change of address whilst this declaration is in force.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS DINNER CLUB

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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
Miss Maggie Bradshaw
Myrtyle Cottage, Tatworth, Chard, Somerset TA20 2NZ
Tel: (01460) 221617

I wish to join the WRAC Dinner Club and enclose:

5 Years Membership	£13.00	(Includes initial joining fee of £3.00)
Life Membership	£18.00	(Includes initial joining fee of £3.00)
(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

'Sauviter in modo, Fortiter in re'
'Gentle in manner, Resolute in deed'

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which are returned undelivered.

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FIRST LINE AND POST CODE OF OLD ADDRESS

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NEW ADDRESS (including postcode):

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TEL. NO

E-MAIL

New Branch

Send to: WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down,
WINCHESTER SO21 2RG

I have enclosed a photo of 'a far-flung fleece' with I hope a suitable caption attached.

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Our Fleece goes Global

Wearing her fleece with pride is Sherry Hamilton of Sydney, Australia, aka LCpl Bartlett, 4 Indep Coy WRAC, GHQ FarELF circa 1950-1952

PHOENIX BRANCH (FORMERLY WALES AND THE WEST BRANCH)

I am happy to report that Phoenix is developing nicely because its members have taken up several invitations extended to them. The March 2012 Grand Reunion in Bristol also provided ample opportunity to make more contacts. So far so good then.

Phoenix members had gathered at the Crewe Arms Hotel for lunch, thereby formalising the arrangements which lead to the Branch's new title and identity.



Gathered and ready to go

The WRAC Standards service held in Guildford Cathedral in May 2012 was attended by Branch members with 5 out of 9 Standard Bearers being from Wales and the West, as was the Virtual Race Day hosted by Shropshire Branch. Phoenix's Maggie Purkis attended the latter using elbow crutches following her recent foot surgery, demonstrating clearly her desire to showcase Phoenix as a 'force' to be reckoned with!

Similarly, Birmingham Branch was the venue for an anniversary event attended by Irene Hall, Joan Berry and Mary Davies.



All smiles

Chester Branch kindly invited members to its "North West Reunion" which included a positively Diamond Jubilee theme in June 2012 as well as an informative address by a SSAFA representative who was the guest of honour.

Maggie Purkis' recovery continued enabling her to host Phoenix's lunch held at the National Memorial Arboretum at the end of May 2012. Her daughter Meg did sterling work pushing Maggie's wheelchair – the Arboretum covers many acres and it was an exceedingly hot sunny day. In turn, Birmingham, Hereford, Shropshire and Tamworth Branch members were warmly welcomed by Maggie.

Some members have been to the National Memorial Arboretum on other occasions. The site is in a constant state of development, for example a newly installed



Newly installed Commemorative Plaque to the TA

memorial commemorating the Falklands conflict. Likewise, Reserve Forces such as the Territorial Army (TA) now have a commemorative plaque.

The experience proved as moving as ever. The venue chosen for Phoenix was a good one. The decision to other branches was generally accepted as an inspired choice.

Phoenix's AGM scheduled for July 2012 will no doubt review events past and hopefully build upon the progress to date.

Best wishes to all members who support their Branches in whatever capacity, be it big or small.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

What a year 2012 is proving to be, Grand Reunion, Diamond Jubilee and Olympics to come. It was lovely to see Col Fisher being interviewed recently on local TV recounting her memories of marching in the Queen's Coronation procession and even finding herself on the TV footage of the day.

But first a huge 'thank you' to the organisers of the Grand Reunion in March. Five of us travelled up to Bristol where we all had a marvellous time renewing old friendships and making new acquaintances. We all enjoyed the evening's entertainment and the parade on Sunday morning was a colourful experience both to watch and be a part of – many thanks to all concerned.

At our AGM in October we elected a new Secretary and Treasurer. Evon Roberts has taken over a Treasurer from Mary Davis and I have taken over as Secretary from Ruth Jennings – both hard acts to follow and we are grateful for them agreeing to stay on as Assistants until we have got the hang of things.



Assembled at the AGM

In April, six of our members enjoyed an afternoon out and meal at Tamar View Garden Centre – the weather wasn't brilliant, some West Country 'liquid sunshine' but a pleasant afternoon nonetheless.

May saw 25 of us meet in The County Arms in Truro for our annual Cornwall get together. We were pleased to

welcome Lt Col Sue Westlake and Maj Anne Maskins McIntyre who made their way down from Dorset, and 3 of our new members came along for the first time – a pasty lunch was enjoyed by all.



In the County Arms in Truro

Looking ahead we are hoping for a fine sunny day for Evon's summer garden party at her home in Callington on 16th August and Armed Forces week culminating in Veterans weekend on Plymouth Hoe on 29th June where we shall have a stall displaying ATS and WRAC memorabilia. Our Christmas lunch this year is again being held at St Aubyns Masonic Hall, Stoke, Plymouth on 9th December when we anticipate a good turn out and welcome a few WREN veterans.

Our membership has increased this year to 78. Our Chairman, accompanied by one or 2 members, has been to the funerals of Margaret Murphy in Truro and Edna Crouch in Plymouth. We are pleased to welcome 7 new members; Corinne Abrahams, Sarah Redford née Glover, Rena Barnes née Aldridge, Vera Beer née Bignell, Shirley Taper née Reast, Tara Henderson-Smith and Lorraine Moore née Torrie. Facebook and the new WRAC website seem to be creating interest and encouraging more veterans to join the Association.

We continue to have our monthly meetings on the 4th Tuesday of each month at Abbey Hall behind the Minster Church in Plymouth. We meet at 1.30 pm and a few of us precede this with lunch at City Buffet which is a good start to the afternoon!

Please feel free to join us anytime or contact me for further information: Secretary Plymouth Branch Nikki Rochelle – 01637 839039.

SALISBURY BRANCH

On this day of glorious sunshine it seems odd to write about our Christmas Lunch!! We all had a lovely time and the food was very good.

In January we held an Auction to boost Branch funds.

Thirza Sillick entertained us at the February meeting with tales of her visit to the Great Wall of China. She also had on display a number of souvenirs. Five members enjoyed the Grand Reunion in March. At our meeting

Mrs J Bennan came to tell us of her experiences as a landlady in the 1950s and 60s. Not an easy job by any means.

Our Secretary set us an interesting quiz in April. The winners were **PDF Compressor Free Version**

Our May meeting was devoted to our preparations for the buffet lunch next month, celebrating our 65 years as a Branch. Great anticipation.



Elaine Corner, Linda Clark, Alison Ogden, Marilyn Offord and Lesley Trattles

Celebrating 65 Years

When old Branch Records revealed the early years of meetings, members decided to have a 65 years Celebration Buffet Lunch. This was held at RBL Headquarters on 28th June.



In the buffet queue

Our guests included the Mayor of Salisbury, John Collier, our National Vice Chairman Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake, Area Chairman Maj (Retd) Ann Maskens-McIntyre, Jane

Freebairn, staff from our HQ and 4 Representatives from the Branches in our area, Weymouth, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Southampton, Bath, Winchester and Bristol.



Chairman and Vice President

All were welcomed by our Chairman Alison Ogden. The Loyal Toast was proposed by our Branch President Joan Freeland the decorated cake was cut by Major Mac who thanked Salisbury Branch for their hospitality and a most enjoyable event.

Alison presented flowers to our one founder member Dulcie Chalcraft and a farewell gift to Mike Harper (RBL Secretary) who has always been so helpful when we meet at their HQ and happened to be retiring that very day.



Recognition of a Founder Member



A very special birthday cake

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

We hope everyone had as good a time as we did at the Grand Reunion in Bristol. It was just that – Grand. Superb venue, the best one for a few years we thought. All 3 of the happy few were collected by friends she hadn't seen for 20 years or so & spent a happy few hours with them, while Iris & Jean spent those same hours on some retail therapy. Sunday morning at the nearby Mall was an eye opener for us, so much going on including choirs singing while we enjoyed our coffee – a really marvellous week-end.

Our Spring Lunch at Granville Catering College in May went well. Delicious food & we had a cake for Chris's husband's birthday on that day. Chris Spencer had announced at our March meeting that she had been appointed County Chairman of South and West Yorkshire of the British Legion. Of course, we all congratulated her on her appointment.



Chris Spencer on appointment

We've had 1 new member this year, Ann Williams – a very welcome new member. Unfortunately, it seems for each new member we get, we lose 2 or even 3 who're no longer able to attend, & our numbers are sadly depleted.

Several outings to look forward to. By the time this is in print we will have been to the SUOTC Beating Retreat at Endcliffe Hall, & possibly our RA day at the Arboretum. We are all "paid up" and looking forward to our NAR in York once again. It was so good last year that we are booked at the same hotel – and I'm sure it will be equally successful.

The Queen's Jubilee of course, has been the highlight of the year so far. I loved the River Pageant, just spectacular. I just wish someone had had the forethought to provide seats for the Queen & Prince Philip under a rainproof, windproof shelter! Monday was a better day weatherwise, when so many parties were going on. I went to one where a tree was planted, a toast to the Queen & the National Anthem sung. We then finished off in the evening with a Hog Roast. Quite a day to remember.

We have 2 more members celebrating their 90th birthdays this year and 2 who will be 92 years old in

August & October. All are staunch members who are well appreciated.

As I sit here, Central heating on 'full' + warm cardigan in mid-June, will someone please tell me what has happened to the Global warming I was promised?

Best Wishes from the Sheffield Branch to all the readers of this excellent magazine.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

January and although our branch doesn't hold a meeting, a couple of us met to try out our new venue. Food and drink passed muster so we are happy to start the New Year at **The Red Lion, Holyhead Road, Wellington, Telford.**

February and its our first official meeting at our new venue. This month it is an afternoon meeting (we alternate each month from afternoon and evening to give those working a chance to attend) and eight members came early to take advantage of having a meal and natter prior to the meeting. Those who joined us later quickly told what a good meal they had missed. Since our last meeting we had been allocated four new members by HQ, and one of those members, Chris Rangecroft had come along that evening and was given a warm welcome by all present. Chris R has since been to Bristol and on most of our trips with us.

March and it's not a good start to the month. Our Chairman Brenda Adams due to various reasons resigns. Brenda had been a member of the Shropshire branch for some years and her resignation was a shock to all. Nancy Tipton and Sandra Davies quickly step up to ensure the branch continues. The month does improve though when Secretary, Chris P, sweet talks a vehicle hire company into renting us a mini bus at an excellent rate for The Grand Reunion Weekend at Bristol.



Ready for the off!

Members have their bags packed and are picked up at home for the start of our Grand Reunion Weekend. Chris hadn't driven very far out of Shropshire before she heard the clink of glass and smelt the brandy (jealous because she is driving and can't join in the fun). We couldn't have asked for better weather that weekend and what fun we had. One of our members Terri Goff has a birthday (not saying the number in case she hits me!) that weekend, so

double celebration on our table. Sheila Johnson from Phoenix branch was placed at the Shropshire table, and joined in with us happily, by the end of the weekend no one would have realized that prior to then she hadn't met any of us before. Only downside to the weekend was the slight dent in the ceiling at the hotel when listening to someone outside telling us we had plenty of room then hit the wall. No problem though as it was only a little scrape that looked bad as on a previous dent. The firm understood and no charge was made. Luck or what eh. Nancy Tipton and Beryl Lane took part in the fancy dress as police women, and arrested Irene Hall who was dressed as a judge (it's an offence to impersonate a judge!).



Under arrest

Most of us made it until the early hours, and danced the night away. I found I could dance in desert boots after all! We also had the chance to meet up with one of our newer members Karen Staples. Hi Karen, hope you got back ok. On Sunday those members who were able, marched in the parade. Then too quickly it was all over, goodbyes to old friends and some new ones. Back into our minibus and heading up the motorway. Very tired but happy members dropped off at homes, with lots of good memories. Thanks to the Reunion Committee for a delightful weekend and Cathy Munro for the super pictures she took.

April and Birmingham Branch invite us to their quiz afternoon. Four of us meet up with Sheila Johnson from the Phoenix branch (she is now an old friend) at Birmingham train station and introduce her to the Britannia Hotel where Birmingham branch meet. There are too many on our table to form a team, so Sheila and Chris P get told to join other excess numbers and make up a new team. So glad we did, as we won and went home with the Easter Eggs. As always at Birmingham, a super lunch and very warm welcome was provided. This is the second Birmingham trip you have missed Nancy, and we know how much you enjoy the lunch they provide so next trip hopefully you make it.

Thanks Birmingham and Babs Blay for the invite.

This month also found us holding a Virtual Race Day at our new venue. We had a super day with not only our members and families, but also Shropshire REME plus

Chester and Wirral Branches. Thank you ladies for coming along and supporting our first endeavour at Virtual Races, and for joining in the fun by wearing "Epsom type race day hats".



A selection of hats

Thanks also to Sheila from Phoenix branch for selling the raffle tickets (Sheila can now be found with Shropshire branch at most functions/events!). Thanks also to branch member Denise Fuller for coming up with the idea and obtaining the DVD, tickets etc. Plus of course her twin daughters who she had roped into working on the tote. We nearly didn't get started because I left the laptop behind at home, but a mad dash along the A5 home and back soon sorted that out. Lucky for me no police or speed cameras around that day. A few races, game, quiz, raffle and buffet then it was time to announce who had won the best hat prize. For this Chris P went out into the pub car park, and asked a woman who was quietly having a smoke if she would come into our function room and judge the hats. Poor woman just nodded, and was hauled in. We then discover she is Australian on her first trip to England to visit relatives and is worried because she has

never been to a race in her life! It's quickly explained to her that her being a race pundit is not a requirement, she then takes a very serious look at all the hats. Would she go for Nancy's creation from the Charity shop, it had everything on it including a teddy bear but not the kitchen sink. **PDF Compressor Free Version** Would she go for the one she had bought for the TIME Version had spared no expense and had bought herself a plastic rain hood? She went for neither, after serious deliberation she said if she ever went to the races and wore a hat she would go for the elegant little black number with white roses on it. We had our Winner!!!!



First prize

The bottle of Cava was handed over to 91 year old Shropshire member Irene Wardrobe, who said she would open it along with her daughter and granddaughter who was due to get married soon. Hope they enjoyed it with you Irene. Our Australian cousin was thanked and duly returned to the car park. After the hat parade it was back to the races. The very last race was really enjoyed by all as it was a Pig race, and I think the shouting from those in the room for their horse/pig was the loudest than at the other races. Everyone who attended said how much they had enjoyed it and when could we do it again. Chester/Wirral enjoyed it so much they are going to run one. Don't forget our invite Pat!

May - We now have a new Chairman. Sandra Davies was voted into this position at the monthly meeting. Nancy Tipton also agreed to be assistant Chairman as Sandra works full time and is not able to chair meetings that take place in the afternoon. Thank you both ladies, without you taking on these posts our branch could not have continued.

Maggie Purkis of Phoenix branch had arranged a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum and had invited branches from the Area to attend. Four of our members went along on a hot day and enjoyed the visit.

Guildford Cathedral Rededication Service took place this month and Sandra Davies as our Standard bearer represented our branch alongside Nancy Tipton and Beryl Lane, they all said how moving the service was. June and we had an invite by Chester Branch to attend their Area Reunion to be held at Chester Castle Military Museum. Sandra Davies, Chris Rangecroft, Hilda Dakin and Chris Powell plus Sheila Johnson of Phoenix attended. We were happily sitting together at a table when a lady asked if she could join us. She gave her name and explained she had only recently joined the



All enjoying themselves at various events

Association and hadn't been before. We told her we were visitors to the branch and welcomed her to join us, going through all the names. She said she would have forgotten them by the end of the day, unfortunately I hadn't caught her name and asked her what it was again, and she told me Doris. So I said Doris and the first of us plus some other Chester ladies had a great afternoon. It was some time before I found out from Pat Sanders (Chester Secretary), that 'Doris' was in fact Ann. Turns out Doris/Ann had given Ann as her name when she introduced herself earlier but I hadn't heard so when I asked later, for a joke she said Doris. I was the only one not in on the joke but now refuse to call her anything but Doris. Doris/Ann if you are reading this, it was so nice to have met you. Thanks for the invite Pat, we enjoyed the day. We are lucky that we are invited by Chester, Birmingham and Tamworth to various events they hold. And when able we do attend as we have a really good time. Now we have a venue we hope to be able to return the invitations.

As I have been able to arrange a reduced rate for minibus hire, we have a number of trips organised over the next few months that include our using it. We have the following events in our diary so far: Llandudno Day Trip, Day trip to a Craft/Antique Centre & Bridgемere Gardens, Queens Diamond Jubilee at Cosford, Veterans Day Cosford, Birmingham Tattoo, Coach Trip to Chester with Canal Trip and afternoon tea included. Skittles at Tamworth Branch, Virtual Race Day at Chester Branch, Area Reunion at Lion Hotel Shrewsbury. Under consideration is an overnight stay to see the Blackpool lights, a Winter Virtual Race Day plus other day trips. If you are a Shropshire branch member and haven't joined in any of our trips or monthly meetings do think about giving us a try. We don't bite, although I might call you Doris!!

