

LIONESS





WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

Registered Charity No. 206184, founded in 1919

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STATE OF THE NATION PLEASE READ



This is an entirely different kind of foreword to Lioness as I want to take this opportunity to update all our members on various key facts, all of which have a bearing on the future of our Association.

As I travel to meet our members up and down the UK I am continually impressed by the visible esprit de corps and benevolence in action, and I do appreciate all of you who give up your time so willingly to arrange activities at Area and Branch level. I am also very grateful to all of you who have donated to the Association. However we are now at a point in time where we can no longer carry on with business as it has always been done.

Some Facts

- Our membership is just over 3,000, of these 70% are Life Members. The Annual Subscription has only recently been raised to £10.00 from its previous longstanding £5.00 level.
- The WRAC Association Funds are split between the Regimental Funds and the Benevolence Funds. The former has 10% of the total funds yet bears 66% of the total running costs of the Association.
- The Regimental funds must pay for the upkeep of the National Memorial Arboretum plot and other permanent memorials, all Grand Reunions and events, publicity, the majority of the salary bill and the majority of office rent and expenses. From all this the current "cost" per Association member (both Life and Annual) is £37.50 per year.
- If nothing changes the Regimental side of the WRAC Association will probably have to close in 6 years.

The Trustees are meeting in October to discuss all of these challenges and we are deeply committed to finding a way through to preserve our Association and all that it stands for. We owe it to you all, as members of the Association, to ensure that you are aware of the situation and are kept informed. The formal update to members will be at the AGM on Saturday 18th March 2017 at Stratford-upon-Avon as part of the WAAC/QMAAC Centenary Dinner. This is a moment in history and I hope as many of you as possible can support the event.

All of the Trustees and I will ensure that we act in the best interests of the WRAC Association, both now and into the future. I am very grateful to all of you for your support.

Ali Brown

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Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this bumper edition of *Lioness*. I hope you enjoy reading about the exploits of other WRAC Association members and Branches, and perhaps take a trip down memory lane with some of the photos.

I would like to draw your attention to the

application form, in the centre section, to attend the WAAC/QMAAC Centenary Dinner on Saturday 18 March 2017 (further details are on page 4). This will be held in conjunction with the 2017 AGM at the Crown Plaza Hotel (formerly Holiday Inn), Stratford-upon-Avon and promises to be great evening, followed by a short Parade on the Sunday morning. We will be celebrating the centenary of the formation of our antecedent Corps, the first women to serve in the British army in a non nursing role. In addition to the dinner we will also be holding a Prize Draw, you should have received a book of tickets inside this magazine, further books can be purchased online via the website or by phoning us on 0300 400 1992 (mornings).

We have recently upgraded the online payment system on the website which now means you can set up a recurring payment on your credit or debit card for both subscriptions and donations (you can cancel or change these payments at any time). As Annual Subscription are due for renewal on 01 October I'd like to recommend you consider using this method. To renew online go to the members area of the website, if you have forgotten your login details use the link provided at the login screen.

I also wanted to draw your attention to the need to adhere to Data Protection protocols. The WRAC Association is registered with the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) which means we do not share (or publish) your personal information with a third party without your permission. We ask that you respect this protocol yourselves when communicating with and handing individual Association members contact details.

Finally a big thank you to everyone who applied to take part in the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph in London in November. Applications have now closed as we have filled our allocation of 120 tickets and also have a waiting list.

Sue Hatton
editor@wracassociation.org.uk

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Also in this edition you should have received a credit card style WRAC Association card containing contact details (photo above). This is a one time issue to all members (and will be issued to new joiners) and should fit neatly in your purse or wallet for easy reference.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP IS DUE 01 OCT 16 WHY NOT 'FIRE AND FORGET'

Wouldn't it be a great if you didn't have to remember to make an annual membership payment? Help is at hand as now when you renew online it will automatically **set up a recurring payment using your debit or credit card** (you can cancel or change this payment at any time). To renew online go to the members area of the website, if you have forgotten your login details use the link provided at the login screen.

Alternatively have you ever thought about settling up a **Standing Order** to pay your annual membership subscription? Please see the pullout in the the centre pages of this *Lioness* for the details to enable you to set up a **Standing Order**, plus a proforma to inform us that you have done so.

Dear Editor,

I was delighted to read the article from Ann Williams of the Sheffield Branch in *Lioness* 2016 edition 1. Like Ann, Charmaine Coleman was also my platoon sergeant. I enclose a picture of myself and Syd the Bear (we are on our way to Catterick) who came with me on my first day at Victoria Station to go to Hobbs Barracks for my basic training. He was allowed to stay with me during my time at Hobbs, courtesy of Sgt Coleman and her 2 training corporals. Syd is now 53 years old!



There were 14 of us in our sleeping quarters at Hobbs and Syd's music box, and its rendition of the Brahms Lullaby, played for us most evenings after lights out and before we went to sleep. I owe so much to Sgt Coleman, she was an absolute inspiration and all that I have learnt in self discipline over all of these years started with her.

If any members remember Syd, or me(!) I would be delighted to hear from them.

Linda Martin-Smith (W/420114 Pte Linda Day)
martinsmithlinda@gmail.com

Dear Editor,

I am writing to say how upset and disappointed I was to see the cover photograph of *Lioness*. A smartly dressed soldier with four ladies representing ex members of the ATS and WRAC in their green 'fleecy tracksuit tops'. Please, please, we have blazers and skirts to wear on parades, wreath laying and other formal occasions.

These green tracksuit tops (yes, I have one) I am sure were not meant to replace the blazer etc. I was pleased to see blazers being worn, shown in photos on other pages of *Lioness*, by members who know. The Royal British Legion are always smartly turned out, I don't know what they must think now. It is interesting to note that the WAAF stick to their gear, they are to be complemented I think.

Could a fixed rule be made regarding the use of these 'work tops'. I thought, when I bought mine, that they were to be used for the monthly meetings, socials, outings etc. It could be me overthinking things in my old age, almost 95!

Mavis Litchfield- Perry

Dear WRAC Association Members,

I'm an author and am writing a novel about ATS drivers during 1940. It's important to me I honour the women that served during that time as best as I can by being as accurate as I can. I am interested in contacting anyone who served in the ATS as a Driver, or perhaps someone with relatives or friends that did who would perhaps be willing to share their stories and insights. Thank you.

Fiona Ford
mail@fionaford.co.uk
07581 514576



WAAC/QMAAC CENTENARY DINNER 1917-2017

Saturday 18 March 2017
Crown Plaza (formerly Holiday Inn),
Stratford-upon-Avon

The History

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was established after a War Office investigation in December 1916 into the number of non-combatant tasks being performed by soldiers on the Lines of Communications in France. It was estimated that 12,000 men could be freed for service in the front line.

The first party of 14 women arrived in France on 31 March 1917, and eventually 9,000 women were to serve there. It was a continually evolving service with rules and regulations being formulated in response to experiences. The WAAC was formally established by Army Council Instruction 1069 of July 1917. On 9 April 1918, largely as a result of their sterling conduct during the German March offensive of that year, the service was renamed Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC), with the Queen becoming Commander-in-Chief.

The QMAAC ceased to exist on 27 September 1921, but some 57,000 women had served with the Corps, both at home and in France. As part of the mobilisation of the whole country this milestone in the push for equal rights formed the basis for women's service in the British Army to this day.

The Event

When? Saturday 18 March 2017

Where? The Crown Plaza (formerly Holiday Inn),
Stratford-upon-Avon

What? A formal Dinner (the WRAC Association 2017 AGM will be held earlier the same day) and a short parade on the Sunday morning.

Who? As the event is subsidised by the WRAC Association attendance will be limited to Association members only (and those eligible to join)

Entertainment? Music will be provided by The Yorkshire Military Band (formerly The Yorkshire Band of The Royal British Legion), including their Corps of Drums, led by WRAC Association member Louise Lingard-Snape. There will also be a disco

How do I book? Full details, including a booking form, can be found in the centre pull-out of this magazine. Online applications can be made via the website
www.wraccassociation.org.uk



Notices A-Z

AGM 2016. The 2017 AGM will be held at on Saturday 18 March 2017 at the Crown Plaza (formerly Holiday Inn) Stratford-upon-Avon. Full details will be published in Lioness 17/1.

Change of Address. Please don't forget to notify us of any change of address. Every time Lioness is distributed a number of copies are unnecessarily returned as members have failed to inform us that they have moved.

Donations. Did you know that you can send a donation to the Association at any time? You can specify whether you want your donation to go to the main Association account – please make cheques payable to WRAC Association – or, if you want it to go to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund then make your cheque payable to ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. Please read page 77 (inside back cover) before making a donation. Donations can also be made on line via the Association website or by phone 0300 400 1992. Whatever you decide to do, PLEASE make sure that we have a Gift Aid form (see centre pullout) 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.

Dress on Parade. In line with the Royal British Legion and other Regimental Associations, parade dress is to be smart and appropriate; the norm is for dark colours. Within the WRAC Association the tradition has arisen to wear a green WRAC Association fleece or a bottle green blazer. Please note that this form of dress is not mandatory and those who do not possess it are still very welcome to parade, as long as they are dressed smartly and appropriately.

Event Tickets. We occasionally receive free tickets for events, or invitations to attend functions organised by The Not Forgotten Association. Historically these have primarily been offered to regional Branch members. However if you are an **HQ Branch member** and would like to register your interest in being sent information about these events please email office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk and type **EVENT TICKET REGISTER** as the subject heading. Please note that the vast majority of these events take place in London or the South.

Lioness (audio version). Lioness is available as an audio magazine on CD. If you suffer from failing eyesight and would like to receive an audio version of Lioness please email office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk or phone HQ WRAC Association on 0300 400 1992

Lioness. Articles for inclusion in the next edition of Lioness must be received by **Friday 16 December 2016**. Please email to editor@wracassociation.org.uk. **Please type the text into the body of the email, not as an attached document.** Please only send a maximum of 3 or 4 good quality photos (jpg format only) as attachments, do not embed them in a document (or email)!

Medals and Badges Etiquette. Etiquette rules for wearing medals only allow the wearing of official awards. Unofficial purchased medals and foreign medals which do not have the Sovereign's permission to be worn are not allowed. The medals awarded to a deceased Service/ex-Service person may be worn on the right breast by a near relative (no more than one group should be worn by any individual). The WRAC Association badge and the Veterans badge may be worn on the left lapel by the position of the buttonhole. Unofficial medals, or badges other than the WRAC Association badge/pin and Veterans badge, should not be worn when representing the WRAC Association.

Memorabilia. Items are available to purchase on-line via the website, by post (prices include P&P) or by phone. See page 53 for details.

Remembrance. The Association receives an allocation of tickets for the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on the Thursday prior to Remembrance Sunday, for the Cenotaph Parade and for the service in Westminster Abbey on Remembrance Sunday. Tickets are open to any member of the WRAC Association who wishes to attend, prior attendance or Branch participation are not a prerequisite.

**Thu 10 Nov 16 Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
Sun 13 Nov 16 Cenotaph Parade - TICKET APPLICATIONS
HAVE CLOSED FOR 2016**

Sun 13 Nov 16 Westminster Abbey Service

Tickets: Ticket applications for the Westminster Abbey events to be made no later than 30 Sep 16 by email (office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk) or letter only. If demand exceeds supply a ballot will take place.

Overseas Members. Overseas Members are requested to pay an additional £5.00 per year to cover additional Lioness postage costs. Only sterling payments can be accepted.

