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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

Assembled Standards 17th October 2011

Back Cover

In Pensioners' Visit to the Red Arrows

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Editorial



It would seem that the production of the *Lioness* is never going to be straight forward. For this edition we have worked around a rather inconvenient flood at Worthy Down which meant that the offices and the computers were effectively out of bounds of a number of weeks. My thanks go to Denise for "rescuing" all of the *Lioness* files

and pictures. Without her actions this edition would have been very thin indeed!

I am very pleased with the amount of Branch News being submitted and the quality of the accompanying photographs is on the up. Where possible I have published the majority of the photographs as I know they are at the heart of the *Lioness*.

This edition is timed to arrive on your door steps the week before the Grand Reunion and I have no doubt that it is going to be a great weekend. Also, and as the Vice President advertises, the Service of Rededication takes place on the 20th May and the proforma is enclosed in the central pages of this edition; book early as numbers are limited.

The financial position of the *Lioness* has been discussed for a while now and I am very grateful to those 20 Branches and a hand full of members who have made donations in the past 12 months. Each *Lioness* costs

£5.10 to produce and each member of the Association, whether on a Life or Annual membership, receives 2 copies per year; thus the *Lioness* has run at a loss for some years now. I have undertaken to review the publishing and print costs this year but in the meantime, I would ask all members to consider whether they can make a donation, however small, to the *Lioness*. If you do feel that you can and are a UK tax payer please complete the Gift Aid Form in this edition and sent it to the WRAC Association along with your donation (cheques made payable to the WRAC Association and marked for *Lioness*). On a reassuring note the *Lioness* will continue, both in hard copy and on the WRAC Association website, for as long as there is a membership out there to read it.

Finally my thanks go to Noreen for her excellent typing and to all members who have contributed to this edition.

Ali Brown

Message from the Vice President



Unbelievably, it is now 20 years since the WRAC disbanded and the Association had the luxury of being able to rely entirely on the support and infrastructure of a living Corps. Fortunately, it has managed to run seamlessly and very successfully since 1992 due to continuing civil service funding of our Regimental Secretary and Chief Clerk's posts, accommodation and administrative

support at Worthy Down under the auspices of Regimental HQ AGC and because of the sterling work of so many volunteers. However, as we approach this 20th Anniversary we have reached a watershed in the Association's evolution whereby we need to move forward in a more efficient, independent and flexible manner keeping abreast of the many legal and regulatory requirements that are imposed on Charities today. We will lose civil service funding for our Chief Clerk's post in April and we may not have the accommodation and administrative support facilities at Worthy Down beyond March 2015. We are therefore now entering a period of transition whereby we will be implementing new electronic working practices across banking, accounting, grant recipient and membership databases, website and shared working environments (intranet) that will not confine us to a single office location in the future. Our contingency planning will ensure that everything will be in place to move the Association into a non MOD environment when the Association's operations have to be entirely self funded. I must, however, quickly reassure you that you should not notice any difference in the service you are used to receiving from Association HQ, indeed, you should begin to see quite soon the benefits associated with these new working practices.

Moving on, I would now like to thank all members of the

Association who came and supported Brigadier Anne Field's Memorial Service at the Guards' Chapel in October. I am sure that you will agree that it was a very memorable occasion and it was wonderful to see the Association 'out in force' to pay their respects. I was very proud to see you all there and in the special mention of the Standard Bearers who were magnificent ambassadors for us; they looked the part and did a superb job.

You will recall that we were approached several years ago by St Mary's Church in Guildford with the suggestion that its Lady Chapel might become our Memorial Chapel. However, progress was very slow and the Rector was very unhappy that he could not move the project along. I therefore decided to approach Guildford Cathedral, where we already have a commemorative window, with a view to renewing our links there. I wrote to the Dean and explained that Guildford was our spiritual home and outlined both the ATS and WRAC connections over many years with the Cathedral. The Dean invited the Reverend Susan Wing, our Honorary Padre, and myself to a meeting last April and since then we have been in negotiations. I am pleased to tell you that as a result the Association has been invited to join the Mattins congregation for a Service of Rededication on Sunday 20th May at 11.30hrs. During this service,

the QMAAC and ATS Standards (currently held in the Garrison Church at Worthy Down) will be officially 'laid up' in the Cathedral Gallery alongside other Regimental Standards. It is hoped that a Memorial Book and Cabinet will also be dedicated at some stage and be a permanent fixture within the Cathedral. I am hoping that, once again, our valiant Standard Bearers will be able to attend and take part. Following the Service there will be Lunch for all Association members in the Cathedral Refectory which has a maximum capacity to seat 200 diners. I therefore urge you to fill in the proforma in this *Lioness* at the earliest opportunity – it will be a case of 'first come, first served', so make sure you are in the first 200! Finally, I look forward to seeing many of you very soon at the Grand Reunion in Bristol. By the time this *Lioness* reaches you there will be just days to go.... I know we will all have a great time as always and my only sadness is that the weekend goes by far too quickly! However, my thoughts turn to those of you who are unable to attend for whatever reason – I just want you to know that we will be thinking about you and that we will raise a glass to you and other absent friends.

So, here's to 2012, our Grand Reunion, our Service of Rededication and our Patron's Diamond Jubilee!

Sue Westlake

WRAC ASSOCIATION FLEECEES

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

Each fleece costs £25 which includes postage and packaging.

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

If you want to check the actual sizes before placing an order, ring 01962 887570



Articles of Interest

MEMORIAL SERVICE OF BRIGADIER

ANNE FIELD CB CBE
17th October 2012

Rosemary Warne

It was a very successful event with Anne remembered and the Corps profile raised along with that of the ABF. The turn out encouraged by the Association was extremely pleasing with WRAC, ATS and AGC members in their numbers showing the history of service up to today in style. The stewards were real quality individuals who were very efficient, helpful and fabulously smart.



WRAC Association National and Branch Standards with the Aden Veterans Standards at the Guards Chapel

I was very pleased with the turnout by the male military, nearly all responded to my round robin but there were even more than that, including the RAG, as they all knew Annie. The family too were brilliant and I thought that both Janet and Hannah's contributions were beautifully delivered and apt. George was a triumph with his reminiscences.

It was a great pleasure to put together the service order and sheet, the seating plan and the obituary for the Telegraph and subsequently for the *Lioness*, as well as Lord G's Tribute. I used the Corps memorandums of the time and the notes compiled for the Times by Anne, as well as some history notes on world events and personal knowledge of herself. I tried to be as accurate as possible.

Sue did a great job getting a good deal from the printers, and negotiating with ABF for their assistance as well as sorting out the Mess and the Grenadier Guards admin for gates trumpets, etc. plus meeting with the Rev Clinton and Mess staff and Lord G. I thought her Tribute was well written and well delivered. I hope she was proud of herself. She certainly got good Corps support and the Standard bearers were excellent, both Corps and Aden Veterans. Sgt Fred Barret took control of them at the church. Sue Wing was of course just as she always is, a real dear and it was lovely that she was an important part of the Service.

The party afterwards was a really good warm and happy event, even if Sue and I wondered if we had all the food. The noise level was high and the meeting and greeting was a joy. So many people that one had not seen for so long and new friends and acquaintances.

In all a good combined action and a very good occasion for remembrance.



Views of the Day – submitted by Pat Pritchett

Again what a good show by all, on such a lovely day for Brigadier Annie.



Leicester and Notts Branch



Leicester and Notts Branch with Brigadier N Moffat CBE and Colonel R Davie AGC Regimental Colonel

BRIGADIER ANNE FIELD CB CBE – EULOGY

Editor's Note: For those that could not attend the Service the Eulogy delivered by our Vice President is printed below.

Forty years ago last month I started my military career at the Women's Royal Army Corps College in Camberley. Halfway through the 8 month Officer Cadet Training course the Commandant changed, and so did our lives! Colonel Anne Field had arrived and didn't we know it! One of my first and abiding memories of her was during a practical exercise where we became Platoon Commanders for the day. We were given our own office and telephone and were given problems to solve throughout the day. I was grappling with a flood in the cookhouse when the Commandant arrived and she sat quietly in the corner of my office, observing. She watched me struggle for some minutes as I ordered the cooks to brush out the excess water and mop up the floor before she intervened and said 'Officer Cadet Westlake, use your common sense, wouldn't it be a good idea to turn the water off at the mains first!' That was a defining moment for me – her direct, no-nonsense approach taught me that she was someone who was not to be trifled with! For the next 40 years Anne Field featured in my life in one guise or another – as Commandant, Director, Deputy Controller Commandant WRAC, Deputy Colonel Commandant AG Corps and as Vice President of the WRAC Association. Then, when I became Vice President of the Association, she gave me her unstinting and loyal support as a Life Vice President. I last spoke to her 2 weeks before she died when she asked for an update on the Association – typically, she never took her finger off the pulse!

Anne joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in September 1947, was commissioned in December 1948 and 2 months later, in February 1949, the WRAC was formed and she began, what was to be, a lifelong commitment to the Corps. She had a very varied career spanning 35 years. Her Regimental Duty and Staff appointments took her to Singapore, Aden, Germany and Scotland. She attended the WRAC Staff College at Frimley Park and on completion of this course was posted to the Staff Duties Branch in the Old War Office; this was acknowledged as a 'career posting' in those days

and clearly implied that she was being groomed as a 'high flyer' which of course proved to be the case.

Promoted full Colonel in 1971, Anne became Commandant of the WRAC College at Camberley where she was responsible for Regular and TA Officer Cadet training as well as Warrant Officer and NCO training. She then moved to HQ UKLF at Wilton in 1975 as Deputy Director – she was now 'the lady in waiting'.

Anne achieved the pinnacle of her career in June 1977 when she was promoted Brigadier and became Director WRAC and Honorary ADC to Her Majesty the Queen. She was then able to put her experience into practice by encouraging and actively moving towards the fuller integration of women into the various Army Corps and Regiments with whom they were employed. As Director, she became increasingly concerned that married women were leaving the Service unnecessarily, a loss which she stemmed through the simple solution of collocating couples' postings. She also backed the trial of mixed platoons with Infantry Battalions and the Royal Artillery. The Glosters volunteered to be the first Infantry battalion to take part in this trial – despite many sceptics it was a resounding success and the rest, as they say, is history.

She retired in April 1982 and was awarded a Military CB. She continued to be a staunch supporter of the WRAC after retirement and gave it and its members her considerable and lasting support. She served first as Deputy Controller Commandant and then as Deputy Colonel Commandant of the AG Corps. She was also Chairman of the ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund, Chairman of the WRAC Association Council, Vice President of the WRAC Association and, finally, a Life Vice President from 1999. In 1995 she received a Civil CBE for her services to the WRAC Association. She was Patron of the ATS Dinner Club for 15 years; sadly, this Club held its final Lunch 2 weeks ago and her absence was keenly felt.

Although Anne was sad, as we all were, that the WRAC was to be disbanded, she realised it was inevitable and the only way forward for Army women. She therefore embraced the formation of the AG Corps with optimism and good grace, going straight in as a Deputy Colonel Commandant. Four months after the formation of this new Corps, I was posted to Germany as the SO1 Female Focus to monitor the integration of women into their new Corps and Regiments. It was a baptism of fire for me – just 8 days after my arrival in Rheindahlen, Brigadier Anne arrived for her first official visit as Deputy Colonel Commandant to AGC Personnel – we spent the next fortnight on the road visiting units across BAOR and Berlin enjoying the hospitality of various distinguished Commanders en route. As you can imagine, we had a 'Ball'. She enjoyed meeting members of the newly formed AG Corps and although she was obviously interested in how the women were faring under integration, she spent as much time talking to the soldiers as she did to the servicewomen. But that was hardly surprising as she was always at ease with soldiers – one of the boys in fact! They appreciated her quick wit, her banter and great sense of humour.

Brigadier Anne loved all sports but, in particular, Horse Racing, Tennis, Rugby and Cricket, never missing annual

trips to Ascot, Wimbledon, Twickenham and Lords. During her career she represented the Army at Inter-Service level in both Tennis and Hockey. She never missed the Army and Inter-Service Tennis Championships – and her picnics for the supporters of the Army Women's team were legendary. One of the Army ladies veterans wrote to me recently and said 'we did so miss her at the Inter-Services this year. She was such a loyal supporter and always brought the team a bottle of Fizz to either use for a celebration or, indeed, to drown our sorrows!'

Most of you in the congregation today will have your own particular memories of Anne Field – she was a formidable character, outspoken even, and certainly never lost for words, yet she was always fair and showed no favours; one knew exactly where they stood with her. She was admired by her male colleagues and superiors for her tenacity, steely determination and forthright manner. Generals she had known since they were Subalterns received the benefit of her advice, whether or not they wanted it, but always delivered with a mischievous twinkle in her eye. Those WRAC Officers who were at our Corps Farewell Dinner at the Guildhall in 1992 will never forget her rousing speech when she turned to the Adjutant General and said 'AG, you don't know what you are letting yourself in for!' A tremendous roar of approval went up from the assembled gathering.

She was a superb hostess – many of you here today will have enjoyed her generous hospitality at some stage whether at her flat in Chiswick or at her favourite club, 'The RAG'. She was an accomplished cook and her famous 'Brigadier Anne Field's Keswick Fruit Cake' appeared in The New York Times recipe section in October 1992 – I am told it is quite excellent. She enjoyed nothing more than good food, fine wines, entertaining companions and lively discussion.

She never missed a WRAC Association Grand Reunion – she attended the last one, held in Blackpool, 2 years ago. We stood side by side as the Parade went past and we took the salute together. She could barely see and needed her trusted umbrella cum walking stick to hold her steady – but she was there! In her last year her underlying and debilitating health problems sorely tested her. Yet she dealt with failing sight and other frailties with her usual strength of character and determination; she was a very brave and courageous lady to the end.

Army women, of all cap badges and ranks, owe Brigadier Anne a huge debt of gratitude. Her significant contribution and example over more than 60 years will have contributed substantially to changing attitudes and to the equality of opportunity that the women of today take for granted. Our serving personnel are honoured to be here today in uniform to represent serving women in recognition, in thanks and in memory of such a strong and highly respected female role model.

And how she would have loved today – surrounded by her beloved family, friends and colleagues – with a party afterward in the Mess too! To those closest to her she was an outstandingly loyal and trusted friend whose kindness and generosity knew no bounds. She lived life to the full and touched so many lives along the way. An

absolute legend to those who knew her – she will be remembered with gratitude and much affection.

Brigadier Anne – we salute you!

DINING OUT OF BRIGADIER N P MOFFAT CBE DIRECTOR AGC(SPS)

Lieutenant Colonel Price-Jones AGC(SPS)

(Editor's Note: Brigadier Moffat has just been appointed to the WRAC Association Council in the role of Life Vice President).

On Thursday 5th January 2012 Brigadier N P Moffat CBE was dined out as Director AGC(SPS). Only time will tell if the Brigadier will be the last ex-WRAC Director of the AGC(SPS). However, if I were a betting woman, I would bet she will be. Some of you that know me might think that I could be a future Director but alas no, the Brigadier has already briefed me that won't happen – there was no explanation as to why, or rather no explanation I was happy with. Anyway, Brigadier Nicky assumed the appointment of Director AGC(SPS) in February 2009 following a tour as Colonel CSS MCM Division, APC Glasgow. It may be fair to say that the Branch, on her assumption, was not necessarily held in high regard. However, those who know Brigadier Nicky will realise that such a view did not endure for too long. As a Branch we are much fitter, focused professionally and proud to wear the SPS cap-badge and, above all, we have a clear direction of travel. Those we serve in the Army also recognise our worth as a Branch which really does give immense job satisfaction.

150 officers attended the Dinner which is no mean feat when one considers that the dinner took place the first week after returning from Christmas leave. The evening kicked off with Brigadier Moffat introducing the guests, namely CGS, AG, DG(Pers), MS, GOC ARRC, DG Capability, ACGS and last but, by no means least, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Sue Westlake. On completion of the introductions we were delighted to see Pie & Chips on the menu – I think the less fitter officers dining were somewhat disappointed that the menu was indeed a play on words and the food was more sophisticated than your usual cafe pie & chips ... much to my relief as one never knows what they put into such pies. Hunger satisfied and all obligatory toasts completed, it was time for Brigadier Moffat to deliver more speeches but, of course, this was now the time for her leaving speech and one got a real sense of an end of an era. Rather touchingly, she was donning the late Brigadier Meechie's miniature CBE, paying homage to an outstanding past Director WRAC. We are, of course, well aware that Brigadier Meechie did much to 'smooth the road' for WRAC officers who followed in her footsteps and Brigadier Moffat is acutely aware of the work done before her. Of note, there were at least 12 ex-WRAC officers attending the dining out – one could call it a very mini-WRAC reunion. Brigadier Nicky did drink the bar dry of champagne – I know that because luckily for me, when it was my time to buy her champagne, the bar was dry – much to my relief.

During her speech, Brigadier Moffat talked about her

recently acquired CBE and did go to some length in thanking the Branch members for all their hard work in helping her to achieve the goals she set and they were not 'hollow words'. In her 3 years of tenure, she worked the Branch hard from Colonel down to Private and it paid dividends and AGC (SPS) has an immense family feeling amongst it – AGC (SPS) Ethos is in abundance. Me aside, it is important to note that no-one worked as hard as the Brigadier to achieve success and those on the ground were acutely aware of this. I do not think Brigadier Nicky would mind me telling you all that her farewell speech was, at times, quite emotional and it was clear that handing over Director AGC (SPS) to Brigadier Paul Burns was a difficult task to do.

Before we knew it, it was midnight and it was time for Brigadier Nicky to hand over to Brigadier Paul. He champagne was popped and she relinquished her duties as Director. As CGS stated, Brigadier Nicky handed over a well run ship to Brigadier Burns and all he had to do was to keep steering it in its current direction of travel. So, an era is over and Brigadier Nicky has now moved to Whitehall.



The Handover



Our Vice President and WO1 (RSM) Nicky Roberts

SAS ASSOCIATION W/105752 Ena Scott née Campbell

I am privileged to belong to the SAS Association, and being one of 3 ATS left, I go to as many reunions as possible. (I may add that in 1945 when I returned to the UK, I was told that I belonged to the Association – I did not join, someone, and I never found out who, had joined me). I am now a Life Member and go to as many reunions as possible. I recently attended one which was for WW2 members only and I had a fabulous time. My daughter-in-law took me to the venue and she thoroughly enjoyed it too, not having been to an 'Army do' before – it was all news to her. Unfortunately on the way home we had a horrendous accident – my daughter-in-law sustaining a broken arm and one of my friends, who was in the back of the car, sustaining a fractured shoulder, with the car being a 'write off'. My friends who had travelled from Canada for the event were coming to stay with me for a week. All in all it was a bad finish to a wonderful weekend. However, we survived to tell the tale, and that was the main thing. We, the oldies, were all presented with a picture of those days which we will all cherish.

May I add that many years ago there was a picture in the *Lioness* of a memorial to an ATS driver (as I was myself) in a cemetery in Hanover, Germany, asking if anyone had known how she had died. It was a request by the brother. We'l, I had known, even though the first name he gave was not the one I knew her by, but as it was for the same time and it fitted in, I answered the request. I was so pleased to receive his reply to the effect that it was his sister and he was pleased to hear from me. I had just returned from Denmark and I attended her funeral. Many years on, another friend (she was in the Control Commission, who took over when the Army moved out of Herford) and myself visited Herford and I went to where this driver had been buried, only to discover that she was no longer there but had been reinterred in Hanover.

May I also say that while in Denmark in 1945, and in the town of Esbjerg, a fishing village, I was 'accosted' one morning by a mother and son with a hug, many tears and kisses. She was married to a local fisherman, been there all during the war, and belonged in Lowestoft. I was the first person she had met from the UK. What a time we had, she was so emotional, it wasn't true. I did not know until then that there was an underground system working in Denmark during the war – but I found out!!

I was the third ATS into Denmark and one night in Copenhagen I, along with a Parachute Regiment Sgt, was invited to a dinner at the home of the Chief of Police Investigation at DAGMA House (Police HQ). What a meal, after the rationing we were used to. It was wonderful to have so much food, even strawberries with cream, which I was allowed to have a second helping off!

I think I have rambled on enough, so had better stop.

I would like to say I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the ATS, the good and the bad, the comradeship was the icing on the cake.

EDEN CAMP – SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2011
W/425889 Chris Corker née Appleby

On a bright and early Saturday morning 8 members plus their mascot James, of the Lincoln & District Branch set off for Eden Camp. After a short trip to the Blyth Services we arrived at 11.00 and the trip organiser, Linda Hilton, negotiated a group entry ticket for us.



Ready for the Tour

What an incredible place Eden Camp is and if you haven't been it is well worth a visit. The museum is constructed in the huts of an original Prisoner of War Camp built in 1942 where until 1948, Italian and German POWs were held captive and housed 64 to a hut with just over 1,000 in the Camp at any one time.

Each hut (and there are 29) is a separate experience. There is The Rise of Hitler, The Home Front, The U-Boat Menace where the inside of Hut No 3 has been converted into the interior of a U-Boat, Women at War, The Prisoners of War and many other aspects of the experience of war are shown within the huts. Outside is a growing collection of WW2 vehicles and guns, and a Junior Assault Course which is subject to the weather conditions.

We had a terrific lunch at a very reasonable price in the Provisions Canteen and several of us tried the Churchill pie, which was a steak pie and delicious. There are not many places where you can get a huge mug of tea for £1.

The highlight of the day must be the visit to the Eden Camp Music Hall where a short musical show was put on using puppets. We saw Gracie Fields, George Formby and ended with Vera Lynn and audience participation in We'll Meet Again. We had been advised not to sit in the front 2 rows so didn't, but those who did had quite a surprise. I won't spoil it by telling you just in case you visit and like surprises!

The final hut to visit is the Chapel where a quiet moment or two is needed to collect your thoughts and think of all that you have seen and experienced.



How many ex-WRAC can you fit in a sentry box?

The answer to the above is not many at Eden Camp, but we shall be looking for a larger one next year to go with the one at Burghley House.

WOMEN IN SCARLET 2011
Ex SSgt Madge Cole WRAC

As another year draws to a close, I can truly say it's been another very rewarding the happy year, meeting lots of new people all over England, both HM Forces and civilians, and been so well looked after by all.

The list of events I've taken part in is too big to name but I have included a selection of photographs from various events.



Charity Bus Pull for Veteran's Aid November 2011



Visit to RAF Scampton June 2011



Armed Forces Committee and Official Guests Armed Forces Weekend Scunthorpe 2011

One of the events I really enjoyed was The WAGS Survival Challenge at Melton Mowbray, Defence Animal Centre in February – it was a fantastic day.

At the end of February I had the honour of attending a Ladies Dinner Night in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess at the Defence Animal Centre at Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. IP Ted Parsons, who is a member of the RAVC, also went.

Little did I know what lay in store for me when we arrived on the Friday afternoon and were greeted by CRSM T Nicol and Captain Hudson. I rather think Ted knew what RSM Nicol explained about a WAGS exercise day the following day and asked would I like to take part. There was a big grin on Ted's face when I said yes. The WAGS are all wives, sisters or girlfriends of those stationed at the DAC (including the wives of the Commandant and the RSM). In all there were 29 ladies and me. Had I known what the weekend entailed I would have packed more suitable footwear and warm jumpers and trousers, but I was soon kitted out with combat kit and borrowed boots, a thick jacket and a wonderful hat with tassels!



The Before Photo!

We were divided into 5 teams of 6 and the first activity was drill. It took me back to my first day of recruit training – it was hilarious. RSM Nicol took the inspection

and sent his wife to the "Dog House" for having a button undone. The next part was team games in the gym – I can't remember when I last played games. Then came a totally new challenge for all of us – rifle shooting on the ranges. We first had to sash our way through a paddock which was more like a quagmire with all the heavy rain they had and believe it or not this young PT instructor insisted on giving me a piggy back across the field. Hoots of laughter as you can imagine, but thank goodness no-one had a camera with them! I think we surprised the instructors with our shooting. I hit 3 bulls out of 5 shots.

Then came dog handling and we all took it in turns to walk a beautiful German shepherd that was nearly at the end of its training to be a sniffer dog. There was a baited item hidden in a low wall which the dog had to sniff out. We all passed our test. After lunch cooked on hexi stoves (I remember cooking on one in the jungle in Malaya), we were taken back to the muddy field for a camouflage exercise. We were issued with camouflage make-up and then had to hide up in a small wood, remaining undetected for as long as possible. I don't think any of us would have made Merrill's Marauders but it was brilliant fun!

From there we were taken to the veterinary hospital and shown various tasks to complete. A young lady captain showed me how to bandage a horse's foreleg and then I did it. I don't think James Herriot would have employed me! The next and final task was to make a horseshoe in the farrier's shop. Hot work and something we'd never done or ever likely to again. I'm afraid I hit the farrier's thumb twice while he was helping me shape the shoe, but he was very gallant and never said a word – not out loud anyway! Finally we struggled back to the conference room to be presented with a WAGS survival challenge certificate by the Commandant.



Concentrating Hard



Mind my Thumb!



Success!!!

That night I was guest of honour in the WO's' & Sgts' Mess and after a wonderful meal the teams were presented with engraved coasters for their efforts. It had been a really wonderful weekend with so much fun and laughter, making more new friends and certainly having quite new experiences, and of course being able to travel as an ambassador of The Royal Hospital Chelsea.

I would like to wish all members of the Association a Very Happy and Healthy New Year.

UNVEILING OF PLAQUE FOR AGE UK/AGE CONCERN

Ex WO2 Wynne Kathleen Pickard WRAC

On Tuesday 6th September 2011 at 1140 hrs I started out with 5 members of the Greeno Centre (Shepperton) to go to London. On arriving at Waterloo Station we met up with Alex Welford, who was in charge of all activities

taking part on Wednesday 7th September 2011. We then proceeded on foot to Travers Square Hotel, where all of us were given first class rooms. The afternoon being very wet we spent our spare time in the lounge or relaxing in our rooms of the hotel. In the evening we were given a first class meal in the hotel.

On Wednesday 7th September 2011 we had to wear navy blue t-shirts with the word "Fit As A Fiddle" written on them. No wonder people really noticed us in the hotel (as every one of us are well in our late 70s or early 80s). After eating a healthy breakfast we proceeded to Travis House. Our part was to demonstrate a game called Bocca. As the morning went on we met and shook hands with Lionel Blair, Silvia Syms and a person known as the Green Goddess, but the most important person of all was HRH The Prince of Wales who shook hands with all of us and even participated in the game of Bocca, after one person demonstrated the game to him.

After that we went into the Restaurant to see Prince Charles unveiling the Plaque to make the Official Opening of the Amalgamation of Age UK/Age Concern. We then finished up with a very nice lunch after which we departed as a happy crowd who had enjoyed a wonderful day.