We will be holding our AGM at our September meeting, so that's an ideal time to come and introduce yourself if you can't make it before then.

A branch needs you to support it if it's to survive. We aren't asking you to stand for any position, just to support us by coming along to a meeting or join us at a trip/ event.

Please note we hold our meetings (2pm or 7pm) at The Red Lion, Holyhead Road Wellington Telford. Our meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month (4th of July at 7pm or 1st August at 2pm and so on) If you would perhaps enjoy something to eat and/or a natter prior to the meeting then come an hour and half before the stated meeting time. Nancy and I will be there having something to eat so why not join us.

Contact Branch Secretary Chris Powell on 01743 241646 or e-mail chris.powell3@mypostoffice.co.uk for further information or details.

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH

Hello to all our friends far and wide,

Here we are once again in sunny Southampton, the weather is gorgeous and I'm sitting indoors trying to

make some sort of sense of what I'm writing. At least I won't get sunstroke!!

I have to let you all know that I will be standing down as Secretary of the Southampton Branch at our AGM in October. I have thought long and hard over the last couple of years before I handed in my resignation to the Chairman. I have so much going on in my home life plus waiting for another back operation, it does make life difficult. Anyway I am still at the Branch to help the new secretary.

We haven't had many outings. The weather has been too unkind to go anywhere, (this seems a bit of a contradiction after the way I started this input) but you never know we might have a summer after all. We have had some interesting speakers and at the June meeting we have a 13 year old Cub Scout to give us a talk on recycling. He has been interested in this subject for a while and is thinking of new ways for recycling. In the August meeting we are having Elspeth Forbes-Robertson who is heavily involved in the SOE, only this time we are letting her relax as we will be having a Fish n Chip supper and then we will be asking her questions. I think we have the best Fish n Chips in Hampshire.

Sadly we have to inform you we have lost another one of our members. Muriel Bone was one of our longer serving members but had been poorly for quite a while. Muriel was in the Land Army and I bet she would have had some stories to tell. Her daughter Linda was talking to our Chairman and saying that Muriel's family had only four days to empty her house. With it being a council house it has to be sorted as soon as possible. You would think that councils would give people time to grieve before that kind of chore has to be down.

Fourteen of our members went up to Worthy Down for their Open Day. What a fantastic day. It was a lot more than we expected and with the weather it was such a perfect day, enjoyed by one and all. All the military personnel were so friendly and helpful. We had George (WO) and Stan (Officer) looking after us. George made





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At the Home of the AGC

sure we had tea or coffee after our lunch. We joined their table and had a chat with the TA girls (they were girls compared to us) and Penny and Florrie were in the front when George wanted to give us all a kiss. It was a very tired fourteen veterans that went home in the mini-bus.

In May our oldest member, Ruth Young reached her 101 birthday. Ruth lives in Dorset near her daughter so can't make the meetings but we still keep in touch. So you see it doesn't matter how old you are, you are never forgotten even if it seems like it at times.

Well I'll finish here and hope everyone is fit and well and you stay that way.

STAFFORD BRANCH

Greetings from members of Stafford Branch. Our report is a mixed bag, which contains good news and sad news. Firstly, Nancy Rutter, who served in the ATS from 1944 - 1945, died in February 2012, she will be sadly missed. Secondly, a big congratulations to Joan Higgins, our former Chairman, who celebrated her 90th birthday in March 2012.

Earlier this year our Secretary, Ann Deakin, wrote to all members about the future of the Branch. With dwindling numbers and many members now unable to travel, the committee decided discussion was needed. In April, during our 48th Anniversary Lunch, eight members reached a sad conclusion that the Stafford Branch would close in June 2012.

The Branch was started in 1964 and we are proud to say that our Treasurer, Muriel Lakin, attended the first week's meeting and Grace Hutchinson the second. Both Muriel and Grace have been stalwart supporters during the 48 years of the Branch's existence.

We will say our final farewell to the Branch on the 20th June with a carvery followed by 'Tea and cakes' at Ann's home. I know I speak for all members when I say a huge thank you to Ann who has devoted 24 years to Stafford Branch. Although the Branch will no longer exist, we have all pledged to meet up in November for a pre-Christmas gathering and have vowed to keep in touch.

Best wishes to you all ~ from all of us.



Good times

SUFFOLK BRANCH

Sadly 2 members passed away at the beginning of the year – Ivy Beckett from Felixstowe and Kathleen Jackson from Ipswich. On a happier note we have had several new members. **PDF Compressor Free Version** All live quite a distance from our meeting place in Ipswich, but hopefully they can manage to make the journey now and again as it is always nice to see new faces.

Numbers at our meetings are still very low but we plod on each month and have an enjoyable afternoon with the regular few.

In January, as no programme had been organised, it was just the usual new year gossip and putting the world to rights.

February was a debate on cosmetic surgery and who should pay should things go wrong. Very strong views on this and general consensus was the patient. March was the first quiz of the year compiled by yours truly and was on general knowledge. Mary Hay triumphed top of the class and said it was the first quiz she had ever won, not bad for 89 years young!!

April was the time to get all those everyday annoyances off our chests, from bad drivers, politicians, bad manners etc. Barry, the Club Steward, stopped by to chat with us and gave an interesting insight into his working life in the hospitality trade. He also talked about his entrepreneurial ideas he had as a young lad to earn himself an extra bob or two!!

May gave us a quiz from Sylvia Johnson on the subject of "Parts of the body", after much thinking and head scratching we eventually all finished the questions and now know a lot more about our bits and pieces!

At some time or another over the Jubilee Weekend the members had various celebrations of lunches, parties etc. Very enjoyable although as usual Bank Holiday weather reared its ugly head, but I'm sure that didn't dampen their spirits.

Will finish with the usual end of year greeting.

ULSTER BRANCH

Time is absolutely flying and I am pretending that I don't notice all the birthdays flying with it. However the Ulster Branch members are young at heart and just to sit eaves-dropping on their cheerful conversations at our various functions would bring a smile to any sad face. Being in such happy company must surely be better than any tonic.

We went along to Belfast Grand Opera House on 14th December to see the pantomime Jack & the Beanstork in 3D and it was absolutely great. Sylvia Connachan brought along a little liquid treat for everyone and of course we had the usual chocolate liqueurs. Most of us spent a good part of the evening trying to avoid the grizzly monsters which were hurtling with great speed towards us, but it was great fun. I have heard it said that the panto is really for the young, but I feel I must contradict this as the

enjoyment which the panto generates among our members is truly something special.

Some of our members went along to the Grand Reunion in Bristol early in the year and I only need to look at the photographs which they have shown me to confirm what a great time they had there. The dressing up part must have been hilarious and Marie Jenkins and her friend, armed with the obvious handcuffs, look as if they really mean business. However, I never remember seeing the checkered tights before, but perhaps this is a new entity! The girls really enjoy going over to the functions each Spring and Marie tells me that the highlight for her is meeting up with old friends and acquaintances.

Our reunion lunch was in one of the local hotels, Beechlawn House Hotel on the outskirts of Belfast. The meal was very appetizing and enjoyed by all. Our committee members Florence and Marie sorted out our Bring and Buy sale and ballot with their usual financial skills and success and Sylvia Connachan and her daughter very capably sorted out the lunch arrangements in the absence of our Treasurer.

The highlight of our year is our summer outing and this year's outing was a great success. Our driver Eddie, picked us up in Belfast and we drove off towards Newcastle, County Down. En route we stopped at a local "watering hole" and had refreshments, which was very acceptable in such hot weather. Then off to Newcastle. When we arrived we went along to the Slieve Donard Hotel for lunch. The Slieve Donard Hotel is in a spectacular setting with a beautiful sandy beach on one side and the picturesque Mourne Mountains on the other. The hotel was very busy due to a couple of wedding parties etc, but after a few hiccups we eventually became seated in the main dining room where we had a sumptuous lunch. Following lunch we decided to try and get a glimpse of one of the brides who arrived in a superb carriage with horses and livery riders, but what I found absolutely hilarious was when the red carpet was rolled out on the hotel steps for the bride, one of our members, Florence Logan, proceeded to show us some of her cat walk skills which even the wedding guests applauded. Eventually the very patient Eddie got us back into our little bus and off we went to the shops in Newry.



Members and our driver at the hotel



Stephanie Harris and Sally Davies

As usual, we had a great time shopping, which we are definitely all very good at, but the time went by very quickly and Stephanie Harris and I just managed to snatch a final bargain before leaving. We were tired, with a little less cash in our pockets, but we were happy.

I hope all Association members wherever you are may be blessed with good health and have a wonderful happy summer.

WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND BRANCH

Our numbers have increased by one and we welcomed Mariann McIntyre and trust that she will be able to join in with our various meetings and functions.

At our AGM on 6th March the officers and committee were voted back en bloc. On 6th March we welcomed Mary Millard who talked to us about the Children of Africa and how her organisation were able to help boys and girls to live normal lives after the trauma of genocide. In particular she told the story of one boy who had overcome many challenges and with help from members of the organisation he was able to attend University and gain a BA degree in social science. Her talk was certainly thought provoking.

Then it was time for the Grand Reunion. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend due to illness in the family. However, Peg McElwaine passed over some photographs



The Belles of St. Bunyons. l to r; Peg McElwaine ATS/WRAC (née Tennuci), Joan Young - WRAC (née Miller) and Sybil Worledge ATS (née Chapman)

showing three of our girls who attended as the "Belles of St. Bunyons" on the Friday evening buffet but were able to recover in time to dress up for the Dinner on Saturday. All of the girls from the Branch really enjoyed the weekend and they send many thanks for the hard work of the organisers and GROTS, it was much appreciated.

On 17th April, we were back to normal and had a very good game of Bingo, enjoyed by everyone. Major Mack kindly acted as caller. On 9th May Peg McElwaine organised a very successful coffee morning/bring and buy at her home. We managed to raise £100 which we sent to HQ for the Lioness Fund.



The Belles resting after their game of hockey



All dressed up for the formal dinner on Saturday

On 15th May Peter Easton returned to give us Part 2 of his talk on church bell ringing. We found this very interesting and informative and when we hear the church bells ringing we shall understand how it happens. Even though 5th June was deemed a Bank Holiday to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee we decided to hold a Branch Meeting and when the meeting closed (a very short one) we were invited to join the members of the RAFA Club to a buffet lunch which was most enjoyable.

Now we look forward to Veterans Weekend on 23rd/24th June and the annual parade along Weymouth Sea Front. Our contingent will be joining the Royal Navy, RAF, British Legion and civilian services and there are normally about 2,500 marchers. The seafront is usually lined with spectators and all in all it is a great occasion.

WIRRAL BRANCH

What a start to the year. March saw the Wirral and Chester Branches off to the Grand Reunion and we had a great time. Meeting up with old friends and outings meant we were **PDF Compressor Free Version** looking forward to the next one in 3 years.

We have had a couple of outings with the Chester Branch Ladies. The Race Day at Shropshire was great fun; the ladies made us feel very welcome.

June saw us off on an outing to a factory that made mustard gas in the Second World War. It was very informative and interesting, then we had lunch. Unfortunately we spent that much time chatting we missed going to Bodelwydden Castle. We finished off with a quick drive around Kinnel Bay Army Camp then onto a visit to the Marble Church where a gentleman gave us a very informative talk on the history of the church – well worth a visit.

The Reunion went very well, the buffet was delicious and there was a lot of merriment over the quizzes. Pat has promised to get them right next time – we will wait and see.

If anyone would like to join us at our meeting at Chetwynd Barracks on the 1st Wednesday of the month please contact our Secretary Joy Griffiths on 07593 757078 or email psand444@btinternet.com

WORTHING BRANCH

We in Worthing had a quiet January and February, but March saw 8 of us go off to Bristol to the Grand Reunion – and wasn't it grand! We had a great time and are looking forward to doing it all again in 3 year's time. I am sure that *Lioness* will be full of photos.



Ready for the off!

The next big event was in Guildford Cathedral, which was attended by 9 of us. It should have been 10, but one of us was ill. It was a very moving ceremony, and our ATS ladies loved seeing (and touching!) their Standard. The whole event was very well run, the standard bearers were very smart, and the food was perfect. All in all a wonderful day out and many thanks to the organisers of both events. I have to confess that 4 of us had difficulty getting out of Guildford. I'm asking for a satnav for Christmas this year!



In Guildford Cathedral

On the Saturday of Jubilee weekend several of us met for a garden party. The food was not only first rate but also plentiful, with a few doggy bags going with us when we left. Thanks Sylvia and Maz, and we love your garden. Our plans for the future are a stall at the West Sussex Armed Forces Weekend, here in Worthing; a birthday lunch in July, and a trip to Bletchley Park in August.

We meet at 1030 hours on the last Tuesday of every month, except December, in the Cornerstone Church, Steyne Gardens in Worthing. If you're ever in Worthing we can assure you of a warm welcome. Some of us meet in the middle of the month for lunch as we cannot bear to be apart for a whole month.

WALES AND THE WEST AREA REUNION SATURDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2012

The Wales and the West Area Reunion will be held at the Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury on Saturday 27th October 2012. The meeting will start at 1100 hours. Because 2012 is a Grand Reunion year, the Area Reunion this year is not the usual 3 line whip. Branch officers should attend and any member who would like to come would be most welcome. Coffee and tea will be served on arrival and there will be lunch following the meeting.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Maggie Purkis

ATS Reminiscences

ATS SERVING WITH THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

POSTAL SECTION (REPS) Version

Dorothy Pope née Pelmeat ATS

Editor's Note: This article was originally published in the RE Journal Vol. 20 No. 2 in 2006. It was also published in the R.E. Officers journal 'The Cleft Stick' edited by Col B. Linden and The Forces Postal History Newsletter edited by Capt. Colin Tabear.

This article is a recollection of my experiences as a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) of working alongside the men of the Royal Engineers Postal Section (REPS) at the Home Postal Centre, Royal Engineers (HPCRE) in Nottingham during the period 1943 to 1946. The experience saw me grow from a very naïve young woman into a more mature, confident person. It was also a time of which I can say that I enjoyed 'almost' every minute, and a time where I met a lot of friends, some of whom I still remain in contact with today, 60 years later.

The Army Postal Service played a very vital role in time of war, helping to keep up the morale of the servicemen who were fighting in all parts of the globe. I feel it has never been given the credit due to it, even though service personnel, both men and women, lost their lives in the course of their duties, due to enemy action. It is said that General Montgomery once remarked that his soldiers could march for 3 or 4 days without food, on the strength of one letter from home. During 1941-1947 over 3,000 men and women, consisting of REPS and 5 companies of ATS, worked in various offices and buildings in Nottingham, and even though the fact that it was supposed to be highly secret, I am sure everyone in the City knew what we were doing. Many of the good people of Nottingham welcomed us into their homes for a little TLC for which we were very grateful.

Women of the 10th Berkshire Company of ATS were the first to be drafted to work with the APS in the days just before the war broke out. Eventually they were joined by conscripted and volunteer girls from all over the UK, including some from the Channel Islands and other parts of what was then our Empire! By the end of the war over 1,400 ATS women were employed by the APS.

In my case, I, along with 4 other girls from the ATS Training Centre in Lancaster, arrived in Nottingham in January 1943. We were met by an ATS Corporal and taken to a billet in Oak St, one of many empty houses in various parts of the city which had been requisitioned by the Army. We were in the attic where the fireplace was open to the sky. Thankfully we were soon moved with our section, to Musters Road in the area of West Bridgford, near to the Trent Bridge Cricket Ground. Our Mess was in the Cricket Pavilion; our Medical room was in the commentator's box, and, worst sacrilege of all, we drilled on the hallowed turf! What would Denis Compton et al have thought about that? At the time of Operation Overlord (June 1944) those on night duty at Vyella office, where the mails for the operation were processed,

messed in the basement of the Palais de Dance, a well known Mecca in the city. It seemed strange to be eating dinner in the middle of the night, where perhaps some of us had been dancing just a few hours earlier!

After 6 weeks training, we were put to work, in different offices, factories and buildings requisitioned for the HPC, to sort and process the millions of letters and parcels destined for the Army and RAF overseas. I went to work in what had been Hicking's Lace Factory, which still had some of its original occupants employed in the basement making camouflage nets for the Russians. The smell issuing through the floorboards was dreadful, particularly in warm weather. The REPS occupied the ground and 2 upper floors in what could only be called a tinder box because the wooden floors and staircases were so dry and in poor condition. Hickings was as busy as a beehive and closely resembled a honeycomb, with hundreds of pigeon holes stacked with letters instead of honey. During training, each of us was responsible for one sorting frame. We new girls started quite slowly, until we were able to hit the right 'hole' practically blindfolded. As our confidence and skill increased so did our speed - increasing from about 200 letters an hour to the desired 1,000 letters an hour, with an individual target of 8,000 per shift. As we became proficient and passed the test to become postal workers first class, our pay was raised from the basic shilling [5p] a day to 14 shillings [70p] a week. Sometimes we worked on the airmail roads and at other times the surface mail.