Service Records. Veterans UK is your one stop shop for all queries about Service Records, Medals, Pensions and much more. Go to www.veterans-uk.info or phone 0808 1914 218.

Subscriptions. Annual Members are reminded that subscriptions (£10.00) are due as at 01 October. Subscriptions can be paid via your Branch, online, by phone (0300 400 1992) or by post with a cheque/postal order (sterling only) payable to WRAC Association. You can now set up a 'Fire and Forget' recurring annual payment via the members area of the website

Veterans UK. Veterans UK is your one stop shop for all queries about Service Records, Medals, Pensions and much more. Go to www.veterans-uk.info or phone 0808 1914 218.

WRAC Dinner Club. The WRAC Dinner Club meets every year on the second Saturday in October, full details can be found at www.wracdinnerclub.co.uk

WRAC Officers' Dining Club. The WRAC Officer's Dining Club Dinner will take place on Saturday 26 November 2016 at The Rag (Army & Navy Club). For more details email wracofficersdc@gmail.com





Jean McCloughlin: Jean has been a volunteer Remembrance Worker for The League of Remembrance since 2001. She has continued this work since joining the Royal Hospital Chelsea and volunteers at St Thomas' Hospital every week



Enjoying Founder's Day: Marg Davies, Julia Doig, Sharon Joyce, Chris Corker, Dot Ryder, Monica Jones, Barbara Davies, Ali Brown



Audrey Purton BEM and Bimbo Coleman



Patron's Lunch Parade



Enjoying the RHS Chelsea Flower Show poppies



Wimbledon

PATRON'S LUNCH ENTERTAINMENT PARADE Babs Anderson

Sunday 12 June 2016 arrived and the forecast was for heavy rain throughout the day. Were we downhearted? Of course not. A bit of rain wasn't going to dampen the spirits of 25 intrepid ex-Army girls, who had volunteered to march in a parade of 1600 people to mark Her Majesty The Queen's patronage of 600 charities and organisations and to celebrate her 90th birthday.

Getting through the security checks proved to be a little bit more complicated than it needed to be and we lost one of our number before she even got to the checklist proper. Her paperwork was actually in order but they still wouldn't let her through. We nearly lost another at the next checkpoint but a bit of good, old fashioned teamwork, blocking of paths and stomping made short shrift of the jobsworth at the gate. Having already lost three participants to illness, we weren't going to give in easily.

We were wristbanded and sent on our way to pick up our parade t-shirts. They were supposed to be purple but it doesn't matter in what light you look at them, they're a dirty pink. We were told to put them straight on to identify us with our segment. We were in Segment 6 Purple with all the other Armed Forces folk. We soon started to make friends with our fellows and it wasn't long before someone spotted the all important tea and coffee tent.

There was plenty of time for those of us who had never met before to get acquainted and some of us who were sporting the new technology to compare our Fitbits. Surprisingly, our oldest member present, Helen Morse was showing us how she synchronized her smart phone with her Fitbit. Helen had turned 90 in May and this parade was to be the culmination of her personal celebrations. She marched round the route twice and was a bit of a star amongst the other participants. Lots of them wanted to have their photo taken with her. She was a particular hit with the Royal Corps of Signals Band, as she was right behind them, at the head of our group of placard wielding, t-shirt sporting warriors. The next day Helen reported to a fellow Fitbitter that she had walked 21,982 steps and was disappointed that she hadn't managed the extra 18 steps. What a star she is and showing no signs of slowing down.



Anyway, it appeared that all expected participants were present and correct because there was a flurry of organisers with headsets and microphones addressing the throng of people in

the massive tent. The person getting our undivided attention was Peter Phillips, the overall organiser of the event and the responsible one, should anything go wrong. He begged us "Please don't let me down". It was heartfelt and we were determined to do his bidding. Various others addressed us with instructions and then we were ready to go for our first time around the block. It was to be called Parade 1. Her Majesty wouldn't be there for this run through but our instructions were to enjoy ourselves, smile and engage with the crowds.

It was pouring down with rain by the time we were formed up into our segment and those of us sporting the less than glamorous dirty pink t-shirts and cling film ponchos were issued with big purple placards. They each had the names of two of the organisations to which Her Majesty is Patron. There was some swapping of placards until we were happy with our organisations. However, our crew manager threw a mini stop and we were told to settle for the ones we were given. The placards spookily resembled Dame Edna's glasses and although we learned that they were supposed to represent peacock feathers, we weren't convinced. It was decided that on Parade 2 a couple of ladies would carry a flag instead of placards, as they had had problems, especially when the wind got up a bit. As we passed along The Mall, waving and grinning we could see several celebrities by the barriers, including a bunch of our own WRAC Association members. Much whooping and shouting ensued before we had marched past our friends and had to content ourselves with waving at hysterical members of the public and their bemused children. When we got back to Horse Guards Parade we were each given a little cool bag containing our lunch. It wasn't the same as the hampers on The Mall but perfectly acceptable to people who have had to cope with compo rations. Tea, coffee and bottled water was also available all day, so we were happy.



Parade 2 was about to step off and we were again given our placards. This time, Her Majesty and the rest of the Royal Family were going to be watching so we were excited and keen to get going. Our cling film ponchos had been discarded because we were determined to show how 'hard' we are. Luckily, the sun was shining at this point anyway. The band struck up and we stepped out proudly. Helen Morse was on our front row again and carrying the purple placard with the Women's Royal Army Corps Association writ large. Once again we marched past our friends and repeated the whooping and shouting before heading towards HM The Queen. We managed to check our dressing before we gave a haphazard eyes right as we passed the platform containing the Royal Family. The wind decided to blow and some of us struggled with the rather large placards before they were taken away from us to form some sort of arrangement in front of Her Majesty.

There is something special about marching together, even if it was the first time for some of our contingent since their discharge. It is surprisingly emotional and a moment to be savoured. We were cock-a-hoop with our performance and the sheer joy of being a part of the celebrations will remain with us for the rest of our lives. Our involvement in the parade and the interaction with our WRAC Association friends on The Mall is what 'Esprit de Corps' looks like and long may it continue in future events.

Editor: In addition to the 25 entertainment parade participants 12 members of the WRAC Association sat down to a luxury picnic lunch on The Mall. Six of these were lucky winners of the Association Prize Draw.





WRAC VETERANS OCEANS OF HOPE TURKEY CHALLENGE

Nikki You

On 28th April 2016 WRAC Veterans Nikki Young and Jacquie Cross joined 3 fellow members of Mutual Support, the Armed Forces Multiple Sclerosis Support Group, to take part in the Oceans of Hope Turkey Challenge. The challenge group was comprised of a total of 39 crew from the USA, UK, Republic of Ireland, Australia, Germany, Holland and Denmark, sailing in six yachts. The challenge was personal to each crew member, whether building confidence, functioning without carers or scooters and powerchairs, sailing for the first time, or in the case of members of Mutual Support reliving the esprit de corps and physical activities all had experienced in past service life.



Jacquie Cross WRAC, Sharon Wright WREN, Tracie Mackenzie WREN, Nikki Young WRAC

Travelling out through Stansted the Mutual Support group were rushed through with disability assistance, unsure what awaited them. Nikki and Jacquie shared berths on the "Sonata Whitby" with sailors from the UK and Germany. The skipper, Jens, had considerable experience having achieved a silver medal for Denmark in the Paralympics and sailed 3 times single handedly across the Atlantic.

The WRAC crew took responsibility for provisioning the "Whitby" in Goeck Harbour whilst awaiting the arrival of the 4 other crewmembers. Shopping for 7 in an unfamiliar store without any knowledge of the language took the girls back to life in Germany but an unfamiliar new wheelchair added to the fun, not aided by the many glasses of tea provided by the owners in the bread aisle.

The following week was spent at sea, sailing several hours a day between the tiny islands of the Gocek Gulf, mooring in bays or alongside jetties. Routines developed on board with the crew learning quickly that Jens was a demanding skipper and that all the crew had tasks from the helm to the anchor via the sails and the fenders. Early morning after a long night entertaining other crews on the "Whitby" was spent watching turtles coming up for air, birds circling the masts or the brave swimming between the boats.

The weather was sometimes warm, but mostly cloudy with a couple of spectacular storms, not the mediterranean idyll enjoyed later in the year. The crew became known as the "Whitby Warriors" renowned for trading aubergines and Efes beer whilst moored, but as pirates when anchored alongside the predominantly Danish boat. The early purchase of water guns helped Jens and crew members holdup "Linear" at lunchtime. There was much feasting that night on mushrooms, chicken and avocados roasted in the galley oven on the last night at sea.



The sea adventure had challenged the "Whitby Warriors" to rethink how they approached disability challenges and develop a greater sense of "living life to the max". Back on land and enjoying some R&R, Jacquie & Nikki set out in a 4x4 into the mountains joined by 8 Muslim girls in another vehicle. The signing of "girl power" and shared amusement at the local boys turning up to see prospective wives at the canyons and caves, sealed the female British and Turkish entente cordiale.

The Mutual Support return through Gatwick was achieved with much camaraderie and hopes for the future. In 2017 the Oceans of Hope Challenge may take place further afield requiring a return to the fundraising and planning journeys with MS friends.

EX WRAC SPRING IN SPAIN

Carol Traynor

This year some of us ex WRAC pals (Rita Broomfield, Anne Gurney, Carol Traynor, Irene Maclean, Marlene Hurstfield and Lesley Annable) enjoyed a spring break to coincide with Anne Gurneys 69th birthday on 2nd March. Throughout the wet dark winter we planned the trip to sunny Spain. Our accommodation was a house in a town near Torre Del Mar, not much English is spoken in the town so it put our linguistic skills to the test! However the house was situated in a street with lovely Spanish neighbours who were more than happy to help us get to grips with some Spanish phrases. People were also very welcoming and helpful in the bars and restaurants around the town.



Torre Del Mar is a lovely resort with a wide promenade stretching right round the bay with delicious fish restaurants on the beach. We had lovely meals in the winter sunshine watching the boats on the sparkling sea, and we enjoyed lazy days sampling the

tapas and coffee whilst watching the world go by in the charming tree lined squares in the town. We thoroughly enjoyed our spring break in the lovely warm climate, how fortunate we are to still be traveling and enjoying seeing places as we did in the army all those many years ago.

BENIDORM BABES 2

Sylvia Cree

The 2nd AGM of the Mediterranean Branch was held in Benidorm in May and was attended by 32 of our members, only 3 of whom live in Spain! I live in France, but nowhere near the Mediterranean! The arrivals and departures were staggered because of work commitments by the girls who are still working. Some of the older non working members made a holiday of it and what a great idea that was!

Six of us met up at Birmingham airport for an early morning flight. Needless to say that is where the fun and laughter began and it didn't stop until we landed back one week later! Once again Mel Howell pulled out all the stops and gave us a wonderful holiday. She was very ably assisted by her second in command Chris Powell. Thank you ladies. You both deserve medals.

We had a coach trip to Valencia, where we visited the beautiful indoor market. The local fresh produce is a sight to behold. We did some tasting and some spending before stepping outside where it was hot, hot, hot! The hat stall did a roaring trade that morning. I saw heads more used to donning berets, wearing pretty, bright coloured straw hats. After our shopping we had lunch at the El Rek restaurant, which is in the rice fields of Albufera. The rice is used to make the fantastic Valencia Paella. We were ladies who lunched, big time that day. After lunch, we had a trip on one of the local boats and were treated to the sight of some unusual wild fowl. Another one of our many outings was to the beautiful village of Guadalest in the mountains. Well worth a visit, if you are in the area. Lunch that day was in a converted old flour mill. Another good find of Mel's.