"Fit as a Fiddle" Kathleen Pickard meeting HRH The Prince of Wales



Meeting the Green Goddess

ELEANOR BOWLES BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

A 90th birthday celebration was held at Worthy Down for Colonel (Retired) Eleanor Bowles. A lovely time was had by all.

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Celebrations all Round

EVENTS WITH THE NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION

Joan Lake née Humphries WRAC

When Cardiff Branch folded I was worried that I would

lose contact with the Association, but the ladies of Clun invited us to join them and we became the Marches and Mid Wales Branch. Since which, my friends Kath Hughes and Cordelia Harding and I have travelled many miles of beautiful countryside in both Wales and Shropshire.

In January 2011 our Christmas lunch was in Caerws and in March, Church Stretton was the venue for our AGM. June saw our lunch enjoyed on the Llangollen canal boat and September we met in Aberdovey. October turned out to be a wonderful surprise when my husband, ex RWE, and I received an invitation from the Not Forgotten Association to visit Highgrove, the home of HRH The Prince of Wales. The day started with a drive up to another world and after parking up we were entertained to both drinks and a superb lunch. Here amongst the guests, I was pleased to meet up with two of the Bristol Branch ladies. Once lunch was over we all boarded a large coach which then transported us to Highgrove House. Security was very tight with photographic identity having to be carried. On arrival we first watched a short film of Prince Charles wishing us welcome and then it was off through the fantastic grounds. Although not many flowers were still in bloom, every small grove we came across was laid out with wonderful statues and tree stumps carved into fantastic shapes. These had been brought back or presented to Prince Charles on his many foreign travels. Although we did not have access to the main house we were able to make purchases in the very well stocked shops with drink, clothing, gifts and gardening items on offer. Once the tour was completed we were invited to have a refreshing hot drink and mouth watering cakes! Then off we went to collect our own transport.

To top up an already great year, in December I was lucky enough to receive an invitation for myself and nine other ATS/WRAC veterans to the Marriot Hotel for a Christmas Luncheon. I contacted ladies from the old Cardiff Branch so the travel was not too far. The Not Forgotten Association once again did us proud with a splendid Christmas Luncheon after a welcome Bucks Fizz. Wine accompanied lunch and this was followed by entertainment by Miss Jane Beal and her Swingtime Sweethearts dressed as Christmas dollies. Miss Beal played a huge selection of instruments and we all enjoyed singing along with them.

See you all at the Grand Reunion – Once Comrades, Friends Forever.



55 Years Service

Betty Green, Doris Clifford, Doreen Jacobs, Gwyneth Thompson, Cordellia Harding, Joan Lake, Edna Thomas, Kathleen Hughes, Molly Acton

Remembrance

CENOTAPH REMEMBRANCE PARADE 2011

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This year's Cenotaph Remembrance Parade was once again a very special occasion, and even more so as we were bathed in warm sunshine for the whole day. It is always a very thought provoking and spectacular event with all the colours of the uniforms, and the public lining the route giving great support. It certainly is a privilege to take part in this parade, to be able to salute the ones who gave so much for us to be there on that sunny day.



A Great Day, Enjoyed by All

Articles from Serving Soldiers

TENNIS ACHIEVEMENTS 2011

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A Successful Year

2011 has been a fantastic year of tennis for SSgt Hilary Greig (RLC Band). Back in February it was the Army Indoor Championships which she won for the third year running. Then, after some set backs involving dental work, bicycles and bushes, she represented the RLC in the Inter-Corps League and end of season tournament, won the Ladies Singles, Doubles and Mixed Doubles at the RLC Championships and received RLC Corps Tennis Colours.

After a fairly busy summer season of band engagements, and admin, SSgt Greig found time to enter the Army Championships held at the Aldershot Tennis Centre in July. The singles crown was up for grabs this year as the long term champion, Maj Nell Mead RAMC left the Army last autumn. Due to a parade in Hull and Beating Retreat in Grantham, SSgt Greig was unable to play on the first day so had five matches to play on day two! This proved to be a great warm up for the whole tournament as she eventually won the Ladies Singles title for the first time ever and won the Ladies Doubles with Maj Claire Curry AAC.

The next highlight was to be the Inter-Services at Wimbledon on 1-2 August. The week before consisted of rigorous training at Raynes Park in preparation for matches and to establish rankings for singles and

doubles partnerships. Capt Cornel Oosthuizen, Army Ladies Captain had the difficult job of collating all the results, which were incredibly close, and ultimately picking the team. SSgt Greig was selected to play singles and doubles for the Army team.

The weather at Wimbledon was perfect for tennis, if a little warm. SSgt Greig's first match was against the Navy No. 3 who took the first set 6-2, but somehow she managed to raise her game and snatch the next two sets to win the match. That was a real buzz, to win such a closely fought match on Court 10 at Wimbledon, but also to play for the team and supportive crowd including the CO of 25 Regt RLC and other members of the unit and RLC Band. SSgt Greig's second match was against the RAF which she won convincingly in straight sets.

On day two, SSgt Greig teamed up with LCpl Hannah Bacon AGC SPS and beat both the Navy and RAF No 3 couples. Unfortunately the other Army pairs had less success against, admittedly, much stronger opponents. Eventually, the RAF swept the board by winning all four team titles ie. Mens', Ladies' and both Vets, with the Army coming third by just two sets. It was all much closer than last year which was commendable for the Army team as a whole. Additionally, it was a great achievement for SSgt Greig to win all her matches and a good way to leave 'Regular' tennis as, sadly, she is due to retire from the Army in 2012, but will hopefully be back as a 'Vet'.



At the Net

HEADQUARTERS LONDON DISTRICT

Major Emma Grafton AGC(SPS)

Our offices are based in Horse Guards and the main focus for the past year has been the inspections process. London District has a wide variety of both Regular and Territorial Army Units and the Branch are privileged to be able to see these unit locations and discover more about their history.

Working within London District brings many opportunities to take part in events that would not normally be part of the day to day routine of an SPS Branch. Annually at the Cenotaph Parade on Remembrance Sunday there is an AGC Detachment on parade consisting of 100 personnel. To take part in this national event is a real honour and privilege.

The Royal Wedding was another fantastic event and the office windows afforded some fantastic views of the carriages and their occupants as they passed through the Horse Guards.

Warrant Officer Class 1 Pete Hawkins and myself were privileged to be able to take part in Founder's Day at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in June 2011. The Royal Hospital's history dates back to 1681 when King Charles II, mindful of the part played by the Army in his restoration to the Throne, implemented his idea for the foundation of a home, or hospice, for his old soldiers. Work started in 1682 and the build was completed about 10 years later. The Figure Court, where the Founder's Day parade takes place, is in much the same form now as it was then. Founder's Day remembers King Charles II and his statue is decorated with oak leaves in memory of his escape after the battle of Worcester in 1651 when he took refuge from his pursuers in an oak tree. All those attending Founder's Day also wear oak leaves.

Pete Hawkins and I acted as ushers for the event, looking after the invited guests including Field Marshal Sir John Chapple and Field Marshal The Lord Inge. The event



HRH Prince Henry of Wales meeting those on Parade



The Royal Hospital Chelsea

was made even more special by the presence of the Reviewing Officer, His Royal Highness Prince Henry of Wales. The In-Pensioners were particularly thrilled to have Prince Harry there as a serving Officer, as he was the first serving Reviewing Officer since 1973. It was an honour to take part in such a fantastic day and to meet the In-Pensioners at the Royal Hospital.

June also sees the annual Queen's Birthday Parade which takes place on Horse Guards Parade. Both Pete Hawkins and myself were again happy to put on our Number One Dress and assist with the event. My task was as the Front Yard Marshall ensuring that all those attending the parade moved through the yard quickly, efficiently and dressed correctly. Several members of the press were asked to change their clothing before being allowed to enter as there is a strict no denim rule. Pete Hawkins acted as the Assistant to the Chief Usher ensuring that all those attending the parade were seated in good time. Both of these roles afforded a great opportunity to see the Royal Family as they arrived to watch the parade from the office of the General Officer Commanding in Horse Guards. Those who work in Horse Guards are also allowed to watch the parade with their friends and families from inside the building enjoying refreshments as the parade takes place. This year Gloria Hunniford was invited to watch the parade and it was a photo opportunity not to be missed.



Just Part of the Working Day!

Headquarters London District is a fantastic place to work. There are so many opportunities to take part in events that would not normally be open to SPS personnel. Next year will be even more special with the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics.

THE LOWLAND GUNNERS Private Carrie Kunce AGC (SPS)

Each year 40th Regiment Royal Artillery holds a competition in which each of the four Batteries compete against each other. Each Battery supplies an eight man mixed rank team to take part in the arduous test of physical strength, stamina and determination.

The three gun batteries will be deploying on consecutive tours of Afghanistan so it only seems fitting that the

challenge be geared towards operations. This year's competition consisted of a three mile run, a 200 metre sprint with power bags to simulate carrying shells and finally a 250 metre gun run pushing the L118 Light Gun up a gentle slope, carrying bergans loaded with a further 20 kilos.

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This annual event is great for inter battery rivalry and the atmosphere is great. I can remember thinking to myself whilst watching the various teams go by, "Thank God I am not doing that" only to find out that our detachment had been entered as a team. I was beginning to dread taking part, especially after being told by the gunners how difficult they found it.



The AGC Detachment All Ready

The time had come for us to take part and as I watched the gun being prepared, I grew more and more nervous. Captain Damion Greetham and Lieutenant Mathew Frost took us to one side for a quick brief and handed their rank slides to Louise Farrow and myself with the words, "you are now in charge."



In Charge At Last

We got to the start line only to find that we were racing against the REME Workshop team. When the horn went

off, this marked the start of the three mile run. Team captain, Louise Farrow, set the pace whilst I encouraged those at the back. The pace was fast and the weight was more than I was used to.

A pile of 10 power bags weighing from 10 to 25 kilos marked the end of the three miles and the start of the 200 metre sprint. Forty minutes in and thighs and arms were burning although this was nothing compared to what was coming.

We arrived at the Light Gun and dropped off the power bags. Next was the most challenging part. None of us knew our way around a Light Gun, but with some instruction we got to it. We loaded the bergans and some of the smaller members of the detachment onto the barrel of the gun to lever the trails off the ground enabling the rest of the us to push it. Forcing almost 2 tonnes of metal around mostly uphill was an emotional experience.

As we approached the finish the ground levelled off and the cheers from the crowd encouraged us to speed up enabling us to cross the finish line with a bit of momentum. I felt a great sense of achievement when we completed the challenge and I really enjoyed working physically alongside the rest of the detachment.

7 REGIMENT ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS – OPERATION TOSCA

Private Kayleigh Roach AGC(SPS)

When I found out I was deploying on Operation Tosca, I was really apprehensive and excited at the same time. I didn't know what to expect as this was my first tour and the longest time I would have spent away from my family.

When we arrived at Ledra Palace Hotel we were shown to our rooms, which was on the top floor to drop our kit off. Being female that meant a lot of stuff, but no stopping there as we had to get straight into work. There were three people in one small office where I worked, Sergeant James Spacey, Private Jade Upton and myself.

The workload was as much as it was back on camp, but that's what made the days go by. It wasn't just all work though. If you weren't on duty for the weekend you could put in a weekend pass, and if there was a vehicle available you could request to use it all weekend and you could go to Ayia Napa for the day or anywhere in Cyprus for that matter, well of course as long as it wasn't in the Out Of Bounds area.

There was also a great range of restaurants on both the Turkish and Greek side, but the Greek side was better for shopping, quite expensive but worth it. The Exchange Bar which was situated in Ledra Palace was popular and it was where most of us would hang out and watch the X Factor on the weekend.

Being deployed on Operation Tosca, I also had the opportunity to do a week of Adventure Training up in Dhekelia, where you had the chance to do mountain biking, horse riding, kayaking and rock climbing even if you were scared of heights. Also if the weather was

clear you had the chance to do water sports, which involved getting pulled by a speed boat in a rubber dingy and the banana boat which was a lot of fun and embarrassing.

My six months in Operation Freedom with 7 Regiment RLC will be one to remember.



Op TOSCA – RAO Detachment

BASTION JOINT OPERATIONS BASE – OPERATION HERRICK 14 Corporal Sarah Fairbairn AGC (SPS)

We landed at Camp Bastion on the 4th February 2011 and went straight to the Reception Staging and Onward Integration accommodation. The current J1 Cell that we were replacing took us on a tour of Bastion to orientate ourselves and then we had a presentation from the outgoing J1 team.

Captain Stef Hinds gave us our job roles and my job came with the part time task of Medal NCO. There was currently a 7,000 backlog on receiving the medals so this



Cpl Sarah Fairbairn AGC (SPS)

was going to prove a challenging job. We had a 3 day bedding in period where we shadowed the outgoing team and we quickly picked up our jobs and were confident for when we were the ones in the driving seats.

The imminent Relief in Place proved to be our busiest period. We had a couple of weeks to prepare ourselves and ensure that all measures were firmly in place to ensure a smooth transition for the outgoing and incoming battle groups. During this period it was extremely hectic in the J1 Cell, but the time flew by, no one complained and we were still smiling.

The daily routine sees the duty clerk signing for their cash float of about \$32,000 and a smaller sum of sterling and Euros. The office opens at 0830hrs and a steady stream of customers flow in. During the day we provide money and deal with the routine general enquires; this is where our individual jobs come in to effect.

When we are not serving the customers we are doing general administration for the various departments in Bastion. General administration includes the input of operational allowances such as unpleasant working/ living allowance, monthly pay statement checks and ensuring they are in the right place at the right time on JPA. Every day there is a finance brief to at least 200 personnel as part of the package for those arriving in theatre. It is my job to deliver this presentation. Luckily I have a helping hand so we alternate between the two of us or I think I would end up losing my voice. We come across lots of unusual and wonderful enquiries and always assist as best we can.

My secondary role of Medal NCO is just as important as finance. I receive the medal applications from nearly every department in theatre, made up from Task Force Helmand and sometimes I get applications from the Danish Forces. I ensure that the medal application is completed correctly and all the personnel are eligible; they must have completed a minimum of 30 days in theatre and not previously received this medal. I then send the application up the various chains and wait for the medals to be delivered to my door. They are then distributed and I see a lot of happy faces.

Stacey Clarke deals with the Paradigm cards. She accounts for all cards held in theatre and when required places orders for new cards to be sent out. During the Relief in Place period this aspect of her job is full time due to the number of personnel coming into and out of theatre.

During the tour we were shown around the Apache attack helicopter. We were briefed on the functions of the helicopter and we all had chance to sit in the cockpit and pretend to be pilots for the day. We had a brilliant time and got some excellent photos. We were also given the opportunity to tag along with the Chinook crews for a day.

The office closes daily at 2200 hrs and on Sundays we get a late start; everyone looks forward to Sundays and morale is always at its peak. We make time for fitness and the gym is excellent and they often hold spinning classes. Stacey is now a member of the spinning club and

will soon be purchasing her spinning shorts and gloves to really look the part. I prefer to run outside around the camp, making sure that I am fully covered in sun lotion as the temperature reaches well towards 40 degrees and beyond.

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Tools of the Trade



A Rare Moment of relaxation

EXERCISE DRAGON'S WINGS Sergeant Sally Brown AGC(SPS)

After a long build up to Operation Herrick 13 and a demanding tour, the SPS detachment from the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment (3 PARA) were sure to make the most of their adventure training to the United States. Captain Damion Greetham had planted the seed for such an extravagant plan and there were plenty of willing members wanting to go, with myself taking on the ownership of coordinating it.

The majority of the Detachment had never been to the United States, let alone the Grand Canyon and although

the lure of Vegas at the end was at the back of everyone's minds, no one was under any disillusion. This was going to be hard work, especially with Lieutenant Alistair Strout and Scott Munro leading the groups.

Arriving late in Phoenix on the 23 June 2011, the first thing that hit us was the heat. It was about 2100 hrs and the temperature must have been in the late 20's.

After sorting out the hire cars and getting the bags squeezed tightly into the vehicles, our designated drivers for the trip, Richard Holmes and Darren Foster took us to our hotel for the night. Although a comfortable sleep, for those who wandered around the next morning, it was obvious to see that the area we were in wasn't the most touristy of spots and a quick exit from the area ensured that the local gangs didn't have any fresh targets.

The drive to the Grand Canyon took quite a few hours, but morale and spirits were high, with me leading the sing song in our vehicle. Steve Cairney had brought his guitar and spent most of the journey rehearsing for the evening's entertainment. Joel Atkins had discovered that the fast food was twice the size of UK portions and attempted to eat his own body weight on the journey up.

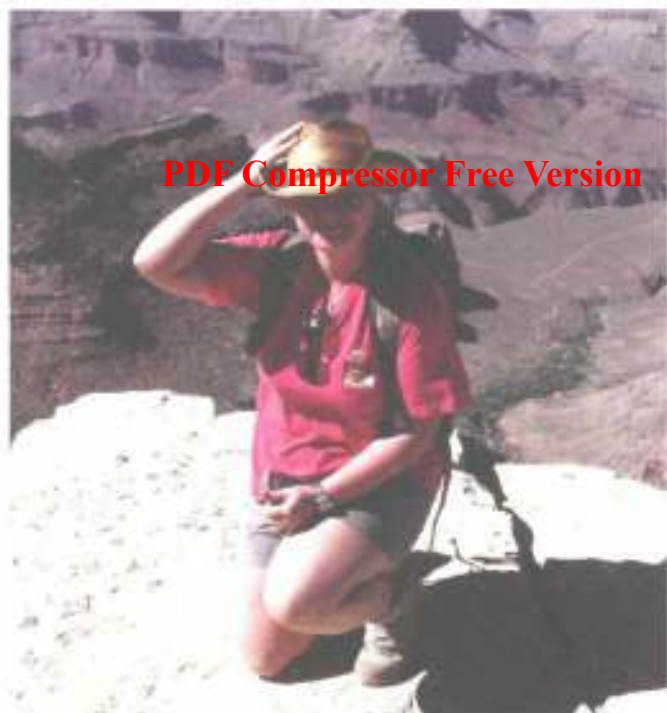
Arriving at the Grand Canyon main entrance, we were directed to the camp grounds where we set up. We then made our way to the South Rim to have a look at the Grand Canyon for the first time and assess our route for the next day.

Words cannot describe the sight of seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time. The sheer size, colours and depth of this world wonder was beyond anything I had seen before. My first worry was the actual drop, with Steffan O'Sullivan taking every opportunity to give me a heart attack going to the side of the rim, to inspect it.



All Admiring the View

A four o'clock start in the morning and the temperature was already 28 degrees. Emma Bradley must have fed the majority of the mosquito population overnight, with her suffering quite bad with bites, but after a hearty breakfast and some fluids, we started our descent down the Bright Angel Trail.



A Long Way Down

As you would expect, the way down was quite easy, although the temperature was ever climbing, there were plenty of rest and water stops. The abundance of wildlife, especially squirrels were also entertaining on the way down. A drop of 4,000 feet and a round trip of 15 km was the order of the day and upon arrival at Indian Gardens, the half way point, everyone was in good spirits, but there was no doubting that the walk out wasn't going to be as easy.

After a good leg stretch and a few photographs we started the trek back to the top of the rim and soon realised that this was going to be a hard slog. Even the fitter members of the party found the going hard and with the temperature now in the 40's, frequent rest stops and water breaks were the order of the day.

The next few hours were probably the hardest I have endured during my Army career, with every muscle in my body aching and although emotions raced high, we bonded together to make sure that everyone got to the top. The feeling of pride and self satisfaction was overwhelming throughout and upon arrival back at the camp site, a sit down and a drink were required. Matt Price and Steve Cairney were in charge of the barbecue and entertainment for the evening and our first full day in the Canyon was a memory I will treasure for the rest of my life.

The next few days in the Grand Canyon saw us doing less strenuous routes, although the amazing scenery and enjoyment were still the same.

The heat continued to be a constant thorn in our side, with the proposed treks having to be changed, but the alternative option was a refreshing dip in Lake Mead, where a boat and jet ski were hired. The rush of speed from the jet ski and the views of Lake Mead backing on to the Hoover Dam were another breathtaking view and it was nice to start to feel my legs again.

The adventure training went too fast and the days soon flew by. The last couple of days in Las Vegas were an eye opener, but fortunately no one got married; we didn't leave anyone on a roof and no one stole a tiger. What more can you say.....what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.

EXERCISE MANSBERGH SPLASH

Private Naomi McVie AGC(SPS)

In March 2011, 4 members of the 5th Battalion RIFLES SPS detachment were given the opportunity to take part in Exercise Mansbergh Splash with 17 Battery of 26 Regiment Royal Artillery. This was a three week adventurous training diving expedition in Belize, but also consisted of other activities that would give us the opportunity to gain qualifications in kayaking, sailing, windsurfing and of course scuba diving.

Our journey began with a long drawn out coach trip from Gutersloh to connect with our flight at Heathrow. We finally arrived at Heathrow in the early hours of the morning for our flights to Belize via the United States. After an overnight stop in the Sheraton Hotel in Newark, we finally arrived in Belize and were welcomed by our Instructor Jay who welcomed us aboard a boat for the last leg of our trip to St George's Caye.

On our first day we awoke to blue skies and sun; we were spilt up into groups according to the various activities. The two week scuba diving course I decided to do was broken down into a one week Open Water course followed by a one week Advanced and Deep Diver course. During this part of the exercise we were given the opportunity to snorkel at Shark Rays Alley where we would see small sharks, rays and the odd turtle, which was a fantastic experience.



Sun, Sea and Sand

Two other members of the SPS detachment, Olecia Merchant and 'DJ' John decided to take on the kayaking and gained themselves adventure training qualifications, while I was joined by Jerry Adams who however, after his first trip was sick and unfortunately didn't complete the course. **PDF Compressor Free Version**

After the first week we were given the opportunity to spend our weekends on other islands in the area. We would be split into two groups and one would visit the island of San Pedro and the other group visited Kaye Caulker; then vice versa the following weekend. During our last week we all decided to take a trip to Belize Zoo which is scattered across 29 acres of tropical savannah. It boasts over 125 different animals which are all native to Belize. I must admit the zoo trip became much more enjoyable once our guide removed the snake from around our necks.



An Unusual Necklace

The whole trip was a fantastic few weeks in an amazing country. I only joined 5 RIFLES SPS detachment in December 2010 from training and to be given such a wonderful opportunity to visit a beautiful part of the world was a real bonus. The best advice I can give to anyone else is if you are ever given the opportunity to take part in adventure training expeditions, then jump at the chance.

AGC LADIES NORDIC SKI TEAM Second Lieutenant Ellie Bassett AGC(SPS)

Ruhpolding, Germany was the arena for the Army and National Nordic Ski Championships in January 2011 where the AGC Ladies started their battle for the top position. After 10 races and 15 days of fierce competition, the AGC Ladies skied their way to glory to be crowned the Army and National Ladies Champions.

The prestigious top place was secured by a supreme effort by the AGC, winning the lead early and gaining strength to the end. The races covered the full range of

Nordic: Classic, Skate and Biathlon. The winning team comprised both National level and novice AGC skiers, all demonstrating outstanding determination and skill. Of particular note were Abi Horner and Polly Cairns who had less than 2 months of Nordic Skiing experience.

The season commenced in Sjusjoen, Norway, with 8 novices, zero experience but bags of enthusiasm. Arriving in Sjusjoen, we were greeted with a warm log cabin but a little less snow than hoped. Undeterred, we were excited to get kitted out and start the infamously tough and physically demanding challenge of Nordic skiing. Within a week, we were covering dozens of kilometres each day and battling freezing conditions with temperatures down to minus 30 degrees Celcius. Our novice team was thrown into a demanding schedule starting at 7am with mobility sessions. This consisted of a 20 minute run and stretches designed to warm up our bodies, reducing the chance of injury. The day was then split into 2 sessions giving us the evenings to practice dry-firing and ski waxing.

Classic technique was first to be mastered. An elegant motion of kicking forward alternative skis, shifting weight and momentum using poles for balance. Our initial attempts were far from elegant and dynamic but through persistent trial and error we made headway. The key to tackling the up-hills relied on wax on the skis and effective technique. The down-hills also proved rather tricky with Carrie Kunce demonstrating spectacularly fast descents, deliberate or not, that terrified the instructor.

Skating technique proved more popular and is best described as ice skating on skis. Next was Biathlon; skating with the addition of shooting. Before using the range, our rifles were fitted and we were taught the skills. From flicking up the dust cover on the move to a slick load and careful body positioning in the prone or standing position. Nightly dry drills helped perfect this.



Ready to Go



The Team in Action

What some of the team members thought.....

Lieutenant Bernie Peake AGC(SPS)

Having just started my new job with 35 Engineer Regiment, the last thing I expected was leaving for a three month skiing exercise. I had no idea what to expect, but I did know that what lay ahead was going to be a challenge both physically and mentally.

Nordic skiing is very physical and puts a large strain on your body. Unsurprisingly the fitness levels of the team rocketed, which was one of the best bits about the trip. Another positive point was the opportunity provided to live and train with soldiers from different branches of the AGC and the team ethic that was developed across the diverse ranks and personalities. This was a key thing that attracted me to Nordic Skiing and taking part in the exercise, that and the challenge of helping with the organisation and administration.

Corporal Abi Horner AGC(RMP)

I received an email asking if anyone wanted to try Nordic skiing. As I had previously been alpine skiing for the AGC, which I really enjoyed, I thought I would try it. Since then I have gained much self confidence and motivation and my fitness has improved massively. There have been hard times, grasping techniques and facing huge hills, but all worth it for success in the races. The cold was an issue at times but the idea was not to stop skiing, that's what kept us going and helped us improve.

I now hope to become a Nordic Ski instructor so I can help others in such a fulfilling sport. I have been selected for the National Development Squad for Biathlon, which I was very keen to do and had to put in maximum effort to achieve this.

Corporal Polly Cairns AGC(RMP)

Before I deployed to Afghanistan I received an e-mail for the AGC Ladies Nordic Ski Team. I jumped at the chance but thought my chances of getting on it would be slim. As it came near to the end of my tour I was told I would leave for Norway in just a few weeks.

The chance to travel across Europe and the fitness I gained from Nordic skiing were phenomenal, but like anything, you only get out what you put in. The only downfall was the immense cold especially when running every morning before breakfast. This was hard to adjust to having just been on a summer tour in Afghanistan. The intense training increased my fitness enormously, and allowed me to push myself to the limit. I think anyone who partakes in Nordic skiing will come back a fit, proactive, team orientated soldier. I would recommend it to anyone.

Private Lou Haughton AGC(SPS)

Shortly after joining my first unit, I was informed that the Nordic Ski team were looking for females to join them. I was attracted to the sport because of the demanding physical effort it takes to ski uphill and cross country. Fortunately, my Detachment Commander was the Germany vice Captain for the team so, before I knew it, I was at Worthy Down with a kit bag full of warm clothes.