Mail from all over the UK was collected several times a day from the two railway stations: the LNER Victoria station, now a shopping mall; and the LMS Midland in Carrington St. The postbags were delivered to the appropriate offices: the surface and airmail bags to Hickings, and the parcels bags going to their appropriate offices around the city. In Hickings, after the mail bags had arrived and had been opened, their contents, consisting of bundles of letters, were sorted into skips. The skips were then taken to the 'roads' as the sorting aisles were called. Each road was made up of about 10 frames, 5 on either side, and each frame consisted of 48 pigeon holes. The ground floor was mainly given over to surface mail and the first and second floors to a mix of surface and airmail, where each frame was allotted to a particular theatre of war. For instance, there would be several individual frames for the Middle East Force (MEF) Central Mediterranean Force (CMF) South East Asia Command (SEAC) India, North Africa, etc. as well as the Colonies and small islands once coloured pink on our Atlases. To make identification of the different theatres easier, the frames were distinguished one from another by different coloured labels. Within the frames, the pigeon holes were labelled with the various regiments, unit and squadrons in that particular battle zone, or the many training centres abroad, especially the RAF. Wherever there was a service man there would be a Field Post Office close by. The Royal, and Merchant Navy's mail was dealt with by their own Post Offices. (The responsibility for their mail eventually fell to the Royal Engineers in 1962).

While we were sorting, every so often there would be a shout from a Senior NCO, either Sgt Major Sam Sewell or RSM Cooley, "MEF mail going out, get moving!" This meant that cut-off time for the dispatch of surface or airmail for that Zone was approaching and we would have to work at top speed. **RDE Compression Free Version** sorted, tied into bundles, labelled and placed into skips for the men to collect. We girls were continually harassed by the male NCOs to work even faster, and woe betides any slackers. I learned a lot of words I had previously never known! Sappers took the skips to the ground floor and sorted the bundles into the relevant mail bags, which were then tied down and sealed with lead seals. These bags would not be opened until they arrived at the Field Post Offices overseas. The bags were then put onto trucks and taken to one of the 2 railway stations in the city. At the stations the men had to wait for a specific train and load the sacks into the parcels van, and pick up any incoming mail from the civil post offices around the country, and so it started all over again. Airmail in those days went down to an airfield in Eastleigh, Hampshire, and from there was flown to its destination. The surface mail went either to the ports of Liverpool or Glasgow, depending on the destination overseas.

In the office we were under the command of the REPS officers and NCOs, but out of the office our own ATS Admin Officers were responsible for dealing with our well-being and meting out punishment to those who offended, such as not wearing our caps outside, or failing to salute an officer. We were under the same regulations as the men, no relaxing of the rules because we were the fairer sex! Sometimes there would be a conflict of opinion between the male and female officers, but generally it worked well.

Some of my colleagues worked in the parcels offices dotted around the city, and like us they worked day and night. Initially some girls found it difficult to flick the parcels into the correct gaping open mouths of the mailbags which were hung on huge frames, and they had to spend some time learning the technique, but, as usual, in the end they were more dexterous than the men. There were also some specialised smaller offices dealing with registered mail, and parcels not properly packed. The latter would be repacked and sent on their way. However, the saddest job we did was returning mail to the next-of-kin of servicemen who had lost their lives in the fighting, or on troop ships lost at sea, in particular after the debacle in Malaya and Singapore in early 1942. Mail that had already been on its way by ship had to be returned to Nottingham and we had the sad task of sending it back to the next-of-kin with covering letters. It was a particularly harrowing job.

Another office where the ATS worked with the REPS was the Location's Section, which was highly secret. This was where details of the movement and whereabouts of every unit in the British Army were kept, and only a few people worked there. Information came in from the War Office, the Air Ministry and the Postal Section HQ of the various expeditionary forces. To ensure that such important details were not lost, a duplicate set of the locations was kept elsewhere in Nottingham. When a draft was about to be sent overseas, the men were given a code known as the 'Draft Indices' which was printed on their kit bags,

and only the War Office and those personnel in Locations knew for which theatre of war the code stood. Until the troops landed they could only guess at where they were going, but thanks to the work of the Location's Section their mail arrived at the same place with them. The job was voluntary as the work carried great responsibility, and took place in a small windowless office that was secured by a heavily locked door – it was like Colditz to get in and out, and even when you needed to relieve yourself, you had to first seek permission to do so before the door would be unlocked! I was offered work there but turned it down, as although it carried Sergeant's rank, I thought it would be too claustrophobic to work in such an environment.

We girls were eventually issued with battle dress top and trousers, which were much more comfortable to work in than the regular service dress. To show our affiliation with the Sappers we proudly wore a RE Grenade on our tunics. After some weeks I was transferred from general sorting to Miscellaneous Section on a specialised job, on what was called the Civil Road, to replace a sapper who was going overseas. He was not particularly enthusiastic about teaching me the work he had been doing, but some months later I received a pair of wooden soled sandals sent from him out in Egypt! I did feel sorry for him as he probably had family, but that was how it had to be. My job entailed sorting mail for some of the more obscure places in the world, as well as civil and naval mail which had been mis-sorted to the HPO. It was a day job so I did not have to work nights.

Early in 1944 we ATS girls were given the opportunity to serve abroad, and were medically examined for overseas duties. I passed A1 but because I was my widowed Mother's only support, I was not allowed to go – much to my disappointment. The first draft of girls was sent to the Base Army Post Offices in Italy and Egypt. It was only after the Base Army Post Office No 8 was established in Belgium that they were also sent there. It was a great adventure for them, and we back in Nottingham were filled with envy. A friend of mine sent me a letter from the Middle East in which she described that "the work out here is entirely different..... my duty covers all the mail leaving the base and we do 2 shifts only, from 8 am to 6 pm one day, then 1.30 pm to 11 pm next day." She was quite happy out there but suffered from the heat, although she saw it as ample compensation for the fact that it caused her to lose weight. Those girls did a grand job miles away from home and deserve special mention.

Christmas time was always terribly busy, and our shift hours were extended. To help us through we sang as we worked, and were fortified by the knowledge that, in spite of our long hours standing sorting letters in cold and poorly lit rooms, what we were doing would be appreciated by the thousands of men and women overseas who were unable to share the holiday with their families.

Some weeks before 'D' Day all leave was cancelled and we knew something big was going to happen. A few days before 6th June 1944 some of us were transferred to the Vyella factory, (I am sure all our older male members will remember buying their Vyella shirts with the latest style of fixed collars that did not have to be starched!), where all the British Liberation Army (BLA) mail for

Europe was to be sorted. We girls worked shifts of between 8 and 13 hours sorting millions of pieces of mail. It seemed like a never-ending task as the piles of letters in front of us never seemed to get any smaller. As one got through a row, another 2 would be piled on top, every one of which had to be cleared for an outgoing mail call. As I was only just over 5 feet tall it took me all my time to see over the top of the pile.

In 1944 3,000 men and women despatched 340 million letters, 95 million packets and newspapers and 13 million parcels, in two and a half million bags, to the troops overseas. To help raise our morale the BBC Worker's Playtime programme, Radio Luxembourg and later the American forces Radio Networks (AFN Munich and Stuttgart) was relayed through the offices and sorting areas by Rediffusion, so we knew all the latest pop songs and sang along with such people as Vera Lynn, Anne Shelton, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and all the other pop singers of the day. It certainly helped to relieve a rather monotonous job. Colonel Ross, the Commandant of the HPCRE, also paid a visit to thank us for the great effort and long hours that we had contributed as part of the APS role in Operation Overlord. I remember saying that we really did not have much choice, but nevertheless we appreciated his words.

As things settled down after the initial heavy mails, we from Hickings returned to our own jobs and, in my case, the familiar routine of working with mail going out to unfamiliar places. Even now I can remember some of the destinations. Some were obscure islands out in the Atlantic or Pacific, names of which previously I had only heard in geography lessons at school. At this time, for reasons unknown to me, I was promoted to the dizzy rank of Lance Corporal and put in charge of the Miscellaneous Section. The promotion caused all 20 of us some amusement as we were friends, and I was given no training for command. The morning parade in the office was like something out of Dad's Army. I never knew what reply I would get from some of the girls. It certainly would not have gone down well with our female officers, had they been there. As for our male officers, they mostly ignored us so long as we did the work: only the NCOs treated us the same as the men, and could be terrifying! We hated 'em!

Our off duty hours were well catered for. We had our own ATS Fife and Drum Band who marched with us on special parades. They did a good job and were always smartly turned out. We also had a very good dance band formed by a few men who had played in dance bands pre-war. Some of the girls were very good singers and dancers, and along with some of the Sappers, put on really professional concerts for us. There were also Sports Clubs for the men and women, and football and cricket teams. Nottingham had plenty of cinemas and a good theatre to visit, as well as the dance halls, and as two of my friends and I had our bicycles with us we often went for cycle rides out into the lovely Nottinghamshire countryside.

In 1945 we were moved out to a deserted Ack Ack camp at nearby Clifton Village. We were housed in prefabricated iron huts with outside showers, wash basins and toilet facilities. Heating was from a coke stove

in the centre of each hut which filled the place with smoke. Sometimes we had no fuel to keep it going and so we were forced to pile greatcoats onto our wooden beds to keep warm at night. This was quite a shock as previously we were in requisitioned houses built just before the war. In each of our huts there was a Rediffusion loudspeaker and we were lulled to sleep by the velvety tones of a man's voice from AFN Munich, Stuttgart, singing "Out of your Dreams" from Oklahoma. Then an unseen hand would switch it off at about 11pm. We were bussed into work each day, but in February 1946 Nottingham was flooded rendering the roads impassable, so for a couple of days we were unable to get into work. We didn't mind that of course.

After Germany surrendered in 1945 some of the REPS serving there were sent back to England and were transferred to Nottingham. They worked beside us, filling the places of other postal workers going abroad. The largest contingent of REPS was sent out to the Far East to join the Forces being assembled to recapture Burma, Malaya and our Far East possessions. As demobilisation got under way after the end of the war, the married girls and older men, some of whom were 60 years old volunteers, began to leave and National Service men arrived to carry on the good work in peace time.

I was demobilised on March 1st 1946 after over 3 years in the Army Post Office and went back to my civilian job. Looking back I can say that all in all it was a satisfying job, perhaps not as dangerous as that carried out by the brave Ack Ack girls. We have had a thriving Army Post Office Association since 1985 and though the numbers are diminishing, it is still going strong. In June 2004 we celebrated the 60th anniversary of 'D' Day and the Normandy landings and in 2005 the end of the war in Europe and Far East, with several ceremonies in Llandudno where our APA reunions are now held. We ladies and gentlemen may be old in age but are still young at heart and cherish our comradeship of those sometimes sad, but mostly happy years. I still have friends from those days, and we correspond with, and sometimes visit each other.

Happy memories.

With special thanks to Captain Simon Fenwick who encouraged me to write this article.

"JOINING UP"

Mrs Florence Wood née Hackney (W/112529)

We have all had our own reasons for "joining up". Towards the end of 1941 my older, unmarried sister revealed that she was pregnant. A shocking occurrence! Her boyfriend was away in the Army and my mother and father looked upon such a happening with horror. It was such a disgrace! After a time I felt that I could no longer stand the atmosphere at home and so, aged 18, I joined the ATS.

After basic training at Wrexham, I became a Kine-Theodolite Operator but, as we had no theodolites, we were sent to Anti-Aircraft Practice Camps, in my case

Burrow Head in Scotland, where our job was to stand over the people manning the predictors, the height finders and the guns in order to make sure that they were doing the job properly.

I was there for 8 months and then became an EAC (Experimental Assistant in Gunnery), a very grand sounding title, and was sent to the Projectile Establishment in Aberporth, South Wales, to assist the "boffins" there in the development of rockets and depth charges. I spent 2½ very happy years there. As time went on the "shoots" got fewer and fewer and we spent a lot of time, although on "standby", playing bridge, a game which one of the girls had taught some of us.

At Burrow Head one of the male officers had acquired a number of musical instruments and decided to try to form an orchestra. I learned to play, very badly, a simple tune on the violin. I don't think that I would ever have become very proficient. At Aberporth one of the ATS officers decided to get together a dancing troupe to take part in camp concerts. We were called "Les Girls" and had to dance in our army shoes as we had no others. We had a couple of nice costumes – one was made from some red and white striped material and the other consisted of masses of parachute silk in which we drifted about the stage to the music of "Rhapsody in Blue". We took part in several concerts in the area.

I began to get restless and decided to volunteer to serve overseas. In due course I found myself on the way to the Far East to join the HQ of ALFSEA (Allied Land Forces in South East Asia), where I did clerical work in connection with the deployment of personnel.

The journey to Bombay (now Mumbai) in the troop ship "The Monarch of Bermuda" was pretty horrendous. We slept in 3-tiered bunks, so packed together that there was very little personal space. Sickness was everywhere. In Bombay I was amazed at the crowds of people, the clothes, the colour, the buildings, the traffic, the litter and the terrible poverty. I found the heat overpowering.

We had no sooner settled down in Bombay than the HQ was on the move to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). To get there we first of all crossed India by train to Madras, a tedious journey, which took 2 days and 2 nights. The carriages were made up of several small compartments, with a long wooden bench on either side and 2 girls were allocated to each compartment. We were issued with a "comforter" a large duvet-type quilt which was big enough for one to be able to lie down on half of it and cover oneself up with the other half.

From Madras we went to Ceylon by ship and settled down in Kandy, a very pleasant town. Here the Temple of the Tooth allegedly houses a tooth taken from Buddha as he lay on his funeral pyre which became an object of great reverence.

Once again the HQ was on the move, this time further east to Singapore where we were housed in Changi Jail. It was here that prisoners of war had been incarcerated after the fall of Singapore and is notorious as having been the scene of so many atrocities. Before we arrived Japanese prisoners had taken their places, but these had

now been moved, although some were still to be seen looking after the grounds and buildings. We girls had a cell each in which the only furniture was an iron bedstead without any mattress. Our "comforters" really lived up to their name. A few years ago we went on holiday to Singapore and visited Changi Jail, which was still there and was then a type of Borstal for young offenders. We were not allowed in. Just outside a chapel has been built, the whole of the inside of which was festooned with cards to, and mementoes of, those people who had suffered there.

I hadn't been in Singapore for very long before I was informed that I could soon be demobbed. All Service personnel were given a number based on their length of service, age, etc and my number had "come up". The HQ was about to move once more, this time to Hong Kong, and I could have gone with them but my decision was to come back to Britain, which I did on the "Winchester Castle". It was February 1946.

So ended 4 years and 108 days of memorable service. I'm so glad that I was able to experience it all.

MILITARY VEHICLES

Peter Hamblin

It's not often that we get the chance to do something really worthwhile with our military vehicles but the opportunity came over the recent Christmas period to David Belcher in the form of an invitation to deliver a cake to a lady in Fairford, Gloucestershire in his Austin K2 Ambulance. Originally from the lady's niece, the request came via Graeme Sty who keeps the K2 register and who was able to locate the nearest Austin ambulance to the lady's home for the surprise delivery of the cake. The delivery was however not just to any lady or, for that matter, of any cake but was to mark the 100th birthday of Kate Chapman who drove a K2 for the Red Cross and whose work took her to Belgium and Holland in 1944/45 repatriating casualties back to the channel ports en route to the UK. Making the occasion even more notable was the presence of the lady's sister, Babs Brockway, aged 97, who served in the same unit as her sister and who was also an ambulance driver during their period of service with the Red Cross.

Prior to the event David had mentioned the occasion to fellow members of the North Oxon and Cotswolds Branch of the MVT and a number of them volunteered suitable vehicles to 'escort' the cake to its delivery point which was in the market square of Fairford. The ladies had both been strategically positioned in the bay window of the Bull Inn overlooking the square and their surprise and delight can be imagined when the road outside suddenly filled up with WWII military vehicles and a doctor in full period kit brought the cake in from the ambulance and presented it to the aptly named Kate aged 100.

The small convoy had met previously outside the town and consisted of Mike Wiley's Bedford MW, Ian Lichfield's Austin K5 and RAF Jeep together with 2 other British marked Jeeps driven by Don Evason and Pete Dowler. All were led into the market square by Jon Small on his BSA M20, followed by David Belcher and Ian Bell

in the K2 ambulance. After the presentation all participants enjoyed a drink at the bar offered by the family, grateful of such a fitting turnout to mark the occasion.