Waiting to embark after the large paella

Ann Colough our Chairman was unable to stay with us at the hotel due to other commitments, but we managed to meet up one evening in Benidorm to celebrate her birthday. The hotel was very welcoming with attentive staff. The only problem was that the Spanish are like the French and they just don't understand vegetarians. I'm sure the message will get through one day! Evenings were mostly spent around the pool and in the bar, where the laughter was very plentiful, to say the least. We even had the DJ playing "simply the best" and the Spanish holiday makers joining in.

We adopted the song "So Long Farewell" from The Sound of Music and sang it each time anyone from the group had to return home. That made quite a sight at the local bus stop!



I must also thank Mel Howell, Phil and David for the excellent day we spent in their beautiful home in the mountains. What a fantastic day we all had and there was enough food to feed an army. I am looking forward to next year and Benidorm Babes 3 and hope to make more new friends there. If you fancy joining us, start saving your pennies.

Visiting Guadalest

WALKING THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

Christine Townsend



In October 2015 I walked 40km along the Great Wall of China and in doing so raised £200 for the WRAC Association. While there I was allowed to put a brick in the wall and leave a special memento under the brick, I placed a WRAC cap badge. What more special memento could I have found to leave in such a special place. Naturally the event was discussed in great detail before venturing out but I still blame in on the red wine that was being drunk! It has to have been the most amazing experience in my life.

“REJOICE... FOR I HAVE FOUND THE PIECE WHICH I HAD LOST” Luke 15.9 Allan Stanistreet

Nicola (Nicki) Wellings enlisted into the the WRAC in 1973, serving in the United Kingdom, Germany and Hong Kong with the Royal Signals and the Royal Artillery. In 1988, as a SSgt, she was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. She ended her career in 1992, as a WO2, serving as Sqn Sgt Maj of 243 Sig Sqn in Bulford.

About 20 years ago, her house was burgled and among a number of sentimental items stolen was her precious medal, the only one she had received for her long years of service. Although the theft was reported to the police, none of her belongings were recovered. An application for a replacement received the response that such a thing was very low on the priorities of the Army Medal Office. And that was how matters stood until late in 2015.

In December 2015, a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal appeared in an on-line auction catalogue. It was described as having been awarded to W/447127 SSGT N WELLINGS WRAC and as being “scarce to a woman”. As a collector of medals it caught my eye and I decided that as the estimate (£60-80) was more than reasonable for such a scarce item, I put in a bid for it, which was successful.

Having obtained the medal I decided to put an appeal for information on this Senior NCO on the WRAC Association website, having a feeling that someone might know the person named on the medal. Not entirely to my surprise, it brought forth an almost immediate response from the recipient with details of the burglary and a request that she might be allowed to purchase the medal from its new owner.

Now, as this medal was stolen property I felt that the only right thing to do would be to restore it to its rightful owner, so I emailed Nicki with a proposal to meet in Salisbury at an early date, when I was was visiting my daughter, so that I could return the medal over a cup of coffee.

The date arranged was Saturday 6 February 2016. At 1100 hours on the agreed day, both parties met at the entrance to the public library in Salisbury's main square and adjourned for coffee and a chat to the Red Lion. I was accompanied by my wife, daughter and granddaughter, the latter two to take the photographs. Accompanying Nicki Wellings were two ex-army friends; WO2 Gail Farmer and Sgt Brenda Killick. Having ordered coffee all round, the medal was duly handed over to its original recipient, to her obvious delight.



Nicki Wellings and Allan Stanistreet (photo by Lara Morris)



**Nicki Wellings, Marie Stanistreet, Allan Stanistreet,
Brenda Killick, Gail Farmer (photo by Lara Morris)**

Now retired and living in Somerset I served as a WO1 in the RAOC. It rapidly became apparent during our meeting that all of us had crossed paths somewhere or other during our military service but had never actually met. All of us seem to have served in Rheindahlen and the running joke was, “Don’t mention Mrs Walker”! We all thoroughly enjoyed our meeting in the Red Lion and had many laughs.

RUNNING WITH DAME KELLY HOLMES 21 YEARS ON! Betty Gash

I had been an Athletic/Cross Country running team mate with Dame Kelly Holmes from 1988 to 1995 and we competed together for the AGC on a couple of occasions. Kelly was also my PTI at CMETS Beaconsfield in 1992-1993. In April 2016 she was due to open a new athletics stadium located at York University. As York was not too far to travel from where I live I accepted an invitation by a coach at York Athletic Club to attend the official opening.



On arrival I was directed to the new clubhouse where there were a number of VIPs and the media. It was so surreal meeting up with Kelly after 21 years and with a loud shout of ‘Betty’ by Kelly we gave each other a big hug! I also had an opportunity of running alongside Kelly for around 100 metres of the 800 metres (2 laps) and had a brief chat.

Betty and Kelly, Beaconsfield 1993



Kelly and Betty, York 2016

I attended the Q&A session and I felt privileged to be singled out as knowing Kelly and being a fellow Army runner, so took the opportunity to speak in public. I mentioned a training session at a London Athletic track where Kelly had blasted the training squad away and also how committed she was to running in her Army days! I had photographs taken on the track and in the hall with Kelly and obtained an autograph. It was a brilliant and emotional day that will live with me forever.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM WRAC ASSOCIATION PLOT

The beds and planting in the WRAC Association plot at the National Memorial Arboretum have recently undergone a programme of refurbishment. In particular all the timber work around the beds has been replaced with oak sleepers. In due course it is hoped to lay a hard path into the the memorial, however this work will not be undertaken until a drainage problem to the rear of the plot has been rectified by the NMA.



LORD KITCHENER MEMORIAL HOLIDAY CENTRE

Sylvia Johnson

I am sitting by the window enjoying a small malt before going down to dinner. Glancing down onto a beautiful golden sandy beach the sea is wild with rollers breaking on the shore. I am thinking of all the hours I have wasted hanging around dirty, smelly airports, to be followed by a coach ride, stopping at endless hotels, before reaching my own destination. I must have been mad when Lowestoft was on my doorstep. Lowestoft is in the county of Suffolk, home to Constable country and many beautiful villages.

The Lord Kitchener Memorial Holiday Centre provides subsidised seaside holidays in Lowestoft for ex-servicemen and women and their partners. The centre (Kitchener's) was established in the wake of the First World War from money donated in memory of the late Lord Kitchener, Minister for War. Kitchener's has been located in its current seafront property since 1919. It is open from April to October each year can accommodate up to 20 guests for week long breaks. Rates are very competitive, where else could you find a sea view room with private facilities for £165 per week half board. B&B (2 nights minimum) starts at £42 per night per couple.

Kitchener's is in need of our support to keep going, like most things in life if you 'don't use it you lose it'. This would be a great shame and an end to almost a century of care and support for ex Service folk. So why not phone and make a booking for a week of excellent food and relaxation? I know you won't regret it! Tel: 01502 573564 www.lordkitchenersmemorialholidaycentre.co.uk

WRAC LIVING HISTORY



*Helen Poole (nee Longden)
in Hack Green Cold War bunker*

FORT WILLIAM 2016



ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund - Making A Difference

"I wish to send my heartfelt thanks for allowing me, though the Benevolent Fund, to have some badly needed replacement windows. I am truly grateful and have held back from asking for help for quite a few years. Thanks to my 'first family' my stress levels have almost vanished. I really can't thank the Benevolent Fund enough".
£1,000 towards replacement windows and doors and a new mattress.

In the first 9 months of the financial year 15/16, your Benevolent Fund processed 241 applications for assistance: 66 from former ATS and 175 from former WRAC servicewomen. In all the Fund awarded £147,990, of which nearly £15,000 was to help towards the cost of nursing home fees, £13,000 was awarded for funeral expenses and nearly £12,300 on general needs grants. A further £36,782 was awarded in the form of Princess Royal's Memorial Fund maintenance grants to 19 beneficiaries. Your oldest beneficiary was 104 and your youngest 43, and applications were received from as far afield as the USA, Canada, Zimbabwe, Spain and France.

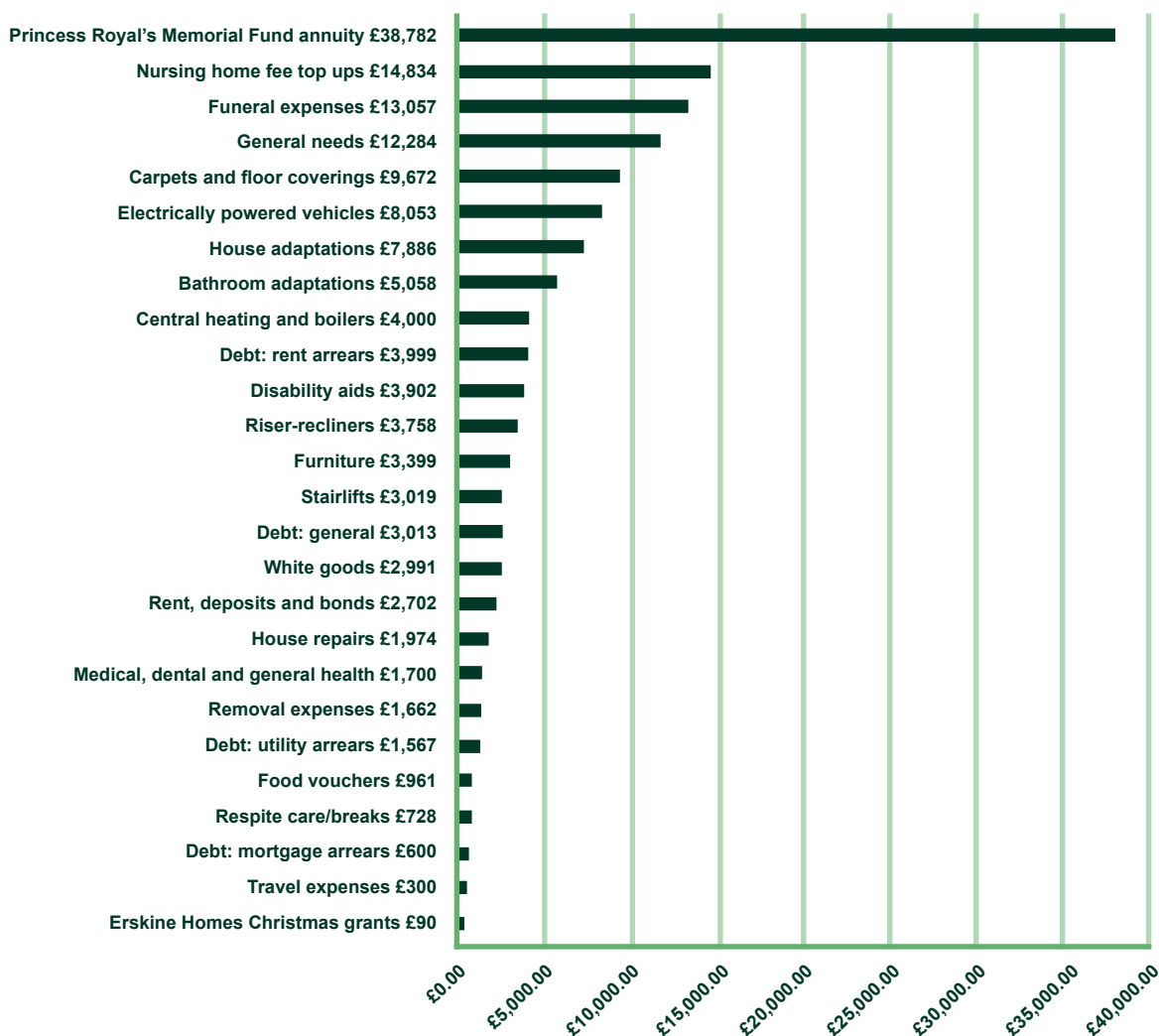
"Thank you so much for the £900. I am so grateful. The new bed is great and my bathroom extractor fan helps a lot. Also for the money for B&Q paint to redecorate my home and the ASDA food vouchers". £246 for a bathroom extractor fan, £244 for a bed and mattress, £209 for a condensing tumble dryer, £40 for antimould paint and £160 in supermarket food vouchers.