Nordic Skiing was a complete learning curve from day

one. The team was coached by ex Great Britain skiers, to ensure we had a good understanding of the techniques, ski waxing and technical racing. Throughout training, I most enjoyed the long skis in remote parts of Norway, seeing the amazing views whilst improving technique and core strength. The early morning mobility sessions in the dark were tough but I knew these sessions were vital as part of our training.



The Patrol Race



A Chance to Relax

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.



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

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

HOW TO APPLY

Telephone:

Call the Veterans-UK Helpline on 0800 169 2277 (UK only)

or 0800 169 3458 (Minicom users).

The helpline is also a source of help and advice on any other issue or problem faced by veterans.

On line:

visit www.veterans-uk.info

Click the Veterans Lapel Badge button on the homepage. Complete the application form, sign and date it then either fax it or return it by post to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency.

Email:

lapelbadge.team@spva.gsi.gov.uk

By letter:

Write to the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency at: Veterans Badge, SPVA, Room 6108, Norcross, Thornton-Cleveleys FY5 3WP.

Branch News

Editor's Note: As most of you are aware Branches are sadly having to close down to falling numbers. Though we should continue to note these in the Lioness. So far I have received notification that Hastings and Wolverhampton have closed since the publication of Lioness 2/11.

ABERDEEN BRANCH

Last year we were up to our knees in snow, but this year we are being totally confused. Snow which did not stay, mild balmy breezes then Baltic Blasts which are capable of deep freezing without the aid of machinery. Maybe the weather has caught the OAP malady – can't remember what it is supposed to be doing!

We still meet on the first Monday of the month and usually 8 of us attend. I can guarantee that if you are feeling down you will go home happier and with a load of advice and good wishes.

Sandra Lemmon and Joan Bartlett (me) went down to Perth for the Scottish AGM and had a very nice day. The company was fun, we as a Branch did OK with raffle prizes and I had a surprise when I was called out along with 3 other Branch Secretaries to receive, from Jo Young our President, a Certificate of Appreciation. As you can see from the photograph, Jo is laughing and I am almost smiling. I did not win the competition, though I did sell my effort and the money went to the funds. The winner was well and truly deserving, the Aran scarf with a long fringe was superb.



Smiles all Round!

December saw 10 of us in a hostelry called the Globe for our Christmas Lunch. A pub it may be but the food was lovely. Our member Moyra Brodie thought her lemon tart was too tart – so we helped her out, as friends do,

and ate it. A good time was had by all – if the laughter was anything to go on.

We wish all Association members a healthy and happy 2012.

BAND BRANCH

Time goes by and it is already the New Year, I would like to wish you health and contentment.

I would like to update you on some of the news. Carol Tyler carried the Standard at the Memorial Service for Brigadier Anne Field and then did the Remembrance March to the Albert Hall; an honour for her and a well done from us. She has said it was the first time she has marched without holding something be it Bass or Standards. As you all know I did do another reasonably successful table sale on our behalf and I would like to thanks all of those who were not of our number who helped me.



Meeting Friends

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Grand Reunion next March in Bristol. I assure you it is an interesting city. If there is anyone not yet booked into the hotel, I do have a double bed settee and a shared single bedroom available. If you would like it please ring me. I am still waiting for your special copies of photos in and out of uniform that will fill our albums; please send them as soon as possible.

I will be planning the Bands' next reunion for May 2013, at present plans are for it being in Stratford-upon-Avon. I do hope our branch meeting will be interesting and we will welcome our Vice President to attend.

BATH BRANCH

Bath Branch continues to meet twice a month but with diminished numbers as old age and mobility problems take their toll. We have a varied programme, raising

money for Branch Funds by regular small raffles at meetings, a Harvest Sale of vegetables from members gardens and a Fish and Chip lunch before our AGM in November. We enjoyed an outing to Gloucester but have to invite members of other ex-Service Associations to join us as we cannot PDF Compressor Free Version

We have a new Committee with 7 members, and as some of them have not served before, we have "new blood" so are hoping for new ideas to keep us going! The Branch Treasurer for very many years has stood down owing to ill health and her position has been taken by Mrs Betty Keating who many of you know as she served in Southampton for many years.

The programme for 2012 is being prepared with visits to local attractions and meeting for coffee between meetings. We are having a Spring Lunch at the local college which produces excellent meals at a very reasonable cost. Five members are hoping to attend our Grand Reunion in March. We get invited to Civic Functions and recently we were invited for a Christmas Tea by the Chairman of Bath and North East Somerset Council in Bath's Guildhall. This event was interrupted by a fire in the building and having to stand outside for some time in very cold weather! Memories of our Grand Reunion at Warwick came flooding back!

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH

Editor's Note: I am afraid I was unable to publish the excellent photographs that came with this report as they were embedded in the document. I can only use photographs that are sent as separate attachments to the report. If the Branch wishes to re-submit the photographs I will publish them in the next edition of the Lioness.

Life continues as usual in Birmingham Branch at a hectic rate of knots. We just never know when to stop and rest!

An eventful few months has seen us all over the City taking part in anything to which we are invited. The summer started with our visit to Bletchley Park in June. We were particularly pleased to find the name of our member, Charlotte (Betty) Webb in the Role of Honour. Betty has since gone into print about her part in the downfall of the Third Reich and her book 'Secret Postings' can be found in Waterstones Bookshop at a very reasonable price. I can confirm that we behaved impeccably on the train to and from Bletchley. Four of our members were able to make a return trip to Bletchley Park for the Polish Day and found it equally as enjoyable.

Many of our members manned a stall at Armed Forces Day in Birmingham City Centre. We found several ladies who had served and were lucky enough to entice Una Watson to join the WRAC Association. She has been a regular attendee ever since. Six of us marched with the Veterans through the city and Maureen Deeley paraded the National Standard. Everything was going well until the Marine Band changed the tempo and we were left with no option but to shuffle along changing foot.

We were sad to hear of the sudden death of Peggy (Marguerite) Guy in June. She had been looking after

her sick husband for some months and had been unable to join us for meetings. Several of us were able to attend her funeral and escort her with our Branch Standard which the family appreciated. Her husband was too ill to be there and we have subsequently heard that he died whilst the service was taking place. Our sympathies go to the family during such a difficult time.

In September we entertained a few other Branches at our quiz. Chris Fretwell set some very challenging questions and a good time was had by one and all. Also in September we visited Tamworth Branch for their skittles challenge and pulled off our usual trick of winning the trophy. Congratulations to our very own Maureen Lay.

October was a busy month with our AGM ensuring that the committee didn't escape for another year. The WRAC Dinner Club was attended by many members from Brum Branch. They were relatively well behaved and have been invited back next year, along with Kim and Jake, the marvellous entertainers. Also Maureen Deeley paraded the National Standard at Brigadier Ann Field's Memorial Service. She was escorted by her minder, Babs Blay.

Our Beetle Drive was a hysterical affair with 5 dice travelling round each table in plastic cups. There were a few accidents when ladies confused the dice cups with their water cups. The noise levels were off the scale and everyone swore that they had never laughed so much. Visitors from Peterborough, Stafford, Shropshire and Leicester joined us and had a thoroughly good time. We hope they can visit us again throughout the year. The concentration was fierce and it is very serious business driving beetles and the eventual winner of the Beetle Drive was Maureen Deeley.

Members of the Branch attended the Remembrance Service in Westminster Abbey on 13th November 2011. Betty Webb, who was one of the 7 present, said "My grateful thanks for the privilege of having a seat in the Abbey on Remembrance Sunday". Five of us were able to march in the parade past the Cenotaph in Whitehall and were very proud. It is always an emotional occasion to march along with fellow Army girls and by the end of the way we are all firm friends. This year HRH, The Prince of Wales, took the salute and tried really hard to not laugh. Some sneaky girls had winked at him.

Six of our members were invited to partake of a sumptuous Christmas Lunch by the Not Forgotten Association at the Arden Hotel near Birmingham International Airport. They were treated like royalty and made to feel really special. Our year was rounded off with a wonderful Christmas Lunch held at our usual venue of the Britannia Hotel on New Street. A jolly time was had by all 39 of us and then we all went home for a sit down in a darkened room. Smiling was the order of the day.

By the time you read this Christmas will be over and we will be into the New Year. Brum Branch wishes you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year. If any of you find yourselves in Birmingham at lunchtime on the first Wednesday of the month why not call in and see what we are up to?



A Festive Celebration

Remember you can count on Brum Branch, we have an abacus.

BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH

Bournemouth celebrated Armed Forces Week, starting with a flag-raising ceremony outside the Town Hall, followed by refreshments in the Mayor's Parlour. There is a draw amongst all the representatives of local military organisations for the person to perform the flag raising. This year our branch member, Merville Pidgeon, was drawn. She duly raised the flag and at the end of the week she was invited to the Town hall to receive the flag to keep.

On 3rd July nine members of the branch enjoyed a most memorable day at the South & South West Area Reunion hosted by Plymouth Branch with guest speaker The Rt Hon Anne Widdecombe. I am sure that this will be covered elsewhere in this issue. Back at home in July Branch members enjoyed a Cream Tea in our regular meeting place, which avoided the problems of minibus travel previously experienced. Merville brought the Armed Forces flag and is shown third from left in front row of the group photo.



The Flag Proudly Displayed

In October we had a visit from WO2 Gail North and Cpl Becky Potts, both AGC, from Blandford. They had transferred from the Royal Corps of Signals to the AGC. They kept us spellbound with their accounts of the life of a woman in the Army today, with tours in Iraq and

Afghanistan, as well as exercises in Canada and Kenya. They were both very interested to hear about how life was in the ATS and the WRAC. Plans are now being made for a group from our branch to visit Blandford Camp next year.

We are now looking forward to our Christmas lunch on 14th December when 25 members will be dining, many overcoming mobility and other problems to be there. By the time this is published we shall be well into 2012 and we wish a very happy and healthy year to all Association members.

BRISTOL BRANCH

Hello to everyone and a big Thank You to all those who sent me cards when they saw that I had received the MBE. I was able to wear it with pride in the Veterans Parade at Weymouth.

On Armed Forces Day we attended the Flag Raising in South Gloucestershire and we also paraded and had a stall at Staple Hill. One of our members was left in charge of the stall whilst we paraded, unfortunately when we got back there was no gazebo – like Mary Poppins, it had taken off and was in the trees. Our member Pauline Scattergood protected the stand with a tarpaulin that I had brought. Not a good day weatherwise but we did have some interest in our stand but unfortunately whilst we were talking to people one of our ladies bag was stolen.



Armed Forces Day



Armed Forces Week

We are pleased to report that it was found some days later in a garden and whilst some items were missing, like her purse and bus pass, everything else was found.

On the Sunday we were invited to attend a service at Weston super Mare. We attended and it was filmed and sent to Helman province that night. We also attended a lunch at the Commodore Hotel in Kewstoke, Weston super Mare. The weather was kind to us and we had a superb day.

In September we held a Harvest Festival which was the suggestion of one of our members and it went very well. In October we had our AGM, again very well attended and all the Committee were re-elected. On Friday four of us travelled to Solihull for Dinner Club weekend. We went to a car wash on the way; unfortunately I did not notice that my window was open very slightly until this spray of water came in and soaked me. It was fortunate that my case was the last one in the boot, so it was easy to get dry clothing. It was funny at the time and set the mood for the weekend. Lots of laughs and meeting with friends.

We also attended an Area meeting at Wilton. Maj Mack brought us up to date with news from our Association. Individual reports from Branches are always interesting and again a chance for some retail therapy at the shopping outlet. In November we attended a Festival of Remembrance where 2 of our members represented us.



Remembrance Parade



At the Festival of Remembrance

On the Monday it was the opening of the Garden of Remembrance, followed by Remembrance Parade on the Sunday in which 5 of us paraded.

We are now in December; our meeting was a Bring and Buy, with Christmas nibbles and lots of talking. I like to see the ladies talking with each other – it makes the meetings very friendly. We are all looking forward to Christmas and hope the weather will be kind to us.

I would like on behalf of all our members welcome you to Bristol in March for our Grand Reunion. Meanwhile we hope you had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.

BURY BRANCH

The Bury Branch has been a little bit on the quiet side over the last few months, but November has blown in on a rush. On the 8th of November our Branch held its monthly meeting and it was well attended not only by Bury Branch but other Branches as well.

We are all looking forward to the Christmas lunch which will be held at the White Lion in Bury on the 14th December. We are always well looked after by the staff and the food is excellent. This year Rochdale and Chester Branches are joining us for this wonderful feast.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all other Branches a happy and prosperous New Year.

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

Since I last wrote we have welcomed 2 new members to the Branch – Andrea Denham and Cath Munro. Apart from our usual activities, 3 members sadly attended the Memorial Service of Brigadier Anne Field at the Guards Chapel. Six members attended the WRAC Weekend at Solihull. Congratulations to the Committee for a brilliant weekend.



Joan Farrington, Jo Teague and Avril Williams

CANTERBURY BRANCH

Members of Canterbury Branch continue to meet on the first Wednesday in the month at the Dominican Priory

located just behind the newly built Marlowe Theatre in the centre of the city. However, our numbers are slowly dwindling through age and mobility problems and we now normally number about 12-15 members per meeting.

At our May meeting we had a special guest speaker, June Berry, a physiotherapist, who gave us an interesting talk about her work as a volunteer with the Medical Mission to the Masai tribes of Kenya. In June we held our annual summer tea party when members enjoyed an assortment of sandwiches and cakes followed by strawberries and cream.

In September we were saddened to hear that one of our keen members, Madeleine Croll, had passed away. Madeleine was a very gifted writer of poetry who had her poems published in both the *Lioness* and *Yours* magazine. We will miss her at our meetings; she could always be relied upon to read out her latest and thought provoking poem.

October is the month in which we hold our Branch AGM. This year members agreed to a change. Susan Wing was voted in as our Chairman, taking over from Kate McGregor who is now Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. Kate had been our Chairman for many years and our grateful thanks go to her for all her hard work on behalf of the Branch.

In November we made the decision not to have a formal Christmas meal the following month, as last year the weather forced us to cancel at the last minute. However we decided that we would have a "bring and share" buffet meal and I'm pleased to report that although it was a cold day, 14 members were able to make the journey to the Dominican Priory and enjoy a festive get together.

On behalf of Canterbury Branch may I wish all WRAC Association members far and wide good health in 2012. With our Patron, HM the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Olympics and our Grand Reunion, it should certainly be a year to remember.

CHELMSFORD BRANCH

Since our last report we have continued to meet regularly in Chelmsford. It is with sadness we record the death of Betty Campen who was a keen and devoted member to the Branch. Despite many handicaps she gave her best and we miss her support after many years.

We welcome to the Branch Rita Eden, a Life Member. Rita is a much travelled lady but intends to join us whenever she is in the UK.

During the year we have held talks from various speakers including a former Rector's wife which was both funny and informative. This was followed by a talk on the origins of quilts and later one on the history of tea. We enjoyed them all.

However, the highlight of the year was a luncheon to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the re-forming of the Branch.



An Excellent Lunch

We were pleased to welcome our new Area Chairman Mrs Wendy Hooton and the Honorary Secretary of the Cambridge Branch Miss Averil Williams. After a very good meal and a toast to The Queen and to the Association we had a raffle where we all won a prize (and some got two). Thanks to all who supported this so generously. We would like to send best wishes to Mrs Patricia Stevenson who resigned as our Area Chair last year. Thank you very much indeed Patricia for your valued support.

We did not meet in August, but in September hope to have welcomed a new member, Miss Janet Edwards, formerly WRAC, who has just joined the Branch.

CHESTER BRANCH

Hope you have all got over the Christmas and New Year celebrations and did not get snowed in or roof blown off. By the time you read this the weather should be starting to get warmer (I hope).

Well we have booked our Grand Reunion places and cannot wait for the event – we even managed to get into the Marriott Hotel. There are 12 of us going in total so it should be a great weekend.

Again we have been busy with our outings and we have managed to have an outing every month from April to October this year, lucky us. Our last outing of the year was to the new Liverpool Museum at the Albert Docks – if you are visiting Liverpool it is well worth a visit.

Some of us attended the Remembrance Parade at Llay and our Chairman Joan McLelland laid a wreath on behalf of the Chester Branch and this year for the first time in years the rain held off.

We have been to many Christmas Lunches – The Royal Corps of Signals Chester Branch, Shropshire Branch, Bury Branch, CRA Chetwyn Barracks and the 8th Army and finally our own on the 12th December when we had 45 people in attendance at the Cheshire Military Museum, Chester. Everyone enjoyed themselves and a few of our visitors have booked for next year already.

Sadly we have a few members who are now not able to attend our meetings due to ill health. May Rideal and Rosa Minks have now gone into Residential Homes, Vera Hamblet is unable to attend due to ill health and they will be sadly missed but we will keep in touch. On a more cheerful side we have had quite a few new members joining us for our meetings and some old members have returned as well.

Next year we are hosting the North West Reunion at the Cheshire Military Museum on the 9th June so we are looking forward to that.

That is all the news from us – hope to see you at the Grand Reunion.

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

CLEVELAND BRANCH

I have been handed the branch quill for the time being until we find a new volunteer, so here we go!

Cleveland Branch is still diminishing month by month as our ATS sisters are just finding it too difficult to get to meetings due to age and ill health. However those of us with access to the internet are doing our best to find new members. We had a stall again in Stockton for Armed Forces Day, and once again gave out application forms for the Association and chatted to anyone who would listen!!



Armed Forces Day – Manning the Stall

Then in August we had a branch outing to Pocklington, North Yorkshire. The sun shone all day for us so it was lovely to visit Burnby Hall and gardens (and of course the coffee shop).



Enjoying the Gardens at Burnby Hall

Our Area reunion is coming up next so the trusty cameras will be there also.

In October we had our Branch AGM and although our numbers have dropped again, we still had a lively meeting with lots of input from everyone. Our Chairlady of many years Mrs Margaret Fick has resigned and as she was not at the meeting today due to sickness we were unable to thank her for "banging the gavel" to keep order. We hope she will be at the next meeting.

Our Branch Secretary who is still a serving soldier cannot get time off each month for our Branch Meetings so her Deputy Mrs Hazel Crammen has stepped in as she lives in Middlesbrough and can manage almost all meetings. So

it's all change at Cleveland but we will do our best to keep recruiting. We have customised the John Bull poster-"Your Country Needs You" and replaced his face with our deputy Standard Bearer, so here's hoping for results!!



Making the News!

We had our Christmas Lunch in Middlesbrough and a good time was had by all. Thanks go to Dot Ryder who did the booking for us-we all enjoyed it immensely.



The Newest Member of the Branch



New Chair, Maxine Lane (extreme right of photograph)

As this is the last time we meet in 2011 I would like to thank our members for the support they give to the branch month by month; we are trying to increase the membership but it's not easy! We will keep trawling the internet for all those "girls" who joined the Army for that great adventure!!

FIFE AND TAYSIDE BRANCH

The Branch is still able to meet in Perth. In October we held the Scottish AGM which was very successful and was attended by 20 members from the Fife and Tayside Branch. Unfortunately two of our members died in October.

The weather is holding out but becoming decidedly colder. We are holding our Christmas dinner on 8th December at the usual venue, The Royal George Hotel in Perth and its fingers crossed that we do not have a repeat of last year's weather which saw our dinner cancelled.

Some of our members are looking forward to attending the Grand Reunion in Bristol.

We wish all members a very happy Christmas and a good New Year.

GREATER LONDON BRANCH

Surprise, surprise, Greater London Branch is still on the map even though we have not sent any reports of our happenings to the *Lioness* during 2011.

Well here is our up-date for 2011. Our year started with the sad news that London Branch had closed. As a Branch we started as a break-away from London Branch 40 years ago (a bit before my time in the Association). No one seems to know exactly how this came about but it was probably to do with girls still working and not being able to get to meetings during the week, hence our Saturday meetings - who knows?

We are very pleased to report that some of the ladies from London Branch have come and joined us and very welcome they are. They all said they enjoyed their first meeting with us which was in February. The attendance was very good considering the weather conditions at the time. Most of our ladies have more than one hours travelling time to get to London so its 100% for effort especially our ATS contingent. I think it must be something to do with our venue being Hyde Park Barracks - the young lads (well they are to me) look after us very well. Ha! Ha!

HQ's AGM on the 2nd of April at the Victory Services Club was well attended by our members. Some of the ladies gave their usual helping hands with the Cloak Room and front of house duties etc, so big thanks goes to them from the Branch and a big "Thank You" to HQ for a super day.

Our own April meeting followed most of which was taken up with talk about the AGM and the forthcoming event,

being the Branch lunch to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the formation of the Greater London Branch which was also held at the Victory Services Club in June. Everything turned out better than we expected with 30 ladies attending including some from London Branch. A day well remembered.

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Happy 40th Birthday to Greater London Branch

October seemed a long way off back in the summer for our next gathering. We like to keep our meetings very informal which helps any new members gel with the rest. We were in fact lucky to have a new member with us and she said she enjoyed the experience with the laughing and chattering in-between tea & cakes and our first attempt at a quiz. Well you know how it is once girls get going – no one was in a hurry to leave.

Well we are well into 2012 and our February meeting is not far off. We have booked a lunch at the Victory Services Club for June – we have started something now!! Let's hope there are no more closures of Branches in 2012.

Best wishes to all from Greater London Branch.

GRIMSBY BRANCH

We have had several fish and chip lunches this year. Six members attended the Northern Area lunch in September, held in York. However, September was a sad month for us as the husband of our Secretary, Ted Davy, passed away. He was a good friend to the Grimsby WRAC Association over the years and 6 members attended his funeral. It was a sad occasion and the crematorium was full, with the Mayor and consort in attendance. He was such a well known character.

Our Standard Bearer, Carole, paraded the standard at a parade on Armed Forces Day. She also attended the Memorial Service for Brigadier Anne Field in London in October. Carole, along with some Lincoln Branch members went to the National Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall and were on parade in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday. Several members helped with the Poppy Appeal collection again during November, a voluntary job dear to all of us. We had the assistance of a sniffer dog called Jamie.



Jamie

Jamie has served in the army for 12 years, in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Iraq and latterly 3 years in Afghanistan, for which he has received 4 Dickens medals which he wears with pride. Jamie has now retired and living with his handler's parents in Grimsby. Jamie visited the branch meeting in October and amused us all carrying a toy about with him. He is also trained as a PAT dog and came to each member to be stroked as he would have done to wounded soldiers in Afghan. Jamie took part in a ceremony to launch the Poppy Appeal in Grimsby and to the amazement of all, he stood to attention during the Last Post and Reveille.

Our knitters have been very busy over the past year and several thousand helmet comforter caps have been sent out to our troops in Afghanistan and we have had a few thank you notes which makes us proud to be able to contribute to their welfare. We have raised over £100 this year with our 50p bring and buy stall, which we hold at every meeting. The money will pay for a New Year party with and a drink or two. The Branch are always thinking of their tummies!

HARROGATE BRANCH

Our June meeting was Party Time. Visiting speaker Suzanne showed us how to ice and decorate birthday and cup cakes. A bit posher than the fairy cakes we used to bake for Sunday tea. Today's buns are larger and



A Splendid Sight

sweeter. Only one is required for enjoyment, biscuits were not required during our break as we all ate and enjoyed the goodies before us, plus our mugs of Yorkshire Tea – a happy and relaxing afternoon.



Immortalised in Icing

July was unfortunately a Wash Out – not from rain, for once the sun was shining and the bus ride was great. Distant views of the Dales, but where we arranged to partake of our lunch was very poor value for money – a definite XXX off our list for Pub Grub.

August greetings were dampened by the news that one of our regulars, Marjorie Harrison was very poorly and needing full time care between our local respite home and the hospital. We were cheered up by the return of our Chairman Barbara, back from her visit to Australia. Barbara welcomed our Speakers, Sally and Jane, who deal in Antique jewellery. What treasures were unearthed from boxes and drawers – beautiful pieces handed down through the families, carefully rewrapped and returned to their allotted hiding places.

September was our AGM, chocolate biscuits and birthday cake for Barbara – one needs cheering up when we reach 80 – a full turnout. Everyone was happy and agreeable to carry on as usual.

Our October meeting was a casual gathering in the end as the Police Constable who was to join us had his duty schedule altered with thanks to the teenage vandals who decided a fire in The Valley Gardens would be a good idea – hopefully the parents are proud of their little darlings!!!

The 13th November Service was well attended – a damp but surprisingly warm day for standing.

30th November should have been a Forces Memorabilia at the Mayors Parlour, but of course everyone from there went on strike and December is Christmas wishes to everyone and plenty of good food which we always enjoy at the George Hotel.

Strength and good cheer to Barbara to cope successfully with her chemotherapy treatment.

Best Wishes to all Branches for 2012. May we battle on.



All Involved in Remembering

HEREFORD BRANCH

The second half of 2011 has been a little quieter here in Hereford. Firstly may give a warm welcome to new members Liz Barbour ex-RMP, Ali Brown ex-WRAC/AGC and Mary Woollard ex-WRAC/AGC.

Sadly since the last issue, two Branch members have passed away. In August we lost Teresa (Terry) Jones and in October, Eva Burton both ex-ATS. Eva was a very active member of the Hereford RBL. Both are sadly missed at Branch meetings.

June saw the Branch hold its Veterans Lunch at the Axe and Cleaver. Over 25 members attended and it was a real chance for members who cannot make Branch meetings to catch up with each other. It was a lovely sunny day and we were spoilt as usual by Andy and his staff.

We held our annual "Picnic in the Woods" at Queens Wood near Leominster.



Enjoying the Rare Sun in Herefordshire

Members this year must have done as they were asked (in the last issue) to do a "sun dance" the night before because the weather was a lot kinder this year, a little warmer and "NO" rain. Thirteen members made the journey with enough food for an "Army" and this is also the time we had our first Festive Meal. A prize of £50 was won by new member Mary Woollard, who very kindly donated it to Branch Funds – thank you Mary. In September our annual Coffee Morning in Ross on Wye was held in memory of Phyllis Bates (who passed away earlier in the year). We raised £120 of which £50 was donated to the British Legion which was close to Phyllis' heart. In October 11 members travelled to the Wales and West Area Reunion in Shrewsbury held at The Lord Hill Hotel.



Gathered for the Reunion

We had a lovely meal and enjoyed catching up with our many friends. October saw the Branch AGM – 15 members present. Well done on a rather wet and windy evening. All officers were re-elected for another year. I must be doing something right!!

The Branch Standard was taken to the Remembrance Parade in Hereford on the 13th November – there were 8 other Standards on parade. The weather was warm and sunny which was good for the many people who attended. Well done to Branch and RBL members Rosemary Jones, Joyce and Mary Nicholls who were busy as they are every year selling poppies and between them collected over £6,000. November saw our last Branch meeting of 2011 and we are due to meet again in February 2012.