Not wishing to **PDF Compressor Free Version** celebrate, some of the MVT contingent took the brief opportunity to look through a photograph album illustrating the 2 sisters' remarkable exploits in Europe. This photographic account began with the collection of their new Austins from a UK depot and continued through the snowy and icy roads of Belgium and Holland to the eventual parting of the ways when the ambulances were handed over to the medical services of the newly liberated countries – the sisters' K2s going on to Poland. Both sisters were remarkably lucid in their recollections, describing with pride how they performed various mechanical tasks on their K2s and were able to pass on one or 2 useful tips on how to start a 3½ litre engine on a cold morning whilst preserving one's thumb intact, and how a 10.50 x 16 tyre and wheel could be manoeuvred into position with the aid of a shovel by a girl of only 5 foot 2.

Not all of their memories were good ones, however, especially when connected to the handling of casualties and included one particularly frightening account of being turned over whilst at the wheel of a K2 in a head-on crash with a 3-tonner. More humorous recollections included the 2 girls introduction to swearing by their injured charges and an illuminating insight into an alternative use for the rear axle inspection hatch located in the privacy of the ambulance body!

Overall the 2 sisters admitted to having had the time of their lives and a favourite saying of Kate's (who still drives) is "I drove an ambulance in the war you know".

As the vehicles dispersed on a bright but chilly December afternoon, the whole occasion was made worthwhile for the MVT participants by the recollection of the broad grins on the faces of the 2 elderly ladies when sat once more with the engine running behind the wheel of a K2 for the first time in more than half a century.

INCIDENT IN BELGIUM – 13 JANUARY 1945

Anthony Murphy

I am researching an incident that occurred in Belgium on 13th January 1945. Twenty ATS members attached to 483 HAA (M) Battery Royal Artillery, were travelling back to their unit from a regimental dance when the army vehicle they were in was struck by an express train on a level crossing. The result was 4 ladies were killed and 2 died later from their injuries. They were – Subaltern Dorothy Liddell, Cpl Elsie Norris, LCpl Marie Rose, Privates Eileen May Smith, Isabella Goodfellow and Clara Carter.

Whilst I have an eye witness account of the immediate aftermath of the incident and details of the 6 unfortunate ladies, who are commemorated in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Debt of Honour (DOH) Register, I am interested in obtaining details of the 14

other ladies who were taken to the local hospital and subsequently transferred, when appropriate, to hospital in the UK. I would have to assume that some, if not all, of these ladies were medically discharged as a result of their injuries.

As a result of my interest in recording details of female service casualties who died as a result of war, or in service, and in particular WWI and WWII casualties, I have discovered some who have, for various reasons, not been accepted by WO/MOD as war casualties. I have had 4 of these unfortunate ladies added to the DOH register and 2 awaiting approval. In this instance I wonder if any of those survivors of this particular incident may have died, after discharge, as a result of their injuries and have gone unnoticed – I have so far been unable to identify them.

Is it therefore possible, through the medium of *Lioness*, to ask members if they know of any such cases. As a non-NOK I have no access to their Service Record so I would require their full name, date and location of death and any other relevant information to start my search. I can be contacted through the WRAC Association or by email: anthony.murphy7@ntlworld.com.

ATS YEARS IN WORLD WAR II

Frances Nunnally (W99790)

7139 Cherokee Road, Richmond, VA 23225, USA



Francis Nunnally

I guess I am as busy as I was during my ATS years in World War II. I was stationed at Gibraltar Barracks in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk from 1941 to 1946. It almost became my second home! I was part of a platoon consisting mostly of refugee girls from Nazi-occupied Germany and Austria. We had escaped Hitler, but as the fear of invasion grew, we shivered at the thought of the Germans being able to gain a foothold in the British Isles. We worked very hard in the mess halls and

cookhouses feeding many hundreds of troops every day. We carried containers of food that weighed more than we did. We scrubbed scores of mess hall tables squeaky clean and swilled the floors. And, yes, we worked "Old Bertha" the ancient dishwasher that cleaned the plates, but knives, forks and spoons were not cleaned. The skin peeled off our fingers after hours working in the strong soapy water.

It was hard work and winter nights sleeping in unheated Barrack rooms were very icy cold but we made many wonderful friends, and we had good times dancing to the big band tunes of that time!

Receiving *Lioness* brings back so many memories. Often, late at night when the house is quiet and the toil of the day is done, I leaf through its pages and look at the pictures of the girls in uniform.

Serving in the ATS was a great experience and it was a privilege to have had a small part in helping the nation move towards victory in the War.

MEMORIES OF SERVICE

Georgina Pratt, 13 McIntyre Street, East Geelong,
Victoria 3219, Australia



ATS Cairo

The current issue of *Lioness* was sent to me by my friend Jo Austin who is a member of the Birmingham Branch and appears in the photograph on page 23, back row 3rd from the left. Jo and I enlisted together effective 31st January 1939 and our ATS numbers were W5915 (me) and W5916 respectively.

She thought I would be interested in the Palestine Remembered items, pages 54/55, knowing that I had served in Sarafand and in Jerusalem and Haifa as CSM, and indeed I was. Then, turning back to pages 50/51 I was delighted to come across SSgt Webb (née Cox) who wondered "if anyone out there" remembered her. I do indeed. We were together in London on an overseas draft and enjoyed VE Day before boarding the SS Cameronia at Glasgow to sail for East Africa via Egypt.

I immediately set about locating her address and telephone number and we had a delightful 30-minute chat which I followed up with a letter and am now awaiting her promised reply.

WARTIME SERVICE IN THE ATS

Iris Fenn, née Clemmens

On 14th May 1943 I caught the train from Brighton to Guildford to start my initial army training at Queens Camp. My friend Mary Cowling had joined up earlier and become a Dispatch Rider. I was hoping to do the same. At Haywards Heath another girl joined the train, she was also on her way to Queens Camp. We made friends immediately and her name was Olive Perrot.

On arrival we were issued with our uniform which also included a thing to clean the brass buttons, penknife, scissors and sewing kit called 'Hussif' – Army name for Housewife perhaps. Kit inspections were quite common. We were then shown to our billet which was a spider hut (so called because of the way the huts were arranged, like the legs of a spider). There were ablutions which we thought was a strange name for baths and toilets.

Our NCO was a Cpl Gearing who was very friendly and became popular with us. The first weekend we were all confined to barracks. We had to have dreadful vaccinations and the moaning and groaning was pathetic. We felt so ill and many girls wanted their mothers! Most of the girls were my age, around 18 years old. The next 3 weeks we had to get down to the serious business of training – marching on the parade ground, route marching, running in gym kit – I began to feel very fit.

We needed to get used to army food. The dining hall was very large and I thought the "breadless days" were not too bad, as we had ships' biscuits instead and the raw cabbage was a bit chewy. An officer came to each table to ask "any complaints?" The outdoor life was making me hungry so I had no complaints. There was a NAAFI canteen on the camp, also a "Sally Ann" (nickname for Salvation Army canteen). A few Free French girls had arrived at Queens Camp with us. I did not think they were very strong. It was usually one of them who fainted on the Parade Ground in the heat. We sat out on the grass and had Army discussion groups – which became very tense. The French girls blamed us, our country for "letting them down" in the War. We felt quite indignant considering what our soldiers had gone through at Dunkirk. It was very heated so the 'powers that be' stopped the discussion groups. However, we had a concert at the end of our 3 weeks, put on by ourselves. One of the French girls sang Ave Maria – she had a lovely voice and it was beautiful and so I hoped all had been forgiven.

Olive and I went into Guildford when we had any time off. One day we plucked up courage and took a boat on the river. The funny thing was we somehow acquired 2 extra passengers. The boat man was not very pleased.

I needed to get past the selection board if I was to become a Dispatch Rider, like my friend Mary Cowling. It was not to be. They said I was too light at 7 ½ stone but I could become a driver. My new friend Olive and I went sent to the Driving Centre at Camberley for 6 weeks training. There were 15cwt trucks, Utilities (Tilys) and 3 ton Ambulances. If we went on the road in the mornings, we did mechanics or first aid in the afternoon, vice versa the next day. We learned the 16

tasks on the vehicles and decontamination in case of gas attacks. I still have my notebook about it. We learned how to quickly change a wheel. The trucks were put up on 4 blocks, so the wheels could turn while we practised changing gears. The trucks and ambulances had crash gearboxes. We had to be able to change them. The Tillys had synchromesh gears, so they were easier to cope with. When out on the road there were no road signs for us to find our way. Our map reading consisted of 'turn left at the King's Head or Queen Victoria. Public houses had become signposts. Someone told me there was a sign post pointing out to sea which said "Bath". This was to confuse Jerry (the Germans) if they were to invade us.

We had many lectures in a Nissen hut. The floor of the hut was made of material like lumps of coke. In the heat of summer the fumes rose up so that we felt gassed. It was difficult to stay awake. There were pieces of machinery all around on tables. I found it very interesting to learn about the internal combustion engine.

On our time off Olive and I used to visit the Blue Pool at Camberley for a swim. We met some Free French soldiers there and had a chat with difficulty. One of the last things at Camberley was to pass our driving test. I had my test on an Austin K2 ambulance which I passed. Having finished the course, it was time to receive our postings to our various units. Before we went there we had some leave.

My favourite vehicle was a Ford truck with a V8 engine. It could have gone a lot faster if the workshop mechanics had not put a governor on the carburettor. It would cut out at a certain speed. There were Army petrol stations in many places. We just filled up and signed, then we made out the work ticket and added the mileage. The vehicles were very thirsty, 12 miles to the gallon was quite usual. There were a few breakdowns. One time, I had to deliver a Morris Pup ambulance up North. My journey was on the Great North Road. I had filled up with petrol at Stevenage and not knowing the area I did not know where there were any more petrol stations. As there was only one petrol tank on a Pup, I ran out of petrol on a very spooky moor outside Doncaster. After some time an Army lorry came along and rescued me. I delivered the Pup and had to return by train. That was alright until I came to Waterloo. The last train for Dorking had gone and I spent an awful, cold night locked in a waiting room covered by a piece of coconut matting.

Another breakdown happened on the return journey from Hastings. The lights went out and the officer just sat there while I had a look at the fuses. Luckily I found the dud fuse and replaced it with a spare. I had been taking an officer, and sometimes his sergeant, around the area visiting families of men serving abroad.

Another very embarrassing breakdown happened right in the centre of Dorking where the main street divides into two. Our trucks had 2 petrol tanks which needed to switch over when necessary. I missed it and fluttered to a stop. I knew what to do as it was a way I had of starting up in the morning. I had a little bottle on a string which I dangled in the full tank. I lifted the bonnet and poured the petrol into the carburettor. Then I took the starting

handle and gave it a quick flip up from the bottom (keeping thumb same side as fingers to prevent accident). Only this time I had quite an audience. A whole row of Canadian soldiers were leaning on railings, watching from a high pavement. When I started up the truck a great cheer went up.

I did have one or 2 boyfriends but nothing serious. I had been writing to John, who I met when I was 16, but he never returned from Arnhem in 1944.

Up in the hills from Reigate towards Kingswood was a secret underground place called Radio City. On the other side of the road was an old quarry where the homing pigeons had their lofts. These were looked after by the R Signals. It was really thrilling to take these birds to the Ashford area of Kent for release. They were in training for D Day. We asked for water at the oast houses so the birds could have a drink first. I was concerned in case any were lost but the R Signals soldier said, "If they don't come home they are no use to me".

I first heard about V1s, Flying Bombs, on the Brighton Road outside an Army Camp. I was waiting to meet 3 tanks as I had 75 'Flimsies', 4 gallon tins of petrol, for them. The sentry on the gate told me about these pilotless aircraft Hitler was sending over, with a 14ft wingspan. The tanks never arrived so I had to return with my load of 'Flimsies'.

At St Margarets the "Buzz Bombs" started to come over regularly. The bus station had watchers on the roof. We had to dig trenches in the garden. The ground was very hard. Our trenches were only about knee high and we soon became fed up with crouching in them. We then went under our beds instead. When the engines stopped on the Buzz Bombs, it was very nasty wondering where it would land. I did come upon a tragedy one day which was near the Surrey/Kent border. A house had been hit off the main road and it had been used by the ATS. Fortunately the drivers had all left for work but the people left behind were killed. It was upsetting to see, amongst all the rubble, a gym shoe. I have seen a map of Southern England showing where the Buzz Bombs fell and it looks as if we were hand-picked as a target.

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.

As a reminder the rates for overseas membership are as follows:

Annual Member - £8.50

Life Membership Annual Postage Charge - £3.50

Reminiscences of the WRAC

RECRUITING LITERATURE

PDF Compressor Free Version Judy Hasnip

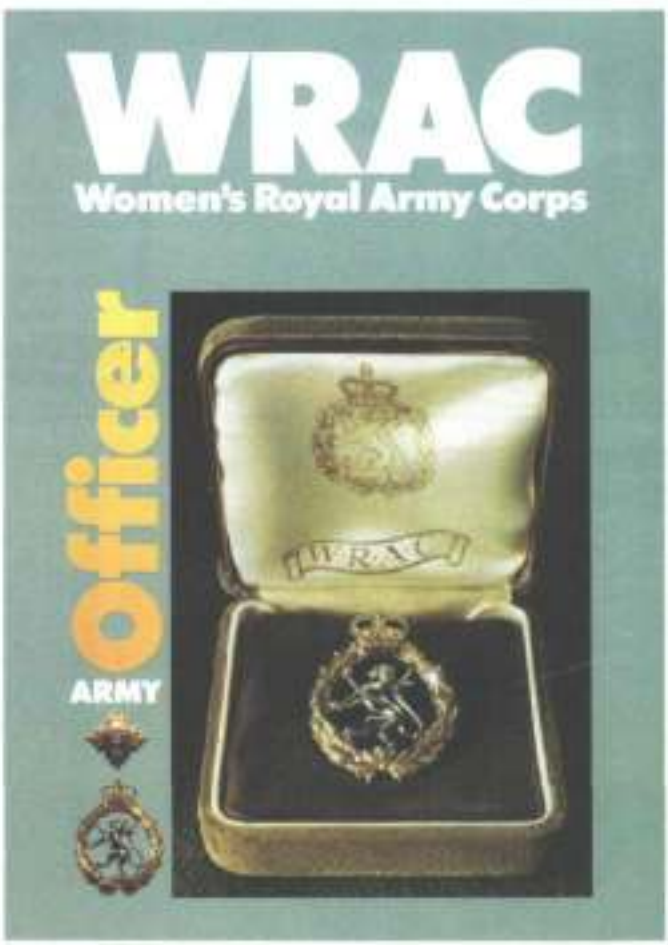
Editor's Note: I was unable to reproduce the newspaper page that was sent in with this article so have paraphrased the text and added some recruiting images found from the recent past. It would be great to know more about the images.

I wonder if any other members remember seeing advertisements in women's magazines recruiting for the WRAC? I know that some of the photos were taken abroad and date back to the 1960s and 1970s. Does anyone recognise any of those pictured and were they serving or professional models? I joined in 1963 after a WRAC Recruiting Team visited my home town.





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Where Are You Now?

Editor's Note: It is not the current policy to give out private addresses within the UK. However e-mail addresses are listed when submitted. Should anyone wish to respond to any of the articles below they can do so through the Office Manager.

PHOTOS FROM PAT CLARK ATS

Bill Crothers

E mail: billc666@btinternet.com

Anyone recognise any of the ladies in these photos? I am trying to get some information for the purposes of writing a book. Any information very gratefully received.



MARJORIE BOULTON NÉE CATHERALL ATS
Steven Boulton
E mail: steve.metro@yahoo.co.uk

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Marjorie Catherall ATS

I would be grateful for any information you may be able to give me regarding my late mother who was in the ATS during the Second World War.

Her details are as follows:-

Name: Marjorie Boulton (née Catherall)

DOB 24/10/1924

Address at the time: 2 Neville Drive, Broughton Heath, Chester, Cheshire

I believe she was only 17 years old when she joined, making it 1941/42.



Group photograph circa 1941/1942

SLAIN GIRL WAITING FOR DEMOB
Sylvia Brightwell Johnson - Suffolk Branch



Margaret Dance ATS

Whilst looking through some papers at home I came across this cutting. It reads:

Twenty year old Margaret Dance ATS private, murdered by bandits in Egypt, was to have returned to her home at Horden, Durham, on demobilisation leave in August. Last night her father, Mr Edward Dance, miner, was waiting for details from the War Office, of the death of the third daughter he has lost since 1939. Margaret joined the ATS two years ago. According to a report from Egypt, she had just left a cinema at Fayed, accompanied by an Army sergeant, when they were attacked. The sergeant was knocked unconscious, the girl stabbed.

My last posting prior to demob in 1945 was to Preston, Lancs, billeted at 218 Deepdale Road. This is where I got to know Margaret Dance who had the bunk above me. She was a happy-go-lucky girl with a terrific personality. What a terrible end to such a short life.

I often wondered how many members of the ATS lost their lives whilst in the Service.

NEWS FROM VERA BIGNELL

Vera Beer née Bignell – W324586

Yes, I am the Vera Bignell that Joan Middleton remembers from Rome in 1946. I still have a photo of the three of us taken in Peter's Square.