Who is eligible for help?

Any former servicewoman, including TA, with one day's paid service or more is eligible for assistance.

"I would like to thank all concerned for the help and support given to my daughter and me to ensure that our house move became a reality. I am overwhelmed by the kindness shown to us. Without the Benevolent Fund's help our circumstances would never have changed and words cannot express how grateful we are for that". £700 towards floor coverings, £150 for furniture and £80 in supermarket food vouchers for a mother and daughter establishing a new home after the breakdown of a relationship.

ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund Expenditure 1 November 2015 - 31 July 2016



Are there any other criteria?

Yes, you must be in need of financial help.

There's also a limit on the amount of savings that you can have above which the Benevolent Fund is unable to make an award.

To qualify for a maintenance grant you must be living alone on a basic state pension and in poor health.

"I am just writing to say a huge thank you for the Benevolent Fund's assistance in the purchase of a new mattress. This has made such a difference and now I can get a comfortable night's sleep. Without the Benevolent Fund's help this would not have been achievable". £399 for a mattress.

How your Benevolent Fund can help

Since the start of this financial year your fund has helped with grants in a wide range of categories including:

How your Benevolent Fund can help	
Since the start of this financial year your fund has helped with grants in a wide range of categories including:	
bathroom adaptations	central heating/boilers
house repairs and adaptations	carpets and flooring
EPVs and electric wheelchairs	clothing
riser-recliner chairs	furniture
stairlifts	white goods
disability aids	removal expenses
maintenance grants	rent, deposits and
care home fee topups	bonds
general needs	
respite breaks	funeral expenses
travel and transport	priority debt
	food vouchers

"Just to say a massive thank you for the Benevolent Fund's help this last year. I'm not sure how I would have coped as my daughter was terminally ill.

All has been put to good use. Thank you are small words that mean heartfelt gratefulness".

£328 to clear rent arrears, £172 for supermarket food vouchers and £118 for a washing machine.

Is there anything with which your Benevolent Fund cannot help?

Your Benevolent Fund is unable to assist with clearing non-priority debt such as overdrafts, bank loans, credit card bills, HP payments; legal fees; or medical and dental procedures available via the NHS.

A daughter writes, "My sister and I want to say thank you so much for finding funds to give our mum a proper burial. It was only possible because of the kindness and generosity of the Benevolent Fund. My sister and I would also like to thank the donors to the Benevolent Fund. Mother felt that she could rely on her funeral insurance and she would be really pleased to know that you helped her daughters to sort things out when the funeral insurance funds proved not to be enough". £2,000 to clear the balance of funeral expenses.

So how do you apply for help?

If you are a former ATS or WRAC regular or TA servicewoman who needs assistance, or if you know someone who is, then your first port of call is your local branch of SSAFA or regional RBL office. SSAFA or the RBL will arrange for a trained caseworker to interview you in your home to establish the full range of assistance that you need.

The caseworker will complete a report that includes details of your household income. This is called meanstesting and ensures that your Benevolent Fund's charitable money goes to those in real need.

When the report is complete it is sent to the Benevolent Fund Secretary. Once received, applications are considered at the appropriate grants committee meeting and a decision is taken.

"I wish to express my thanks to the Benevolent Fund for your help in providing me with items which will make my life a little easier". £659 for a bathlift and OT report

How often do the grants committee meetings meet?

There are 2 types of grants committee meetings:

- Minor grants committee meetings are held daily as required and can award immediate grants up to **£1,000**
- Major grants committee meetings (MGCM) are held at least twice a month and can award grants up to the annual maximum of **£3,000**. The MGCMs also consider applications for care home fee top-up fees and maintenance grants, and for applicants with fewer than 6 months service.

What happens next?

When a grant is awarded it is paid by digital bank transfer to either SSAFA or the RBL rather than direct to an applicant. This means that SSAFA or the RBL receive the grant immediately and are able to ensure that it is used for the specific purpose for which it was awarded as soon as possible.

Please find below the contact details for SSAFA and the Royal British Legion if you, or someone you know, are in need of assistance.

SSAFA

www.ssafa.org.uk

0800 731 4880

9.00 am – 5.30 pm: Monday Friday

The Royal British Legion:

www.britishlegion.org.uk

0808 802 8080

+44 (0)20 3376 8080 from overseas

8.00 am – 8.00 pm: 7 days a week

Editor: The information below has been reproduced from outside sources, the WRAC Association takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information.

NATIONAL INSURANCE CREDITS FOR SPOUSES AND CIVIL PARTNERS OF MEMBERS OF HM FORCES ON ASSIGNMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE UK

What is the new credit? Accompanying a spouse or civil partner on a posting overseas could affect your ability to work and pay National Insurance (NI) contributions. This could leave a gap in your NI record, which could in turn affect the amount of State Pension you receive in the future.

To help fill any gaps, the government has introduced a new NI credit for those who:

- reach State Pension age on or after 6 April 2016; **and**
- are/have been married to, or in a civil partnership with, a member of Her Majesty's forces; **and**
- have accompanied their spouse or civil partner on a posting outside the UK since 6 April 1975.

This is a new Class 3 NI credit and doesn't replace the existing Class 1 NI credit for those who have accompanied postings since 6 April 2010.

What's the difference between the Class 1 and Class 3 credits? Which credit you apply for will depend on your individual circumstances.

A Class 1 credit counts towards the amount of State Pension you may receive in the future, as well as working age benefits (Jobseeker's Allowance; Employment and Support Allowance; and Bereavement Benefits (until April 2017)). It must be applied for before the end of the tax year (5 April) following that in which the assignment ended.

The new Class 3 credit only counts towards your State Pension. There is no time limit for applying.

Who is eligible? Not every spouse or civil partner who accompanied a posting overseas will be eligible for the new credit. You may be eligible if you:

- were born on or after 6 April 1953 (if a woman) or 6 April 1951 (if a man); **and**
- are/have been married to, or in a civil partnership with, a member of Her Majesty's forces; **and**
- have been on an accompanied assignment outside the UK at any time since 6 April 1975.

At the time of the posting, your spouse or civil partner must also have paid, been treated as having paid or been credited with UK NI.

You can still apply if you are now widowed, divorced or have had your civil partnership dissolved, provided you were married or in a civil partnership at the time of the posting. It's worth bearing

in mind that even if you meet these criteria, you may not have any gaps in your record if you have already paid enough NI contributions or received NI credits for the tax year in which you were abroad. **How do I apply?** For information on how to apply for these new Class 3 NI credits, visit: www.gov.uk/dwp/ni-credits-armed-forces-partners

There is no time limit for applying. However, if you apply after reaching State Pension age, any increased State Pension might not be paid for periods before the date of your application.

National Insurance Helpline
0300 200 3500
Outside UK +44 191 203 7010

ARMED FORCES COVENANT NHS

Veterans receive their healthcare from the NHS, and should receive priority treatment **where it relates to a condition which results from their service in the Armed Forces, subject to clinical need.** Those injured in Service, whether physically or mentally, should be cared for in a way which reflects the Nation's moral obligation to them whilst respecting the individual's wishes. For those with concerns about their health, where symptoms may not present for some time after leaving Service, they should be able to access services with health professionals who have an understanding of Armed Forces culture.

In simple terms this means that if a veteran is suffering from a health condition that can be attributed to their military service then they should be given priority treatment. However to prioritise this does not mean they would just jump to the front of the queue. If people already waiting have a clear clinical need they should be prioritised, but if those waiting have an equal clinical need then the veteran should take priority.

If the NHS service you are dealing with is unaware of priority treatment, you are actively encouraged to tell them about it and ensure you have told them that you have served. Failing that, you can enlist local health care commissioners, your local authority community covenant lead, or one of the national service organisations, such as the Royal British Legion, to support you. <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/armed-forces-covenant>

Please remember that priority treatment does not entitle you to jump the queue ahead of someone with a higher clinical need and only relates to a condition associated to your time within the armed forces.

PAYMENT SLIP

In the centre pull out of this Lioness you will find three Payment Slips. If you are sending a cheque to the WRAC Association it would be helpful if you could complete and return one of the Payment Slips with your cheque.

AREA CHAIRMAN SOUTH & SOUTH WEST Sharon Bingham

Editor: Sharon Bingham has taken on the vacant post of Area Chairman South & South West. The role was previously carried out by Mack Maskyns-McIntyre.



I enlisted in the WRAC as Sharon Griffiths and served as a Staff Clerk from 1988 - 1992. On completing my trade training at Worthy Down I headed to 16 Battalion RAOC. From there I went onto 9 Signals Regiment in Cyprus where I had the opportunity to serve during Operation Desert Storm and received the campaign medal. I left the WRAC in 1992, the year that ended an era and opened the doors to the Adjutant General's Corps.

Before my discharge from the Army I met my husband who was serving with the RAF in Cyprus as a Telecommunications Engineer. After I left the WRAC we continued on his tours, with a number of years spent in Weston-Super-Mare at RAF Locking. We have 2 children who are both in their early 20s. Since leaving the service we have continued to travel in and around the UK and spent 7 years in the USA living in Chicago on expat assignments through work. We have now settled back in the UK and have spent the last 9 years living in Swindon.

In 2013 I became a member of the WRAC Association and a life member of the WRAC Dinner Club. I became a member of the Bath Branch and also developed the Swindon Informal Branch, of which I am the Secretary. So it was a very busy and enjoyable year getting back into the comradery of those associations. Swindon Informal Branch was first set up through social media Facebook and we even managed to get a slot on the Swindon 105.5 FM radio. I have attended AGMs in Guildford, Harrogate and London, Area Reunions in Southampton & Bristol, marched at the Cenotaph 2014 and am hoping to march again this year. I also took part in the Patron's Lunch entertainment parade. I also took part in a recruitment pitch at Swindon Armed Forces Day this year to promote the Association.

Since leaving the army my roles of employment have been varied. From Negotiator for General Accident Property Services, Shop Supervisor for Somerfield and One Stop Stores, all aspects of hospitality for Forte Hotels and Whitbread Plc, owning a

family run business in Computer Training and Consultancy, lead teacher for kindergarten and preschool setting in the USA, parcel sorter with Royal Mail. For the past 3 years I have been an Administrator and Stage Door Receptionist at the Wyvern Theatre.

I am very honoured to be taking up this new and challenging role and have very large boots to fill from my predecessor. I joined the WRAC Association because I felt something was missing in my life. I have since realised that that feeling is one that I share with many others. It could be a longing to be part of something that reflects the past, which I have now joined. To reconnect with old and new friends who understand what it meant to be part of the WRAC, to which I have reconnected with joy, laughter and tears. I would like to ensure and that we follow and adhere to the traditions that the service taught us in our lives, which I feel I am doing.