Our next social event is our Festive Meal on 14th January 2012 at the Axe and Cleaver in Much Birch. Weather permitting we shall have our usual attendance if over 25 members. This is and always has been a very special event for the Branch and we are so lucky to find a venue with staff which looks after us very well. The Branch has not yet decided on what to "get up to" next year but a visit to the NMA in May to join "The Phoenix Branch" for lunch is on the cards.

On a personnel note **"Calling all WRAC Recruiters"** my name is Sharon Joyce and for the last 15 years of my Service life I was a Recruiter/Officer Manager at Worcester. During that time my head offices were Shrewsbury and Birmingham. I would love to get in

touch with "any" WRAC recruiter in this area during January 1984 to February 1992 and from March 1992 to 1999 AGC. Please call 01095 821189 or email sejoyce007@btinternet.com

LEEDS BRANCH

This is my first report as the Secretary of the Leeds Branch. First of all I would like to thank Betty on behalf of the members for her sterling work as Secretary and continuing support in the running of the Branch. We have had quite a busy and successful year with members attending a Remembrance Service at the Royal Armories in Leeds. Several members also visited the Arboretum; this is always a truly memorable day.

We held a Tea Party to celebrate the Wedding of Prince William & Kate and our Bring & Buy Sales have put money into the Association and Branch Funds. We also had Tea and cakes with the Bring & Buy Sale in aid of the SSAFA as well as our usual Lunch in Wetherby and our belated Christmas Lunch in May. These are enjoyable occasions and make a change from our usual meetings.

We enjoyed the NE Area Reunion in September and are looking forward to the Grand Reunion next year; it is always good to have the opportunity to meet up with friends.

We were sad to learn of the death of Edna Storr. She had worked tirelessly for a Memorial for Women who had served during the War. Hundreds of people gathered in Selby Abbey for her funeral and to celebrate her life. Elizabeth was one of the few ATS/WRAC able to attend.

On a sad note we have to report the death of Margaret (Margo) Fraser (née Taylor) in November after a brave fight against Cancer. Members of the Tangliners joined us at her funeral.

We are pleased to have welcomed three members to the Branch and hope they will enjoy our meetings and days out.

We enjoyed our Christmas Lunch at the Thomas Danby College and look forward to meeting again in the New Year.

We would like to wish you all A Happy New Year.



All Smiles and Well Fed

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

I am writing this report on a mild December day and as we all know this has been one of many this year especially in our part of the country. What a varied and interesting year it has been. PDF Compressor Free Version
and successful monthly meetings with attendance figures on the up and up – we now average 27 members each month.



Leicester Cathedral Armed Forces Day



Leicester Branch



Nottingham Branch

June. Bletchley Park was our outing this month, a follow on from our tour earlier this year to Beaumanor Hall, so names like Colossus and Enigma made more sense to us. There was lots of interesting information on code breaking, how the staff operated machinery and equipment and at the same time lived under this cloak of secrecy. To this day some of the staff will not talk about their work during the War years. Also this month our Standard and Branch Members attended various parades and services both in Leicester and Nottingham.

July. Two of our members, Barbara Danter and Lyn Wenham, volunteered to talk about their military service and the difference between the ATS and WRAC. The talks from both ladies were humorous, varied and interesting. In August our Annual Sailing Club visit was a great success, as always with 50 plus in attendance. The weather was kind to us with plenty of excellent food and drink, down to all the hard work of the team that spend time before the event preparing everything, monitoring that all run smoothly on the day and clearing up afterwards. Thanks to other members who provided wine, raffle prizes and the crew that take our members safely around the lake.

September. Our Harvest Festival raised a record £106. Three members attended Birmingham Branch Lunch, 9 ladies attended the Parachute Association Parade and 5 members attended the Battle of Britain Parade. Also this month 21 members and guests travelled to Wicksteed Park in Kettering for a show called "Those Were The Days" and what a great show this was. There were songs and dances dating back to the forties right through to the eighties. It was loud, foot tapping and people were up on the floor dancing. Just before the show started we had lunch and there was a bar if people wished to partake. Thanks to our Social Secretary for arranging such a great day out for us.

October. At our AGM all current Officers and Committee Members were re-elected. Also this month 9 ladies attended the County Council Church Service at St John The Baptist, Enderby and a buffet lunch at Brockington College. Eight members had a great weekend at the WRAC Dinner Club in Solihull. Brigadier Field's Memorial Service in London was attended by our Standard Bearer and 6 ladies met at the Lord Hill Hotel in Shrewsbury for our Area Reunion followed by an excellent lunch. In November our Christmas Fayre raised £60. During this meeting we enjoyed mince pies, sherry and wine. This month is always busy with Remembrance Parades and Services including Leicester Cathedral, The Poppy Football Match and Parades in Nottingham and London. Three of our members managed to find time to visit Birmingham Branch for a Beetle Drive and Lunch. The Branch is now looking forward to our Christmas Lunch to be held at Devonshire Place. Unfortunately a few of our members have not been too well this year but our Welfare Officer and her Team have provided a steady stream of cards and flowers and made visits to individuals where appropriate.

For 2012 we can now look forward to March and the Grand Reunion in Bristol. Branch Visits for 2012 will include; June – National Memorial, Arboretum, August – Sailing Club and September – Chatsworth House. Actual dates to be confirmed.

May I take this opportunity to thank all Branch Members who work so hard in many ways to make our Branch such a success and encourage a steady influx of new members.

2011 has been a great year and I hope that next year will be the same. Don't forget our meetings are held at Devonshire Place, Leicester on the second Tuesday of every month at 1330 hours.

Good wishes and a healthy 2012 to all our friends and comrades.

LINCOLN AND DISTRICT BRANCH

We are very fortunate with the Lincoln Area to have a wide age range of members and also an extremely large catchment area. This means that whatever is happening you can guarantee that somebody from Lincoln will be there. During the past few weeks we were not therefore surprised that Charmaine Coleman (fondly known to us all as Bimbo) has been selected to join the Chelsea Pensioners. A great loss to us but a great addition to London.

Several of our younger members are still in full time employment and they arrange weekend walks in different areas, always concluding in an appetising meal.



Walk Done and Ready to Eat!



Ready to Party at Solihull

We were very privileged to have Nora Jones parade our standard at the Memorial Service in London for Brigadier Anne Field on 17th October 2011.

Lincoln is always well represented at the Dinner Club and this year was no exception at Solihull 7th to 9th October 2011.

On 10th September 2011 we were the largest contingent to join in the NE Area Annual meal in York and spread ourselves amongst 5 different tables making new friends,



A Great Reunion

Again at the Armistice Parade in Whitehall, London we filled out the ranks with most of our ladies marching with our own WRAC Association and Bimbo making her last march with the Military Police. We were also well represented in Lincoln where Terri Marshall laid our wreath at the British Legion Service there.

This year our younger working ladies organised the first of our Christmas Celebrations on 10th December so that a photograph from the camera of our Branch photographer Beryl MacEwan could be published. The theme was for everybody to wear a festive hat and this produced much amusement.





No Hat No Lunch

The Lincoln Branch always extend a warm welcome to other Branches and would at this time like to wish all other Members of the Association a Happy Christmas and all good wishes for 2012.

Christmas Lunch at the Carre Arms Hotel, Sleaford

On Saturday 10th December 22 ladies from the Lincoln and District Branch met at the Carre Arms in Sleaford for a Christmas lunch. Christmas headgear was the order of the day and for those who failed to bring along anything to wear, a choice was provided by Linda Hilton. A very enterprising lady who charged a £1 for Branch funds to all those who had to borrow raised the princely sum of £10.



Festive Cheer by the Bucketload

After a really good lunch and sing-along led by Jackie Walton some of the members left for home but a stalwart few remained to enjoy a few libations at the bar where we planned some great expeditions for 2012. Sue Beevers spied a santa sleigh across the road in a car park and admonishing the staff not to remove our drinks and ensuring them that we would return, we went to meet Father Christmas as you can see in this photograph. We had to 'make do' with a sleigh as we could not find a sentry box!



All we Need are the Reindeer

MEDWAY BRANCH



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Most of our Active Members

L to R: Margaret Cameron, Barbara Gallafent, Margaret Gallafent, Nellie Dodds, Dot Stedman and Joyce Keam

It has been a busy year for us at the Medway Branch one way or another, with some members of our (very small!) group being unwell. Janet Cameron has been very poorly and bravely undergoing treatment which we hope has worked, everything crossed! In January, we sadly lost Marjorie Grant. Three of the Branch and members of the RBL attended her funeral at Medway Crematorium.

In July the President of the WREN Association invited our crew to come along and celebrate her birthday. October saw the WRAC dinner night in Solihull where 3 members of the Medway Branch attended (myself, Margaret and Barbara). It was my first time and I was pleased to catch up with several old mates, as well as making some new ones.



WRAC Dinner Club

L to R: Sadie Kemp and Margaret Gallafent

It was a busy month because it also saw one of our members, Grace Smith, turn 90. She is not the eldest of our group (Nellie Dodds proudly holds that title!) and still managed to drive to her own birthday party! Nellie and Sadie thoroughly enjoyed Grace's party which was also attended by so many of her family and friends. Sadly, Grace died on Friday 6th January – our thoughts go out

to her. Janet Cameron, our Branch Secretary, has sent the 'Last Post' entry for Grace separately by post.



Grace's 90th Birthday

L to R: Nellie Dodds and Grace Smith

On Remembrance Sunday I laid the WRAC/ATS wreath at Rochester Cathedral, proudly watched over by Nellie Dodds. We have had two dinners out together, plus a wonderful Tri-Service Christmas meal; excellent as always, and we were all given a memorial spoon to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2012.



Remembrance Day 2011

L to R: Anne Cook WRAF, Sadie Kemp WRAC, Nellie Dodds ATS

We are in the process of organising our somewhat belated Christmas meal, weather and space in our hectic diaries permitting!

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE BRANCH

Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham all had lots going on for Forces Day in June and I am sure that wherever our ladies went they had a great day out.

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Two of our ladies had special birthdays this year. Margaret Bowman celebrated her 70th birthday on 27th July and Olive Kinghorn celebrated her 90th birthday on 31st August. She brought in some of her birthday cake and it certainly tasted lovely.



90th Birthday Celebrations

Seven of us ladies went to the Northern Reunion on 10th September and we all agreed it was a wonderful day. The weather was lovely and warm and at the Monkbar Hotel in York there was a wonderful courtyard garden completely hidden from the public. Our meal was superb and we are all looking forward to return there next year. I would recommend the hotel to anyone visiting York.



Newcastle Branch Having Tea

We are having another draw at Christmas to help fill our coffers. Will let you know how much we have made. Best wishes to you all.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH

We haven't got a great deal to report for the back end of 2011 because our Area Reunion was featured in the 2011 No 2 issue of the *Lioness*. There were some questions asked later, "How did you do that, it was way past the deadline for copy?" Well, it really is "Who you know and who pulls the strings", sometimes. It caused a few good laughs, which was a bonus.

Just the week before our hosting of the Reunion, we had been very busy with taking part again in the Armed Forces Week - 22 - 26 June, which was held on the Hoe this year on Saturday as well as on Sunday. We took our display of ATS/WRAC memorabilia and talked to folk whilst trying to entice new recruits. Our volunteers are getting thin on the ground now and we only rustled up 5 of us to be there from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. Still there was enough of us at crucial times to be able to take breaks for food and with luck a quick look around at what everyone else was doing, not only in the marquee but out in the open there were a lot of military displays and banks plus many stalls vying to tempt you to eat this or that. We settled for a pork batch, yummy!



ATS/WRAC Display

At 11am a very moving open air service of thanksgiving and wreath laying at the RAF and Allied Air Forces Monument, on the Hoe, for their 21st anniversary with many standards from local associations. This year, the Plymouth City Council's 'Plymouth in Bloom' display on



Plymouth in Bloom

the Hoe was very appropriate celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Royal British Legion, and Plymouth won gold in the competition, I think for the third time.

We had fun at the WRAC Dinner in Solihull again in October and Jane designed the Ladies' evening afternoon by having a swim and visiting the Jacuzzi, the steam room and the sauna. We then ruined the possible benefits by having supper at O'Neils one night and an Asian buffet on another evening, not to mention our dinner and dance on Saturday night.



Who needs Exercise?

The following week Jane and I attended the South and South West Area AGM in Salisbury, Sid once more being our chauffeur. Nikki Rochelle, our Secretary elect, came too to be introduced, officially and I thankfully and gratefully stepped down, just half a step for a while, to be Assistant Secretary so as to help Nikki into the job for the next 12 months.

In addition to our new WRAC ladies earlier this year we have welcomed Samantha Raynor in Wadebridge; Susan Ward in Camborne and Carole McNaughton in Exmouth, all ex WRAC, we are hoping to see them sometime soon either at our monthly meetings or in Truro for our mini-reunion in May.

Our Christmas lunch will be at the Masonic Hall in Stoke as usual and we hope to have a good attendance, hopefully more of our new, more distant members will drive up to join us for a few hours. We also hope the WRENS will join us again this year.

Our Committee will have a meeting in January to plan 2012 and we are looking forward to the AGM and Grand Reunion in Bristol in March.

We now have our meetings in the Abbey Hall, behind the Minster Church of St Andrew on Royal Parade, 1.30-3.30pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month. There is no meeting in December. Please feel free to join us anytime.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

We have not had a very good year. We lost 4 members and our older members have not been able to help much due to ill health. We have 35 life members and 13 annual members.

The Chairman Gillian Utting and Secretary Teddie Bray attended the South West Area meeting at Wilton and heard what other Branches were doing. The Branch started with the beautiful Memorial Service for Brigadier Anne Field held at the Guards Chapel in London. Our Standard was carried with honour by Phyllis Price during the service. Phyllis Price went on a trip to the Menen Gate in Belgium. She attended the service held there on the 11th month, 11th day and the 11th hour which was very moving. She would like to go again next year.

It was left to our two Standard Bearers to attend the Parade in the Guildhall Square on Remembrance Sunday. Sally Watson paraded our Standard and Phyllis Price marched in the Parade and also laid the Branch Wreath. Our last event for 2011 will be a coffee morning on Saturday 26th November at Gillian Utting's home. We hope that 2012 will be a better year for us all.

SALISBURY BRANCH

Many thanks must go to Plymouth Branch members for hosting a successful and most enjoyable Area Reunion at Borington Hall. The Hall is an impressive building enhanced by the delightful presence of the Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe.



Jill Trainor shares a joke with Rt Hon Ann Widdecombe



L to R: Val Trout, Alison Ogden, Sue Rollo and Joan Freeland

Colonel Sue Rollo, SSAFA Secretary for Salisbury Division came to our July meeting and gave an interesting history of SSAFA and the many ways in which help is given to the Services personnel today.

August found us in Amesbury for our annual garden party at the home of our Secretary. We were pleased to welcome Jane Fairbairn and members of the Southampton Branch. However, the weather was dreadful so we held it in Val's double garage! Due to the confines of the space it was a very cosy event which made it even more enjoyable. Joan Freeland, Frances Green and Christine Forward were able to chat about the time they had each served in Tripoloi.



Joan Freeland, Frances Green and Christine Forward



Roll Call at our Garden Party

We held our AGM in September. The committee was re-elected en bloc, so we are pleased our members enjoy the meetings and the programme.

Congratulations to the new WRAC Dinner Club committee for organising this year's event at Solihull. A good time was had by all. At our October meeting our Chairman welcomed 3 new members; Carol Davies, Christine Humphries and Elaine Corner. This is very encouraging. Christine had seen my phone number in the last *Lioness* and made that important phone call.

In November Val tested our brain power with an interesting quiz. The joint winners were Clare Edwards

with Jill Trainor, and Maureen Robertson with May Brown.

We now look forward to our Christmas lunch – always a happy occasion.

Some old Branch records have come to light and we find that the Branch was formed in 1946. So we voted to "push the boat out" and celebrate 65 years with a special event in June. We are all looking forward to this.

SCOTTISH AREA

The Scottish Area of the WRAC Association held their Annual General Meeting in Perth on Saturday 22nd October 2011. 45 Members from Branches throughout Scotland attended with Lt Col Jo Young chairing the meeting. Unfortunately, our Guest Speaker – Lt Col Sue Westlake – was unable to join us on the day but was kind enough to send a message which Lt Col Young read out to the meeting to keep us all up to date with current events within the Association.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Doreen Peggie from Fife and Tayside Branch and to all those named below:



Joan Bartlett, Aberdeen Branch



Mary McGregor, Glasgow Branch



Isobel Gordon, Fife & Tayside Branch

The meeting was followed by an excellent lunch with time to catch up with old friends and much enjoyed by all.



The Lady Martha Bruce Admiring the Winner's Garment

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

What a lovely summer we've had. I only hope we don't suffer for it with a winter as bad as the last one.

Our day out in July was to the market town of Skipton. Eight of us went our separate ways until meeting for lunch at a fish & chip restaurant. They were the best fish & chips ever and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.



At the Northern Area Reunion

Our N.A.R in York went very well. I enclose a photo of the 6 who went. In place of the usual entertainment, York Branch hired a pianist and it was a super sing-along which everyone enjoyed. We always enjoy these reunions and this was no exception and a real chance to meet friends we haven't seen for maybe a whole year.

The very next day we went to Eden Camp for the Remembrance Service and Parade - a yearly trip which gives us a chance to march behind a super brass band and about 50 Standards. I enclose a photo of 4 who marched, taken in the "Ladies" afterwards.



All Smiles at Eden Camp

Several of us went to London in November for the Remembrance week-end. On Sunday one of us marched, one went on HMS Belfast and 3 went to Westminster Abbey for the Service. A much better day than last year when the heavens opened at 11 a.m.



On Parade

We saw a show on Friday evening, but on Saturday we changed our usual routine to go shopping - we spent a super day on Oxford Street and even ate "al fresco" - couldn't believe it, mid November and eating outside! When the parade was over, we headed for Westminster Bridge intending to catch a bus to the hotel, when a man asked where we were going. He said "the London cabbies are at your disposal today, free of charge", how wonderful was that? When we saw the line-up of taxis, 5 rows with 7 or 8 behind each one, we thought what a fantastic gesture - I promise not to grumble next time I'm charged £33 from Tower Hotel to the AGM.

We've already had our Christmas lunch. Our usual venue has had 3 changes of restaurant manager this year and it hasn't done any favours for the food. The word that comes to mind is 'adequate'. On the other hand, 3 of us are also members of the Suez Veterans Association and on the 6th Dec went for Christmas Voucher Wakefield Catering College. The food was excellent – in fact Jean said it was the best dessert she had ever had and the young staff were wonderful – an all round super day.



Christmas Lunch for Sheffield Branch

Two of our members had their 91st birthdays this year and one more is celebrating her 90th next year. All are regular attendees. Sadly we lost Dorothy (Dot) Lean this year. She never missed a meeting, outing or whatever. We thought about her at Eden Camp (I think I enclosed a photo of her there with her obituary, which hopefully will be in this issue). We raised a toast to her at the Christmas lunch – the first one I've been to and her not there.

Now it must remain for me to say I hope you all had a super Christmas and send my good wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2012 to everyone.

SHROPSHIRE BRANCH

June found several of our members looking skyward at a flypast from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight!! They had taken up an invite from The Royal Air Force Museum at Cosford to celebrate Armed Forces Day.



A great Day out at RAF Cosford

Members were treated to a full day's programme including live music, tours round the Museum's Conservation Centre, an afternoon tea dance with music from a local swing band and of course the flypast from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Dakota.

There was also the chance to speak to some of the exhibitors including the Aerospace Museum Society and the Royal British Legion. I don't know who asked the most questions of whom, but some of our ladies were in great demand to speak about their exploits during WW2. A special two course lunch was enjoyed within the Museum's hangar, in a private eating area surrounded by aircraft and artefacts. A tour around the Museum's Conservation Centre followed. Here members were able to view work on current restoration projects, such as the Vickers Wellington and the Handley Page Hampden in an area not normally open to the public. The afternoon tea dance got some veterans up on their feet as they danced away to live music including songs from Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and others from the 1940s and 1950s era. Afternoon tea and coffee was provided and the day closed with a flypast from the Battle of Britain Dakota. The end of a Brilliant day out.

July and we celebrate Lucy Bowyer's 90th birthday. That must have been a very good year, as she doesn't look anywhere near that age. Mind you she doesn't act it either!





A Very Special Celebration

This month also found 7 of us on a trip to the National Memorial Arboretum. We had super weather and a very enjoyable day. A little worried at the number of police following us all over the place, but then found out the HM The Queen was due to visit the following day. Big sigh of relief. We watched as a bouquet of sweet peas were prepared for the Queen's visit. Apparently they had been informed this was a flower she quite likes.



Chris Powell at the National Memorial Arboretum

August – it's a coach trip to Chester, organised by the local REME Branch. Thought it was just a chance to do a bit of shopping and visit the sites. Some serious shopping took place before a two hour walk around the city walls (I must have been mad, but at least my shopping was by then safe on the coach). As my poor feet needed a rest I made my way to the agreed meeting place for tea I thought. Quite surprised on arrival to be asked my name by a Roman legionnaire who then ticked my name off his list and escorted me onto a canal barge. For the next hour I happily sat and watched the world float by, being served lots of tea, sandwiches and cream cakes. The Roman legionnaire gave a very interesting talk on the Romans in Chester, plus local commentary on the journey. Eat your heart out Nancy, you missed a really good high tea!



An Unusual Tour Guide

September and our AGM takes place. This month we also raise a team to play skittles at Tamworth Branch. None of us had ever played before and we discovered almost at the end of our game that Hilda Deakin could play far better when she took her glasses off!!



Almost!! Victorious

WRAC ASSOCIATION

RENEWAL OF LINKS WITH GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL

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REDEDICATION SERVICE – SUNDAY 20 MAY 2012

There will 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 this Mattins Service the QMAAC and ATS Standards (currently held in the Garrison Church at Worthy Down) will be 'laid up' in the Cathedral Gallery alongside other Regimental Standards. You will all recall that our Commemorative window in the Cathedral was unveiled by our Association President, HRH The Duchess of Kent, in 1994 but since then we have had no links with the Cathedral. It is hoped that a Memorial Book and cabinet will also be dedicated at some stage and be a permanent fixture there.

The service on the 20th May will be conducted by The Dean assisted by our Honorary Padre, the Reverend Susan Wing. It is very much hoped that Branch Standard Bearers will wish to parade their Standards at the Service, however the Association regrettably cannot fund any travel or accommodation costs in this instance. Following the Service there will be a hot buffet Lunch for Association Members only (at no cost) in the Cathedral Refectory. It must be stressed that lunch can only be provided for members i.e no spouses or partners.

If you would like to attend this service and wish to have Lunch afterwards in the Refectory please complete the proforma and return to Association HQ as soon as possible. The Refectory can only accommodate 200 people therefore Lunch places will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. Please note that although only Association members can attend the Lunch anyone is welcome to attend the Service.

For Office Use Only	
Date	
No.	

GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL REDEDICATION SERVICE AND LUNCH

SUNDAY 20 MAY 2012

FULL NAME
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

ADDRESS.....

.....

Email:

Phone:.....

BRANCH (if applicable)

* I wish to attend the Service of Rededication at Guildford Cathedral on
Sunday 20 May 2012.

* I would like to have Lunch in the Refectory following the Service.

* I am a Branch Standard Bearer and wish to parade my Branch Standard.

* Delete as applicable.

Signed

Dated.....

Return by Fri 27 Apr 12 at latest (places allocated on 'first come, first served' basis) to:

WRAC Association, Gould House, Worthy Down, Winchester, SO21 2RG

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the ~~Postal Secretary~~ **Free Version**
The WRAC Association
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

PDF Compressor Free Version

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

AND

**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 WRAC Association Benevolent Fund treat all donations I have made in the last 4 years, 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 WRAC Association Benevolent Fund. The declaration will no 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 WRAC Association Benevolent Fund of any change of address whilst this declaration is in force.

We did not win the individual prize but was really shocked when informed that Shropshire was the highest scoring team. This was our first time at this event, but it won't be our last. We had a super time and thank you Tamworth for the invitation and buffet. We will return.

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This month also found some members taking tea and cake in Shrewsbury in support of "Help our Heros". Lots of interest was shown in the ATS ladies being present at this event including from the local Shrewsbury & Atcham MP Daniel Kawczynski. He asked for a photograph of him and our ladies but easier said than done. It turned out Mr Kawczynski at 6 feet 8½ inches tall, is believed to be the tallest MP ever to sit in Parliament, but after a bit of movement on the garden steps, we did finally get it taken.



The Long and the Short of it

October and Sandra Davies our branch Standard Bearer, plus 4 other Branch Members attended the Memorial Service for Brigadier Anne Field CB CBE in London. Thank you ladies for representing Shropshire Branch on that sad occasion. The Area Reunion took place at The Lord Hill Hotel in Shrewsbury. So nice to see so many ladies from various Branches attended. Excellent meal and lots of laughter took place. Another enjoyable Horse Racing night and buffet at TA Centre Dawley Bank. This is organised by the local REME Branch who kindly invite us and put on a free buffet for the event. Only problem is the horses I bet on don't like to be at the front!

November found us on parade at Donnington Garrison Church on Remembrance Sunday, followed by a very enjoyable curry lunch at the Officers' Mess.



Smartly on Parade

Another first for us this year when Birmingham Branch invited our members to a Beetle Drive. We had no idea what it was, except Babs Blay from Birmingham promised us it was nothing to do with insects. So off 5 of us go wondering what on earth we had let ourselves in for. I can only say we haven't laughed so much in ages. The afternoon started well with a superb lunch, no idea how the hotel did it for that price. Nancy Tipton as usual didn't need to be told twice when asked if she would like another desert, then to help herself. She was out of her chair before the words had been finished! Wonder if they could put that in the Olympics? We would win Gold for sure with Nancy in the seat; only joking Nancy. Not about the Gold, but about you being out of the chair before you should have – no false starts with you! Thank you Birmingham for a super afternoon and we do hope you will invite us again.

December, although we don't have a monthly meeting, we did have our Christmas lunch. This year it was held at the Shropshire Golf Course in Muxton Telford and that got us into the Christmas spirit. Our members were invited by Chester Branch to their Christmas lunch at the Cheshire Regimental Museum, Chester Castle and 7 of us took up their kind invitation. We had a super meal and a really enjoyable day. Thank you Chester.



Christmas Lunch in style

As you can see from the above, we do enjoy ourselves and hope those of you who are members but don't support the branch or come to meetings may now reconsider and join in the fun. We meet the first Wednesday of every month (not December or January) and alternate the times between 2pm one month and 7pm the next.