I was called up in May 1945 and sent to Glen Parva Barracks in Leicester for 6 weeks training, then I went to APO Nottingham. I volunteered for overseas and was sent to a holding unit in Bristol (Muller's Orphanage). I left there on 5th November by train, to Glasgow and sailed on a troopship to Naples. We had a lovely building for ATS only, overlooking the bay. Going to Sorrento was a nice weekend trip as we had a lovely hotel by the sea. Also, whilst there, I had a nice leave with Eva in Venice.

I left Italy for Austria (Klagenfurt) in October 1946 and was sent to O2E. I met my husband there and we married in Hampshire in May 1947. We had an Army flat for 6 months and I went back to England in November 1947.

My husband passed away in 2004 and I now live in a small village in Devon, near the youngest of my daughters.



Vera Beer at Basic Training in Parva Glen Barracks
May 1945

NEWS FROM PAULINE KEMP

Pauline Kemp née Davey

Lady Kemball née Webster sent to me part of the Where Are You Now? Section of *Lioness*, possibly the March issue, as she thought I was mentioned.

Yes, 12 Bn Kingston was my second posting. Leaving Kingston in 1962 I served in Singapore for two years as a Captain and returned to Officer Cadet Wing in Camberley. I resigned in 1965 and married Major T Kemp RAOC. Our daughter was born in 1967. In 1968 my husband's service ended and we moved to Somerset for 7 years and finally returned to my original home parish in Cornwall in 1985. My husband died in 2007 following a few years of ill health. I continue to be committed to most of the pursuits we shared together.

I am a poor correspondent; keeping in touch regularly with just 3 members. I attended a WRAC event at the Guildhall in London some years ago but find day-time events more to my taste these days. Also I am no longer a member of the Association. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need, but warn potential correspondents that I am tardy picking up the pen and I do not e-mail!

COURSE 38 WRAC COLLEGE

Sue Ingham née Bonavia
scingham@btinternet.com

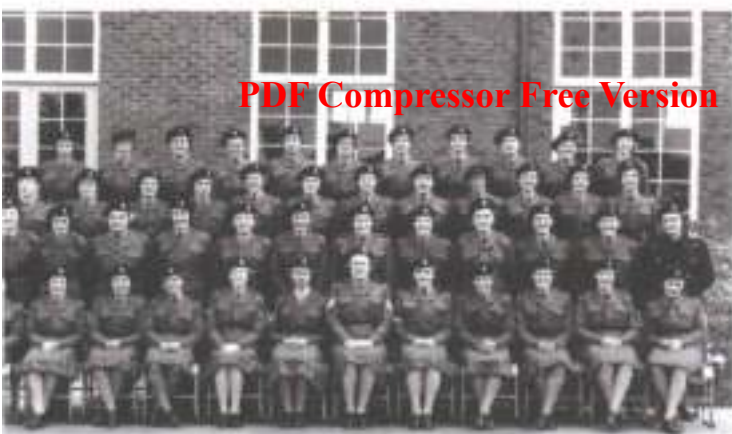


Course 38 WRAC College
Camberley Evening News December 1965

Erica Pattinson née Jones and Sue Ingham née Bonavia, both living in East Anglia, thought it would be fun for all of us to get together again before the 50 years are up! Please contact us if you are in the photo or know the whereabouts of anyone who is.

GUILDFORD 1958

Jackie Naysmith



Guildford group 1958

Does anyone have any names for this photograph? Any filling in of the gaps would be very welcome.

LUFTON CAMP YEOVIL SOMERSET

Alan Bennett

curryandrice388@yahoo.co.uk

Are there any ladies who trained and/or served at Lufton Camp, Yeovil, Somerset (clerks and drivers) from 1966 to 1969? If so please do contact Alan Bennett (ACC). I look forward to hearing from any of you.

SEARCH FOR SANDRA DUNBAR ROBERTSON

Fred Pettersen

19 Escabon Grove, Karingal, VIC 3199, AUSTRALIA

I am writing in order to locate an ex WRAC Sergeant whom I served with at the British Embassy in Saigon during 1969 – 1970. Her name was Sandra Dunbar Robertson and I believed she hailed from Glasgow. When I left Saigon I was posted to the TOS at Sharjah and lost contact with Sandy. I returned to Saigon a year later but she had already been posted out. I would dearly love to make contact with her.

SEARCH FOR CHRISTINE LLOYD WRAC

John Taylor

Uglyboy698@hotmail.co.uk

I am looking for Christine Lloyd who was a Cpl in the Post Room in Bovington Camp in 1991. At the time I worked in HQ BSU/RTR. I would love to make contact with her.

2 COMPANY 6 PLATOON WRAC BASIC TRAINING AT LINGFIELD AUGUST 1962

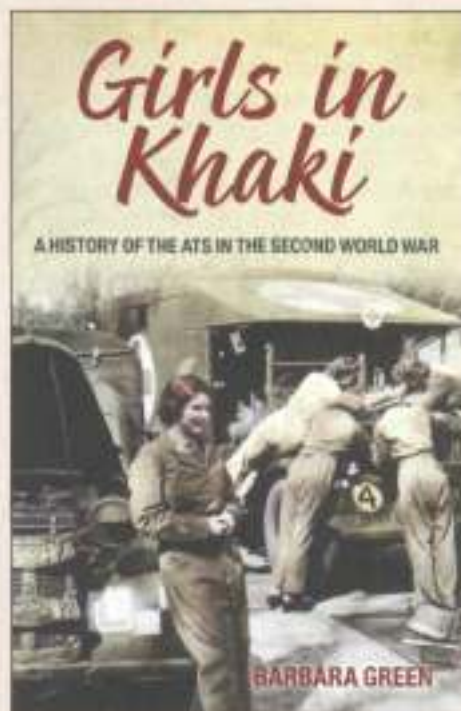
Pamela Selway W/419014

keynsham@myhymmer.com

I am trying to trace the women who joined the WRAC Basic Training at Lingfield in August 1962. I already know Christina Connor (Wilcockson), Chris Gray (Ince), Jo Gillion (Beecham), Katy Corley (Catherine) but wonder if

anyone knows of the whereabouts of the others. Where are: Pat Shadlock, Maureen Watts-Barnes, Eleanor (Nell), Linda Norbury, Barbara, Gracie and another Irish girl whose name I cannot remember? I put a message on the Association website but have heard nothing and would be really interested to hear from any of them.

GIRLS IN KHAKI



Girls in Khaki – A History of the ATS in the Second World War is available to our members in an exclusive offer from 13th August. The author is Barbara Green who is ex WRAC and a member of the WRAC Association. The exclusive offer is as follows:

Girls in Khaki: 978-0-7524-6350-6

RRP: £12.99

Exclusive offer price: £10.50 free UK P&P

Offer Code: HPKHAKI
(Please quote to get discount)

Offer duration: 13th August 2012 until
12th November 2012
(Please quote offer end date)

Ordering: Tel: 01235 465500 or
www.thehistorypress.co.uk

ATS Dinner Club

50TH AND FINAL REUNION LUNCH -

ATS DINNER CLUB

The 50th and Final Reunion Lunch of The ATS Dinner Club was held at The Victory Services Club on Saturday 1st October 2011 and was well attended by members, ex ATS members and carers. Representing the WRAC Association were Lt Col Westlake, Maj Freebairn and Maj Shanahan. Also present were Sue Corbett, freelance reporter of *The Times*, and all those having spoken in the past at our lunches or reported them. My daughter, Julia, provided the floral decorations for the tables.



Proud to have served

A Minute's Silence was held in memory of our late Patron, Brigadier Anne Field, and President, Lady Mary Crofton, both of whom passed away shortly before the lunch and all deceased members of The Dinner Club. Music was provided by a five piece brass ensemble from the Adjutant General's Corps who played war time music throughout the lunch, which in itself was enjoyed by all attending.

Lt Col Westlake gave us an interesting talk on the ATS and on the origins of The Dinner Club. A presentation of an engraved cake-server was made to the Chairman of The Dinner Club and also to the Treasurer, and Joan Awbrey was presented with Marks & Spencer vouchers in gratitude for work done in Committee.



All enjoyed a good lunch

The Chairman told the members present that an arrangement would be made for them to meet for lunch in The Buttery at The Victory Services Club on the first Wednesday of October each year, those attending being responsible for their own costs. No further newsletters would be published and those wishing to attend should telephone the Chairman on 01202 432743, a fortnight before.

I would like to thank all attending the lunch, all those unable to attend, all Members of The Dinner Club and all those who served in the ATS in so many categories for their support over the years. Good Luck to you all.

Joy Balmain, Chairman

WRAC Officers Dining Club

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB DINNER SATURDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2012 VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, LONDON

Mark your diary for the 2012 WRAC Officers' Dining Club Dinner to be held at the Victory Services Club, London on Saturday 24 November. Last November was a very successful and well attended Dinner. A significant number of serving, recently retired 'young(er)' officers and guests attended for the first time and enjoyed an excellent evening. Please spread the word amongst your contemporaries and persuade them to come along.

perhaps make up a table for a course reunion and support this annual opportunity to 'reune'.

If you are a member of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club you will receive personal notification of the Dinner and an application form. Please feel free to photocopy the form for your contemporaries. Members' guests are also very welcome. If you are not yet a member and would like to receive details please email sue.hatton@wracassociation.org.uk (née Davison) or call 01962 887570.

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 send 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, Gould House, Worthy Down, Winchester SO21 2RG.

Subscriptions can also be paid via the website. Alternatively 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

Reunions

CENTRAL LONDON RECRUITING DEPOT Jean (Johnnie) Kick



Recruiters together again

A 'mini reunion' of 5 members of the London area Recruiting staff from Central London Recruiting depot, Wembley and Blackheath whose total service in the ATS, WRAC and QARANC totals 139 years, of which 107 years were spent as Recruiters between 1954 and 1982. We are extremely proud to report this and to say that at this Grand Reunion 2012 which was a joyous occasion – some of us had not met for 35 years. Needless to say a toast was made to absent Recruiter friends who were unable to join us, which indeed would have increased our combined service figures!

Maybe some of you who attended the Reunion this year had been processed by us during 1954 to 1982.

Our very sincere thanks to all who organized this Reunion – we shall remember it well.

Weddings

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

PETER AND GWENDA EASTON

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*Peter and Gwenda Easton
14th April 1952*

Peter and Gwenda Easton née Burbridge celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 14th April 2012. Peter and Gwenda met at the Army College North, Welbeck Abbey Worksop in 1949 where Peter was the Education Officer and Gwenda the OC of the isolated platoon attached to Chilwell. They were married in Singapore Cathedral on 14th April 1952 and spent their honeymoon on a virtually uninhabited island south of Singapore. Peter returned to Malaysia and Gwenda returned to the isolated platoon of 4 Independent Company at Nee Soon Singapore until she returned to England in 1943.

Their 5 children, Nigel, Robin, Rosamund, Caroline and James were born in various parts of the UK and they are grandparents to 12 grandchildren. Having been stationed in Malaysia, Singapore, Germany, Cyprus and the UK, they now live in a small village in Devon and are almost as busy as they were when they were serving.



50 years on to the day!

NOTICE FOR SPEAKING LIONESS

We hope to produce *Lioness* in spoken format for those members who are blind or find it hard to read.

Please contact the Office Manager to find out more about this project.

Tanya-Jayne Park
01962 887570

Poems

THIRTY MINUTES SILENCE

Submitted by Avril Williams, Cambridge Branch

The gun has fired
Eleven am
This is the time
We remember them

Two minutes gone
Another gun
Releases all
And everyone

Old soldiers march
With medals and flags
Old soldiers upright
And no one sags

The church prays for
The glorious dead
Old soldiers bend
A tonsured head

Recalling Battles
On sea and land
As less and less
They understand

Of what it was
Quite all about
As mystery
Replaces doubt

I'M FINE

Submitted by Mrs G L Scott née Campbell W/105752

There is nothing whatever the matter with me
I'm just as healthy as I can be
I have arthritis in both of my knees
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.

My pulse is weak and my blood is thin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I am in
My teeth eventually have to come out
And my diet, I hate to think about!!

I'm overweight and I can't get thin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I am in
I think my liver is out of whack
And a terrible pain is in my back.

My hearing is poor, my sight is dim
Most everything seems to be out of trim
But I'm awfully well for the shape I am in.

I have arch supports for both of my feet
Or I wouldn't be able to go on the street
Sleeplessness I have night after night
And in the morning I am just a sight.

My memory's failing
My head's in a spin
I'm practically living on aspirin
But I'm awfully well for the shape I am in.

The moral is, as the tale we unfold
That for you and me who are growing old
It's better to say "I'm fine" with a grin
Than let them know the shape we are in!!

LIONESS WOMEN

Submitted by Sandy Acathan

Now here's a jolly little ode
Of some women of a special kind,
They all have something in common
Unlike many others you will find,
Under the emblem of the Lioness
Their friendship is loyal and strong.
"Proud to have served" is their motto*
Lass of Richmond Hill their song.

We have Maggie with Sheila and Sue,
And dear Mariann who looks chic in blue.
Following behind comes Jackie Rice,
With Emma and Kate, now they are nice.
Looking smart see Crunchie Wendy, Oh I say there's
Janice who is always trendy.
Look someone is waving, it's Sylvia Cree,
She lives in France, just like me.
Berni and Babs even the score,
But don't go away, there's still lots more.

Trotting along I see Maggie, Rose and Jane,
I almost forgot Sally with Trudi dodging the rain.
Not to be outdone in Karen and Jan,
Chugging noisily in Del Boy's old van.
It is nice to see Sharron, Tanya and Fil,
Jogging in trainers even uphill.
That's our Lorraine in fatigues I think,
Out in the snow and her nose all pink.
Jennifer and Babs considered fancy dress
But couldn't get permission from the Sergeants Mess.
Gaynor and Trish took time out shopping.
Rumour has it that they go bopping.
But who is this bringing up the rear,
Someone said she never drinks beer?
Barrow full of beads that in the dark glow,
Who else can it be but Cathy Munchkin Munro.

PS

If anyone has not had a mention
It's because the author's in detention.
But hopefully by the Autumn fall,
The ode will be longer about you all.

*motto of the WRAC Facebook Group!

WRAC ASSOCIATION AGM 2013

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The next AGM will be held at the National Memorial Arboretum on Saturday 13 April 2012.

Application details will be published in the next edition of *Lioness*.

COPY DEADLINE

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

15 DECEMBER 2012

WEBSITE MEMBERS' AREA

Over the past few months a lot of work has been put into the Members Area of the website. One of those changes is that Members who have provided the Association with an e-mail address have now been provided with their own user name and password to login to the website. If you have an e-mail account and have not been notified please contact the Office Manager.

If you do not have an e-mail address you can still access the Members Area using these **NEW** guest login details:

Username: guestmember
Password: 17guildford92

DAILY MAIL WOOD – ATS TREE

It may be of interest to our members that in celebration of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, a tree has been planted in memory of the ATS in the Daily Mail Wood at Normanton le Heath in Leicestershire.

Letters to the Editor

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Dear Editor,

I am the husband of an ex-ATS girl and have been an active supporter in all of her ATS reunions and functions as Betty is of my several ex-Service Associations. As we are both 91 those activities have been severely restricted of late. However we still enjoy our local meetings and the news from the various Service journals we receive.

I have been a keen reader of *Lioness* for many years and have much to thank it for. Not many issues after Betty received her first copy I spotted a letter from the sister of my girl friend of my years in Stirling 1939-41. I contacted her and since then have met her at reunions along with another 'girl' I knew at that time. At ATS gunner reunions and arranged holidays we have met others who served on gunsite radar like Betty. I was glad to be part of their reminiscing and having spent most of the war overseas, I was still learning about the important role that the Women's Services played. Sadly these contacts are less in numbers now but we still have our own treasured memories.

Having read the recent issue I would like to add my voice to those who in the past have written to say how much they enjoy reading the *Lioness*. This issue was excellent. The stories and experiences of times past never seem to pall and all the girls always look attractive in their ATS uniform. The up-to-date experiences of the girls serving in Afghanistan are a welcome addition.

Eric Stratford
Kent

Dear Editor,

I wish to say Hello to all the Secretaries of the WRAC Association I have met at our meetings, at AGMs and Reunions over the last 20 years. I couldn't make it to the last AGM - I think it's the first I've missed owing to age and health. Hope to be at Bristol though and look forward to saying "hello" again. We have had many good Reunions over the years and I am happy to see all these younger members doing such a good job with their ideas for brightening up the Reunion. I thought the fancy dress costumes at last year's Reunion were fantastic. I saw quite a few of my age group dressed up and enjoying their little selves. Ten years ago if anyone had suggested a fancy dress "theme" or whatever, there would have been a deathly hush, but I was really entertained. Just to sit back and relax and watch took me back over 60 years to our youthful days and how we enjoyed knees up. Some of us turned into prunes or sour grapes but not any longer - keep up the good work and enjoy joining in and make Bristol another Reunion to remember.