ABERDEEN Joan Bartlett



9th May 2016 lunch outing to the Milton of Crathes Brassiere.

Standing L-R: Moyra Brodie, Mhairi Irving, Margaret Muirhead, Moira Thom, June Fisher & Sandra Lemmon.

Sitting L-R: Joan Bartlett & Helen Thomson

The Branch currently has 14 members and there are usually about 8 of us at our meetings. We try to have discussions on set themes, recently it was 'words you don't like', we had a right old moan and a good laugh and as ever went off onto another subject! The ladies don't know it yet but I'm going to hit them with a Quiz in the near future, I wonder if we will sabotage that as well. In May 8 of went on a trip to Milton of Crathes (near Banchory), it was a glorious day with fine food, and great company as usual.

The city of Perth is hosting a 'Poppies Weeping Window' installation at the Black Watch Castle and museum from 30 June to 25 September. The sculpture, which has thousands of ceramic poppies, comes from the exhibit which attracted millions of visitors at the Tower of London last year. Four of us will be travelling down to see it and hopefully to meet up with friends from the Fife & Tayside Branch. We are also hoping that some of the ladies will come north for a Christmas Lunch as last years get together was such a success. We wish all Branches fun and companionship galore.

BIRMINGHAM

Babs Anderson



Armed Forces Day

It goes without saying that Brum Branch have been busy, busy all year. We are a relatively big branch and are fortunate enough to have enthusiastic, active members so the job of being Secretary is so much easier. The main news from our Branch is that we have re-located back to the Britannia Hotel on New Street for our meetings. We had started to feel unwelcome and uncomfortable at The Irish Centre. It was nothing to do with being full of Irish people but only to do with the manager's childish strops. Anyway, the change has been well received by other branches as it means a less arduous journey from the train.

We have lost another member to the big parade square in the sky since our last report but gained 4, one of whom will be an associate member. We were honoured to have been asked to assist the National Army Museum with a project to get experiences and stories of women in the Army told. The book which has been produced using our input is now published and makes interesting reading. There is to be an event in September to launch the book and we all hope to be there.

A bunch of Brum Branch enjoyed a trip to the pantomime in January. Having a lovely Chinese meal beforehand made it all the more special. We had such a good time that we determined to do it again next year. Roll on Wednesday 11 January 2017 and Dick Whittington. Other Branches are welcome to join us. Shropshire Branch invited us to join in their post Christmas celebrations again. We had a lovely time meeting up with old friends and making new ones. The food was excellent as usual and we managed to bring home many super raffle prizes, along with trays of beautiful, locally produced eggs. We look forward to next year, but not only for the double yokers.

A couple of us attended the WRAC Association AGM at the Victory Services Club in March and were treated to a lovely tea after the business of the day had been completed. In April we welcomed Rita Sutton, who was a teacher in Germany. It was interesting to hear her talk about the very different life she experienced compared to the one many of us had whilst serving there or as an Army wife. She will visit us again to talk about her time teaching in Northern Ireland during the troubles.

A group of 8 ladies took a tour of the BBC studios one Saturday in April. It was really interesting and could be a possible outing for other Branches. There was a good turnout of Brum Branch members at the Wales and the West Midlands Area Reunion. This year the event was hosted by Shropshire Branch so we gathered at the Mytton and Mermaid Hotel. This ensured that

we had great food as well as a successful gathering of friends. Pizza night is always a popular one for the diary and we have partaken of pizza twice since our last report. Anyone in the vicinity is always welcome to join us on the second Wednesday evening of March, June, September and December. We gather at the Britannia Hotel in the bar at 1830hrs before staggering across the road to Pizza Hut.

This year's Armed Forces Day was well supported by Birmingham Branch, as you might expect. Unfortunately, the organisers were not up to the mark this time and we had to endure many little niggles. The weather did its' best to spoil our day but we have our Branch waterproofs so were able to keep relatively dry. On the plus side, we managed to mingle ourselves amongst the other veterans for our traditional march and it made for a lovely parade. As you can see from the photograph, there was much to smile about. It was a long day, made pleasant by the company and a fly past by a big aeroplane which only Sue Dolphin could recognise because she had been forewarned.



Armed Forces Day Parade

Shropshire Branch invited us to join them to shout at a wall in July. Our sides will probably stop aching in time. They call it Race Day and it is a great way to spend time with our friends and families. This year we shouted at greyhounds and took part in the Race Day Hat Competition. Brum Branch failed to win the hat competition but picked up quite a few raffle prizes. Four members of Birmingham Branch will have taken part in the London (Newham) 10K by the time you read this. It doesn't sound very far on paper but we have all noticed how 10K is getting longer year by year. Most of the runners/walkers/crawlers are in their 50s and 60s so perhaps it is something to do with rationing after the war or the state of the pound/s!

Birmingham Branch members enjoy any opportunity to get together. Some of them even go away on holiday together. Now that is what Esprit de Corps looks like!

BRISTOL

Jackie Naysmith MBE

Once again it is time for our report for our favourite magazine the Lioness. Bristol Branch has been fairly busy these past few months. Our January meeting was very well attended and our February meeting was held the week before our Annual Lunch. I had been asked by a student from the local Uni if she could meet some of the ATS ladies and talk with them as she was making a short film as part of her course. Two of our ladies were chosen to participate and I have been informed by Vicky that the film is finished and that she would be sending me a copy. I look forward to receiving it as she has done it I believe as a Cartoon. I will certainly send a copy to HQ. Great news as Vicky has just informed me that she has a 1st in her exams, so pleased for her.

Our Annual lunch was in February and the theme was 'Posh', to celebrate Her Majesty's 90th Birthday. We decorated the room with bunting and flags all looked very colourful. Members dressed for the occasion some wore Tiara's and Crowns, but they were all 'Royals'. Bristol City Marriott once again looked after us and put down the 'Red Carpet' for the ladies when they came into the room and were met with a soft drink.

For our April meeting Pat Carter and Stella Fogg organised an 'Easter Bonnet' event. Everyone enjoyed this and Easter Eggs were given out as prizes. Well done to those who took part. I attended the Association AGM at the Victory Services Club and found it very interesting and informative. I along with Sylvia Musgrave, Bath Branch Secretary, were staying for the weekend, but a Bristol member came for the day. The afternoon tea served after the AGM was very well received, the sandwiches and cakes were delicious. Thank you it was much appreciated.



S&SW Area Reunion decorations

In May we were hosts for the S&SW Area Reunion, again it was held at the Bristol City Marriott and on this occasion the 'Red Carpet' was laid again for our guests. We had a good response from the Branches in our Area and I thank them for their support. Sharon Bingham from Swindon Informal Branch informed the members that she had taken on the role as new Area Chairman. Sharon was able to go round the tables afterwards and talk with members. We also had as a 'special guest' Simon Tattersall who sells the Poppy Pin badges. Lt Col (Retd) Val Trout was asked if she would say 'grace', I had taken a prayer ball that had been given to us by Maj Mac and that was used. The Marriott certainly once again looked after us, before and after the event, I cannot thank them enough. Simon sold some of his badges and he gave me £50 as a donation to the Association. Members were very generous and we raised £150 on the Raffle, It was our pleasure to be able to send £200.00 to the Association towards the 'Lioness' I received many letters of thanks from Branches for an enjoyable day.

Three of our members, courtesy of Not Forgotten Association, attended HM Garden Party. They had a most enjoyable time and I have been shown photos by very proud ladies.

Stella Fogg, our Branch Chairman, and myself attended the Flag Raising for Armed Forces Day in Bristol and then another one in South Gloucestershire early in the afternoon. Bristol Branch did not have a display for Armed Forces Day but this was due to the weather.

For the first time, due to holidays, it was decided that the July and August meetings would be cancelled, however members still met in August for our annual Fish and Chips at Weston super Mare.

BURY & ROCHDALE Kathleen Kirtley

The last six months have been quiet due to members going off to sunnier climes. We celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday in the usual style consisting of lots of cake and tea, not to mention chatter. This year we ventured to Liberty's in Bury and it was wonderful, other customers might have thought we were strange in red white and blue!



Pat Oldham, Branch Chairman



Celebrating HM Queen's 90th birthday

We are hoping to have a trip out in September and are looking at a Steam Train trip with Afternoon Tea or even a Canal Boat trip, either will see us enjoying ourselves. Our informal Wednesday night meet up has seen us growing with up to 10 ladies, sometimes more, depending on who is around. We have changed our meeting place to the Chadderton Park and Grill in Oldham, anyone is very welcome to join us. The food is fabulous even though we are all very predictable in what we choose, sometimes not needing to give our order as they know us so well.

CANTERBURY

Sue Foulks

As we no longer hold meetings during the coldest months of the year, our first meeting of 2016 was held on the 6th April at our usual Canterbury venue. After welcoming 10 members, Chairman Susan Wing gave the sad news that Doreen Dennis one of our longest-serving members had passed away. Win Phillips, who previously lived in Deal before she became one of the first lady pensioners at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, had also passed away.

The meeting continued with a discussion on our programme for the remainder of this year. As the Christmas lunch in December, held at the Miller's Arms, a local hostelry, was such a great success, it didn't take us long to decide to book again this year.

In May the speaker was from the Canterbury Branch of Hotter Shoes, Alan Garner gave us a very informative talk on how Hotter shoes started in a small way and very soon become a great favourite with many of us who find foot comfort is paramount. Before the meeting closed Monica Trinkwon, one of our last ex-ATS members, told us that she would no longer be able to attend meetings as she is soon to move nearer her family in Sussex. We wish her well and we will certainly miss her colourful presence at our meetings.

June saw us welcoming a new member – albeit a very small one! Baby Connor Coles born just three weeks previously, came with his mum Carol and was quickly surrounded by lots of new aunts. In July, Sharon Addis kindly held our summer tea party in her beautiful garden in Wingham. We enjoyed a lovely afternoon in good company.

If you live in East Kent and would like to join us we meet at 1.00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month at Housing 21, Cowdrey Place, Old Dover Road, Canterbury CT1 3PB. Our meetings are always lively and we are often joined by members of the East Kent WRNS and WRAF Associations. For more information please contact me on 07797 947214. Do come along and help keep one of the remaining Branches in Kent in existence.

CHELMSFORD

Gina Shadrack

In January we were saddened to learn that Irene Raffell, a founder member of the Branch, had died on the 21st. Rene, as we knew her, transferred from London Branch in 1990. She gave much support, particularly in her early membership, attending civic occasions, Branch meetings and the Association AGM etc. Some of us attended the service held to celebrate her life where her service in the ATS was remembered.



Enjoying a cup of tea after a Fish & Chip lunch

In March we met at our usual venue, the RAFA Club in Chelmsford, and listened to an exceptionally informative talk by Dennis Rensch MBE on his former career as a policeman. Dennis is also a Deputy Lieutenant for Essex and is the husband of Branch member Denise Rensch. In April our Quiz topic was 'sweets', we enjoyed that one. May was a popular meeting as we held a Fish & Chip lunch. In June we held a paper craft workshop and made greetings cards, all glue and stuff! In July, as is our custom, we met to celebrate the anniversary of the Branch.



The results of the craft workshop

We would welcome any new members who may live in and around the area and might like to join us. Please contact Gina Shadrack on 01245 251088.