Please note we have a new venue. From Wednesday 1st February 2012 at 2pm we will meet at The Red Lion, Holyhead Road, Wellington, Telford. If you would perhaps enjoy something to eat and maybe a natter prior to the meeting, then come at 12.30pm Nancy and I will be there having lunch so why not join us.

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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,

We hope you all had a lovely Christmas and New Year and are keeping in good health.

Before we give you our news could I enclose our address and date we meet for anyone who lives or has moved into our area.

ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, DESBOROUGH ROAD,
EASTLEIGH, HANTS. SO50 5NH

Our Meetings are on the first Thursday in every month from 7-7.30 until 9.30pm approximately.

If anyone wants to know anymore about our Branch, please give me a telephone call 02380 470965.

Southampton Branch has been plodding on quite well. We average about 18-25 members per meeting and although our aches and pains trouble us at times we do try to attend most meetings. We are not able to have a Christmas Lunch in December this year so we are going to our favourite eating place, King's Court in January. Some of our members that can't make the meetings because of them taking place in the evenings do manage to attend the Lunches so they can catch up with friends. We have managed to get our programme ready for the coming year on time. We get the help of the members to organise this. You can imagine it getting quite rowdy at times but at least everyone has their say (I think).

We thought we were going to go through the year without a new member and then there were two in October and yet another in November. In October we had Ezri Tegan and Norah Gough join our happy band and then Jean Bates joined us, welcome to all of you. Unfortunately at the October meeting (AGM) three of our committee members resigned. Audrey, Hazel and Penny who have worked their fingers to the bone for the branch decided to step down. Luckily they will continue to sort out refreshments and raffle at the monthly meetings; many thanks to you all for your hard work. We welcomed Pauline Keane to the committee, and she is taking over the entertainments side of things.

Some of the members were invited to Val trout's home where they had an enjoyable time. Carolyn met up with people from her Army days. Even the down-pour that ended up with everyone having lunch in the garage didn't dampen their fun. Sadly because of ill-health Carolyn has had to resign from carrying our Standard. In

steps Di Gardener, who has so far been busy because sadly we have lost two of our members, Hazel Haycock who would have celebrated her 90th birthday in November and Irene Hansford. Unfortunately Irene couldn't make the meetings but I think she and Betty Rush were in regular contact.

We have had three special birthdays this year. Our little TV star Penny Bailey was a very young 90 years in February. Penny is on the ball at all times with her one liners. Next came Barbara Bennett who was 60 years young in October. You haven't caught me up yet Barbara!!! Barbara's 'better half' is our very own resident singer, Tony. Bringing up the rear is our chef Gail Langton. Gail invites the Branch every year during the summer to Lunch. We enjoy a two course lunch with a raffle and lots of talking and go home very contented. Another regular event is Gail's Coffee Morning at which we have a chat and a bit of fun, Penny Bailey made her debut as Dolly Parton. It was lovely to see Val Trout at Gail's and I'm sure she enjoyed the entertainment.



Gail's Birthday

Gail is the one that makes the cakes for the members that have special birthdays but the tables were turned when I asked our daughter Toni to make a cake for Gail. Gail runs Cub/Scout packs in her area so Toni made her a cake with the boys sitting around a camp fire. I hope it was a surprise for her.

Well to all our friends, hope the coming year is all you wish it to be and as they say in the Star-Trek movies LIVE LONG and PROSPER.

Southampton Branch Obituary Notices.

Mrs Hazel Haycock (Née Hutchinson) ATS, died July 2011
Mrs Irene Hansford W/168086 L/Cpl, ATS, died 25th October 2011

STAFFORD BRANCH

The Branch continues to survive despite dwindling numbers; this varies from month to month. Our activities in 2011 mainly consisted of lunch or coffee in various venues around Stafford. We enjoy meeting up and sharing news. A few of us attended skittles in Tamworth

in September and a Beetle Drive in Birmingham in November, both were great fun. Ann and Pat attended the WRAC Dinner Club in October, for next year they have vowed not to talk over the Satnav to avoid joining the M5 and spending an extra half an hour trying to get back on the M5. In November, eight of us sat down to a very enjoyable carvery in Stafford,

At our AGM in September it was decided not to hold meetings between December and March, especially as last winter's weather was so bad. So looking ahead to 2012, we will celebrate the 48th anniversary of the Stafford Branch in April with a carvery lunch. The rest of the year will consist of afternoon tea at Ann Deakin's home in May and August, the same at Pat Pedley's home in July, another carvery lunch in June, the AGM in September and a Christmas get together in November, the venue is still to be decided. Three of us will be attending the Grand Reunion in March and look forward to seeing everyone there. Best wishes from the members of Stafford Branch.

STIRLING BRANCH

Members of the Branch have been busy in the last couple of months taking part in activities to do with Festival of Remembrance. Two of our ladies, Joyce Logan and Isabel Bodman, looked smart and proud as they marched onto the stage at the Falkirk Festival of Remembrance as the representatives of the Stirling



A Proud Day for All

Branch of the Association. Also Lynn Crickmore and Liz Dixon flew down and joined up with other ATS/WRAC members and paraded at the Cenotaph in London. This is a proud occasion for all ATS/WRAC members to march past the Cenotaph with our chest puffed out displaying our green fleeces and hearing all the cheers and shouts of encouragement from the crowd. An added bonus was Liz meeting up with Bernie after 20 years.

Next on the agenda was our Christmas Lunch held on the 10th of December where 15 members all enjoyed a nice 3-course lunch, a few (corny) jokes and a couple of drinks. Ann Borthwick provided a Christmas cake which all members got a big slice of to take home.

Stirling Branch of the Association meets on the last Saturday of each month at 12 p.m., venue Allan Park Hotel. Any members of the Association are welcome to join us.

SUFFOLK BRANCH

Unfortunately we haven't had a very good turnout of members this year due to various ailments and ill-health but hopefully all will be fully recovered by the New Year.

At the end of May several of us had a very enjoyable lunch at "The Plough" in Ipswich. June and August we had our quizzes, the first was general knowledge compiled by Sylvia Johnson and the second on countries of the world compiled by myself. In July our topic of discussion was "capital punishment - yes or no?" The decision was a resounding "yes" - (do you read this magazine Mr Cameron??) and all of us were more than willing to be the executioner should we be asked to do the necessary deed.

At our September meeting Sylvia gave us a very interesting talk on the origins and meanings of pub names - I think she has been in most of them!! October was our AGM and saw our best turnout of members this year. It was proposed and carried that Sylvia Johnson Chairperson, Sheelagh Wilson, Secretary and Marjorie Lambert, Treasurer continue for the coming year.

On Remembrance Sunday I laid a wreath at Ipswich War Memorial on behalf of the ATS/WRAC in Suffolk. The November meeting was very quiet so just a general chinwag and airing our moans and groans. We don't have a meeting in December but had our Christmas lunch at "The Plough". Members who were able to attend had an enjoyable afternoon and a good start to the festive season.

This year our Area Chairperson Pat Stephenson resigned because of personal and family health reasons. All the best to yourself Pat and your family for the future and thank you for all you did for the area. Wendy Hootan replaced Pat and she visited us in August. It was very nice to meet her and hopefully we will see her again many times.

That's all for now - good health, good luck and happiness from sunny Suffolk, Brrrrrr.....

TAMWORTH AND DISTRICT BRANCH

Once more we are drawing to the end of another busy year. We have met some old friends and made some new ones. We had a great time at the BBQ with our friends from the Royal British Legion at Whitehall Barracks on 23rd July and were made very welcome.

We all arrived at the National Memorial Arboretum for our picnic on 2nd July and you will see a report about that in this issue by our Standard Bearer, Tammy Kirkwood – it was a great day and the weather was lovely and it was the first time we had been to the Arboretum with good sunny weather and it wasn't windy.

On Friday 2nd September we held a quiz night and invited all of our friends from the other Associations in Tamworth and also made it open to any member of the Royal British Legion. We had teams of 4-6 and we had a full house. The quiz master was Nicola with Nancy and Belle providing the buffet and we had a raffle and the winners were Sandra and Bryan from the RASC/RCT Association. They must have been good as there was only the 2 of them in the team. We hope to do another quiz night next year as everyone enjoyed it.

On Friday 17th September we had another skittles day with friends from Birmingham and Shrewsbury Branches; it was lovely to welcome the ladies from Shrewsbury as they hadn't been before. As usual our Area Chairman, Maggie Purkis and Area Secretary Irene Hall, were present – they do support us every time we have our functions. We do appreciate it ladies – it's always lovely to see you. Maureen Lay from the Brum Belles won on this occasion.

On Saturday 22nd October five of our members set off for Shrewsbury for the AGM of Wales and the West where the Secretaries meeting was held and then we had a lovely meal afterwards. It is lovely to have these get togethers as we meet up with members from other Branches too far away to meet on a regular basis.

The Branch held another quiz on Friday 4th November but this time it was in aid of the Poppy Appeal. We had a great turn out as usual and had a buffet and raffle and we raised a lot of money on the night. We also have a lady who knits poppies and when we sold them we raised £480.00 which all goes to the Poppy Appeal. I think this might just be an annual function as Vee and her husband have taken over running the Poppy Appeal in Tamworth.

We are looking forward to our skittles night on the 17th December and also to our Christmas meal at the Globe Inn which Nicola has organised. We look forward to another full year of activities and wish you all well in your Branches whatever you may be doing.

Branch Picnic

On Saturday 2nd July we had a picnic at the National Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire. This was a relaxed day in which we got together with Birmingham Branch to eat, be merry and above all have some fun. Not all the ladies were from Tamworth and Birmingham Branch as we had some members from Derby, not to mention the lovely husbands who also joined in with the day. It was a

pleasure to see everyone, especially little Archie Deeley, Maureen Deeley's Grandson, who was a star all day and so well behaved.



All Ready for the Picnic

The weather was absolutely glorious and though the Arboretum was very busy with other events going on, we managed to walk around freely to take in the sights totally uninterrupted. We sat and ate our picnic in our WRAC plot which was a fabulous setting. Most of us were able to sit and eat together as a handful of camping chairs had been brought, but a couple of people used the WRAC benches, which meant we could not all sit together. This was a shame but unavoidable on that day. It was such a lovely day that we would love to do it again next summer. Should anyone wish to join us for a picnic next year, then please contact Vee Moore (Chairperson Tamworth Branch) or Belle Jenkison (Secretary Tamworth Branch) where you will be made very welcome. It's a great way of meeting up with friends, or simply come and make new ones.

ULSTER BRANCH

We in the Ulster Branch awoke this morning to a carpet of snow. When I looked out of my window I could hardly believe it. There were queues of commuter traffic all the way into town. I am also trying to recover from flu and I should remind myself that it is that time of year and I must make the best of it and stop complaining.

Our Branch has had the good fortune of getting 5 new members to boost our numbers so the future certainly looks promising. Two of the new members who were at our AGM in September, Sarah and Kathie, are very enthusiastic and will obviously enjoy our various functions. At our AGM the officers were re-elected for the ensuring year and in particular Mary Wilson our Chairman. The members who were present were very keen that Mary should remain in office and continue her good work. We had a superb meal in Pizzarelli's Restaurant prior to the meeting and there was a really good turn-out of members. However, we always have quite a number of apologies from members who would dearly love to be with us at our functions, but are sadly in failing health and no longer able to come along and our thoughts are always with them.

Sylvia Connachan and I went along to the Ceremony of Remembrance at Belfast City Hall. There is always such a buzz in the atmosphere with the smartly turned-out Army bands and their wonderful music and the pomp and ceremony of the civic dignitaries with their red and gold robes. **PDF Compressor Free Version** It was just great to see so many people come along to take part, the numbers increasing year by year.



Sylvia Connachan and Jean at Belfast City Hall

Last Saturday we had our Christmas luncheon in Beechlaw Hotel on the outskirts of Belfast. I brought Alison Warnock along in my car. Alison had been our Branch Secretary/Treasurer for over 20 years, during which time she was a very willing and capable worker for the Branch. She had been admitted to hospital as an emergency earlier in the year and it was absolutely wonderful that she was able to be with us for our luncheon. The members were so pleased to see her. As usual the lunch was superb with a choice of main course



Members and Guests Celebrate

and dessert. I myself am not supposed to eat sweet food, but I attacked my strawberry pavlova with relish and there wasn't even a trace left! Sylvia Connachan's daughter Leslie was at the dinner as a guest and she took a number of photographs for us and also some photographs at the Remembrance ceremony. It is just great to have such a superb photographer in our midst.

We had a raffle following our meal which was very capably organised for us by Florence, Marie and Rae and which generated the usual craic. Some members were winning prize after prize, but when they discovered that a few of us were not so lucky, they very kindly shared their winnings with us which is absolutely typical of the kindness which abounds in the Ulster Branch.

We all missed Ruby Agnew's company at the lunch, but she rang me to say that her brother had just passed away and I knew that she was overcome by sadness. We can all associate with this type of sadness from time to time, so I can only hope that she will be back with us again soon.

We are once again looking forward to the Christmas Pantomime Jack & The Beanstalk in 3D at Belfast Grand Opera House on 14th December. We have 15 people booked in for the show and I just know that it will be outstanding. Ulster Branch knows how to enjoy itself and I know this year will be no different from previous years.

As Christmas fast approaches I would like to wish everyone a happy and peaceful holiday and a Happy New Year. One of our members sent me a beautiful Christmas card showing some of our soldiers accompanied by Santa Claus and his bag of goodies, getting out of a helicopter, probably in Afghanistan. He was obviously determined to bring much needed Christmas cheer to our beloved troops who have to spend Christmas apart from their loved ones. I have given the Christmas card pride of place on my mantelpiece and every time I look at it I will be reminded of the wonderful commitment our forces are making.

Could I wish our HQ staff a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year with grateful thanks to them for the work they do on our behalf.

WALES AND THE WEST BRANCH

Members may recall the background information in Issue No 2 of the *Lioness* which outlined the reasoning behind the creation of Wales and the West Branch. Individual Branches eg Crewe and Wolverhampton were regarded as no longer viable as separate entities. Happily, an early opportunity arose for members of the newly created Branch to gather in Shrewsbury in October 2011 at the Lord Hill Hotel where planning for the event by Maggie Purkis, Irene Hall and their helpers ensured its success. Fifty or so members attended, enabling the bonding process to begin in earnest over lunch. Floral decorations created and provided by Margaret Walkden were positioned on each of the tables and complimented the meal beautifully. Assorted liquid refreshments were available throughout the afternoon. The Association's fund raising tradition was much in evidence by way of raffles, sales of WRAC keepsakes and guess the cake's weight competition. All met with enthusiasm and hard cash!



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Guess the Weight?

Heartfelt votes of thanks were expressed to those members closely involved with organising the Area Reunion. Up to 8 Branch Secretaries were able to attend the pre-lunch meeting and special mention of their work all year round was also noted.

It then fell to Maggie Purkis to have the pleasant duty and privilege of presenting Certificates of Appreciation awarded to Mary Davies and Edith Francis – former Branch Secretaries for Wolverhampton and Crewe respectively. It is clear from the photographs how much the recognition of their long-term efforts meant to the recipients.



Wales and West Branch is born

As a consequence of the recent changes, HQ was approached and gave permission for the Branch to be re-named PHOENIX. Good wishes for further progress in 2012 are therefore appropriate.

WEYMOUTH AND PORTLAND BRANCH

Our numbers have remained fairly static and we have 16 Annual Members and 24 Life Members and one Associate Member. However, unfortunately we had to say "goodbye" to Jean Rowell who passed away on 14th September.

In June we participated in the annual Veterans Parade – there were over 1,000 marching and 150 WW2 vehicles of various kinds. Branch meetings were then ceased for the summer months, however in July we were very pleased to travel down to Plympton to attend the South and South West Area Reunion, this time hosted by Plymouth. We all enjoyed ourselves – congratulations to Plymouth Branch.

The summer luncheon was held on 13th July at the Rembrandt Hotel, Weymouth which is always enjoyed by all. The food is excellent and there was a lot of time to have a good old natter. We reconvened on 20th September for a domestic meeting.

Our Branch meeting scheduled for 4th October was cancelled as we had arranged to go to The Lobster Pot on Portland which was superb. Thirteen members attended and had a cream tea or other of their own choice.

On 18th October we had a normal domestic meeting to catch up on items missed out from 4th October meeting. On 1st November we had a very enjoyable game of bingo and as usual Mack called the number. On 15th November we had a hilarious meeting where members talked about their holidays (both good and bad) although most recollections were for bad experiences – missing luggage and delays on the way to the airport and not being allowed to board the plane.

So we come to the last meeting of the year where we had a party on 6th December – food and goodies brought by members and wine and soft drinks supplied from Branch funds.

We break now for Christmas and the New Year and reconvene on 21st February 2012.

WINCHESTER BRANCH

Two of our members, Janet Endean and Alison Schofield joined their Royal Signals Association husbands on an outing to Ightham Mote, an ancient moated manor house on the Surrey/Kent borders. The husbands then returned the compliment and accompanied them to the South and South Western area reunion held at the historic and beautiful Boringdon Hall at Plympton in Devon.

At lunch in August we welcomed Elaine Boden, recently

returned from Crete where she had been living, then in October we were well represented at the WRAC Dinner Club in Solihull.

November was a busy month. The Branch took part in the parade at the Remembrance, soon followed by our own AGM – postponed from September (a casualty of summer holidays); here we said a sad farewell to our Secretary, Herme Emary, who has now left Worthy Down. We are sorry to see her go – she has been an innovative and enthusiastic Branch member, full of ideas – particularly in the production of her quarterly “Winchester’s Pride” a newsletter full of ideas and candid camera shots. We presented her with an Emma Bridgewater mug which contained a scented candle with the hope that once burned out (the candle, not Herme!) she will use it to enjoy her daily “cuppa” and think of us. Herme’s departure meant a change of Secretary, so Alison relinquished the chair to fill the Secretary’s position; Lynn Blowes, our Treasurer gallantly agreed to carry on in the job she fulfils so capably. Still in November several of us went to the Officers’ Dining Club at the Victory Services Club where we were happy not just to greet the “usual suspects” but also Rowena Griffiths recently returned from service overseas.

We plan to meet again in January 2012 for our annual New Year’s supper and subsequently at the Grand Reunion, where we hope to fill a Winchester Branch table – so if you used to know us, sign up to join us there, but please contact me first at scoffia@yahoo.co.uk. What are we planning for the rest of the year? Join us to find out!

WIRRAL BRANCH

Well we have come to the end of an eventful year and are looking forward to attending the Grand Reunion in March, again we are joining up with the Chester Branch to travel down to Bristol with them, and we even managed to get into the Marriott Hotel as well – lucky us.

We hope everyone got through the winter without losing roofs or getting snowed in and had a great Christmas and New Year. I know we are all looking forward to the warm weather.

This year was a year to remember at the Remembrance Parade as it did not rain! Joy our Secretary and Pat our Treasurer laid a wreath on behalf of the Wirral Branch. Lesley Waugh, our member who lives over in Bulgaria, came over to see her family and met up with a couple of us at the Remembrance Parade but unfortunately she missed the meeting. She said hopefully she would be over next year and would arrange to meet up with us all; we are holding her to that.

We were very busy over the Christmas period. We attended Christmas lunches at Shropshire Branch, Royal Signals Chester Branch, Bury Branch, Chetwynd Barracks, 8th Army and of course the Chester Branch Lunch. We had a great time at all the lunches and would like to thank everyone for their invites – see you next year.

Although the Wirral Branch is only very small, we still attend our meetings every month and have plenty of outings especially with the Chester Branch and are looking forward to next year’s outings, including the North West Reunion in June in Chester.

Well that is all the news for now – see you in March.

We hold our meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at Chetwynd Barracks, Prenton. If you would like to join us please contact our Secretary Joy Griffiths 07593 757078 or email psand444@btinternet.com

WORTHING BRANCH

There is not a lot to report for Worthing this time as our July trip to Buckingham Palace managed to get into the last one and we have not had many outings since.

We did take a very comfortable coach trip to the Chelsea Pensioners on yet another beautiful sunny day (we do pick them). This is always a good day out, being shown around by one of the in-pensioners, but for us it was even better meeting up with Madge and some of the Lady in-pensioners.





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Views of the Royal Hospital

We held our Christmas lunch after our usual meeting on 30th November. Sue Westlake joined us and we presented her with a special bottle of wine which we had found and cannot find again.



Our Vice President receiving her Wine with Thanks

I do not have very many photographs from the dinner which is a shame as the table was laid beautifully, with sweet boxes and presents (including WRACA diaries for all of us!) added by some of our ladies. We have a room to ourselves which makes the meal even better.



All Set for a Party

On 10th December we had a couple of stalls at the Church Hall where we usually meet and made up some of the money we had spent on the dinner.



Raising Funds

We then faced long weeks before we meet again at the end of January. How will we survive?

ATS Reminiscences

Editor's Note: This article is re-published with my personal apology to the author. The original version was littered with typing errors and this detracted from the content and caused some embarrassment. The fault lies entirely with myself and I shall ensure it does not happen again.

REMEMBERED IMAGES – IN TRANSIT TO GERMANY 1947

Mrs E Mander (née Clarke) W/338306

August 1947 – Liverpool Street Station and a crowded troop train. The start of a new chapter of my life. It was evening and the train sped on its way bound for Harwich. I remember my first view of the troopship which was to take us to the Hook of Holland, the Empire Parkeston. She was a war veteran and looked it – her battleship grey paint was streaked with rust. A weary ship she looked – my heart sank. We struggled aboard with our kit and made our way down to the troop deck. Our cabin was fitted with 3-tier bunks to accommodate about 60. I made sure I got a top bunk. The feeling of claustrophobia of the middle and bottom bunks was too awful to contemplate. Large ventilation ducts overhead did nothing to alleviate the hot, stuffy atmosphere. They were also very noisy but worst of all was the smell of engine oil and the throb of the turbines. It did not bode well. After stowing my kit I went up on deck for fresh air and stayed there until we sailed. A soldier was playing a popular sentimental song “Now is the hour for me to say goodbye, soon I’ll be sailing far across the sea” his harmonica lingering on the sad notes. I watched the lights of Harwich fade below the horizon and felt tearful at the thought of leaving England. We were ordered below decks and told to stay there until we docked in Holland. The wind was freshening by now.

The ship tossed and wallowed her way through the night. The continual sound of the sea pounding against the sides made all thoughts of sleep impossible. I was too excited to sleep anyway. Some of the girls began to retch and this made me feel queasy so I climbed down from my bunk and made my way towards the “heads”. The companionway was awash with vomit as stewardesses used squeegee mops to push it down to our deck. The smell was disgusting which made me feel even worse. The toilets were covered in vomit and the floor was slimy with it. Morning came at last and I went up on deck as soon as I was allowed. The wind was blowing hard but the relief of breathing fresh air was wonderful. A steward came along the deck, carrying a breakfast tray. He bade me good morning and asked how I felt. I told him. He lifted the cover from the plate on his tray and said “this is what you need”. I saw a runny mess of baked beans with two fat pork sausages in the middle. He laughed when he saw the look on my face and swayed on his way. I wanted to die.

The low, grey outline of the coast of Holland looked uninteresting but by now I was beyond caring, I just wanted to get onto terra firma. We were relieved to finally get ashore but the ground seemed to sway like the movement of the ship. We were taken into a huge dockside building which looked like a Spartan Butlins Holiday Camp. Concrete floor – tables and chairs to accommodate hundreds of troops. Dutch waitresses came

round with baskets of bread and we each got one slice but this bread was WHITE! We hadn’t seen white bread for years. I kept turning my slice over and simply marvelling at this luxury. At home we had the National Wheatmeal Loaf – better for us in fact but oh, I shall never forget that slice of white bread. It seemed almost self-indulgent to eat it. I think we were given a bowl of soup but the bread is the most vivid memory.

We boarded a troop train at the dockside. Packed in like sardines our kit-bags filled the racks and littered the floor. The next phase of our journey began. We must have travelled north from The Hook. I saw a vast expanse of water with a narrow causeway stretching across it. I thought how vulnerable it looked. Someone said it was the Zuider Zee. We reached Amsterdam but we didn’t stop. We passed through Amersfoort, Appeldoorn and Hengelo. At Bentheim we reached the Dutch/German border. Here we were told to disembark and to leave our kit while Customs officials searched the train. We stood on the platform while they went about their task, glad of a chance to stretch our legs and to breathe fresh air. Once more we crowded into the train but this time there was a stir of excitement because, at last, we were in Germany. The scenery didn’t look any different from Holland rather flat and boring, mostly farmland. The houses in Holland and Germany had the most shiny windows I had ever seen. Flower-filled window boxes gave the houses a festive air. It made a favourable impression on me. Farms were neat and tidy – no muck filled yards as in England. I did not see many cattle and assumed they had either been slaughtered for food or killed in the fighting – probably both.

There was one unexpected and sad aspect of war which shocked us as we proceeded across Holland and Germany, it was the pathetic sight of children, thin and ragged, risking their lives begging from the troop trains. Many were barefoot and all were undernourished. We went into the NAAFI coach and bought up everything on the shelves and threw sweets, food and cigarettes out of the windows onto the track. The children scrabbled for these, fighting each other like young tigers for possession of any scrap they could get their hands on. It was a very dangerous game and I wondered how many had lost their lives playing it. I suppose we encouraged it by throwing food and sweets to them but they had such desperate appeal in their eyes, you could not ignore them.

Eventually we reached Bielefeld – journey’s end for the time being. We were to be housed in the former German barracks until we received our postings. By this time we were very tired but little did we know what lay just ahead! Out into the forecourt of the station we went and lined up in ranks. What happened next happened quickly. Some youths began shouting at us, shaking their fists and trying to rouse the passers-by against us. I couldn’t understand what they were shouting but one didn’t need to know the language to realise that it was not very complimentary. We stood, literally, with our backs to the wall of the station, wondering what was going to happen. After what seemed an age we heard sirens and vehicles roaring into the square. It was our Redcaps to the rescue, guns in their holsters. They quickly dispersed the crowd, much to my relief. The troop carriers pulled up behind the MP’s jeeps.

We needed no second bidding to climb up and over the tailboards, kit slung in anyhow, to be sorted out later. Out of the square we went, with our military escort and along the road to Bielefeld barracks, which was about a mile out of town.