Good Health, Best wishes to all.

Yes girls, I've resigned being Secretary of Cleveland but the girls in the Branch are 90% ex-WRAC girls and I know they will continue to enjoy their contact with each other as we old ATS Veterans have done over the years.

Gwyneth Friday

Dear Editor,

I am so pleased you were able to publish my article under "Memories of Service in the ATS" in the last issue of the *Lioness*. I had ended by writing "I wonder if there is anyone out there who remembers me".

On Saturday morning I received a telephone call from Australia from Georgina Platt (Sgt Georgina Dobbin - "Dobbie" to her friends) - who was on my draft bound for Nairobi. On the Cameronia, the Ship, "Dobbie" met a handsome Palestine Policeman returning from leave and "arranged" to stay in Egypt. She was posted to Palestine and eventually married said Policeman! We were last together in 1945 and corresponded until 1947 when a letter I sent was returned to me marked "Not known at this address". What a very pleasant surprise to receive the telephone call from Georgina after 65 years. We seemed to pick up where we left off and are buying the lightest writing paper we can find to give each other 65 year's worth of news!

Thank you for giving her my address although I believe it is not something you normally do.

In your article my maiden name and married name were reversed - probably my mistake.

(W/38369 SSgt Nancy (Nan) Webb (née Cox)
Bradford-on-Avon

Dear Editor,

I intend to place this image and caption in pride of place on the first righthand page of the Autumn 2012 edition of The Guards Magazine. Please feel free to use the image and the caption. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

I wonder if any of the readers of *Lioness* can throw any light on how it was that this ATS group was 'badged' Grenadier Guards, where it was based and what their role was? Perhaps you have readers who served in this ATS unit?

I am unclear whether this was the same ATS group, apparently based in Windsor, that Princess Elizabeth joined in 1945.

Best wishes,
Peter Williams, Editor, The Guards Magazine



Fig. 1. This year sees the 70th anniversary of the Queen's formal link with the Grenadier Guards, of which she was appointed Colonel of the Regiment on her 16th birthday in 1942. An article by Major Philip Wright, entitled 'A Wartime Princess', appears in this edition. In this image Princess Elizabeth is seen inspecting an ATS contingent whose members are wearing Grenadier Guards insignia. Readers are invited to submit anecdotes and other information about the members and role of this ATS unit.

Dear Editor,

One morning this week recalling the 60 years rule of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the presenter of the programme on television recalled the aeroplane "the Comet" which he had not flown in. I immediately recalled my first flight at the age of 22 in the "Comet" aeroplane off to Singapore to the barracks of Tanglin. I was so excited at being sent to the Far East in 1964 dressed in a neat rayon suit to a country so unknown to me and so far away. The journey was 24 hours long and so memorable. On arrival I was met by a Sergeant in a neat khaki dress adapt for the heat of the weather.

The Comet aeroplane did not last as faster planes were invented, although the long journey was so memorable the change of lifestyle for me is part of my history. Life was wonderful, meeting so many people and going to places like Penang Malaysia for a holiday, and learning about war history on the beach of Changi.

Anne White (née Marsh) W/420613,
Carmarthenshire

Dear Editor,

I have often wondered why I was given the Army Number 419014. I have never met anyone else with the number 419 and understand it was a TA number. I was not in the TA at the time I joined the WRAC and wonder why I was given this number.

Can anyone help me please?

Pamela M A Selway (I still use my maiden name)

Dear Editor,

Could anyone settle an argument which has been going on for years between an ATS in Canada, and one in Australia.

My friend in Australia volunteered for the ATS in 1941 and swears that she walked into the Recruiting Office and was signed up at once and given the King's Shilling. I too volunteered for the ATS in 1941 but am certain that I did not receive the King's Shilling feeling sure that I would have treasured and saved it.

A search of the Internet shows that the practice of giving or taking the King's Shilling died out after the Napoleonic Wars and neither of us is that old.

Was a token Shilling given? Can anyone else remember getting one?

A friendship of 70 years is in jeopardy here. Can anyone help please?

Barbara (Mason) Fosdick (W/74662)
473, 451 and 670 Batteries

Dear Editor,

In June 1959 I was at the RAEC Training Camp at Beaconsfield undergoing my National Service Instructor's course. Part of the Camp included WRAC quarters and whilst on guard duty (6pm to 8am) it was the custom for us to awaken the girls if they were on early duties.

They signalled us to do this by draping a towel out of their bedroom window and the patrolling guard would tap on their window until they woke up.

Needless to say we were never invited in!

Happy days.

Brian
Ex-Sgt (NS) RAEC

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE MARRIOTT HOTEL, BRISTOL, SATURDAY 24 MARCH 2012

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1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending. She continued by introducing her support team:

Lt Col (Retd) Jo Young	Chairman of the Executive Committee
Col (Retd) Audrey Smith	Chairman of the Grants Committee
Col (Retd) Alison Brown	Editor of <i>Lioness</i>
Maj Leona Barr-Jones	Honorary Treasurer
Maj (Retd) Gabi Shanahan	Regimental Secretary
Maj (Retd) Sue Hatton	Assistant Regimental Secretary

The Chairman explained that 20 years had passed since the WRAC disbanded in 1992 and the Association had experienced the luxury of being able to rely entirely on the support and infrastructure of a living Corps. The Association had managed to run seamlessly and successfully since 1992 due to continuing Civil Service funding of the Regimental Secretary and Chief Clerk's posts, accommodation and administrative support at Worthy Down under the auspices of RHQ AGC, and because of the sterling work of so many volunteers. However, the Association had reached a watershed in its' evolution whereby it was necessary to move forward in a more efficient, independent and flexible manner keeping abreast of the many legal and regulatory requirements imposed on Charities today. Civil Service funding of the Chief Clerk's post would be lost in Apr 12 and HQ WRAC Association might not have the accommodation and administrative support facilities at Worthy Down beyond Mar 15. The Association had therefore entered a period of transition; implementing new electronic working practices across banking, accounting, grant recipient and membership databases, website and shared working environments (intranet) that would not confine the HQ to a single office location in the future. Contingency planning would ensure that everything would be in place to move the Association into a non MOD environment when the Association's operations have to be entirely self funded. The Chairman reassured the meeting that members should not notice any difference in the service received from Association HQ, instead there were benefits associated with the new working practices.

The Chairman continued by explaining that Mrs Denise Thompson, Association HQ Chief Clerk, was moving to a new Civil Service post within RHQ AGC after 5 years excellent service to the Association. The Chairman introduced Tanya-Jayne Park as the new Office Manager and welcomed her to the Association.

The Chairman paid tribute to all the Branch Secretaries and thanked them for their hard work and

support, appreciated not just by Association HQ but by each one of their members. Every Secretary was part of a significant team which included their Chairman and Treasurer and together they underpinned the Branch network. Flowers had been sent to all Branch Secretaries in Mar 12.

The Chairman outlined her programme of visits to individual Branches and Area Reunions and thanked all members of the Association who had supported the Memorial Service for Brig Anne Field CB CBE on 17 Oct 12:

18 May 11	Guildford Cathedral with Honorary Padre
02 Jul 11	South & South West Area Reunion in Plymouth with Ann Widdecombe
01 Oct 11	ATS Dinner Club Final Lunch
10 Nov 11	Field of Remembrance
13 Nov 11	Cenotaph
29 Nov 11	Worthing Branch Christmas Lunch
05 Dec 11	Royal Hospital Chelsea Christmas Lunch and present giving.
09 Feb 12	Bristol Branch Lunch
24 Mar 12	Band Branch Meeting

The Chairman welcomed Chelsea Pensioner and Association member Marjorie Cole to the meeting. The Chairman concluded her opening remarks by reading a message from The Patron of the Association thanking all members for their loyal greetings and support.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from many individuals, several Branch Secretaries and the following members of Council: Brig (Retd) Dame Joanna Kelleher, Col (Retd) Eleanor Bowles, Lt Col (Retd) Mary Soames, Lt Col (Retd) The Lady Martha Bruce, Lt Col (Retd) Nicky Murdoch and Mrs Karen Loftus.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated in *Lioness* 2011/2. No comments had been received. It was proposed that the Chairman sign them as a true record.

Proposed: Lincoln Seconded: Hereford
Unanimously agreed

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There was no business arising that would not be covered by other Agenda items.

5. REPORT OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman stated that Council had met twice since the last AGM: firstly in Jul 11 at Worthy Down and secondly in London at the Victory Services Club in Jan 12. The main items of interest had been:

- a. **Newly elected members of Council.** Brig Nicky Moffat CBE (Life VP) and Mrs Karen Loftus had been elected in Jul 11. Col (Retd) Ali Brown & Maj (Retd) Jackie Walton had been elected in Jan 12.
- b. **Finance Committee.** A Finance Committee had been established comprising of the Honorary Treasurer, Lt Col (Retd) Angela Owen, the Chairman of the Grants Committee, the Regimental Secretary and one co-opted member, Maj (Retd) Rowena Patrick MBE.
- c. **Governance.** A Sub Committee of Trustees, under the Chairmanship of Col (Retd) Ali Brown, had been established to conduct a Governance review of the Association's Constitution.
- d. **Branches.** Bolton, Crewe, Wilmslow and Wolverhampton branches had closed. Wales and the West Branch had opened as an option for active members of defunct Wales and the West area branches who did not wish to transfer to HQ Branch.
- e. **National Memorial Arboretum (NMA).** The Regimental Secretary had visited the NMA in Dec 11. The 3 benches were in need of maintenance and the brick & metal plaque plinth was showing signs of wear; many plots had replaced theirs with an engraved granite structure. Council had agreed to fund maintenance of the benches and approved funding to replace the existing plaque plinth with an engraved granite structure.
- f. **Appointment of Auditors.** The Finance Committee would meet on 04 Apr 12 to consider 5 tenders for the appointment of auditor of the Association accounts. The Association's previous Auditors, Baker Tilley, would be one of the five considered.

6. REGIMENTAL SECRETARY UPDATE

The Regimental Secretary outlined the web based working practices that had been introduced in Association HQ. The new website launched in Feb 11 had proved very successful and had led to a big rise in online membership applications and the option to opt in to Gift Aid. Online donations via www.virginmoneygiving.com had increased and 60 attendees at the Grand Reunion 2012 had applied and paid online. Where possible email would be increasingly used for communication with members, however it was stressed that traditional methods of communication via post and phone would still be available.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Honorary Treasurer presented the Financial Report and started by thanking the Regimental Secretary for all her work managing the accounts. The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 October 2011 had been published in *Lioness* edition 2012/1 and on pages 12 and 13 respectively of the Annual Report 2011.

The Association had shown a net surplus to the General Funds of £95,958 compared to £8,781 in the year ending 31 October 2010.

Income

- £13,500 had been received from Grand Reunion applications.
- Gift Aid income had nearly doubled.
- Investment income had remained stable.
- *Lioness* income had reduced by £424.
- The Association had received a very generous legacy of £135,000.

Expenditure

- Staff costs had increased by £3,989, due to a new split of salary apportionment between the Association and Benevolent Fund for the Regimental Secretary and payment of temporary staff to cover staff sickness.
- Travel and Meeting expenses had increased by £5,381 due to Trustees now receiving reimbursement for travel expenses.
- AGM costs had increased by £887.
- Audit costs had increased by £604, due in part to a different apportionment between Association and Benevolent Fund.
- *Lioness* publication costs increased by £1,704, due to longer editions.
- Expenditure on Brig Anne Field CB CBE's memorial service had been £2,500.
- Council had written-off just under £39,000, the collective value of all the Branch funds that had previously been accounted for as 'Income from Branches'. This decision was explained on page 14 of the annual report, paragraph headed 'The Branches of the Association' and was taken because the Association's Governing Document recognizes formally the distinctiveness of a Branch's financial commitments from that of its own. On that basis, Council had decided to separate any financial connection that had existed and recognize in a clear and transparent way that there would be no financial dependency of the Association on the Branches, or vice versa.
- In addition to the net surplus, the Association Funds had unrealised losses on investments of £11,017 compared to unrealised gains of £18,496 in the financial year ending 31 October 2010. The carried forward fund balance was £630,244, an increase of £84,941 on the £545,303 carried forward the previous financial year.
- The Restricted Funds, that is the Benevolent and Princess Royal's Memorial Funds, showed a net deficit of £88,502 compared to £13,701 the previous year.

Income

- Legacies had reduced by £21,549.
- Donations had reduced by £4,063.
- Gift Aid had reduced by £471.

Expenditure

- Staff costs had increased by £7,880 due mainly to increased hours worked by the Regimental Secretary.
- Audit costs had increased by £740 due to increased charges by auditors.
- Benevolent grants appeared to have increased by £76,555. This was due to a change in how grant

income from the Soldiers' Charity had been accounted for.

- PRMF grants had increased by £16,566 due to an increase in older members.

The Benevolent Funds realized loss on investments was £26,950, compared to a gain of £264,401 the previous year. This was a substantial reduction on the year ending 31 October 2010. The net result of this financial activity was that the carried forward balance for the Benevolent Funds was £4,780,434, a decrease of £115,452 on the £4,895,886 carried forward the previous year. In summary, as at 31 October 2011 the total funds had been worth £5,446,456, compared to £5,476,973 at 31 October 2010. The Honorary Treasurer concluded that the funds had adequate liquidity, with available cash of £329,000, ensuring all creditors and planned expenditure falling due within the financial year November 2011 – October 2012 would be met without calling on investments. She reported that a budget had been planned and set for the financial year November 2011 – October 2012 and would report on performance against this measure at future AGMs. She recommended that the financial statements be accepted and that the audited accounts be ratified.

Proposed: Chester Seconded: Bath
Unanimously agreed

8. REPORT OF THE EDITOR OF THE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

The Editor thanked everyone who had sent in an article, most articles had been accompanied by high quality photographs and every effort had been made to publish as many as possible. Future article and photo submissions would ideally be received as an email attachment however hard copies sent by post would always be accepted.

The Editor reported that *Lioness* 2012/1 had been restricted to 80-85 pages in order to restrict costs. The Editorial comment in *Lioness* 2012/1 had explained that as each copy costs £5.10 to produce and distribute, twice per year, donations would always be appreciated. The Editor stated that a review of publishing costs would be undertaken and three quotes from alternative printers would be presented to Council.

The Editor concluded by reminding the AGM that the copy deadline for *Lioness* 2012/1 was 15 June 2012. Submissions could be sent to officemanager@wracasociation.org.uk. The Chairman reminded the AGM that the *Lioness* had been produced on a voluntary basis and thanked Ali Brown for all her time and effort.

9. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

a. Executive Committee

Grand Reunion 2012. The Executive Committee had been tasked with the organisation of the Grand Reunion and had endeavoured to produce a weekend to remember. The Chairman of the Executive Committee thanked all of the committee members, co-opted members and Association HQ staff for their

hard work. Thanks were passed to the events team at the Marriott Hotel City Centre Bristol whose professionalism and efficiency had made the planning a lot easier. In addition the fact that members attending had been responsible for their own accommodation had taken a great deal of the pressure off the Association HQ at a time of change. The Executive Committee would be delighted to have constructive criticism and ideas for the next Grand Reunion.

Meetings. It was reported that the Executive Committee had met three times since the 2011 AGM. The aim was that the Executive Committee would become the engine room of the WRAC Association, to meet prior to Council and subsequently brief and support Council. This process had been initiated at the January 2012 meeting.

The Chairman of the Executive Committee concluded by thanking all those who had attended the Grand Reunion. She then gave special thanks to the Vice President WRAC Association, Lt Col (Retd) Sue Westlake, for all her enthusiasm and dedication to the Association. It was explained that 2012 would be her last Grand Reunion as Vice President (2003, 2006, 2009, 2012) and she was presented with a signed booklet from all Grand Reunion 2012 attendees.

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee

The Chairman of the Grants Committee gave an update of the work of the Benevolent Fund in the financial year 2010/11. The Benevolent Fund considered cases for one or more of 3 categories of grants: one-off grants, annuities and nursing home fee top-ups. The total number of cases considered in the year 2010/11 was 466, compared to 483 in 2009/10. Of these cases 205 or 44% were ATS and 261 or 56% were WRAC.

Cases were considered at either minor grants committee meetings or major grants committee meetings. Minor grant committee meetings were held weekly and awarded grants up to £600. Any request for £600 – £2,000, or for an ex-servicewoman with less than 12 month's service, usually had to wait until the next major grants committee meeting, held monthly.

As at 31 October 2011 16 ladies were receiving annuities from the Princess Royal's Memorial Fund. The annuity remained £14 per week with a Christmas bonus of £60 giving a total of £788 per annum. The maximum total commitment was therefore £12,600 for the year ending 31 October 2011. The first instalment was paid on 1 December, the second on 1 June and the eligibility of each annuitant was reviewed on an annually. In January 2012 Council agreed to increase the PRMF annuity to £17 per week, plus a £60 Christmas bonus, giving a total for the financial year 2011/2012 of £944 per annum. As at 31 October 2011 there were 30 recipients of Princess Royal's Memorial Fund nursing home fee top-ups with contributions ranging from £6 per week to a maximum of £30 per week.