CHESTER

Pat Sanders

The Chester Branch has been really busy again this year with our usual outings. January saw us off to Shropshire for their post-Christmas Lunch, we had a lovely meal and won loads of raffle prizes. Chris Power certainly knows how to throw a party. May was a very busy month with a lovely day out at the Albert Dock where we had a look around the Titanic Story and the Slave Museum followed by a lovely lunch. We had lunch with the Chester Branch of the Royal Signals were again we did very well with the raffle prizes.

May also saw a group of us off to Buckingham Palace courtesy of the Not Forgotten Association. we arrived on the Wednesday and stayed in the Union Jack Club. In the evening we had a lovely dinner and when the other guests were informed that we had 6 ATS ladies in the group the cameras came out, I don't think the girls have had their photos taken so much. The following day saw us travelling via coach to Buckingham Palace, everyone did us proud with their outfits and hats, and yes, Pat Sanders even wore a fascinator although still wore trousers. We were first in line to meet Prince Andrew who spoke to Dot Garnet first, we thought Dot would end up in the Tower as she argued with Prince Andrew about the Falklands but he took it well. He then spoke to Audrey McDermott, Frances Rimmer, Doris Wallington and finally Elsie Roberts who had him laughing when she forgot to curtsy and spoke to him first (we had been told not to speak unless he spoke to you) but he was really lovely with her. Finally he spoke to Pat Sanders and Joy Griffiths and said they looked too young to be in the ATS, Pat and Joy told him they were WRAC only there to try and stop the ATS ladies from misbehaving to which he laughed and said we had a hard job to which we agreed with him. In the evening we had another dinner and all went to bed tired. Next day we travelled home after an exhausting few days but with lovely memories.



Enjoying the Garden Party

June saw us having our trip out to a bowling alley where we had a mini competition with a lot of laughs, the winners were Jackie Jones, Lynne Cook, Joy Griffiths and Frances Rimmer with Audrey McDermott, Dot Garnet, Jane Styles and Stella Joseph being close runners up.

We celebrated the Queen's 90th Birthday at our June meeting with everyone dressing up in red, white and blue and Pat even managed to do a quiz without giving out the answers first. June also saw us off to our annual outing to Shropshire Branch for a great day out, losing our money on the greyhound racing. We had a lovely lunch and came home with loads of trays of eggs, I wonder what the coach driver thought when he saw the girls all piling on to the coach with trays of eggs and raffle prizes. That is all the news about our trips out, as you can see we do like to enjoy ourselves. We still have plenty more going to happen for the rest of the year and you will hear all about them in the next issue. We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year (thought we would get that in first!).

CLEVELAND Audrey Grange

After a fairly uneventful few months we had a busy period organising our "Big Branch Party" to celebrate our 30th Birthday and also to wish our Patron HM The Queen a very Happy 90th Birthday. We had a special cake to mark both events which was cut by our Chairlady Irene McClean, who hosted the party in her lovely garden and house. She even managed to give us some nice weather as the previous few days were pretty gloomy. There was a plentiful supply of food and drink so 'thankyou' to all concerned in the preparation and serving, especially the Cupcakes made by one of our guests, Cherry Harbon.



Enjoying the party



Delicious cakes

We welcomed our guests with a Champagne Toast starting with our 3 ATS Ladies who unfortunately cannot attend our meetings any more. Phylis Preston, Margaret Fick (a past Chairlady) and Gwynne Friday (a past secretary) who has been quite poorly of late. We appreciated her Daughter and Granddaughter travelling up from Kent to make sure she was able to attend. We also welcomed a group of our Dinner Club Ladies who came from various Branches as far afield as Kent, Leicester, Bradford and Burton-on- Trent. We had a rousing Sing Song of all the old favourites. The song sheet was brought by Jenny Nelson.



Phylis Preston, Margaret Fick, Gwynne Friday

Everyone joined in including Connie Meakin's son who had brought his mother to the party. We also had a Fun quiz, all in all a great day was had by all, and who knows we may do it all again next year.

Our Standard Bearer Anne Mahoney is still as busy as ever



Irene cutting the cake

and has been to many functions including an Award Ceremony given by the Town Hall in recognition of the service given by all the Standard Bearers in the Middlesbrough area. She was invited to Parade our Standard at the Queen's Birthday in London and also a Drumhead service at Chelsea Hospital. She has attended many funerals in the area this despite being unable to drive whilst waiting for an eye operation. We wish her good luck with that and hope she is sorted very soon.

We have welcomed 2 new members to the Branch, Pearl Cawley and Gillian Peacock. Our summer outing was to Skipton on 24th August. We are also attended the Eden Camp All Services Parade on 11th September. Our Christmas Lunch has been organised and will be held at the Blue Bell Acklam in December.

COLCHESTER **Kerry Warnes**

The year started with our first "Get Together" on 27th February, held at The Albert Colchester. It was another outstanding success where we welcomed 3 new members. The meal was very good, however the bar closed prematurely, so 3 of us stealthy managed to infiltrate The Norfolk public house to carry on the meeting (our excuse).



On the 30th of March Carole (Vinnie) Vincent, Yvonne Wilson, Dawn Amey and Audrey Crook had the honour of attending "The Not Forgotten Association" variety concert and tea at Colchester Town Hall. The concert began with the original broadcast celebrating the birth of the queen, followed by songs from that era and the war years. A few voices were lost after an hour and a half of singing along. There were copious amounts of sandwiches and cake, which proved too much for our girls. All said and done, it was a fantastic afternoon, so much so The Colchester and District Branch were also invited to attend The Colonel's Review of Trooping the Colour on June 4th.



Enjoying The Colonel's Review of Trooping the Colour ***Debbie Green, Karen Beard, Yvonne Wilson***

Three of our members (Yvonne Wilson, Karen Beard and Debbie Green) duly attended The Colonel's Review of Trooping the Colour on June 4th. They had a brilliant day with some very good seats on the 2nd row. We, as a branch, look forward to many more events hosted by "The Not Forgotten Association". Yvonne, Karen and Debbie then hightailed it back to Colchester for a Branch meeting that evening which was held at The Bricklayers public house. It was yet another resounding success with some very excited ladies having received their Branch polo shirts, but mainly because of our summer bash "Seaside Havoc", was only a month away at Clacton on Sea on July 31st.



Back Row L-R: Carole (Vinnie) Vincent, Kerry Warnes, Heather Savin, Karen Beard and Sandra Cooke.
Front Row L-R: Jackie Smith, Jenni Pizzuto, Midge Whitcomb, Audrey Crook, Debbie Green, Gwen Greenwood and Yvonne Wilson.



Measuring up for a Branch polo shirt - Vinnie Vincent and Heather Savin

The next Branch meeting will be held at The Bricklayers public house on 17th Sept at 19.30, we look forward to meeting anyone who would like to join our Merry Little Band.

DUMFRIES BRANCH **Susan Marcroft BEM**



Dorah Mundell

Last year some members enjoyed about half a dozen lunches together and as a group we have decided to now meet at one location instead of the variety of locations as we did in the past.

Although Dorah Mundell, our Secretary for many years, now resides in a Home in Moffat we still see her at some of our lunches as one of our members very kindly collects her. Dorah celebrated her 90th birthday at Wamphrey Village Hall on

Saturday 20th February. Seven Branch members went along to this wonderful event and joined the 100 or so other friends and family for an afternoon of entertainment and a delicious tea. Although there were lots of candles on her cake, with the help of her Grandsons, all were blown out in one go. No the Fire Brigade weren't needed!

Like most of the country our winter months were very wet and kept most of us indoors, sensibly keeping warm and dry. Eventually, in April, about 10 of us enjoyed a Spring Lunch and more events are planned for later in the year. Some of our stalwart members were on Parade at Armed Forces Day in June and will be for Remembrance Sunday in November. It is also hoped that some members will attend the Scottish AGM in Perth.

Regretfully, we have lost some of our members recently, but they are thought about often. Some, due to poor health and location, find it difficult to get to our lunches, again they are thought of often and members do visit each other, so with the Lioness and contact within our Branch we know what's going on. Our Branch members send greetings to all other Association Members across the country.

FIFE & TAYSIDE

Kate Arnold

The Fife & Tayside Branch held its Annual General Meeting on 28th April at the Salutation Hotel in Perth. Fourteen Members attended and, as always, we were extremely well looked after by the hotel staff. We had a successful meeting followed by a very enjoyable lunch.

The Poppies Weeping Window installation is coming to the Black Watch Castle and Museum at Balhousie Castle in Perth from Thursday 30 th June to Sunday 25 th September. The sculpture, which has thousands of ceramic poppies, comes from the exhibit which attracted millions of visitors at the Tower of London. The 888,246 poppies in that display represented deaths in the British and Colonial forces between 1914 and 1918. For those who wish to visit the installation, full details can be found on the website www.1418now.org.uk.

Branch Membership now stands at a healthy 42. Sadly in May, Ruth Forrest gave her Final Salute. Our condolences went to her family. The Branch meets on the last Thursday of the month in Reid's Bar of the Salutation Hotel in Perth.

GRIFFIN



Members of Griffin Facebook Group enjoying lunch in Chilwell

GRIMSBY

Gail Davy

In December the members of Grimsby Branch were invited to a Christmas lunch at RAF Scampton. We had a superb meal with wine also a visit from Father Christmas who distributed gifts to us all.



A New Year party was held in January, which also included 90th birthday party for our oldest member Lily Corby. She was thrilled with a cake made by a member and a box of chocolates.



Carole Tyler and Lily Corby

March was another celebration. Before the meeting we had a fish and chip lunch to celebrate the 70th birthday of the Secretary, Gail Davy. During the meeting she was presented with a birthday cake and cards.



A celebratory outing took place in April when the members went to The Millstones restaurant near Harrogate to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. The menu choices included; Duke's Roast Beef, Queen's Salmon and Prince Charles Lamb, dessert included Princess Anne's Trifle, Prince Edward's Pavlova and Prince Andrew's Apple Pie. The secretary sent a birthday card to the Queen on behalf of the branch and received a letter of thanks from Buckingham Palace



Celebrating the 90th birthday of HM The Queen

June was an exciting month with National Armed Forces Day being held in Cleethorpes. Serving personnel from all 3 services took part with their bands, the 3 cadet forces and many veterans and Standards from across the services including our Branch Standard and members. There were many exciting displays on land, sea and air including the Red Arrows display team. Carole our Standard Bearer thought the march at Cleethorpes was long. That was until she attended a funeral of an ex-soldier and had to follow the funeral car at the Grimsby cemetery from the entrance chapel to the graveside at the other end of the cemetery, about three quarters of a mile. Fortunately I picked her up in the car after the interment to save the walk back.

The rest of the year looks to be busy with outings and meals out, we always enjoy filling our tummies and look forward to new adventures.

HEREFORD Sharon Joyce

Hereford Branch are creatures of habit like so many, we therefore started 2016 with our Festive Meal at The Green Man at Fownhope. This seems to be our favourite haunt at the moment and no wonder as the food, service and ambience is excellent. Life was a little quiet during February but March saw the notice of the Wales and West Reunion arrive, this year to be hosted by Shropshire Branch in May. We were sorry to lose our Leicester and Nottingham friends in the new WRAC Association Area reshuffle as many of them attended are Area and Branch events, they now belong to the East Midlands Area.