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The barracks were impressive – well designed and built. Spacious grounds, softened by landscaping. There was even a fountain in the centre of an ornamental pool. This was a far cry from our country – it made a good impression. After a couple of days rest we were allowed out of barracks, provided we didn't go alone. I was eager to see for myself what life was like in a German town. I accordingly persuaded a colleague to come with me and we set off, feeling very conspicuous in our uniform, trying not to stare at the Germans as they were staring at us. There was not much traffic and what there was, apart from our military vehicles, was made up of bicycles in various stages of dilapidation. There was very little to see in the shops but we were curious to look around. We felt rather self-conscious to tell the truth. A man approached us. He looked like a Gestapo agent, complete with black briefcase. He wore a long dark overcoat and a dark felt hat pulled low over his eyes. He sidled up and greeted us in English then proceeded to open his briefcase. A spiv! I think he was trying to sell us stockings. We backed away not wanting to get involved with a black marketeer. We had been warned about this. Even if we had wanted to risk it, we had no currency, but the sort of currency he wanted was cigarettes. Worth their weight in gold at that time. He grew angry when he saw we were not going to play ball and started shouting abuse – then he spat at me! A great gob of German spit landed on my shining toecaps. I was mortified. In plain English we told him what we thought of him. I don't suppose he fully understood us which was just as well. We turned about and walked back to barracks with as much dignity as we could muster but I began to wonder just what I had let myself in for.

We did not remain in Bielefeld for long, just a few days while they sorted out our postings. I was sent to Rhine Army HQ at Bad Oeynhausen, which was 35 miles away. The final lap of the journey brought me to No 3 Portastrasse, which was to be my home for the next 2 years. I grew to love it. No 3 was a handsome light stone-coloured building on a corner site. In the days before the war it had been a hotel – it must have been very attractive. It was conveniently situated in as much as our mess hall was just around the corner, across the road.

I was given a driving test that first afternoon. The staff car for my test was a Humber Super Snipe – sheer luxury to me. I was taken out to the autobahn and told to take over, driving on the right of course. I was amazed by the autobahn. We had nothing to equal it back home. The car was a dream to drive and I took to the change of sides very easily, even though our vehicles were not adapted, still being right hand drive. I passed and was told to report for duty the following morning at 0900 hours to S & T Directorate (Stores & Transport). My life in Germany had begun.

MEMORIES OF SERVICE IN THE ATS

W/38369 SSgt Nancy (Nan) Cox née Webb

It was early in the year of 1940, age 19 I was walking down our High Street and saw a notice outside the local Labour Exchange "JOIN THE ATS – APPLY WITHIN". I went in

and collected a few papers and when I reached home said to my Mother "I am joining the ATS", to which she replied "Oh no you are not"! I said I would complete the necessary forms and find out more about it.

Shortly afterwards I received a Travel Warrant to Bristol for an interview. Mum insisted she was coming with me! On reaching the Recruiting Office I said she was to wait outside, but one of the staff saw her and insisted on bringing her in! Imagine, with about 30 girls I was the only one accompanied by her Mother! By the time we left she was satisfied I would be well looked after. As Mum was duly satisfied I joined on the 28th May 1940 and was sent to Aldermaston for my initial training. At the time I did not perhaps appreciate how it has stood me in good stead ever since, and I'm now in my 91st year.

My first posting was to Shirehampton, Bristol where I became Secretary (having completed a secretarial course on leaving school) to the Commander (Lt Col Gidley-Kitchen) who was responsible for the Defence of the then County of Bristol and the City, including the Docks and the Airfield. Not to be confused with the current Airport. A very interesting and top secret job which I held until December 1943. I was then posted to Burnham on Sea as Secretary to the Area Transport Officer. On this posting I was promoted to SSgt. Until about this time the ATS had its own ranks (Volunteer, Chief Volunteer etc) but then came into line with the Army. I believe I was one of the first, if not the first, to be promoted to this rank. I was the Senior Rank (non commissioned) ATS stationed there and the Transport Officer always called me QA – Queen AT! If he left me written instructions it was always headed QA! In 1944 I was sent to Salisbury Plain (Larkhill Barracks) where troops were massing for the D Day landings, and after 6 weeks Posted to M Coy, Glasgow. The only English girl among the Company of Scots.

In April 1945 I was posted overseas and sent to London to join the remainder of the ATS going overseas. We reported to an Officer in Radnor Place, where Mary Churchill was then a young subaltern, and billeted in a block of flats in Sussex Gardens, not far from Paddington Station. Whilst in London the war in Europe ended and three of us made our way to Buckingham Palace where we managed to get a good view, outside the gates, to cheer the Royal Family when they appeared on the balcony. Our present Queen, then Princess Elizabeth, was in her ATS uniform. We were due to report back to our billets at 10.30 pm but by the time we made our way through the great crowd it was well past that time! No-one was concerned as it was such a significant occasion.

We were issued with tropical kit so we knew we were bound for somewhere warm but not where. We eventually set sail and reached Alexandria in Egypt 12 days later, on the RMS Caledonia. We were then transported to a transit camp at Ismailia where we were to wait for a ship to Mombasa in Kenya. Some of us were sent to Cairo to work there as there was a month to wait for a ship – no idle hands here – and were billeted in Kass el Nil Barracks (no longer in existence I believe). Eventually we boarded the Franconia at Port Tewfik, at the northern end of the Suez Canal, the ship used by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin for the Yalta Conference. We docked at Mombasa, then boarded a train, then an overnight trip to Nairobi. I spent 10 very happy months there and met my husband who was in the RAF.

On my return to England I completed my remaining 8 months Service (having signed up for a further year after my Demob number came up) at the War Office Drafting and Holding Unit in Hertfordshire.

My husband and I were happily married for 57 years and have one son, 4 grand children and one great grandson. My husband died almost 7 years ago at the age of 92. I wonder if there is anyone out there who remembers me?

THIS IS THE ARMY 'MISS' JONES

Editor's Note: Some of the articles from This is the Army 'Miss' Jones, A Collection of Service Memories 1911 - 2004" are again reproduced below. I am very grateful for the permission of Hereford Branch to extract some of the memories therein.

W/768 Jnr Commander (Captain) Mackay B J R 'Mac'
Mrs Jean Robins MBE 1920 - 2004, Teleprinter Operator

With just three digits in her Army number, Jean was a very early volunteer

'For King and Country'

Early in the 1939 'war crisis' my sister and I were living with our parents in a Kent village near Canterbury. One day our father, who was an ex Royal Navy Captain said to us, 'I think you two should volunteer for some war training'. At that time this meant either nursing, VAD or Army (no WRNS yet - to father's dismay!). My sister and I both opted for the Auxiliary Territorial Service and enlisted in Canterbury in the spring of 1939.



Jean Mackay

We attended weekly training at the local TA drill hall learning how to march with the men! I don't think they liked it much having six or eight women marching with them. We waited a long time for our uniform to arrive; the underwear came first, a pink corset; khaki knee length knickers and khaki lisle stockings, which didn't give us much identity as soldiers!

Annual Camp in August at OttaPool, near Hythe (Kent)

was a sea of mud - it just didn't stop raining. Being six years older than me, my sister was allowed to sign on for 'general duties' and worked in the field kitchen, not easy for her in those conditions, as she was not an 'outdoor type' girl! At age eighteen I was only allowed to sign on for 'home service' and was put to work in the tent marked 'Company Office', checking Attestation Papers (the enlistment document that we all had to sign). We were still only partially kitted out with uniform but that didn't seem to matter! I have a vivid recollection of filling palliasses (bags) with straw, which we were going to use to sleep on - eight to a bell tent with feet all facing the centre pole. I seem to remember that we did everything whilst at camp to the command of a bugle call.



Constructing our Palliasses

After camp my sister went to a Gunner training camp; we never served together. My call up papers ordered me to Rochester Police Station from where I was taken to a Radio Intercept Station in a fort. Here I worked on shift with six other girls all from Sharps Toffee factory, Maidstone.

Along the high bluff overlooking the estuary of the river Medway, high above Rochester were three forts, which I expect are still there today. I believe they were built to protect England from a Napoleonic invasion. Looking at a map, the Medway is one of the outer reaches of the Thames estuary, so it was a strategic location.

The forts were not unlike those that we see on films today on the Northwest frontier of India, only smaller. Entry was through a huge fortified gateway which might well have had a portcullis at one time. These gateways were set within high thick walls.

Fort Bridgewoods was the one where we worked as a group of very raw ATS Sergeants! Was that quick promotion because of the secret work we were doing? One of the other forts was known as Fort Borstal, and was the original Borstal for 'bad boys' in the 1930's. The time I am describing was September 1939.

Entering the fort through the imposing gateway, there were a series of dungeon like rooms built into the walls (Redoubts). Radio Operators occupied one of these. Here you found civilian men all listening to Morse code messages from the German army and some Japanese Diplomatic messages in clear language. All the staff were civilian; we were the only ones in uniform! Our shift of girls were in a nearby room, where we had our teleprinters which were connected over GPO telephone lines direct to No 4 Intelligence School, later to become famous as Bletchley Park.

The teleprinter had a typewriter keyboard. It sent very high frequency signals down an ordinary telephone line above the speech level. It was received at the other end on a similar machine, which returned it to script and printed out the message. It was a humdrum, dull job; on our shift we spent hours just typing out pages and pages of this five-letter script. The monotony broken only by a few plain language Japanese messages – always prefaced 'Nippon'. We little realised how important this work was.

In the centre of the fort, three wooden huts had been built. These housed the early breed of 'Boffins', those clever people who were good at solving cryptic crossword puzzles, and were trying to make sense of what we now know was the 'Enigma Code'. I expect when our unit there closed down, those chaps all ended up at Bletchley Park. I fell in love with one. He was devastatingly good looking, and I was only a romantic eighteen-year-old.



Teleprinter Room

When we first arrived at Rochester, I was billeted with a builder and his family. It was a totally new life to me, having come from the home of an ex-Royal Naval Captain, turned ignorant farmer; I had had a very sheltered background. I had never lived in a three bedroom semi before and found it difficult being so close to everyone else. I was astounded by the huge plate of food I was offered for my 'tea' at about 18.00 hours, with mountains of potatoes!

I contracted German measles and was sent to a 'Fever' hospital. That sounds very grand but actually it was a tin hut! When I was fit for work again I found that the ATS had all moved to a requisitioned house in Chatham. We had our meals in the nearby 'Sapper's' Sergeants Mess and it was revolting. Rationing was starting to bite; one soon learnt bad manners, like wiping ones plate clean with the crust of bread, provided for that purpose? The tea was

deeply coloured tannin, and served with sweetened condensed milk in a sort of jam jar mug. I bought a mug, which I used all through the war and I still have it! We did have fun at the Mess dances; there were not many of us ATS about yet so we were quite popular. We also played 'Housie-Housie' now commonly known as 'Bingo'.

This was all in the 'phoney' war, that winter of 1939-40. We were waiting for something to happen. I do remember one air raid on Chatham, when I was sleeping off my night duty I was woken up by the siren. In those days we did not run to shelter, I just turned over and went back to sleep. I don't remember just when the unit was enlarged and we started to do twenty-four hour shifts, probably when we moved to Chatham to live.

We were taken to work in a taxi. After I left I heard there was a freak 'accident'. A stray bomb hit the taxi carrying the girls to work, all were killed. I think it was hushed up, I suppose because of the secret place where we worked. In May, with the impending invasion of Kent, the unit was disbanded, and postings found for us all elsewhere. I was posted to Eastern Command HQ at Hounslow, Middlesex.

Here, I continued to work on a teleprinter, which marked me as 'Signals' for the rest of my four years service in the ATS. My new Camp Commandant thought we would be safer sleeping on the floor, so he took away all our beds, although I suppose we spent more time sleeping in the shelters! I loved my Army service; such wonderful camaraderie!

I met my husband in Taunton in 1944. He was a founder member of the Royal Corps of Signals; he had joined up the year I was born! He died in 2000 aged 92. I am still in touch with a teleprinter operator who worked with me at War Office, Cheltenham in 1942.

If you are curious I was awarded the MBE for 40 years work with youngsters in Youth Clubs in Wiltshire. Service after service perhaps, or just a love of people and how they tick.

W/51287 Pte Dempsey E C 'Jackie'
Mrs Eileen Langman, Clerk

'A Vital Experience'

Seventeen and a half was the acceptance age; so don't ask me how I managed to join the ATS at the tender age of just seventeen! This was in February 1941, and yes, you've guessed it, I was quickly given the name Jackie after Jack Dempsey the boxer who was in his heyday! After my basic training in Aldermaston, where I learned all about making a bed with 'biscuits' and how to salute and make an "ab-o-u-t turn" without falling over, I was then sent to Queen Alexandra's House (QA) in Kensington Gore, London. This was actually The Royal College of Organists, which had been acquired by the military to accommodate the ATS. Nearby was the Albert Hall and we were often given tickets for the performances.

I worked at Leconfield House, which was H.Q. London District and was in Curzon Street, Mayfair. The house is still there today but it probably has a different use. I was a Messenger to start with which entailed taking files, letters etc to different departments. Later, an enthusiastic officer decided that I was capable of something more, so I was sent all the way up to Strathpeffer in the Scottish Islands to be made into a shorthand typist. I will never forget the dreadfully slow train journey to get there. Someone with a sense of humour had written on the wall of the train,

'please do not pick the flowers while the train is in motion'. Although I passed the three-month course, I never really took to the shorthand and subsequently only used my typing skills!

Being in the centre of London, bombing raids were a nightly occurrence and there were some really savage attacks on the city during 1941, often precipitated by incendiary bombs, which lit up the entire area. After a sleepless night at QA we still had to parade next morning by the side of the Albert Hall and then march across Hyde Park to Leconfield House. Our working routine consisted of a system of eight hours on, eight hours in reserve and eight hours off. No excuses were accepted for weariness and none were offered because of lack of sleep, or for shock when the bombs fell very close. When Leconfield House was bombed, part of one of the upper floors collapsed.

I was in the cellar office on reserve duty at the time, having already worked eight hours on the upper floors of the building. The explosion unbalanced me and I fell, at 5'3" and weighing just 8½ stone I was a wisp of a girl. I remember so well the buxom, middle aged ATS officer in charge telling me in a frosty voice to, "pull yourself together, don't you know there's a war on?" There were no 'human rights' in those days; not even a cup of hot sweet tea and one had to deal with one's own stress.

Since we were adjacent to Hyde Park, we were subjected to the continual fire of the Artillery units. Strangely enough we became as accustomed and hardened to the bombing raids as the Londoners; we didn't let Hitler's bombs prevent us from going out when we were able to do so.

We often went to Lyons Corner House, which was situated at Marble Arch, but we were not always welcome there. We were paid 12 shillings (60p) a week and could only order cheap snacks. I was once told by an irritable waitress to, "go to your own NAAFI", which incidentally we didn't have! There was always an orchestra playing so we could spend a pleasant couple of hours there, in spite of the noise from the nearby artillery. The Americans on the other hand, spent a lot of money and gave huge tips. It was true what they said about the Yanks, 'over paid, over sexed and over here'.

There was an outbreak of infections due, someone said, to the water supply being polluted by incendiary bombs. I became ill with scarlet fever and was taken to Fulham hospital. I was there for a month, during which time, my family from Gloucester visited me. On my eighteenth birthday a Lance Corporal came to take me back to my unit. She said she had been instructed to buy me a present but there wasn't time to get it!! I remember being quite peeved about that.

I was then sent to a convalescent home; Morton Manor in Oxfordshire had belonged to a very rich American and was used for female military during the war. It was set in lovely grounds and the food was excellent but it was such a boring existence with nothing much to do. I wanted to be back with my mates and ran away from the place. I found my way onto the railway track where a man asked me what I thought I was doing. When I told him I was trying to get back to my Unit in London he very kindly gave me my fare and directed me to the station. While I was travelling to London the Military Police were knocking on my mother's door in Gloucester because they thought I had run away from the Army. For that piece of insubordination I was put on a charge and given an

'admonition'! The telling off was worth it, I was so happy to be back with my friends again despite the bombs.

From HQ London District, I was posted to Boston Manor where I worked in a Company office, No. 8 Survey (W.O. Map) Depot. I was the only girl to start with apart from an ATS Sergeant who was plainly not happy there and who had applied for a transfer. The idea was that eventually women would take over the men's duties thus freeing them for more active service. This did not go down very well with the soldiers who were quite satisfied with things as they were. They refused to hand over work to us and so most of our work consisted of making tea for them, something they thoroughly approved, and running errands and sweeping up! However, I complained and our gallant comrades were forced to teach us their jobs, which they did with surly reluctance!

I was finally posted back into the centre of the Capital again; this time to M Company, which overlooked Hanover Square. My most abiding memories of this period were the rats that climbed the curtains in our rooms. They were quite brazen and unafraid and I hated them. With all those bomb damaged drains and sewers it's a wonder there wasn't more disease. I also remember the Yanks (they were never very far away) who paraded in the square watched by jeering ATS girls who knew that they could drill better. However, those same girls were willing to be taken out by the Americans in the evening!

Lastly, I remember the 'buzz bombs', which were pilotless aircraft, and the fearsome rockets. This was Hitler's last desperate fling, which killed so many Londoners. I was puzzled at first by the buzz bombs because I thought they were ordinary 'planes'. Unlike the Ack-Ack girls, we had no training in aircraft recognition; I could not understand why the engine cut out prior to the explosion.

Soon it was obvious that they were another kind of weapon, but we eventually were able to estimate where they would fall after the engine cut out, and whether we were in danger or not. Far worse were the rockets, which were faster than sound; the gushing noise that announced its arrival always came after the explosion so we had no warning that one was coming.

I was demobilised in February 1946 and I thought it was rather a pity that I had to hand in my greatcoat, which was the only coat I possessed. I had very little civilian clothing to wear and clothing coupons were still being issued. I understand that the soldiers were allowed to keep theirs. Such was the discrimination of those days!

I made very many friends during my service; in spite of the war it was a very happy time and a vital part of my life. I wouldn't have missed a minute of it; such an excellent training for the rest of my life.

I was accepted for 'Emergency Training' for the teaching profession back in Gloucester. After further training at Oxford I eventually taught deaf children – a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding vocation.

W/67130 Sgt Bush W 'Winnie'
Mrs Winnie Birt, Gunner

'From Pin Pointing the Enemy to Needlepoint'

My parents were away when I travelled from Ross-on-Wye to Bradbury Lines in Hereford to volunteer for service in the ATS in 1941. I was twenty-one years of age so didn't

need parental consent but being a military man himself, my father was very pleased when I told him that I had volunteered. I received my call up papers to report to the Training Centre in Pontefract on the 25th July. I was there for just one month for basic training. I can't remember what my pay was but it was a little over £10 a month during my service, but then I didn't smoke as so many of the girls did. I was sent for another month to Oswestry where it was decided that I was going to be trained to work on a gun site attached to the Royal Artillery.

So I packed up my kit bag again and was sent to the firing camp at Anglesey. Here we learnt to use plotting instruments that were known as 'Predictors', 'Spotters' and 'Height Finders'. I was trained on the Height Finder and we practised on what were known as 'sleeves'. These were trailed behind aircraft and our plotting had to be very accurate because we had to direct the gun to the sleeve and not the aircraft. After just four weeks of practise I was sent to my first gun site, which was at Sheldon on the outskirts of Birmingham.

I don't remember exactly how long I was there but I expect it was a couple of years; long enough for me to be promoted to Lance Corporal. It was very scary while we were there as it was during the time that the Germans were doing their 'hedge hopping', which meant they were flying very low. The then Duke of Kent visited us while we were there. I was in the plotting room at the time and he had a few words with us all.

We were then moved to the South Coast and our gun site was up on a hill near the port of Newhaven in East Sussex. It was a very busy time because preparations were underway for D-Day. When it did come we had to have our beds in tents, close to the guns. The ATS were not on the guns; we manned the instruments, which were telling the guns where the enemy aircraft were. It was a time I shall never forget, as the sea was black with ships of all shapes and sizes and the sky black with aircraft. Of course we had the V1 and V2 rockets coming over while we were there and one of the first V1's landed very near to our gun site. I was on a twenty-four hour pass at the time but spent all night in an air raid shelter at Newhaven.

Apart from all this activity, while we were there we had a very enjoyable time, we knew how to let our hair down and release all the tension when we were off duty and I don't regret a single day of it.

With the worst behind us I was sent inland to a camp at White Waltham near Maidenhead where I spent the next nine months as an instructor for needlework. I was immediately promoted to Sergeant. This was a rehabilitation centre and we had a different batch of girls to teach every month. There was one other ATS Sergeant and one ATS officer; otherwise they were all male Sergeants as there were more classes for men than women.

We taught the women how to make slippers and gloves as well as embroidery. We took each course to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London to spend a day looking at all the needlework there. It was a most interesting and very enjoyable time for me, as I loved doing needlework. I was there until January 1946 when I was sent briefly to Kettering and from there I came full circle back to Bradbury Lines in Hereford, where I was demobbed. It was very late at night when I set off from Hereford to get

to my home at Ross and there were no buses. A lorry stopped near the Broad Leys pub and took me out as far as the turning off for Abergavenny, which was his destination. I was left in the darkness wondering what I should do and how I would get home. Suddenly the work bus appeared that ferried all the workers for the munitions factory at Rotherwas in Hereford. It stopped for me and the driver invited me to jump aboard. My offer to pay the fare was refused.

Travelling home with local people was a lovely way to end what had been altogether a very happy time serving my King and country.

PALESTINE REMEMBERED

W/317408 Mrs Hilda Mary Waite née Mosley

1945 saw me leave the beautiful and peaceful Derbyshire hills and dales to experience life beyond the horizon. I certainly did see a bit of the world and experienced sea sickness, home sickness, desert sickness and many other maladies.

From Glen Parva I was posted to the Ordnance Depot, Bicester and travelled to work to a vast area of dreary buildings by train, where I was bored and baffled by paper work concerning nuts, screws and other bits of metal. Some-one had to do the work but not me! So I volunteered for pastures new and experienced another side of life being transported to Egypt on a cruise liner. We were pampered alongside the "civilian" passengers, and ate food which was unobtainable in England. Too soon we crashed back down into Army life at the Ismailia Transit Camp, behind the first rolls of barbed wire fencing we grew to accept as normal security arrangements. We were given one week to laze around in the blistering heat to acclimatize and warned that blistered skin was a punishable offence, and many of us suffered in "silence".

We wandered across the sweet-water canal, notorious, and known to numerous service people as water to be avoided. 13 injections if you fell into the foul smelling, muddy mess which was a lavatorial and bathing area for any human being of any age and donkeys, buffaloes, scurvy dogs, and a few animal corpses were thrown in for good measure. We soon learned not to eat food from the street vendors.

1946 and the GHQ Middle East, Cairo, was the next stop to Barracks on the banks of the Nile and we were taken daily to an office work place a few miles away by Army lorry. We were often isolated by incidents in the surrounding streets, demonstrations against the Government and trams and buildings were set on fire. They did not like our presence either, and we soon moved down to Fayid in the Canal zone. That's another story of sand, scorpions, desert dogs – and yes, more barbed wire. Sadly one of our girls was murdered by an Egyptian worker in the camp and the first name I saw in the poppy garden plot of Westminster (2007) was in her memory. Very emotional for me.

Of course we saw amazing sights in Cairo. Across the Nile we saw the Pyramids of Giza, and frequently visited and climbed the biggest one. On the rare occasions we had wet afternoons we walked a few yards down the road to the museum which housed all of the treasures from the Tombs. Priceless gold statues and mummies lying around smothered in dust, long before they came to be viewed in our museums; and it cost us nothing! We christened one of

the favourite market alley ways for our nut purchase, Peanut Alley, and anyone in the area always came home with the biggest, saltiest peanuts ever seen, and the most delicious Turkish delight; nothing like the rubbish produced now. Outings on our days free were organised by the Welfare Squads and we saw life in the raw on many occasions. One trip to King Farouk's experimental farms took us to see his buffaloes. Two mud built so called houses, side by side. One side housed a whole family of farm workers, and the other side one of his precious buffaloes.



Jerusalem 1948

From the dubious delights of Cairo, and tented dwellings in the Sinai Desert, whilst waiting for an old mental hospital to be made habitable, I volunteered to join my friend in Jerusalem. To civilized living arrangements in flats vacated by Forces families before returning home. The removal was named Polly Ops. Being a clerical person and employed always in the Personal Services we knew of the many problems facing British service personnel. The files of atrocities, the murders, the bombings, even now so distressing to recall. The kindness of men who spared me seeing the detailed photographs, and removed them from the files before handing them over. Our hearts were heavy and we shared the grief of families and comrades. Today I still can't see pictures of the hangings in the eucalyptus grove, and murderous others, without an over-whelming sense of grief. After a trial, when a murderer was found guilty, I typed details on a death certificate, I was sickened. We were young people, conscientious and proud of our British comrades. Most of the paperwork was red tabbed, and we were privy to the most sensitive and confidential information. Today a glimpse of something reminds me of Palestine, a red beret, green Argyll plaid, a cultivated Apostles clematis. It grew wild in Jerusalem entering the barbed wire entanglement outside Camp HQ, Allenby Barracks.

I was delighted to meet Irene Lewis at Eden Camp. I went to Jerusalem a while after the KD bombings, and the scars were still visible. If anyone wondered why two ladies were

laughing a lot, the Palestine Police were to blame. We were often confined to barracks, strictly forbidden to leave camp. I need not confirm that the PP were a responsible, much respected body of men. They were also compassionate, they rescued ATS girls from boring evenings in camp. They whisked them away in armoured cars, through curfewed streets and headed for the hills. A belated thank you! Seeing the arab head dress worn at King Hussein's funeral was a reminder of the daily journey to work across Jerusalem by troop carrier. Our armed escort was the Transjordan Frontier Force.

I spent a week or so in a hospital which had previously been the Jerusalem prison, in a cell with barred windows, heavy doors with a huge lock, stone floors, prison gates which clanged shut and depressing dark green and black painted walls. Fortunately the key was removed, a small mat provided but the walls stayed dark. A young national serviceman woke me at 2am each morning with a foul medicine and stayed to regale me with stories of all that has happened on the day King David was bombed. Now I realise he just wanted someone to share his sadness. We all had Guardian Angels; ask the girls who survived the atrocities. Guardian Angels don't have angelic faces and feathery wings, they wore boots and strange hats of all colours decorated with hackles and badges, and their wearers were all fiercely proud. I have no picture of an "ankle sock and sandal" parade - pity, we put all today's glamour girls in the shade.

We had 4 armed escorts at all times and a favourite haunt was a restaurant in the Greek Colony, quite near camp. The food and John Collins were fine but the convenience arrangements were far from it! An outside wash-house with just one loo (and that's a polite word for it!) and a badly fitting door. The chicken run next door would have been more convenient. The small space for queuing was jammed with species of all ages, but I was most likely to be squashed between a brawny, kilted Argyll and a dishy Palestine Policeman, none of us daring to acknowledge each other. We needed no artificial blushes and no romance ever started in that wash house; at least not for we service people. Our flats were out of bounds to all except the ATS. The armed sentries and barbed wire did a wonderful job of keeping out intruders, but I suspect it was the sight of our army issue undies and striped pyjamas which really deterred the boys from the camp next door.