Inevitably a number of annuitants and recipients of nursing home fee top-ups were lost during the year through death or because they cease to be eligible as a result of an improvement in their circumstances through better access to benefits or a move into, or out of, residential care. In these circumstances refunds of annuities were not received but a pro rata refund of any nursing home fee top-up was received. As at 31 October 2011 there were 22 ATS and WRAC recipients of an ABF The Soldiers' Charity annuity on our books. The ABF The Soldiers' Charity annuity for the year 2010/2011 remained £780 per annum, that is £8 per annum less than the PRMF annuity for the same period, but had increased to £940 per annum for the financial year 2011/2012. The Benevolent Fund was grateful to ABF The Soldiers' Charity for the nursing home fee top-up contributions, ranging from £4 per week to its maximum of £35 per week, to which it had committed for 10 of our 30 recipients. The Benevolent Fund's budget for the financial year 2010/11 had been £170,000. Our total expenditure in 2010/2011 had been £150,350, which is £19,650 under budget but £24,750 more than during 2009/2010. The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund budget for the financial year 2010/2011 had been £48,000. As at 31 October 2011 there was a commitment to a possible maximum spend of £52,600, adjusted to £50,000 for unclaimed Nursing Home Fees, an over-spend of £2,000 – £4,600 against budget. It was therefore agreed by Council in January 2012 that the responsibility for paying for Nursing Home Fee top-ups passed back to the Benevolent Fund and that, consequently, the budget for the Princess Royal's Memorial Fund was reduced from £48,000 to £20,000 for the financial year 2011/2012.

The Chairman of the Grants Committee thanked SSAFA, the Royal British Legion, and the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League for the sterling efforts of all their caseworkers who provided the vital link between applicants and our fund and acknowledged our debt to all the benevolent funds that supported us, not only the Army's regimental funds but also the Royal Navy Benevolent Trust and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund. She concluded by thanking Maj (Retd) Gabi Shanahan for all her hard work with the Benevolent Fund and then read out some of the thank you letters received in the 12 months of the report:

"I would like to thank you most sincerely for your assistance in obtaining the grant for the cost of repairs to my home. A very grateful and thankful ex-WRAC". - roof repairs

"The RCEL wrote to me recently to say that the ATS & WRAC grant that I last received in Sep 10 is to recommence soon. This is welcome news in view of the disastrous recession last year. I would also like to say how much I appreciate the news that you are to increase my grant to £500. This will make a tremendous difference to my budget – a sincere THANK YOU" – general needs.

"I would like to thank you very much on behalf of myself and my children for your very kind and generous gift of help. We very much appreciate it and it will go a

long way to helping us in our effort to relocate and settle in this beautiful part of the country during difficult financial times for us". – removal expenses necessary as a result of domestic violence

"I understand from the secretary of our local branch of SSAFA that I have you to thank for the grant that gave me a badly needed new cooker, so I do send my very sincere gratitude. A month ago I had nowhere to turn to for help until my support worker suggested that, as an ex-WRAC, maybe SSAFA would help. They tell me it was all thanks to you I can now cook a decent dinner again". - electric cooker

"My sincere thanks for the grant towards retiling my rear back steps. This is very much appreciated". – rear patio repairs

"I am just writing to thank you for all the help you gave me: you will never know how it made me feel. My family take but never give back. They think because of your age you don't need anything much to live on. As I go nowhere they just say 'what you give us is what mothers do'. But once again I thank you all". - food vouchers, clothing and a tumble-drier

"To all you wonderful people, after a rare illness which left me unable to walk and hands which I can barely use, and 2 years in hospital, I had to move home into a flat which has been adapted for me. Your fund has helped me to turn this flat into my 'home'. I can never thank you enough. My years in the WRAC and many more as a army wife were probably the best years of my life". - furniture and household items

"SSAFA has told me about your generous help to me for oil and other essentials. I was left after 34 years of marriage and as we had a tied cottage with his job I lost my home and all I had was my dog and a few personal items. I found this rented house and I am now settled. Thank you so much; I can't tell you how grateful I am, having heating oil settled is such a relief". - heating oil

This is just to say a big thank you for your generous grant towards my mobility scooter. It means that not only can I see my husband who is in a nursing home more easily but I can get around and do the other things I need to do as well. I will also save a fortune in taxi fares!. Thank you once again for your Benevolent Fund's generosity" - EPV

The Chairman of Council thanked Col (Retd) Audrey Smith for all her support and commitment as the Chairman of the Grants Committee.

10. RESOLUTIONS

a. **Motions of Urgency.** There were no motions of urgency.

b. **Council Resolutions.** There were no Council resolutions.

c. **Branch Proposals.** There were no Branch proposals.

d. **Election of Honorary Treasurer.** To re-appoint Major Leona Barr-Jones as Honorary Treasurer. Proposed: Worthing Seconded: Winchester Unanimously agreed

11. CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

There were no awards made at the AGM. Since the 2011 AGM the following members had been awarded

with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of devoted service and significant contributions to their branch and the Association:

Mrs Betty France	North East Area
Mrs Olive Hughes	North East Area
Mrs Mary McGregor	Scottish Area
Mrs Doreen Peggie	Scottish Area
Major Isobel Gordon	Scottish Area
Mrs Joan Bartlett	Scottish Area

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a. **Guildford Cathedral.** There would be a Service of Rededication and Renewal of links for the WRAC Association at Guildford Cathedral on Sunday 20th May 2012 at 11.30hrs. During the Mattins Service the QMAAC and ATS Standards (previously held in the Garrison Church at Worthy Down) would be 'laid up' in the Cathedral Gallery alongside other Regimental Standards. A Commemorative window in the Cathedral was unveiled by Association President, HRH The Duchess of Kent, in 1994 but since then there had been no links with the Cathedral. It was hoped that a Memorial Book and cabinet would also be dedicated at a future date and be a permanent fixture there. The service would be followed by lunch in the adjacent Refectory for a maximum of 200 Association members.

b. **National Standard Bearer.** The Chairman thanked Maureen Deeley for her dedication during 12 years service as our National Standard Bearer. Sharon Joyce (Hereford Branch) had kindly agreed to take on the role as National Standard Bearer with Tammy Kirkwood (Tamworth Branch) as her Deputy.

c. **Chief Clerk.** The Chairman presented a leaving gift to Denise Thomson and thanked her for all her dedication and hard work since she joined the Association in 2007.

13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Subject to confirmation, the next AGM would be held at the Victory Services Club on a Saturday in March or April 2013.

(Afternote: the next AGM will be held at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs on Sat 13 Apr 13).

Signed as a true record.

Chairman:

Date:



A fond farewell to Denise Thompson



Thanks to Maureen Deeley

Obituaries – their final salute

ALISON SCHOFIELD NEE SENIOR WRAC

5th May 2012
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Editor's Note: Alison is remembered with great fondness by all of us and we thought that a proper entry in the Lioness would be the tribute delivered by our Vice President at The Celebration of her Life Service held on 22nd May 2012 at St Thomas-on-The-Bourne, Farnham.

Alison's military career started in 1950 when she became a member of Durham University Officer Training Corps, beginning what was to be over 60 years of dedicated service. She passed the Regular Commissions Board in July 1952, started her basic military training at Guildford two months later and then went straight on to Hindhead to start her Officer Cadet training. Alison Senior was commissioned into the Women's Royal Army Corps on 21 July 1953 and was attached to Royal Signals with whom she became permanently employed for the rest of her Regular Service.



Proud to be in the WRAC

Her first posting was to 1 Anti Aircraft (Mixed) Signal Regt based in Orsett, Essex which is where she first met Lt John Schofield, Royal Signals. After 18 months, John left the Army and Alison was detached to Chickerell Camp near Weymouth; they continued their courtship over the next 3 years during which time Alison was posted to Eastern Command in Worthing and then to Rheindahlen in Germany where she joined 19 Army Group Signal Regt. It was during this tour that Alison and John were married in St Boniface's Church in Rheindahlen on 27 July 1957. Following their marriage

Alison offered her resignation, as women did in those days, but she was persuaded to stay in and was posted to Southern Command (Mixed) Signal Regiment based in Aldershot so that she could be near John who was working and living in London.



Scenes of Service Life

On 1 November 1959, Southern Command Signal Regt became 251 Signal Squadron and Alison became its first Officer Commanding; it is therefore so fitting that the Squadron has sent their representative here today. After her resignation from the Regular Army in 1960, Alison took up a TA Commission and was posted to 310 Battalion WRAC/TA based in Southampton, eventually

leaving the Service on the birth of her first child in 1962. However, this was not to be the last time she wore uniform because in the late 1980s and early 1990s she ran the Army section of the CCF at Pierrepont School where she was a part time member of staff.

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Despite being busy with her family and her teaching, Alison found time for her beloved WRAC. A life member of the WRAC Association since her retirement from Regular Service, she became the linchpin of the Aldershot Branch of the Association and served on the Committee of that Branch for over 25 years. When it had to close in 2003 due to declining membership, Alison was very disappointed and tried her hardest to see a way to save it. She invited Brigadier Noel Moss to one of the final meetings and he kindly invited members to join in with his local Signals Association Branch. A number of ladies did avail themselves of this arrangement and it worked very well. When a new Branch of our Association was set up in Winchester in 2005, Alison was delighted – and, in true Alison style, she volunteered to be its Chairman when a vacancy arose in 2008! At the AGM only 4 months ago, the Branch Secretary retired and Alison took over as Secretary, again to save the Branch from closure. Alison's devotion was rewarded when she was invited to become a Trustee of the WRAC Association and a member of its governing Council in July 2004. She was also a regular member of the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund Grants Committee. As expected, she was a diligent and dedicated Trustee and we missed her so much at Council meetings after she stood down in July 2010.

As well as her untiring commitment to the WRAC Association, she has also been a loyal member of the Aldershot Branch of the Royal Signals Association with John for the past 20 years. They attended meetings and outings whenever they could as well as being very hospitable to members at home in Grey Gables – their garden parties were legendary. However, once a year, she would put on her WRAC hat again and would chivvy a group of us into being the Lioness Quiz Team for the annual Royal Signals Association Quiz night. Alison was always our Captain and we deferred to her wealth of experience and great general knowledge. She was very strict and we were not allowed to discuss possible answers out loud in case our neighbours heard so we had to write our suggestions down for the rest of the team to read. The Lionesses won in 2006 and were always placed in the first 4 of approximately 25 teams. Three years ago we had to play in an exciting tie breaker for third place. Our question was "What age was Tony Blair when he became Prime Minister? Whilst 3 of us looked aghast at each other, Alison confidently declared: "44". The Lioness team came third! When we asked her how on earth she knew that, she smiled, gave that little shrug of the shoulders which she did so often and said, "I happened to hear it mentioned on the radio this morning!". The Lioness Team came first again last year so Alison's last appearance as a Lioness was a victorious one!

She was Assistant Editor of our Association magazine *Lioness* for many years and she will be fondly remembered for capturing Association Gatherings on camera – she was our Association unofficial

photographer. She took some lovely photos at our recent Grand Reunion even though she was feeling so poorly that weekend. The next edition of the *Lioness*, due out in September, will be a special Jubilee edition – this was Alison's idea from her bed in the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice only days before she passed away. Our Editor was so touched by this suggestion that the front cover of this Jubilee edition will be a photo directly from Alison's album of the WRAC Contingent on Coronation Day in June 1953 with Officer Cadet Senior on parade.

Alison's contribution to the WRAC Association over the years is immeasurable. I shall miss our regular telephone chats and meetings, there was always something to discuss and she used to keep me as Vice President on 'the straight and narrow'. She was gracious, astute and totally dependable, painstaking and conscientious in her duties and always fluent and measured in her responses whether written or spoken; she had the unique ability of being able to communicate at all levels. She was always great company and had a lovely mischievous sense of humour. Above all, she was a staunch friend to so many and we will all recall her generosity, thoughtfulness and kindness. On one occasion Alison visited me in Guildford bringing flowers from Aldershot Branch as I had recently been in hospital. She drove up to my house in her brand new Renault cabriolet, hood down, looking every inch the chic, elegant lady that she was. She never lost that image....and it will be my abiding memory of her.

Alison was a very special person and a great contributor; an amazing woman who dedicated her life to the service of others. As Vice President of the WRAC Association I consider Alison to be totally unique and completely irreplaceable; we shall not see her like again. If I could give a 'Lifetime Achievements Award' to any member of our Association it would go to Alison.

Thank you, Alison, for touching all our lives along the way and for the wonderful legacy you have left us – we will endeavour to continue to uphold your very high standards within the WRAC Association. We will certainly be the poorer without you.

Our Corps Motto, 'Suaviter in Modo, Fortiter in Re' – Gentle in Manner, Resolute in Deed, epitomises Alison. I cannot think of a more fitting epitaph.

Alison, we salute you!

Sue Westlake

PAM HASTINGS NÉE BOWLES ATS/WRAC
6th March 2012

Editor's Note: Alison Schofield visited Pam only a few weeks before Pam died. They served together for a period of time during their careers.

In Pam's own words:

My father served as a Captain in the First World War and won the Military Cross and in the Second World War he was in the Home Guard.

I joined the ATS in 1940 which became the WRAC in

1949, and served for 18 years (hoping to serve 22 years to get my pension!). After I was married I had a special arrangement which meant I could live at home as I was by then with the Territorial Army, not all good news as I continually had to work evenings and weekends. On becoming pregnant I was immediately discharged, quite a difference from today!

I was in France in 1945 a couple of weeks after 'D' Day, arriving off a landing craft and walking through the sea onto the beach. We lived in tents with no ablutions or latrines for a little while and on the day these were ready for use they were bombed!

I carried on into Germany after France and Belgium and was in charge, with 8 other ranks, of the women's compound of civilian internment camp for 500 women near Hamburg. Some of them were hard line Nazis, others were really nice people! As a Sergeant, I was the highest ranking woman in that part of Germany in the allied forces.

Eventually I was posted back to the UK until I was discharged. I have been a member of the Royal British Legion since 1949.

Pam married in 1956. Before retirement she worked as a School Cook at a primary school in Chobham. She was also an active member of the local WI. In 1993, after the death of her husband, she moved to France to be close to



*Sgt P Bowles
21 Army Group, BIA, 1945*

her daughter Sue and her grand children. Pam was very active in local events in Fontainebleau and regularly organised church events and was a poppy seller every year.

*Sharon Hastings
(Daughter)*

MARGARET WALKER ATS

19th March 2012

Margaret Walker was a valued member of the Dumfries Branch. 'Gentle in Manner, Resolute in Deed' certainly comes to mind when I think of Margaret! She had been a member 'along with the other stalwarts of Dumfries' since our Branch started and had religiously attended all functions till poor health a few years ago prevented her from doing so. Our secretary, Dorah Mundell had kept in touch keeping Margaret up to date with branch news. Margaret had done her War Service in the ATS working at times on secret work that she never divulged to anyone. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.



Margaret receiving her Certificate of Appreciation from the Vice President in October 2003

Sue Marcroft BEM

W/107435 LAVINIA BURGHAM "VINNIE" ATS

29th March 2011

Vinnie volunteered for the ATS in 1941 and after training at Neville's Cross in Durham was based at ISRB (SOE) Station Villa, the Bontex Knitting Mills in Wembley, for much of the war where she worked on the construction of wireless and other equipment for agents in occupied Europe. Like many women of her time she found the army offered her not only comradeship but a freedom to explore her potential. In many ways, these were the happiest years of her life. Duty and a disabled mother brought her home after the war and she always had a nagging regret that she had turned down the job she had been offered in London with the Philco wireless factory and had said goodbye to her many friends. Vinnie was not the only member of her family to serve her country: her father had been seriously injured in the First World War - less than a month before the armistice and only a few weeks after her birth; he was one of the many people

treated by the pioneering Harold Gillies at the Queen's Hospital, Sidcup.



"Vinnie" in uniform

Vinnie spent many subsequent years working in various shops and newsagents in her native North East and was a familiar figure to several generations of villagers in Boldon Colliery and Whitburn. She had a real love of people and was never without friends, creating her own family from the many people she met. She had an adventurous outlook, learning to swim in her 60s, and loved to travel – for her ninetieth birthday and with failing health and mobility she made a sea crossing to Amsterdam and was determined to leave her wheelchair to negotiate a steep ladder into a boat so she could enjoy a tour of the canals. Only in her latter years as more details of SOE became public did Vinnie allow herself to talk about her wartime experiences – her Release Book says nothing other than that she was "NCO in charge of Dining Room".