Marg Davies our intrepid walker announced her next walk from the 18th to 23rd April between Winchester and Eastbourne along the south downs. She completed the walk raising £2,375.00 for her two charities, well done Marg. Heather Bradbury took part in a sponsored bike ride in the late Peggy Rose's memory and raised approx £320, and with her neighbour monies raised over £700 for the British Heart Foundation. Well done Heather who was perhaps a little saddle sore after the event.

In June our Chairwomen Mary Nicholls, with her daughter Joyce, was invited by Herefordshire City Council to attend the Queen's 90th Birthday Service to be held at Hereford Cathedral. The Branch Standard was also on parade carried by Jo Foster. The Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, Lady Darnley, very kindly had her photograph taken with Mary and Jo.



Jo Foster, Mary Nicholls, Lady Darnley

Three members; Sharon Joyce, Marg Davies and Barbara Davies were invited to Founders Day at The Royal Hospital Chelsea. We joined other WRAC Association members and Vice President Ali Brown for a great parade on a lovely sunny day with the Princess Royal as the Reviewing Officer.



Marg Davies, Sharon Joyce and Barbara Davies

June 20th saw the flag raised in Hereford to mark the start of Armed Forces Week, both the National and Branch standards paraded. On Armed Forces Day the Herefordshire RBL County Rally was held at Ledbury where 12 Standards were on parade including Hereford Branch. On Sunday 26th July, at Wormelow near Hereford, a parade was held in honour of Violette Szabo, an SOE agent in WW2. The film "Carve Her Name With Pride" starring Virginia McKenna told of her story as a secret agent during WW2. Both Virginia McKenna and Violette Szabo's daughters attended on a very wet afternoon.



July saw 24 branch members attend a Veterans/Armed Forces Lunch at The Green Man, this gave members who can't make the branch meetings a chance to catch up. In August we held our annual Summer Draw and Picnic at Queen's Wood, Leominster and in September we are planning a members "Day at the Seaside". Look out Weston Super Mare the girls in green are coming!

Hereford Branch Standard at the RBL County Rally



They even got a mention on the telly!

We've been meeting for twelve months now at the Walton Fox on the outskirts of Preston and we're a happy, friendly bunch. We chose this venue because of it's great location as it's pretty central in the Lancashire area and allows easy access just off the M6/M61/M65. We just get together for a Saturday lunch and a good natter and reminisce about our WRAC days. Anyone is welcome, if you fancy coming along and would like more info contact me on 07939 505485 or gaildki@talktalk.net

LEEDS Pat Harpin

This year unfortunately several of our members are finding it more difficult to get out and about because of ill health. One of our ATS ladies passed away last month, Lilley will be sadly missed having always attended meetings and outings well into her 90s.

Betty attended the 300th Anniversary of the Royal Artillery (report on page 41). Several members enjoyed the Patron's Lunch and the Battle of the Somme Commemorations in Leeds. Trish has been busy raising funds for the WRAC Association and was in London for the Great Newham London 10K, well done to her and all the other WRAC Association competitors.



Hereford Branch members at the Great Newham London 10K

LANCASHIRE Gail Newsham



**Celebrating HM The Queen's 90th Birthday
L-R: Anna Orlinski, Jane Barmer, Ann Butcher, Sue Brown, Mags Turner, Lee Telford, Gail Newsham**



Enjoying Afternoon Tea

We had a very enjoyable Afternoon Tea in the Queen's Hotel with 10 ladies attending, 4 of them were ATS. In July Ann arranged a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum, we look forward to hearing about the additions to the WRAC Association plot. We are looking forward to meeting up with Anna and the other ladies in our new Northern Group.

LEICESTER & NOTTINGHAM Sue Slattery

January. The 1st meeting of 2016 to catch up with all the gossip from the festive period and sort out our programme for the year. Our eldest member Joan Thornton had been in hospital over the last few weeks and has since been admitted into a care home in Wigston. Teresa Neal turned 92 this month and she still goes to the gym 3 times a week! Two of our ATS ladies, Joan De Vall and Ann Atkinson, were invited by the BBC to travel to the capital to meet the cast of the new Dad's Army film. They joined Matt Baker on the One Show to talk about their service in the war. As some of you may have seen they certainly had some stories to tell, well done ladies a long day but they really enjoyed it.

February. Thirty ladies enjoyed a talk from a member of the local Police Rapid Response Team, all were specially interested in the handcuffs and sprays! Twelve of us (bearing cards and gifts) were invited by Ann Cousins, the daughter of Joan Thornton, to join their family for afternoon tea and cakes on the occasion of Joan's 96th birthday. She was so surprised when we all turned up. This month the branch said farewell to our long serving Welfare Officer, Pam Richards, who has become an In Pensioner at the Royal Chelsea Hospital. Pam will be a very hard act to follow as she dedicated so much of her time to our ladies who were in need of a card, phone call or a visit when required. We thank you Pam for all you have done for our branch and we send you our best wishes in your new home, hopefully we can all come and see you on a visit in the future.



Joan Thornton's 96th birthday celebrations

March. Our Bring & Buy afternoon raised £115 for our funds. We welcomed Donna Remzi from Nottingham to our branch, we wait for her to tell us all about her service time. Four ladies attended the WRAC Association AGM at the Victory Services Club, where a card and photo album of past events of the branch were presented to Pam Richards.



AGM presentation to Pam Richards (centre)

April. This month Christina joined us with two other serving female soldiers to talk about their tour to Belize. It was very interesting to hear about the way that female roles have progressed over the years. We were delighted to be joined at our meeting by Dot and Chris, Chairman and Secretary of the newly formed East Midland Area, of which we are now part of. We hope to make new friends from other branches in this area, also may I wish all our previous branches in Wales and the West area our best wishes to them in the future. Four ladies attended County Hall for the beacon lighting for the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations. Six of us attended Peterborough Branch quiz and buffet, sorry but we brought the winning trophy home... you've guessed it a gnome! We will return it next year, Jacquie Courtney is keeping it safe till then. Many thanks to Cathy and her team for inviting us to a enjoyable afternoon. Sadly this month we lost Joan Thornton whose 96th birthday we had celebrated in February but what a send off we gave her on 11th April. Twenty three ladies attended her funeral and provided a guard of honour which included our branch Standard. We then moved to Beaumanor Hall for the wake, as this was where Joan served during the war. Good bye dear Joan you will be sadly missed by us all.



Pte Charlotte Whelby AGC(SPS), LCpl Nicola Thompson RAMC, WO2 Christina Jones AGC(SPS)

May. Our meeting this month was mainly a time to chat and catch up with reports about our ladies who have been ill or in hospital. Many of our ladies are reaching the age of needing a little more in the way of care for one reason or another. We are so proud of our ladies who despite their increasing ages are still able to continue to support the branch. Twenty one branch members enjoyed our yearly visit to Wetherspoons for a meal which was enjoyed by all. After much discussion Yvonne volunteered to take on the role of Welfare Officer, assisted where necessary by a member of the committee.

June. This is always our busiest month, 6 ladies attended Leicester Cathedral for the Queen's 90th birthday Evensong service. Sixteen ladies travelled by coach to the Black Country Museum, a very interesting day with great fish and chips, well worth a visit. Our Standard and 4 ladies attended the flag raising ceremony at Leicestershire County Hall. Eleven ladies attended the service and parade through the city for Armed Forces Day in Leicester and Yvonne, Christina and Jo had a wonderful day in London for the Patron's Lunch Entertainment Parade. Didn't they all look great in pink parading down the Mall.

We look forward to the second half of the year when I hope to report that all our ladies who were suffering from ill health have recovered and we hope to see them back at our monthly

meetings. Finally I would like to say a big thank you to the committee members who work so hard for our branch and this is very much appreciated by all our ladies. Our thanks and best wishes to all our branches and our Association HQ who work so tirelessly on our behalf.



Sue, Carol, Lyn, Joan and Lynda at Leicester Cathedral

LINCOLN & DISTRICT Chris Corker

After a successful Christmas Lunch at the Carre Arms in Sleaford 2016 got off the ground with a catch-up meeting in January. This was followed by a February lunch at our favourite eatery in Sleaford and a branch meeting with a musical quiz hosted by Shirley Dawe.

In March we were again put through our paces by Sylvia Stubbs with another of her exercise classes, again with much hilarity. At the end of April we welcomed Ali Brown and Bimbo Coleman to our Anniversary Lunch. It was also the occasion of the 90th birthday of our member Joyce Gough.



Anniversary Lunch with guests Ali Brown and Bimbo Coleman



Chris Corker and Joyce Gough

The branch AGM was held in May and there is now a new committee comprising of Secretary Sylvia Stubbs, Treasurer Marion King and "Welfare Officer" Nora Jones. We wish them good luck in their tenure. After the AGM we had a contingent from Worthing Branch visit for the Bring and Share lunch. An evening meal was held in Sleaford at the end of the month and it was lovely to meet up with the members who are still working.



Branch members with visitors from Worthing

In June we were delighted to meet Karen Chambers, who is still serving with the Reserve Army in London District, who gave a very interesting and enlightening talk about life as a Reservist Officer in today's modern army. On 9th June in beautiful sunshine 2 members, Dot Ryder and Chris Corker, attended the Founders Day Parade at the Royal Hospital Chelsea along with other members of the WRAC Association.

Three members of the branch attended the National Armed Forces Day event in Cleethorpes. A beautiful sunny day with thousands of people in attendance and the salute taken by HRH The Duke of Kent, accompanied by the Prime Minister David Cameron.



Dot Ryder, Betty Gash and Chris Corker in Cleethorpes

For the remainder of the year we look forward to a trip on the "Boston Belle" along the River Witham into the Wash and into the River Welland. The branch outing which took place in August, a quiz, a beetle drive and of course a lunch or two.

We still meet at the Central Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Lincoln LN5 7PR on the third Tuesday of the month (not August or December). Come along for a coffee if you are in the area and you will be made very welcome.

MEDITERRANEAN BRANCH

Ann Colclough

Here on the Costa Blanca the thermometer on my terrace says 36 degrees, it's hard to believe that in less than 4 months we will be celebrating Christmas, although it never gets as cold here as it does in the UK!

Once again April and May were brightened up with a visit from the "Benidorm Babes", some of whom were on a return visit after last year, and some who were "newbies". I know Sylvia Cree has written a report on the event, and I'm sure she will tell you what went on, or at least some of the high jinks!

I do however want to express my personal thanks to Mel Howell and Chris Powell for all the hard work that went into arranging hotel rooms, day trips, and resolving any problems that arose. Mel even sorted out a problem that arose with a Spanish family in the dining room, she is clearly very fluent in Spanish, as I understand the family went very quiet after she spoke to them! I would also like to say thank you to all those folks who came to the lovely Four Seasons Restaurant to help me to celebrate my 71st birthday on 4th May. I had a lovely time, it was a wonderful evening, and the cake was delicious, so thank you all. I was so thrilled with my cake and gifts, but most of all with the resounding singing of Happy Birthday!



Ann Colclough

Mel has already announced the dates of the 2017 Benidorm Babes holiday, and I have a feeling that now the word is out about what a great time everyone has, the places will be filled very quickly! Med branch is continuing to grow in numbers, of course most of the members so far are based in the UK, but we are gradually getting more "local" members too. Even as I am typing this, Claire Belsky Parker is on her way to live in Spain, and will in fact only be about a 30 minute drive from me. Mel and I seem to have chosen the local Iceland shop for meeting, (I confess it's far more local for me than Mel!) and no doubt that's where we'll meet up with Claire too. Med Branch will soon have enough members to have a meeting!