I have talked at length with Irene Lewis and yes we had our fun times and were well protected, but were always aware of the dangers faced by "the boys" serving in this distressing country. We met numerous service men at work, on escort duties, just travelling around Palestine and we always had the greatest respect for each other. We whole heartedly agreed we were privileged to serve with them. In spite of the disturbing circumstances we would not want to have missed a moment of the time we served in Palestine. I wear my badges and medals with pride and my only regret is that I did not discover Eden Camp sooner and meet so many of the friends I know today.

HARROGATE A TOP NAZI TARGET

Mrs Dorothy Pope née Pelmeur

Editor's Note: The article on page 17 of Lioness 2/11 sparked a memory for one of our members. Mrs Dorothy Pope has kindly offered to give a copy of her memoirs to the WRAC Association and I would like to take her up on her kind offer.

In 1940 I was working in Harrogate, in Standings, when

the Luftwaffe dropped some bombs on the town. It was lunch time, on a sunny day with a clear blue sky and one of the assistants had been into town. Whilst she was out the sirens went, but we did not take too much notice – the Germans would never drop bombs on Harrogate! This lady came back in a very nervous state as she had seen an enemy plane flying low and dropping something, but thought it was only leaflets. There followed a few explosions which were made not by leaflets but by bombs. It turned out that an unexploded bomb had dropped down the chimney of the Majestic Hotel, which the Air Ministry had commandeered. The others had exploded over some glass hot houses on the outskirts at Bilton near the railway – a lot of broken glass and squashed tomatoes here! I think maybe the City of Leeds had been the actual target – or – as your writer said, the Germans knew there were many RAF and other Ministry Offices in Harrogate. There was a big Army camp a couple of miles out of town at Penny Pot Lane and also many RAF airfields in the surrounding countryside. Who know what the real intention was? Fortunately there were no serious casualties to my knowledge.

Just a few months later I was called up into the ATS and finished my war with the Royal Engineers Postal Service in Nottingham but that is another story. I have written about my time in the Army Post Office. My article on my APO service has been published in the Royal Engineers' Officer's journal as well as copies placed in their archives in Chatham Museum; the Army Post Association Archives, and the BBC WW2 series and now in their archives.

FAVOURITE EVENTS Mrs Barbara Danter

There are many things that my friends and I look forward to each year and the Field of Poppies and the parade on Whitehall are two of our favourites. But before those two events, October 2012 added another "joyous" occasion. It's strange to say that really because it was the memorial service for Brigadier Anne Field CB, CBE. It was a lovely service and judging from the eulogies given, she sounded a wonderful person and it made us wish we had had the privilege of knowing her. We had a great time that day, so much fun and laughter – a true celebration of a life well spent and enjoyed. Thanks to all who helped make that day a happy one for the four of us.



Wellington Barracks, 17th October 2011

A few weeks later we were back in London for the Field of Poppies at Westminster. We arrived in good time and were happy to see Lt Col Sue Westlake and others already there. We made our way to the spot indicated on our passes and a gentleman came over and apologised to us and said he had only been a Captain, (well we had only been Privates!) and he told us that we were a vintage example of smartness and he wanted to give us all a kiss. We obliged of course and threw in a group hug for good measure! We met many friends from past years, and the Duke of Edinburgh, who always has a word with us, pointed his finger at us and said, "Ah ATS!" He never forgets us.



All Women in the Forces

We were back again on the Sunday for the parade on Whitehall but this time we were the guests of the Sherwood Foresters Burma/Malaya, the Forgotten Heroes....a bit like us really – not many know who were are either these days. Anyway, two of us paraded and two of us were unable to do so due to health problems, but we enjoyed chatting to other visitors and it was fun when one of the gun carriage horses decided to break free and have a gallop around on his own. However, being well trained, he was soon put back in harness and order was once again restored. The band and the parade were fantastic, and my friend and I felt a little sad that we had to miss it. Ah well, maybe next year, eh?

Over the last few weeks we have also all done a stint for the poppy appeal so all that remains now is to welcome the boys back to Leicester for a spell of peace following a tour of duty in Afghanistan, then our uniforms get cleaned and put away for next year.



Armed Forces Day Nottingham

Reminiscences of the WRAC

CITY OF LONDON

PDF Compressor Free Version
Mrs Jeanne N H Kirk BEM
Hove, E Sussex

The forthcoming Diamond Jubilee of the Queen to be held in June, recalls my service with the City of London Bn WRAC/TA, and one of the most impressive parades that I have been privileged to attend during my 30 years service with the ATS and WRAC. It was in February 1952 when the Battalion had the honour of participating with the Grenadier Guards, the Honourable Artillery Company and the Royal Corps of Signals in the City of London announcing the proclamation of Queen Elizabeth II – albeit it is now 60 years ago.

I recall my attention kept turning whilst marching to the Pikemen of the HAC – I will never know how we girls kept in step! It was a long tiring day and I remember that not one of the Battalion fell out of step or even fainted when arriving at the Royal Exchange.

I wonder how many remember that day – it would be interesting to know – for on reflection it was an historical event.



A Splendid Sight!



Pikemen on Parade

EAG PHOTO

Mrs Jean Evans née Dennes (W/404712)
jean_evans06@btinternet.com

Editor's Note: I was unable to use the photographs enclosed with this submission due to their poor quality. If the author would like to send the originals in then I would be more than happy to publish them in the next edition of the Lioness.

I was very interested to see a photo in the *Lioness* 2/2011 of the wedding of a former EAG – Anne Robinson née Lawson. Her article mentioned the different uniform we wore and I remembered my time at 17th Independent Company at Shoeburyness in 1960.

MUSICAL MEMORIES FROM 12 BN WRAC RICHMOND PARK CAMP

Mrs Anne Jones née Povey

I thought some members would like to see this photo of Eddie Calvert and his golden trumpet. This brings back lots of memories of the number one hits of Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White. I think it was about 1957 to 1959 while at 12 Bn WRAC at Richmond Park Camp.



The Golden Trumpet

Where Are You Now?

Editor's Note: I have not included full addresses. Should anyone wish to contact any of the undersigned please contact the Editor at the WRAC Association, either by letter or e mail.

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CAROL WEBB

Pat Smith e-mail: pccray879@aol.com

I am trying to trace and contact Carol Webb. She and I served in Singapore in the mid-1960s. Carol was the unit PTI at that time. She tried to contact me a few years ago through a third party but unfortunately due to ill health I wasn't in a position to respond. Circumstances are different now and I would love to hear from Carol or anyone who knows of her whereabouts. I can be contacted at my e-mail address above.

RONA MAY MUNDAY née ANDREWS

ronamunday@hotmail.com

I was a member of the WRAC and an association member for many years and receive my *Lioness* copy without any problems and would like to try and locate some old WRAC friends.

My details of service are as follows.

I joined the WRAC on 6th March 1972. I was in Guildford from March to June 1972 and my training sergeant was Sgt Linnegan. I went on to trade training in Catterick and from there to serve in HQ 1st British Corps in Germany. I have some great memories from my service and I am sure others I served with have similar memories. I would love to make contact with people I joined up with or people I served with in Germany from 1972 to 1974.

People can contact me via my email address.



Basic Training 1972

MARGARET MARTIN

W/112714 Gwendoline Andrews née Davies
Newport, Gwent

Does anyone know of my friend Margaret Martin from Neath? She was my bridesmaid on 13th October 1945. Margaret and I were stationed at various houses in Cardiff. Thank you.

12 Bn WRAC – KINGSTON GATE CAMP 1959-62

W/403621 Miss N E Marshall
(War Office, Whitehall 1959-62)
Bickley, Bromley

Does anyone know what became of 2Lt Workman who was with 12 Bn WRAC at Kingston Gate Camp from 1959-62. Likewise 2Lt Tweed and Lt Davey? In a previous *Lioness* mention was made of 2Lt Rosemary O'Haway. I wondered if this lady had attended Bromley County Grammar School for Girls in the 1950's? Thank you, just curious.

PLAS MYNACH & MOUNT ARGUS – BARMOUTH

Roy Hobbs
Ossemsley, Christchurch



ATS – 164 Inf O.C.T.U. Plas Mynach, Barmouth 1944

This photo is of half the girls in my Company who lived in Plas Mynach, Barmouth, North Wales. The other half lived at Mount Argus and my late wife was one of them. I would love to hear from any of them and to have a group photo of them if anyone has a copy. I also enclose a photo of myself should there be anyone who was there at the time and remembers me. I haven't much hope after all these years but it's worth a try.



*Roy Hobbs in
1940*

ANY SURVIVORS?
Mrs E Pettifer (née Pickup)
Ashby, Scunthorpe

I would like to know if there are any survivors from Hickleten Hall, 100, Sefton Hill, REMN, Gainsborough, N Lincs. I know they will be in their late 80s like me as it was during World War 2 years.

Thank you.

SAMANTHA WILDGUST
Mrs Ann Williams (née Farrell M A)
Email: yorkshirecot@hotmail.com

This is a bit of a long shot but who knows. My first posting in 1964 was to CVD Marchington. I worked in the Orderly Room and my Sergeant Major was Samantha Wildgust. We all loved her. I remember her as being 'old' but as I was 18, she might have been 40ish! She had a lovely dog called Bonnie who she brought into the office every day. I think the OC then was Major Godin. The Camp closed in 1965 and we were all posted out. I would love to know what happened to Samantha?

**HAVE YOU MOVED RECENTLY
OR ARE YOU ABOUT TO MOVE?**

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

Mrs/Miss Initials.....

Surname

First line and post code of old address
.....

New address:
.....
.....
.....

Post code

Tel. No.

E-mail

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

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. Please make cheques payable to WRAC Association – and include the purpose of your donation.

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 enclosed in this edition. 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!

News from Overseas Members

NEWS FROM PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PDF Compressor Free Version
joanhods@optusnet.com.au



Joan Hodgson

About April 1999, Mrs Joyce Seward who had been meeting a few ex-ATS and ex-WRAC locally, decided to put a notice in the West Australian, the Daily in Perth, to ascertain if there was any interest in the wider community to meet in Perth.

Joyce had good response and the Perth Group of ex-ATS and ex-WRAC was formed on a very informal basis on the first Wednesday in May 1999. It was quickly agreed to meet on the first Wednesday in the months of February, May, August and November. If there was sufficient interest we would have a Christmas gathering in December.

Joyce reminded us all of the dates – we were to have coffee and a chat followed by lunch and did all the arranging. At the group's peak Joyce had 80 names but due to natural attrition we are down to 18 on the lunch list and about 10 wishing to keep in touch and receive the newsletter.

Unfortunately late in 2010 Joyce had a stroke. However she stunned her doctors when a few days later she was



ATS Lunch

doing cryptic crosswords. Being a real fighter she recovered her speech and was back in our midst. Unfortunately in recent months she has developed mobility problems and has been forced to pass on the baton.

We are all deeply indebted to Joyce Seward for setting the ball rolling and for so long carrying us along with her.

Thank you Joyce – we miss you.

Ann Page (née Doherty) who held a Regular Commission in the WRAC has stepped up to accept the baton and will make sure that the group continues to meet on the original basis. In November 9 of us managed to get to Rockingham (where Joyce Seward lives), by public transport, to lunch with Joyce and it was a delight being with her again.

It was particularly sad for me losing my friend Mrs Anne Davies, née Sadie Jones, as we served together in Rome and Vienna in the British Element of The Austrian Control Commission from late 1945 onwards. She was in her nineties. We also lost another member of our group Mrs Margaret Lowdnes. Our condolences are offered to both families.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION REMINDERS

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

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

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

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

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

WRAC Officers Dining Club

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB
NOVEMBER 2011 - VICTORY SERVICES CLUB
Ali Brown

Once again the members of the WRAC Officers' Dining Club converged upon the Victory Services Club on a cold and wet November evening. The occasion was the annual dinner and numbers were once again healthy with a good attendance from serving and retired officers from the ATS and the WRAC. It was also great to see a

growing number of husbands attending and contending with the noise produced by us all catching up with old friends. The Club, once again, did us proud with good food, good wine and the evening flew by ending up with a stalwart dozen watching the bar close in the early hours.

A really enjoyable evening and one to look forward to in 2013. Thanks must go to all those who were involved in organising the Dinner.





WRAC Dinner Club

Another WRAC Dinner and another absolutely wonderful weekend, to have this opportunity to meet old friends we served with and also to make new ones is so valuable to us, and we really appreciate all the hard work it takes to make the weekend possible. It is great to be able to be together to chat, have a good laugh, and visit the local shops, cafes, and pubs. Dancing the night away on the Saturday evening with "Kim and Jake, The All Stars" was "Simply the Best". Their enthusiasm, energy, and professionalism that they put into their performance is outstanding, and had everyone dancing from the moment they started singing till the evening ended.

The whole weekend had a very special atmosphere, many thanks to the committee for the nice welcome and for making the weekend so good.

Carol Traynor

A GREAT WEEKEND AT THE DINNER CLUB

The weekend began on Thursday 6th October with even more members staying earlier at the hotel than in previous years. Friday morning saw the Gloucester suite ready for the influx of members with a registration desk, raffle ticket sales, merchandising and information point. The new style programme was greatly admired and due to the new format everyone knew the table they were on for the dinner and also where friends were sitting.

By Saturday evening, after some retail therapy, members were ready for a night of fun. As you can see the new Dinner Club Committee waited with trepidation to see how the evening would pan out.



Will it All be Okay on the Night?



It Was!

The majority found their meal to be very enjoyable (after all you cannot please everyone all of the time!) and the raffle draw under Dot and Maggie P ran like clockwork and the vast amount of prizes (thank you, ladies, for your generosity once again) were quickly delivered by Lesley and her team of runners. What would we do without you? Then came the highlight of the evening – Soul Mates. Our great friends Kim and Jake did not disappoint and delivered a wonderful programme including Lady Gaga, Tina Turner, Frank Sinatra and Freddie Mercury. John Dolphin once again provided the Disco.

The success of the weekend and especially Saturday evening has been revealed by the terrific comments received and the number of dancers on the floor at any one time.

Ladies, if you do not belong to the WRAC Dinner Club, you do not know what you are missing. Without those of you who come on a regular basis, and there are many, it would not be such a resounding success so THANK YOU. It makes the hard work so worthwhile to see such happy smiling faces and seeing old friends reunited. If you have access to the internet, please look at the WRAC Dinner Club website where in the Gallery there are 223 photographs of the dinner taken by our new 'snapper' Cathy Munro. Thanks to you Cathy as you must have caught just about everyone on camera.

Welcome to the committee to Jan Burchett-Vass as Deputy Entertainments Secretary.

Looking forward to seeing you in 2012.

Chris Corker



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Fun was Had by All

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'

WRAC MEMORIAL PAVIOUR

Maggie Purkis

On 16th May 2001, the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas was officially opened by our own Association President, HRH Princess of Kent. The WRAC Association was offered the opportunity to purchase a plot at the Arboretum to commemorate the service of the women of the QMAAC, the ATS and the WRAC. The purchase was made, the WRAC Association plot was planted with trees and shrubs, and 3 benches were provided; one in memory of the ladies of each of the sections making up our Association. In November 2003 the Royal British Legion assumed ownership of the site and from that date the importance and popularity of the NMA as a focus of Remembrance in Britain grew exponentially.

On 15th July 2006, a Service of Dedication was held at the NMA at the unveiling of a statue in memory of the service given by the ATS; the statue was provided by donations from members of all the Branches of the Association, and members of the ATS Dinner Club. The statue was in position well before the start of construction of the Armed Forces Memorial, but the ATS statue will gaze forever at the glorious tribute to the members of The Armed Forces who fell in the service of their country.

There is no permanent memorial to the WRAC at the NMA – yet. In time, the WRAC Association will cease to exist; in perhaps 50 years, visitors to the Arboretum will be hard pressed to recall that there used to be a Corps of the British Army staffed only by women. The benches may, by then, have fallen to disrepair, and who will be prepared to replace them?

On 17th May Belle Jenkinson and I were invited to represent the Association at an open evening at the NMA to discuss possible changes in the next 10 years, and to raise awareness of their Future Foundations Fundraising

Appeal as launched by HRH Prince William of Wales in April 2009. The plan is that the NMA will raise £8 million (they're over half way there already), with which to build a new Visitor's Centre, and that as part of that build, large stone pavours (measuring approximately 2' x 3' x 2") engraved with the badge and name of the donor (Regiment, Corps, RN Ship, RAF Station or other) will be placed as a permanent memorial. made further enquiries. The pavours cost £3,000. I asked at the Dinner Club Committee meeting if the members would be happy about the Dinner Club sponsoring the fundraising.

The ladies of the Dinner Club Committee were very happy to give the green light, so I applied to purchase a paviour, and rattled a "big bottle" at the Dinner Club on 7th – 9th October 2011. The big bottle collected £432 – it was a great start; admittedly only 1/6 of the total needed, but there was still time. We had hardly had time to recover from the wonderful weekend which is the WRAC Dinner Club, when Babs Blay, the Club's Treasurer, received an envelope containing a note and a cheque. The note explained that two of our members (who wish to remain anonymous) wanted to donate towards the cost of the paviour. The cheque was for a massive £2,500. Babs circulated the news to the committee by e-mail, and amongst the responses was one which said that a committee member wished to donate the remainder needed. The fundraising appeal was fulfilled – the paviour paid for.

When I applied to purchase a paviour, I asked how many had already been applied for. The answer was 10 or 12. I explained that the WRAC was quite used to being sited at the edge of a garrison; beside the outer fence; at the far end of the runway. As our application was received so early in the process, perhaps we could have our paviour sited in a more central position? The very nice lady at the other end of the phone said she would make a note to site our paviour at this end of the runway. Within site of the arrivals lounge would be best!!

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2012

The next AGM will be held in the Bristol Suite at the Marriott City Hotel, Bristol on **Saturday 24th March 2012.**

Provisional Agenda for the AGM:

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

Reunions

WRAC POSTAL BRANCH ASSOCIATION
23RD WRAC REUNION AT JESMOND
NEWCASTLE
 W/3830053 Miss Margaret Grant MBE



Some Members of the Postal Branch Association

We had a superb reunion this year and everyone enjoyed themselves. During the days trips on open tour buses were made and visits to the Cathedral and shopping expeditions.

Evenings were kept busy with quizzes, bingo, raffles and money collected was put into our fund which was nearly empty. Thanks to all members who contributed with gifts for the raffle.

The management, hotel accommodation, food, staff and everything was great and we will be having another reunion there in the future.



Painting by Pat Gray given to Margaret Grant MBE to donate to the Raffle.

Sadly the weekend came to an end too soon and it was time to go home.

SHOEBURYNESS P & E REUNION
 (17th Indep Company WRAC and later detachment)
 Janet James

Further to my letter to the *Lioness* in edition 1/2010, I am happy to report that the girls of the Shoeburyness garrison had a further bi-ennial reunion week-end and dinner, organised by Jo Crutcher, at the end of October 2011, at a hotel in Hemel Hempstead.



Spot the Spectral figure of former E AsG!

Our numbers were a little down on previous occasions, mainly due to last minute ill-health problems, but nevertheless the decibel level from many conversations remained quite undimmed. Although the photograph show only the girls, many husbands who were also posted to Shoeburyness take the opportunity to come along.

The years covered by the attendees range from 1954 until the ending of the WRAC presence in the mid-80s, including a fair number of those who were there in the mid-60s.



Catching up

I mention this, as I have only just noticed, rather belatedly and apologetically, the letter from Anne Robinson in *Lioness* 2/2011, who was at Shoebury at that time. If she (or any other folks who spent many a happy hour freezing behind a Number 7 Director on the sea wall and do not know of our gatherings) would like to

contact me on janejames@ukgateway.net I would be happy to add names to the list for the next gathering. This will probably, although not yet carved in stone, be in October 2013 in the Midlands area.

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BAND REUNION

Mrs Jean Collyer (née MacDowall)

I hope you might be able to use this photo of a Band Reunion (small) lunch at the George Hotel, Stamford held on 20th October 2011.



Includes Margaret and David Kent, Pat McMahon, Ruth Crombie, Pauleen and Ivor Annetts, my husband Lt Col Peter Collyer and myself.

However we have now decided to meet next year in London as our numbers able to travel to Stamford are decreasing.

Brigadier Anne Field's Service was very moving – she was a dear friend and I thought Lieutenant Colonel Westlake's tribute was moving and excellent. Thank you all for the good work you do.

I did go to the AGC Museum in Winchester recently – interesting, but I saw my name incorrectly spelt! Never mind. Thanks in haste, forgive writing – I'm approaching 92!!!

NORTHERN REUNION

Mrs Iris Howe



They could not wait for the Gravy!

Here is a photograph you may want to include in our next *Lioness* – not sure who the ladies are. I took it at the

Northern Reunion in York on 10th September 2011 – aren't we a happy lot – as always.

I am so looking forward to Solihull next weekend and another brilliant encounter.

NORTH EAST AREA UNION

Irene Maclean, Cleveland Branch

On September 10th 2011 the North East Area Reunion was held at the Monkbar Hotel York. As Area Secretary I knew who was coming and had the great privilege of reuniting two pals of mine who did basic training together at Lingfield. Audrey Grainge née Bradbrook is a member of Cleveland Branch and Christine aka Cherry née Tordoff is a member of Leeds Branch. I served in Germany with Cherry and I, through the internet, got in touch again and along with other pals, we re-unite quite often, especially at the WRAC Dinner Club.

So ladies, don't despair of finding old pals, it can be done. As Audrey told me afterwards, lots of tears and laughs at that Reunion!! And also as Cherry said, they would love to find other girls from their basic training days; they must be out there somewhere!!



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Scenes from the Reunion

OLD MATES MEET AT LAST Mrs Mavis Middleton née Prince

I just had to tell you about a fantastic holiday I have just had at The Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre in Lowestoft with a lass I first met in Guildford over 65 years ago. We lost contact and I hadn't seen her since

then. Grace noticed a letter in a magazine from a Mrs Prince who lived in the same town as myself (Herne Bay). My maiden name was Prince. Grace wrote and enquired if she knew a Mavis Prince in Herne Bay and it turned out to be my sister-in-law. My sister-in-law brought the letter down to me. I replied with a photo taken of the two of us when we were in the ATS, and said "if you are this Grace in the photos, then yes I do remember you".



Grace Cox and Mavis Middleton née Prince in 1943

From then on we continued to correspond and when my daughter and I were going to the holiday home for a week my daughter suggested Grace came too. She readily agreed and we called and picked her up en route. We had a marvelous week together and she's still the same old Grace. It was as if we had only met up the day before.

The Lord Kitchener is home from home and I've been going there each year for about 30 years. It's situated right on the Prom. The food is out of this world, plenty of it and you can make a cup of tea at anytime of day or night providing it doesn't interfere with meal times. The Lord Kitchener has very reasonable rates and my daughter and I will be going back again later this month. Hopefully Grace will be booking the same week as us again in the future.



68 Years Have Flown By!

SOUTH AND SOUTH WEST REUNION

Mrs Pip Shail, née Page

When a recently joined member of the WRAC Association, Pip Shail (née Page) attended the South and South West Association Reunion in July, she hasn't necessarily expecting to meet the Vice President of the Association.



At the South and South West Reunion

I attended basic training at Guildford in July 1972, and my Platoon Commander was 2Lt Margaret Davies. I am keen to get in touch with any WRAC members who were attached to the Intelligence Corps, serving in Germany and Northern Ireland between 1972 and 1976.



Basic Training – July 1972

NOTICE

AGC Corps Day – Saturday 26 May 2012

WRAC Association members might be interested in attending this event which takes place at Worthy Down on Saturday 26 May 2012 from 1200 hours. As the event is only six days after the Association will have taken part in a service of rededication and the laying up of QMAAC and ATS Standards at Guildford Cathedral (see centre page of this edition of *Lioness*) there will be no official WRAC Association involvement in the AGC Corps Day.

This event will take the shape of a large village fete at Worthy Down, with an arena hosting various displays surrounded by marquees, tents, stalls, sideshows or attractions and fairground rides. There will be a main marquee within which AGC and Antecedent Corps Association personnel and their guests may purchase lunch and afternoon tea.

12:00	Drumhead Service.
12:30	Lunch.
13:30	Lunch ends and public access begins.
14:00	Arena events begin.
15:30	Afternoon Tea.
16:00	Arena closes.

GRAND REUNION

FRIDAY 23 MARCH – MONDAY 26 MARCH 2012

PDF Compressor Free Version **OUTLINE PROGRAMME**

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

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	REMARKS
Fri 23 Mar	1400	Reception opens. Receive Welcome Pack and check Seating Plans. Fund Raising.	It would be very helpful if everyone could arrive at the Bristol Marriott Hotel during the Friday afternoon, even if you are not staying there. This will help us confirm numbers and names for the seating plans.
	1830	Reception in the foyer of the Bristol Suite	Pre Dinner drinks are at individual expense.
	1930	'Ladies in Uniform' themed Dinner in the Bristol Suite	Please wear appropriate 'fancy dress' if you like but it is not compulsory! One bottle each of red and white wine, will be provided per table. Additional drinks at individual expense.
	After Supper	Cabaret/Music provided by 'Soul Mates	Dancing/Listening until 0100 hours.
Sat 24 Mar	Morning	Fund raising and sale of Prize Draw tickets	Until 1230 hours
	1330-1400	Branch Secretaries Meeting in the Conservatory	Conservatory is located on 1st Floor
	1430	AGM in the Bristol Suite	Including announcement of Prize Draw results.
	1830	Pre Dinner Drinks in the foyer of the Bristol Suite	A glass of Cava or soft drink will be provided. Additional drinks at individual expense.
	1930	Gala Dinner in the Bristol Suite	One bottle each of red and wine will be provided per table. Additional drinks at individual expense.
	After Dinner	Entertainment provided by 'Classic Soul Dog'	Dancing/Listening until 0100 hours.
Sun 25 Mar	1030	Church Service in the Bristol Suite	Branch Standards may be paraded. Music by The Salamanca Band & Bugles 6 RIFLES.
	1130	Parade	The Salamanca Band & Bugles 6 RIFLES.
	Afternoon	R&R!	
Mon 26 Mar	After Breakfast	Grand Reunion ends	Safe journey home.

* Bianca Taubert from the Adjutant General's Corps Museum will be at the Marriott Hotel on Friday & Saturday looking for willing volunteers to recount their Service memories, these will be recorded for the Museum's oral history archives.

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

Weddings

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

PAUL AND NANCY PUCKEY

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Paul and Nancy Puckey celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 30th September 2011. They met whilst Paul, a Corporal at the time, was serving with the Royal Army Service Corps at HQ Southern Command Transport Platoon, Wilton, and Nancy (née Venni) was posted to join the Platoon in October 1959.



Nancy and Paul at Wilton

They married on 30th September 1961 and began married life in Berlin.



Wedding Day 30th September 1961

Over the next 25 years they visited places all over the world and raised 3 children – Deborah, Andrew and Richard. Their family has increased over the years with 8 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. After leaving the Army as a Captain in the Royal Corps of Transport, Paul went on to have a very successful career in Industry. Both are now retired and live in Tamworth, Staffordshire.