She joined her local Sunderland branch of the WRAC association and was a stalwart member until dwindling numbers forced it to close, always looking forward to the next reunion. Vinnie had a number of health problems in her later years facing up to breast cancer at 80 and fighting it off, laughing at the strange jelly-like consistency of her prosthesis and spending most of her time comforting the younger women who were in hospital around her. She remained feisty and independent into her early 90s, but increasing frailty led eventually to long weeks in hospital and ultimately to nursing care for the last few weeks of her life. Threatened with the possible loss of her leg owing to diabetic complications she asked, not entirely in jest, for

her legs to be replaced by the spring blades used by disabled sprinter Oscar Pistorius so she could get around again as she did as a young woman. She was ultimately spared the operation as she declined rapidly, facing her last few difficult days with fortitude, and died peacefully in her sleep on 29th March 2011.

*Tim Dixon
One of her many "nephews"*

EDNA PATRICIA SANDERSON née ROYLE ATS
20th March 2012



Edna Patricia Royle ATS

My mother, Edna Sanderson née Royle died suddenly on the 20th March 2012. Edna served with the ATS and was a proud former member of 489 Heavy Ack-Ack Battery, County Durham. A relative latecomer to ATS reunions (she first attended at Imphal Barracks, York in 95-96) Edna was able to re-kindle many old friendships, which she treasured until the day she died.

Edna's long association with the Army started with the ATS in 1945 and continued long after. Edna met Les Sanderson whilst serving and they later married. Les served as a 'Gunner' for 38 years, from 1945 – 1983, retiring in Cyprus as the RQMS of Episkopi Garrison. After a few years of retirement in sunny Nicosia, they returned to the UK and happily settled in Edna's home town of Manchester.

A much loved and cherished mother, Edna leaves behind her three children: Lt Commander Peter Sanderson RN, Lt Colonel David Sanderson MBE DL and her daughter Carol.

David Sanderson

MEMORIES OF MAJOR ANNE HOLLOWAY

26th February 2012

We first met in early 1965. I had been posted to Chester as my first appointment as a very green and shiny new Second Lieutenant in the OC. The OC was a very old, but was probably only in her forties! She was posted elsewhere in early 1965, and Anne arrived as my new boss. We immediately hit it off, and it was the beginning of a life long friendship.

Our paths diverged later in the year, as I was posted to Germany and Anne to Singapore in 1966. We kept in touch by letter, but I am indebted to Audrey Smith and Sue Bateman, for anecdotes about their time with Anne in Singapore. One evening, Anne collapsed in Audrey's room demanding alcohol, the detail of why came from an email Sue sent to me:

'Anne was Duty Officer one night and was called out from her quarters as one of the servicewomen, who had been on parade that morning, had gone into labour! We all went around watching the girl's waistline, and in lightweight summer uniforms with a belt there was nowhere to hide a bump. How she managed to go full term without showing was amazing. However, she had left it far too late to get to the Military Hospital, and was producing this baby at speed. The MO lived nearby, and Anne called him from a dinner party. He delivered a healthy baby boy who was immediately called Nicholas, because the Doctor had arrived in the nick of time! Anne was present throughout and related that as a farmer's daughter she had seen many animals give birth, and that it wasn't all that different for humans!



Major Anne Holloway, WRAC

She handed over to me next morning, saying quietly that a new baby had arrived during the night, and she was going to get some sleep instead of going to the office. I

thought it was a bit odd, and assumed one of the Coy's pet dogs had produced a puppy, so asked what colour it was. Anne replied it was white and told me the weight, but had to elaborate when she realised I had the wrong end of that particular stick (the OC and the CSM could not believe their ears when given the news).

Anne was very proud of her newly permed hair when she arrived in Singapore, but unfortunately it was affected by the humidity. The problem hair-perm took ages to grow out, and she kept having it cut to get rid of the frizz. A group of us occasionally went down in the warm evenings to the street market in Orchard Road known as the Amah's Market, where we wandered along a road bright with coloured lights and colourful stalls selling everything under the sun. The theme tunes from Born Free and Dr Zhivago were always playing on the latest reel-to-reel tape recorders or Danette record players, encouraging us to buy, combined with the cicadas throbbing and Chinese or Malay food cooking on half oil drums on the pavement. It was a magic and memorable posting, heady with sounds and scents in the mid 1960s, now lost in the sanitised Singapore of today.

We served together again in 1968 when we were both at the WRAC Centre in Guildford. I was training recruits, and Anne was in charge of all the catering for the Centre, which must have numbered over 400 people. She had trained in catering at Bath before joining the Corps, so was returning to her first love. At the time Anne had a very beautiful, but unreliable Sunbeam Alpine, and I can remember her returning to Camp one Sunday evening, followed by an AA man. She was coming from home in Somerset, and had called out the AA so often, that he decided to follow her to her destination, as it would save time!

My memory of dates is a bit hazy, but I visited Pibditch House several times with Anne, and stayed with her parents. I saw my first Aga there, and was appalled when her Mother told me they put the baby lambs in it. Seeing the expression on my face, she reassured me that it was only to keep them warm, not to cook them!

Humphrey appeared on the scene around now as well. For those of you who do not know, Humphrey was a large, strong and determined Bassett hound. Anne now had a snazzy 2 seater TR4. Humph loved this - it had one seat for the driver, and one seat for him. This was fine until Anne wanted to take a passenger, and I had many battles with him as to who should sit in the seat. I won, but only just. Humphrey went to live with Anne's parents when she was posted where he could not go.

I left the WRAC in 1970, and came to work in London. Anne's health was clearly causing problems, but it was not until she came to see a specialist at Millbank Military Hospital in London, that MS was diagnosed. She rang me at the office, and I was shattered. The Army was very good to Anne, and kept her in service so that she qualified for her full pension, being careful as to where she was posted.

We went on several package holidays in the 70's. The first was to Corfu, and although I knew how easily Anne made friends, even I was astonished with the speed with

which she managed to click with the bus driver who picked us up from the airport! He asked her out, then realizing she had me in tow, said 'I bring a friend for your friend'. We agreed to go. It was the first and only time that I have been on a date in a 52 seater coach!

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We went again to Corfu, and then to Corsica, Tenerife and Yugoslavia. The last was in the year of the sugar shortage in the UK, and I remember bringing back bags of it so that my mother could make jam. This greatly amused the locals, and I am sure I would be accused of drug smuggling now.

Anne's mobility had deteriorated after Yugoslavia and we could not cope with going abroad, but decide to have a week in the Borders. Anne loved Scotland, and had worked there before joining up. I rang hotels from the AA Disabled Guide and Anne wrote to confirm the bookings. I had been very clear that we needed wheelchair access, and they were all happy that they had the appropriate facilities. We left a trail of chipped paint and splintered wood wherever we went, as if you could actually get the wheelchair in many rooms, you could not manoeuvre it once you were inside. We managed and had a lot of chuckles.

I visited Anne a lot after she had left the WRAC and settled in her lovely bungalow. We went from there for a break at an MS Nursing Home in Exmouth, for a week, which although it was all beautifully adapted for disabled guests, was not nearly as much fun as our trip to Scotland. We also had many lunches out in pubs, both from the bungalow, and while she was still able to, from various nursing homes.

I was particularly pleased that Anne was able to come to our wedding outside Bath in 1981. She came with 2 friends from Chiselborough and it really made our day. She gave us a splendid set of saucepans as a wedding present and they are still in daily use.

I know Anne will be greatly missed by everyone that knew her. She had a lovely outgoing personality and a wonderful sense of humour. Her last years were heart breaking, but I am sure she is up in heaven and now smiling down on us. I count myself very lucky to have had such a wonderful friend.

Pam Hedgecoe née Longley

ELSIE GERALDINE ROWE

(Known as Deenie)
13th April 2012

Deenie served in the ATS from 1943-44 and had enjoyed life to the full and continued to do so until shortly before her death at the age of 91. She was a Life Member of the Bournemouth Branch WRAC Association.

Her funeral at St George's Chapel, Wimborne Minister on 13 April 2012 was attended by her daughter Janyce Coles and many of her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Val Wright



Deenie Rowe

KATHLEEN VERONICA JACKSON née SIDEY

(known as "Nelly")
29th March 2012

Kathleen passed away, after a short illness, aged 92 on 29 March 2012.

Joining the ATS in 1941 and stationed at Shoeburyness Experimental (XP), she served as a batwoman to a Commandant for a short period then asked to be transferred to the operational side of duty. In 1945 she met G T Jackson (1st Lincs Fusiliers) in Southend on Sea in a café. Leaving the ATS in January 1946, they married in Leigh, Lancs and lived there until 1960. Because of ill health of herself and second son (asthma) the family moved to East Anglia. They moved again in 1969 to be nearer to their employment, where she worked until 1979. George died in 1989.

A Jackson (Son)

MRS IRENE DREW née LYON W/305949

ATS/WRAC
17th May 2012

Irene enlisted into the ATS on 28 August 1944 in Liverpool as a Telephonist. I am a bit scanty on details of her Service but I do know that she served in Germany in 1947 with amongst others Terri Goff.

It was in Germany that she met Eric Drew who was serving in the RAF. They went on to marry and had 2

lovely daughters and eventually a beautiful grand-daughter, Georgina. Irene trained as a teacher in the 1970s. Both she and Eric were very much involved with the RAF Association and Irene continued to be involved after Eric sadly died.

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Irene Drew ATS

She was very involved in the WRAC Association in Southport and when that Branch closed continued in the Liverpool Branch as a very active member. The ATS Dinner Club was dear to her heart and, until 2 years ago, she annually joined the ATS girls, firstly marching at the Cenotaph in London and when age began to take its toll, at Westminster Abbey for the Service of Remembrance. She was very sad when she could no longer make the trip. Irene readily joined in any Branch activities and regularly travelled to Chester with us to meet friends there.

She will be sadly missed by her friends and comrades both ATS and WRAC. Rest in Peace Irene – we salute you.

Pat Brown

**W/228539 AGNES MUIRHEAD FLEMING
(NANCY) ATS**

31st January 2012

I write to advise you of the death of my above-named Aunt on 31 January 2012 aged 89. She was a Life

Member of the WRAC Association. Nancy served in the ATS from November 1942 to June 1946 in the UK, Belgium and Germany. I enclose a photograph of Nancy taken in the Montgomery Club, Brussels in 1945.

David Robertson



Nancy Fleming

BARBARA FRANCIS DAWSON WRAC

20th May 2012



Barbara in recent times

Barbara was Chairman/Treasurer of Harrogate Branch for many years and was the linchpin of the Branch.

Barbara was born in King Edward Hospital, Subiaco, Western Australia on 7 October 1931. As a teenager she used to visit her Uncle Jack Dawson and family at York in Western Australia, and she would get involved with all the farm work. She was especially close to her cousin John Dawson and used to spend time with him and the family. In her early 20s, Barbara went with a friend by boat for a 12 month holiday to the UK and never returned to live in Australia.

During her early years she wasn't able to visit Australia very often, but in later years was able to make regular visits.

After first arriving in England in 1958, Barbara stayed with Uncle Alex and Aunt Lyn Hendry in North East England. Barbara, I'm told, was like a big sister to their sons Douglas and Alasdair. After Alex died, Barbara would often take holidays with Aunt Lynn.

Barbara's first job in the UK was with ICI Billingham and then she went on to work for Legal and General in London and Leeds before she retired from paid employment. In her time Barbara also spent time with the Territorial Army as a Driving Instructor; and was also keenly involved with the St John Ambulance in both London and Australia, thereby being able to share in big events such as the Last Night of the Proms, Operas and so on.

In the 60s she was able to take time out to travel extensively through Europe in a pickup truck with a home-made tent on the back to sleep in – of which she was extremely proud.

As we talked about Barbara, and some of the narratives and experiences that make up her story, we were able to paint a wonderful picture in our hearts and minds of the sort of person Barbara was. We smiled about how, in Barbara's absence, her handwriting was once analysed – the expert declaring Barbara to be: reliable, honest, spiritual, helpful, someone who would not trample on other people to get where she needed to go. How right they were!

**W/8087 WINIFRED FRANCES (DUSTY)
HUGHES née GOODBODY
28th June 2012**

Editor's Note: Terry Hughes kindly sent in a copy of the Order of Service and the coverage in the Basingstoke Gazette from 12th July 2012. I have used the article to write this obituary.

Sadly my Mother passed away in Basingstoke Hospital on 28 June 2012. She was immensely proud of her military service. She joined up on 9 September 1938 and left for family reasons in December 1943. She trained at Hornsey Drill Hall North London (October 1938 to September 1939) and served at Central Ammunition Depot, Bramley in Hampshire 1939 to 1943. The cremation service was on Friday 13 July 2012 at Basingstoke Crematorium at 1315 hours.

There was never a dull moment in the life of Winifred Frances Hughes, who has peacefully died at Basingstoke

Hospital after a short illness. The mother of seven sons and grandmother of six, she was described by her son Stuart as "a lovely mum". Hailing from Tottenham, London, Winifred Frances Goodbody, as she was called then, signed up on the day King George VI proclaimed that the ATS was to be formed. Known to friends as Frances, she was 19 when she signed up on 9th September 1938, with her friend Stella Marks to offer their services as war was brewing in Europe. Shortly after war was declared on 3rd September 1939, Frances was posted to the Central Ammunition Depot in Bramley. At the camp she worked as a storewoman in the HM Stationery Office before transferring to the Ammunition School of Instruction. She left 3 years later when she married her late husband Robert, who was an instructor at the school.



"Dusty" Hughes

One happy memory that stayed with Frances was when the King's sister, Princess Mary, visited the camp and was amused by Frances' nickname of Dusty. After the war, Frances was stationed with her husband in Germany, Egypt and Cyprus with her growing family before returning to CAD Bramley in 1962 and moving to the Clarke Estate in 1968. The prolific letter writer, who had pen pals all over the world, also collected money for the Deep Sea Fishermen, knitted blankets for British Red Cross, and was an ardent supporter of the Royal British Legion, collecting poppy appeal money for 27 years for the Sherborne St John Branch. Frances was a founding member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Winklebury and the Winklebury Scout Group.

Terry and Linda Hughes

ACTON Mrs Molly, née O'Callaghan, of Cardiff on 7 Jun 12, ATS

BARD Mrs Eileen, née Hempstead, Long Melford on 4 Nov 12, ATS

BARNETT Miss Patricia, of Clackmannanshire on 29 Feb 12, ATS

BECKETT Mrs Ivy, née Finch, of Felixstowe on 15 Feb 12, ATS

BIRCH Miss Mildred, of Melbourne on 23 Jun 12, ATS

BUGGINS Mrs Susan, née Booth, of Ruislip, ATS

CALVERT Mrs Primrose, née McNicol, of York on 10 Apr 12

DAWSON Miss Barbara, of Harrogate on 20 May 12, WRAC

DEELEY Mrs Maureen, née Terry, of Birmingham on 25 Aug 12, WRAC

DRAKE Mrs Ruth, of Shillingstone on 17 Apr 12, ATS

DREW Mrs Irene, née Lyon, of Merseyside on 17 May 12, ATS

EDNEY Miss Connie, of Birmingham on 27 Jun 12, ATS

FLEMING Miss Agnes, of Haywards Heath on 31 Jan 12, ATS

GIGNER Mrs Ena, of Spalding on 13 Jan 12, ATS

HASTINGS Mrs Pamela, née Bowles, of Fontainebleu, ATS/WRAC

HORNE Margaret

HUGHES Mrs Winifred, née Goodbody, of Basingstoke on 28 Jun 12, ATS

HUMPHREYS Mrs Lilian, née Davies, of Rugby, WRAC

JACKSON Mrs Nelly, née Sidey, of Manningtree on 29 Mar 12, ATS

McKIE Miss Heather of Castle Douglas on 3 Aug 12, WRAC

MIDDLETON Miss Joan, of Salisbury, on 5 Jun 12, ATS

MORRIS Miss Janet, of Falkirk, ATS

MORTIMER Mrs Brenda, née Foss, of Warminster on 27 Jan 12, WRAC

NEEDHAM Mrs Vanessa, née Wightwick, of Cromer on 5 Mar 12, WRAC

PENFOLD Mrs Lilian, née Cowshall, of Eastbourne on 20 Feb 12, ATS

POPE Mrs Gladys, née Jones, of Mere on 23 Jul 12, WRAC

ROWE Mrs Elsie, née Radford, of Bournemouth on 14 Apr 12, ATS

TAYLOR Mrs Ruth, of Farnborough, on 18 Mar 12, ATS

TAYLOR Mrs Stella, of Newbury, on 28 Jan 12, ATS

THOMAS Mrs Cecilia, née Hall-Patch, of Bourne End on 1 Feb 12, ATS

SCHOFIELD Mrs Alison, née Senior, of Farnham, on 5 May 12, WRAC

SPURR Peggy, of Godalming, ATS/WRAC

STEPHENSON Mrs Joyce, née Eaton, of Leicester on 21 May 12, ATS

WARD Mrs, of Leicester on 21 May 12, ATS

WINTERTON Miss Dorothy, of Los Angeles, on 8 Dec 12, ATS

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