Taken at a recent RASC/RCT Association Function

Paul Puckey BEM

NOTICE

Photographer working on portrait photography project to celebrate Women WWII volunteers is looking for ex-volunteers to take part in this project by sharing their experience and having their portrait taken. Please contact Rachel on 07770 697171 or via www.rachelvoegeleisen.com/projects/ii/

Editors Note: This is a private advert and is not supported in any way by the WRAC Association.

Letters to the Editor

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Dear Editor,

Just received the *Lioness* – it's certainly something to look forward to and it is always appreciated especially all the hard work that goes into producing it – an excellent magazine. On reading the editorial, alarm bells started ringing, true I'm ex-ATS/WRAC so I am amazed at the thought of a Web Site etc as I am sure some of the WRAC personnel will also be in the same mind. Having worked in International Telegraphy for 26 years we were in contact with any major town in the world with a telegraph office interested and in touch. The last year of my service was by computer, uninteresting and boring so have no love for computers and do not have one.

When the *Lioness* drops through the letter box it's a friend arriving and an enjoyable one – long may it remain so.

Christine (Chris) Gibbs

Dear Editor,

Thank you for printing my letter in No 2 issue of *Lioness*. When I first wrote I should have explained more who I was. I have been sending mementos of ATS to Major Fairbairn for years. If you ever went into her office, England's calendar I sent her would be on her wall.

I had my ATS memoirs in *Lioness* etc under my Army nickname of Dusty. My son has just phoned up your office to find out when it would be convenient to let you have a huge ATS Poster, but the gentleman who answered him said the poster was not wanted – sorry about that, but I do understand you having so much to contend with. I am sorry I cannot phone you myself but I am over 91 years old, disabled with arthritis etc and find using a telephone a bit of an ordeal.

I still enjoy reading the *Lioness* which I pass on to another ex-ATS friend. Thanks for the book of tickets. I enclose a cheque for £10 as I feel I cannot sell anymore as it would mean more work for my carer son – I am lucky I can still write, even though it takes age.

I do hope Major Fairbairn has arrived back safely from New Zealand. My best wishes to you all – you all work so hard to give us all the news and photographs of interest.

Winifred Frances Hughes née Goodbody, W/8087 ATS Basingstoke

WRAC FAREWELL PARADE DVD

I am contacting you to inform you that the WRAC Farewell Ceremony on 25th March 1992 Video is still available to buy. We filmed the event many years ago and have recently put it onto DVD which can be purchased via our website – <http://shop.visionsunlimited.co.uk/> Or telephone 01473 828474

If you would like more information please contact us.

Richard Tann (Visions Unlimited)
Email: artwork@visionsunlimited.co.uk

QUESTION FOR THE EDITOR

Would it be possible in the back of the *Lioness* to have a list of branches and contact numbers? Many of the ladies on the WRAC site on Facebook have asked how to contact their Branches. I myself have found it hard to get a contact number. I hope you can help.

Thank you.

Carole King

Editor's Note: This has not been possible for this edition of the Lioness but will be investigated for the next edition. Contact numbers for the Branches can be obtained from RHQ and will be contained on the official website.

Dear Editor,

I see in the last issue of the *Lioness* a Vera Bignell who in 1946 was in Rome. I am not sure if it was the same one I knew, but we worked in the Army Post Office in Nottingham, then moved in 1945 to Naples to work in the Post Office there.

I did go to Rome on a week's leave in 1946 with a Vera and Eva and 2 other ATS. I think Vera went back to England that year. I moved up to North Italy and then on to Klagenfurt, Austria, where I signed on for 6 months then came back home in 1948.

Ex-W/316951 Joan Middleton
Salisbury

Dear Editor,

My email address shown in *Lioness* No 1 of 2011, page 50, shows my old email address. Could my new email address be shown in the next 2012 *Lioness* please? New email address is jean.crook535@btinternet.com

Thank you.

Jean Crook

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES for the year ended 31 October 2011

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		• Unrestricted •				
	Notes	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2011	Total 2010
INCOME & EXPENDITURE						
Incoming resources						
Incoming resources from generated funds:						
Voluntary Income	1	140,958	3,205	72,974	217,137	62,943
Activities for generating funds	2	13,450	-		13,450	-
Investment Income	3	11,348	-	128,427	139,775	149,805
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4	6,539	-	-	6,539	50,408
Other incoming resources	5	5,110		543	5,653	2,110
Total incoming resources		177,405	3,205	201,944	382,554	265,266
Resources expended:						
Cost of generating funds:						
Cost of generating voluntary income	6	15,996	-	30,850	46,847	31,736
Charitable activities	8	60,690	-	255,914	316,603	227,664
Governance costs	9	7,971	-	3,683	11,654	9,423
Total resources expended		84,658	-	290,447	375,105	268,823
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS						
		92,748	3,205	(88,502)	7,449	(3,557)
Transfers between funds	14	3,210	(3,210)	-	-	-
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR						
		95,958	(5)	(88,502)	7,449	(3,557)
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES						
(Losses)/gains on investments:						
Unrealised		(11,017)	-	(26,950)	(37,967)	282,896
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	17	84,941	(5)	(115,452)	(30,517)	279,339
Fund balances brought forward at 1 November 2010		545,303	35,784	4,895,886	5,476,973	5,197,633
Fund balances carried forward at 31 October 2011		630,244	35,779	4,780,434	5,446,456	5,476,972

The net movement in funds for the year arises from the charity's continuing activities.

No separate Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses has been presented as all such gains and losses have been dealt with in the Statement of Financial Activities.

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

BALANCE SHEET for the year ended 31 October 2011

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	Notes	2011	2010
FIXED ASSETS			
Investments	10	5,125,394	5,163,361
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stocks of badges, souvenirs & standards		5,138	5,410
Debtors	11	2,994	41,212
Cash at bank & in hand	12	329,190	276,048
		<u>337,322</u>	<u>322,670</u>
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	13	16,261	9,058
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>321,062</u>	<u>313,612</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>5,446,456</u> =====	<u>5,476,973</u> =====
FUNDS OF THE ASSOCIATION			
Restricted funds:			
The Benevolent Funds	15	4,090,530	4,185,998
The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund	16	689,904	709,888
Unrestricted funds:			
General funds		630,244	545,303
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund	14	9,458	9,569
Lioness life subscription fund	14	26,321	26,215
TOTAL FUNDS	17	<u>5,446,456</u> =====	<u>5,476,973</u> =====

Approved by the trustees on

..... Chairman
Lieutenant Colonel S J Westlake

19 January 2012

Obituaries – their final salute

W/227584 DOROTHY LEAN

Shepherd ATS
13th June 2011



Dorothy Lean at Eden Camp, September 2010

I wish to inform you of the very sad loss of Dorothy (Dot) Lean, an active member of the Sheffield Branch for 29 years. She served in the ATS from December 1942 to December 1945 at Chilwell as a typist. She and her husband Ken were staunch members of the British Legion and attended every military parade held in Sheffield. They also went every September to Eden Camp for the Remembrance Service held there.

Dot had a beautiful singing voice and belonged to a concert party called Ladybird Singers who entertained at residential homes for the elderly, as well as taking part in variety shows at the Companions Club, Sheffield. I enclose two photos, one taken at her funeral on 20th June 2011 when friends formed a Guard of Honour for her, and one taken at Eden Camp in 2010. We shall be going to our Northern Area Reunion on 10th September 2011 in York and a glass (or 2) will be raised to her, she will be sadly missed.



Guard of Honour for Dorothy

Brenda Colley

MARY MOORE ATS

26th July 2011



90th Birthday Luncheon Party – 11th June 2011

The photo of Teddie Bray's 90th birthday lunch will always be remembered. Our long serving member Mary Moore (sitting in the front) was very ill although we didn't realise that. She went home and was looked after by carers, then she moved to the local hospice. We visited her when we could and she was always so cheerful. She died very peacefully on 26th July 2011. Phyllis Price carried our Standard and 10 members attended her very beautiful funeral service. We shall miss her as she always came to meetings and helped with anything the branch wanted doing.

Portsmouth Branch

W/115584 CPL GWENDOLINE JOYCE MARY GIBBS née SIDWELL ATS

25th June 2011



Outside J Hut – Beaumanor 1997

It is with great sadness that I must inform you about the death of my mother Mrs Gwen Gibbs, on the 25 June 2011.

We are very fortunate that Gwen wrote her life story for the family and left us with many memories about her life in the ATS, so in her own words:

"I joined the ATS on 16 December 1941, since the official age of joining was 18, I gave my DOB as 1923. I became a Intercept Operator, this required the ability to read high speed morse, memorise lots of boring old 'Q' signals and required signing the Official Secrets Act. A secret I kept (even from my husband) until 1993 when I was able to tell everybody about my life at Beaumanor which was part of the codebreaking operations at Bletchley Park.

Looking back, I am proud of what I did and also very glad I did it. I marched at the Cenotaph on the 50th anniversary and felt marvellous".

A devoted wife for 64 years, a loving mother, grandmother and great grandmother Gwen was an inspiration to all who knew her.

Judith Witts

**MARGARET (MARGO) FRASER
née LALOR WRAC (R SIGNALS)
16th November 2011**

Margo served in the WRAC in the 1960s, some of us knew her from Singapore in 1966-1967 so it was wonderful when Margo was reunited with us at the 2005 WRAC Dinner in Birmingham. Another Tangliner was with us, once again Margo's lovely nature and gentle smile was still the same as ever and she fitted in as though all those years had just melted away. As well as meeting up with old pals from her postings, Margo also made many new friends at the WRAC Dinners and also at



At one of our many Reunions

the Leeds Branch – all of whom became very fond of her. Margo came from The Wirral in Merseyside and before coming out to Singapore she used to go to the Cavern in Mathew Street Liverpool where the Beatles started their journey to fame, so by the time Margo went out to Singapore she was a very trendy 60s girl. Jeanette Thirlwell remembers Margo coming to Singapore with up to date 60's clothes which had bypassed us who were already there, and from then on she was known as "Margo the Mod". She looked like a model – tall, slim and pretty in her short shift dresses and sandals and 60's bob hairstyle. She was a popular member of her shift working in the switchboard and well liked by all the lads and lasses. Jackie Johnson, née McPhie, shared a room with Margo for 2 years in Singapore and said she was a true friend. Margo was Jackie's bridesmaid in 1967 and after 43 years Jackie was delighted to be reunited with Margo again at the 2011 WRAC Dinner in Solihull.

Since 2005 we have had many happy times at the yearly WRAC Dinners with Margo, then 2 years ago she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Margo took this all in her stride and was very stoic all the way through her treatment. This year when she knew she didn't have long left she was still determined to come to the dinner, and even though she was very weak, she made the journey to be with us for one last time. We felt honoured and privileged to have her with us. One of the things she especially requested to do was to go shopping with us to the Solihull shopping centre which she had loved doing in the previous years. Margo said over and over again that it was what she wanted to do most of all, and even though she had to be in a wheelchair all of the weekend, we went shopping and she bought some nice things and afterwards we sat and relaxed in the square and had a coffee, and now we have some lovely memories of Margo smiling at all the banter enjoying simple pleasures of shopping and having coffee and we are so pleased she had her wish fulfilled. Although she was very ill she would not give in and managed to stay for the whole of the weekend. When she came down to dinner on the Saturday evening she looked beautiful and serene and still with her lovely smile but when she got home after that weekend her condition worsened very quickly. She went into St Gemma's Hospice, Leeds where she passed away on the 16th of November.

Margo's funeral service was held at Lawnswood Crematorium on 28th November. A large group of WRAC and ATS friends who knew Margo both from her Service days and since joining the Dinner Club and Leeds Branch, attended to pay their respects. The 2 Chapels were packed full with family, friends and work colleagues from the Post Office and other places where Margo had worked.

Now we know that we had in our midst not only a friend, we had someone who had carried out the true meaning of life, who valued the important family, friends, and doing ordinary things, being together and having fun. Her son Lee paid tribute to his Mum in this way, of all the accolades anyone could have Margo got the ones that really matter, that she was a devoted wife and mother, a loyal daughter to her mum and lovely sister to her siblings, always thought of others before herself, was selfless throughout the years, a hard worked and loving mother. A very fine tribute from her son and family

indeed, although Margo being modest as she was would not think she had done anything unusual.

At the time we knew Margo she showed extreme bravery, never complaining, always optimistic and very resolute. She leaves us a big void in our lives, but with lovely memories of happy times at the dinners.



Having Fun

Margo leaves a devoted husband Doug and son Lee, and her Mum and family. Our condolences and heartfelt sympathy go out to all Margo's family and friends. Margo our Friend we Salute You, Rest in Peace – well deserved.

Carol Traynor

MAJOR BRENDA BASS WRAC
19th December 2011

Major Bass died on 19th December. You may have seen the announcement in the Daily Telegraph. Captain Bass, as she then was, was stationed at Chilwell in the 1950s and worked in the Central Ordnance Depot Chilwell (served in Ordnance most of her career I believe). At the time I was RSM of 4 Battalion WRAC also stationed at Chilwell. During one bank holiday most of the company went on leave. I stayed in Station acting as Orderly Officer. It was the practice that if a telegram arrived for anyone not then in Station, the orderly opened it and duly dealt with any important news. A telegram duly arrived addressed to Brenda, which I opened. It said – I am in London and would love to meet you – signed Ginger Rogers. The Ginger Rogers of the dancing duet with Fred Astaire! I had no way of getting in touch with Brenda, so the telegram was left for her return. I would like to think that eventually the two did meet up.

I spoke with Captain Heather Cary (in Scotland) and she said she was going to Brenda's funeral to represent the Corps – a fitting gesture.

Lt Col (Retd) Gerry Fahy

W/315200 ISABELLA B TOFT
née SIEVEWRIGHT ATS
6th August 2011

My Mother, Isabella Beatrice Toft née Sievwright died on 6th August 2011 (she was born on 10th March 1924).



Proud to be in Uniform

She served in the ATS from 1944 to 1946. I have enclosed a picture of her and her Platoon Company.



2 Platoon, D Company 1944

Mother did her initial training in Guildford and then moved to Nottingham to work in the Army Post Office. There she was stationed at Sunrise Camp (Nottingham). I was told by my Mother that she sorted mail at what was a mineral water works next door to the Home Brewery at Daybrook and the Vyella (shirt) factory, Nottingham.

Mum married a Royal Engineer, Sapper, 14460551 Ernest Toft on 27th July 1946 and I believe she left the Armed Forces at that time. The couple met when he was on guard duties – not sure if it was at Sunrise Camp or one of the Postal Depots. My Father served in the Army until the early 1950s, having been based at Marchwood near Southampton and Hanover, Germany.

My Mother was a member of the Royal British Legion, Women's Section, Bradford Branch for a number of years and the Army Post Office Association – both now disbanded.

Mr M E Toft

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In Uniform

It is with regret that I have to inform you that my Mother Emily Allen passed away on 22nd August 2011 at Scunthorpe General Hospital. She was very proud of her Army days, serving her time at Aldershot in 'C' Company. She enlisted on 25th April 1941.

This was where she met Pte H A Collette from the Canadian Stormont Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders and subsequently they were married at Aldershot in September 1943. Sadly he was killed in action on 8th July 1944. Despite her sadness she continued in the Army and was finally discharged on 5th January 1946.

Following her discharge she then went every year to visit her husband's grave in Beny sur la Mer, until it became impossible due to lack of mobility and failing sight.

She remarried in 1957 to Bill Allen (who was a Master Staff Sergeant in the REME) and together they raised 6 children. Sadly Bill passed away in 1989.



Much Loved and Missed

She attended many ATS functions held at the Victory Club, London and was due to attend the final luncheon this year. Also her family had organised a 'surprise' 90th birthday party which sadly wasn't to be. It had also been planned for her to attend the Cenotaph Ceremony this year.

She was a much loved Mum, Nan and Super Nan to all her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren and will be sadly missed by us all. Thank you for all those wonderful years you gave to everyone.

Bill Allen (Son)

MRS MARGARET D CRANMER ATS/WRAC
1st November 2011

It is with much sorrow that I have to write and tell you that Margaret died on 1st November 2011.

For 15 years Margaret was our wonderful Secretary of the Exeter Branch. There is a lovely photograph of her receiving her Certificate of Appreciation from Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Sue Westlake in the 2008 No 2 *Lioness*, page 14.

Margaret was born on 7th June 1923 and served in the ATS from 1941 to 1945 and the WRAC 1958 to 1974. She had been ill for some time and we are going to miss her happy presence at our two yearly luncheons.

Mrs Edna L Green

MRS KATHLEEN MIRIAM BALLS née GUEST
12th August 2011



"Molly" Balls

I am sorry to have to inform you that my Mother, Mrs Kathleen Miriam Balls née Guest, who was always known as Molly, died on 12th August 2011 aged 90 years. She was born on 10th March 1921.

When her death is recorded in the *Lioness*, you might perhaps like to include the photograph from the Order of Service.

Christine Balls

Editor's Note: This article was sent in about the life of Mary, Lady Crofton but there was no details as to the author so I have included the name of the author.

Mary, Lady Crofton, who died on 29th July 2011, was one of a small group of women who landed on the beaches of Normandy, shortly after D day.

Mary Friend was the eldest of five children and the daughter of James Irvine Hatfield Friend MC of Northdown House, Margate. A few months before the outbreak of World War Two, he donned his World War One uniform and took his daughter Mary to Shorncliffe where they both enlisted into the Army. He re-joined the Buffs and Mary joined the ATS. One of her first experiences of war was handing out tea in Dover to allied soldiers returning from Dunkirk. Years later she saw a film about Dunkirk which showed the soldiers smiling and waving, but it irritated her because she recalled that they were dirty, dishevelled and exhausted and she did not see anyone smiling. After Dunkirk, she watched the Battle of Britain first hand in the skies about Kent and remembered sitting on the cliffs above Dover, eating her sandwiches, and seeing 12 planes going down into the Channel. She was subsequently attached to Montgomery's HQ during the preparations for the Normandy Landings. At that time it was assumed that the Germans would use women to operate some of their gun batteries, just as the British used women to man anti-aircraft batteries, and so the planners decided to transfer a number of women into the Royal Military Police and to deploy them to Normandy to guard captured German women.

Mary Friend was attached to the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division and landed on Juno Beach on D+20. In the event, there were no German women manning the guns, but Mary remained with the advancing troops and eventually arrived in Brussels a week after it was liberated. After the surrender, she did find herself guarding women prisoners at a prisoners of war camp which held many of the female concentration camp guards from camps such as Belsen and Dachau.

After the war she went back to Germany as a member of the Control Commission where she met Robert Flach, who she later married and with whom she had two children. However that marriage ended in divorce and she then married Blaise, Lord Crofton in 1964 and settled in Cornwall. Subsequently she became President of the ATS Association and was an active member of the Normandy Veterans Association.

Poem

This poem was doing "The Rounds" when I was in the WRAC – how many others remember it?

A WRAC stood at the gates of heaven
She looked both weary and old
And timidly asked St Peter
For admission to the fold.

What right have you the great saint said
To gain admission here
I've been with the WRAC, she said
For many a weary year.

The gates were then flung open wide
St Peter tolled the bell
Come in my girl, you're welcome here
You've had your share of hell.

Submitted by Sheelagh Wilson –
Suffolk Branch

COPY DEADLINE

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

15 JUNE 2012

Please do ensure that the
photographs are of a high
resolution and are sent as
separate attachments.
If they are embedded in
documents they cannot
be used.

ALLEN Mrs Emily, née Waller, of Scunthorpe, on 22 Aug 2011, ATS
ANDREWS, Mrs Marjorie, née Puddey, of Cirencester, ATS
ARMSTRONG, Mrs Betty, née Howard, of Luton, on 4 Dec 2011, ATS
BASS, Miss Brenda May, of Moray, on 19 Dec 2011, ATS/WRAC
BATES, Mrs Phylis, of Herefordshire, ATS
BENCE, Mrs Pamela, née Brise-Johns, of Fife, on 24 Oct 2011
BENNIE, Mrs L, née Murphy, of Glasgow, on 15 Mar, ATS
BOURNE, Ms Joyce, of Sevenoaks, ATS
BROWN-TURKE, Mrs Agnes, née Cunningham, of Taunton, ATS
BUNCHER, Miss Joyce, of Middlesex, on 3 Feb 2011, ATS/WRAC
CAIN, Mrs Agnes, of Norfolk
CAMPBELL, Miss Helen Hope, of Erskine, on 8 Sept 2011, WRAC
CHADWICK, Mrs Elizabeth, née Larke, of Norwich, ATS
CLYNE, Mrs Beatrice Alice, née Moyse, of Wolverhampton, ATS
COAKER, Mrs Janie, née Vian, of Gunnislake, Cornwall, on 29 Sept 2011, ATS
COLLIE, Mrs Isobel, née Thomas, of Angus, on 27 Sep 2011, ATS
CRABTREE, Miss Marion, of Cheshire, on 30 Aug 2011, WRAC
CRANMER, Mrs Margaret, née Favell, of Exeter, on 1 Nov 2011, ATS/WRAC
CROLL, Mrs Madeline, née Reef, of Whitstable, on 10 Aug 2011, ATS
DAVIES, Mrs Ida Marjorie, née Barker, of Bathampton, on 12 Jun 2011, ATS
DAVIES, Mrs Elsie Freda, née James, of Aberystwyth, ATS
DEAN, Mrs Edith, née Rowles, of Westbury on Trym, on 21 Aug 2011, ATS
DICKIE, Mrs Mary, née Renwick-Brown, of Leuchar, Fife, on 21 Jul 2011, ATS
DUNEC, Miss Pauline, of Fareham, Hants, on 13 Dec 2010, WRAC
FALLA, Mrs June, née Crawford, of Guernsey, on 15 Aug 2011, ATS
FELBEY, Mrs Olive, née Cummings, of Andover, ATS
FORD, Mrs Betty, née Peace, of Middlesbrough, on 21 Mar 2011, ATS
FRASER, Mrs Margo, née Lalor, of Leeds, WRAC
GIBBS, Mrs Gwendoline, née Sidwell, of Wallington, on 25 Jun 2011, ATS
GILBERT, Mrs Patricia, née Hamilton, of Kent, on 20 Sep 2011, ATS
GILL, Mrs Gladys Ruby, née Durbar, of Pontefract, on 13 Jun 2011, ATS
GOODBODY, Mrs Tricia, née Laws, of Shroton, Blandford, on 15 Nov 2011, WRAC
GREWCOCK, Mrs Sheila, née Watson, of Leicester, on 26 Jan 2012, ATS
HANLEY, Mrs Georgina, née Jamieson, of London, in Sept 2011, ATS
HARRISON, Mrs Marjorie, née Smith, of Harrogate, on 10 Nov 2011, ATS
HARTNELL, Mrs Dorothy, née Wilks, of Devon, on 19 Jul 2011, ATS
HORSFALL, Miss Joan, of Manchester, on 24 Oct 2010, ATS

JAMES, Mrs Peggy, of Chelmsford, on 10 Nov 2011, ATS
JONES, Mrs Terry, of Hereford, on 17 Aug 2011, ATS
JONES, Mrs Joan, née Shepherd, of Derbyshire, ATS/WRAC
JONES, Miss Kathleen, née Rowing, of Folkestone, on 2 Nov 2011, ATS
KENT, Mrs Ruby Eillen, née Boswell, of Hastings, on 10 Dec 2011, ATS
KEOUGH, Mrs Stella May, Peterson, of Stanmore, Middlesex, on 3 Jun 2011, ATS
KITCHEN, Miss Kathleen, of Cleethorpes, on 22 Oct, ATS
LANE, Mrs Helen Anne, née Harding, of Hemel Hempstead, on 10 Sep 2011, ATS
LEAN, Mrs Dorothy, of Sheffield, on 13 Jun 2011, ATS
LOCK, Mrs Florence Rosina, of Kent, on 16 Dec 2011, ATS
LOWNDES, Mrs Margaret, née Bain, of Australia, on 25 Apr 2011, ATS
LUCAS, Miss M, of Bexhill on Sea, on 29 Sep 2011, ATS
MAYNARD, Miss D, of Worthing, on 21 Jun 2011, WRAC
MIDDLETON, Mrs Beryl, née Hayford, of Crayford, Kent, on 3 Apr 2011, ATS
MILLAR, Mrs Irene P, née Rushton, of Blackpool, on 15 Dec 2011, ATS
MOORE, Mrs Mary, of Portsmouth, on 26 Jul 2011, ATS
MOORE, Mrs Lilian, née Killigrew, of Canterbury, in Mar 2011, ATS
NICHOLAS, Miss Norma, of Hook, Hants, on 20 Sep 2011, WRAC
NOCK, Miss M, of Poole, WRAC
OLDRIDGE, Mrs Winifred, née Caunder, of York, on 10 Jan 2012, ATS
PASHLEY, Miss A J, of Bexhill on Sea, on 28 Jul, ATS
PURCELL, Mrs Kathleen May, née Preston, of Canterbury, on 29 Oct 2011, ATS
RIDLER OBE, Mrs Barbara, of Eastbourne, on 10 Aug 2011, ATS/WRAC
ROSS, Mrs Elizabeth Betty, née Carroll, of Dumfries, on 14 Oct 2011, WRAC
ROWELL, Mrs Jean, of Weymouth, on 14 Sep 2011, ATS
RUTTER, Mrs Nancy, née Millward, of Newcastle, on 9 Feb 2012
SIMPSON, Mrs A B, née Hunt, of St Leonards on Sea, on 31 Jul 2011, WRAC
SMART, Mrs M E, née Forbes, of Dundee, in Oct 2011, ATS
SMITH, Mrs Grace, née Burnet, of Rochester, Kent, on 6 Jan 2012, ATS
SMITH, Mrs Shirley, née Case, of Tyne & Wear, on 10 Feb 2012, WRAC
STEWART, Mrs Gladys, née Bennie, of Kent, in Jan 2012, ATS
TERRY, Mrs Betty Alice, née Giddings, of St Albans, on 22 Jul 2011, ATS
TOFT, Mrs Isabella, née Sievwright, of West Yorkshire, on 6 Aug 2011, ATS
TRUELAND, Mrs Mary, née Will, of Perth, on 8 Jan 2012, ATS
VIRTUE, Mrs Ruby Eillen, of Hornsea, Yorkshire, on 9 May 2011, ATS
WIGHT, Mrs Agnes, of Lockerbie, on 29 Jan 2012
WILCOX, Mrs Lilian, née Foster, of Rigby, on 21 Nov 2011, ATS
WILKINSON, Mrs Kathleen, née Cook, of Grimsby, on 30 May 2011, ATS
WILSON, Ms Daphne, of Ipswich, on 4 Apr 2011, ATS

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