I was very pleased to get a phone call from Mel asking if I'd like to meet up at Iceland with her, Sue Jackson and Sheila Johnson. They had enjoyed Benidorm Babes so much, they were back over here in Mel's spare room! I airily told my husband I would be "about half an hour", so he was getting a bit concerned when well over 90 minutes later I arrived home. As you would expect we made lots of noise, and laughed a lot, isn't it odd how you can tune in to people you have only met briefly before when you have being a Veteran in common.

My travel arrangements, flights etc are all made for DC this year, and I'm looking forward to spending more time socialising. Shirley Taper and I are staying at the Copthorne, so will be "in the thick" of the celebrations! I'm looking forward to seeing lots of you then.

NORFOLK

Joan Awbury

The ATS Group, some 8 to 10 of us, are still battling on. Getting together once a month for lunch, to catch up on news and a comparison of our medical conditions - aching joints, bad backs, eye and ear malfunctions - we seem to try to outdo each other! We occasionally arrange a Saturday lunch when our WRAC friends can join us. The conversation then is on a higher level; the world of work, sports activities, exotic foreign holidays.

In April the combined group had lunch in the old Britannia Barracks, known to many ATS stationed there. Now it is HM Prison Norwich and in their programme of training prisoners for future careers, they run an excellent and very popular cafe staffed by inmates awaiting release.

On May 11th, as is our regular custom, the ATS group returned, for the 22nd year, to the memorial plaque in Gt Yarmouth and a short service for the 26 ATS girls killed there in 1943. We were a smaller group than usual, missing our friend Madge Freeman who sadly died in March.

In August last year I attended an induction course for the partially sighted at Blind Veterans UK (which we all knew as St Dunstan's) Brighton Centre and then in February five days at their Sheffield Centre receiving further training on the computer programme for the partially sighted. I cannot speak too highly of this wonderful organisation. Everyone, and everything, provided of the highest order, Staff kindness itself, nothing too much trouble. I heartily encourage anyone with failing sight to make contact with them for advice and assistance.

We would like to send our good wishes to all our ATS friends living in the County and who we haven't forgotten, although direct contact may have been lost. If you would be able to meet us somewhere out of Norwich, please phone Joan on 01603 455070 or Marjorie on 01603 454096.

OXFORDSHIRE

Christine Townsend



I am very pleased to say that Oxfordshire Informal Branch has been up and running for a year and still growing. We meet every other month at lunch time on a Saturday we just have a chat and lunch, it is a very pleasant way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

PETERBOROUGH Cathy Munro MBE

Yet another eventful year here in the Peterborough Branch as we head towards the first anniversary of our formation. Membership continues to grow and it won't be long before we reach our 100th member (a combination of WRAC Association members and Facebook Group members). We are now located in our new Area under the guidance of Dorothy Ryder who keeps us on our toes, and the increased banter between our fellow Branches keeps us all laughing daily. In April a Quiz Challenge held in Peterborough Army Reserve Centre showed who the "Brains of Britain" were, sadly it wasn't us. That being said the "Quiz Master", that is the Secretary, didn't hold back on the variety of questions on offer, including downloading the wrong answers to the wrong section. We soon found out which individuals were sneaking a peek at the questions set left on the bar beforehand. To be honest I am not convinced Peterborough Branch wanted to retain the trophy.



Quiz trophy

The Branch continues to meet on an ad hoc basis, usually at local restaurants and public houses and we must pass on a huge thank you Pam Sussex for her dedication in trying out all the menus before deciding our next venue. Her dedication has meant we are slowly working our way through a variety of menus which has resulted in many local dishes being given our seal of approval. Our absolutely fabulous Sue Goodes organised an amazing event in Grantham which drew in our members from Nottingham, Derby, Milton Keynes and Grantham itself, showing just how far our ladies are prepared to travel for a decent spot of lunch.



Sue Goodes

In July Peterborough Branch took part in a Charity Abseil off Peterborough Cathedral. Names were drawn out of the hat to decide who would best represent the Branch and Debbie Sutton and I were selected. (I still think there were only our names on the slips!). On Saturday 09 July, Debbie and I descended the 150 feet in torrential rain, suspended by two very thin pieces of ropes, to the cheers of the Branch members standing below. The local civilian population did not know what hit them as our cheerleaders chanted our names (along with "Hurry up it is raining and the pub is open"). It was an amazing day and the views (once we opened our eyes) from the top of the Cathedral were spectacular. Massive thanks to the Facebook Posse (on the various groups) for their ongoing support and sponsorship which resulted in a total of £1500 being raised for our various chosen charities, including the WRAC Association and the Peterborough Branch Standard Fund. At £400 we are getting closer every day to parading our colours at local and national events. On 07 August we had a branch visit to Bradwell Abbey near Milton Keynes and on 27 August we ran Mobilisation Madness III.



Debbie Sutton



Cathy Munro MBE

The Branch continues to encourage new members to join, some being known to stop people in Tesco (other supermarkets are available) and ask if they served simply because of the way they walk! It has proven successful, along with posters and advertisements for forthcoming events. I now am reaching the end of my tenure as Branch Secretary and will be handing the reigns over shortly, but the events will continue. There is an open invitation for you to join us (numbers permitting). We plan to parade in Peterborough on Remembrance Sunday (13 Nov), have a Christmas Lunch in December and we'll participate in the June 2017 Armed Forces Day events in Peterborough. For further details please contact the outgoing secretary via email cathmunro@hotmail.com

PHOENIX Sheila Johnson

It was with immense sadness that the Branch learned of the Joan Berry's passing on 30 April 2016. Joan served in the ATS and was a founder member of Phoenix Branch. At the request of Joan's family four Branch members attended a Service of Thanksgiving, alongside church friends and representatives from Betley village societies and organisations where Joan had been an active participant. Millie Pover, a contemporary of Joan, was unable to attend the Thanksgiving Service but recalled how touched Joan had been at the Branch 'mystery outing' to Attingham Park where she had served as an ATS Driver. Joan will be sorely missed by everyone.



Armed Forces Day at RAF Cosford **Debbie Wilson, Chris Powell, Maggie Purkis**

Armed Forces Day was commemorated by a visit to RAF Cosford where the museum has a stunning selection of military exhibits. Prior to lunch musical entertainment was provided by Glebe Symphonic Winds, comprised of brass and wind instruments, all played with gusto as one might expect!



Phoenix Branch 2016 AGM

On 2nd July the Branch AGM was held at the Crewe Arms Hotel where, as previously, the lunch, service and accommodation was first rate. Fourteen members attended and, following the business on the Agenda, enjoyed the fund raising raffle. It was agreed that the Branch Christmas Lunch will be held on 10 December (at the Crewe Arms) and the 2017 AGM on 08 July, possibly at the National Memorial Arboretum. As ever, best wishes go to all Branches similarly involved in keeping the Association's traditions in good shape.

PLYMOUTH **Jean Cundy-Borge**

We few are still meeting regularly on the fourth Tuesday of each month in the lower Abbey Hall, Catherine Street, Plymouth. We share a cuppa and sort out our outings for the next few months. We also decided that we would no longer send out local Newsletters and now rely on the Lioness to be the window on our activities. Several of us continue to meet at the Chinese Buffet City restaurant for lunch before the monthly meeting.

In December 2015 twenty four of us enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the St. Aubyn's Masonic Hall in Stoke, we enjoyed it so much that we immediately booked for 9th December this year. If you wish to join us could you please contact us before 14th November.

February saw 15 members enjoying a meal in Windy Ridge followed by a brilliant weekend away in March for the AGM in London. As well as the AGM we enjoyed a trip to the Household Cavalry Museum and a shopping on Oxford Street. Our accommodation and food in the Victory Services Club along with our train and taxi journey, all arranged by our Chairman, was first class.



Ruth, Jean and Jane

In April we attended St Andrew's church for the Service of Remembrance in recognition of the 75th Anniversary of the Plymouth Blitz, a sobering memory. In early May 4 of us attended the South & South West Area reunion in Bristol. A happy gathering where the new Area Chairman, Sharon Bingham, introduced herself. This was a busy month for us because on the 14th we then travelled to Truro to meet up with some members from the Cornish contingent at the former RBL club, another very happy get together.

On June 25th and 26th we were on Plymouth Hoe celebrating Veterans Day. We had a table in the Veterans Tent shared with the Alzheimer Society, our joint venture is the Memory Café and the WRAC Association.

July 9th offered us a little light entertainment, because Evon (our Treasurer) belongs to an Amateur Community Group (ACT) and they are put on a light hearted show with a Circus Theme in St .Budeaux Community Hall. Several of attended to support the community.

August was another busy month, Evon had an open house on the 20th raising money for cancer and on the 27th we headed to the Knightstone Tea rooms for lunch. October 8th will be the WRAC Dinner club weekend, followed by the S & SW Area AGM on the 15th. We are looking forward to our Christmas lunch at St, Aubyn's followed by all our family celebrations, and we wish everyone a (very early) Happy Christmas!

PORTSMOUTH **Margaret Bush**

Hello from Portsmouth Branch. Unfortunately, due to being poorly, I missed the deadline for the last issue so have added our 'salute for troops' photo taken at our Christmas lunch at the Maritime Club in Portsmouth. A very lovely and enjoyable festive time was had by all.



Christmas Lunch

We would like to welcome our new members Ellen Hutton and Bobbie Fodden, hope you enjoy our meetings ladies. It is with regret I inform you of the passing of Veronica Shiell, her funeral was attended by some of our members and our Standard was carried by Phyllis Price. Phyllis also kindly paraded the Standard at the request of Southampton Branch who also sadly lost one of their members, condolences to all.



Funeral of Veronica Shiell

We once again had a very enjoyable afternoon at the S&SW Area lunch hosted by Bristol Branch, Thank you to all, a great job! I was very honoured to be part of The Patron's Lunch Entertainment Parade. It was a great day, meeting and making new friends and us Lionesses's certainly kept the party going! I think everyone enjoyed our rendition of the Spice Girls 'Wannabe'. Even the rain couldn't put a downer on a great day.



Bobbie Fodden, Rose Ide, Phyllis Price, Margaret Bush, Sally Watson, Megan Martin, Edna Metherell.

Finally a picture of two of our ladies Edna and Rose with a combined age of 190 years both have a great lust for life and have some wonderful memories to share with everyone.



Rose Ide and Edna Metherell enjoying a Not Forgotten Association event

SCOTTISH AREA Kate Arnold

The Scottish Area of the WRAC Association will hold its Annual General Meeting at the Queens Hotel in Perth on Saturday 24th September 2016.

SHROPSHIRE Ali McGowan

Hello everyone and greetings from all in the Shire. My name is Ali McGowan and I took over as Chairman of the Shropshire Branch at our AGM in September last year. As a branch we would like to thank our previous Chairman, Sandra Davies, for all her hard work and support over the years.

Our last branch event of last year was to the Pantomime, 'oh yes it was'! Chris, Debbie, Frances and I visited Theatre Severn on 21st December to see Dick Whittington. This was followed by a meal at the Turkish Restaurant across the road from the theatre. We all agreed it was an excellent evening and we have already booked for next year's Pantomime. In the photo I am not sure if Chris was trying to recruit a new branch member or not.



The first branch outing of the New Year, as usual, was our branch post Christmas Lunch held on 23rd January at the Mytton and Mermaid Hotel. This event seems to grow in numbers annually and this year there was a grand total of 72. This included members of Birmingham, Chester, Hereford, Nottingham and Leicester, Mid Wales and the Marches, Tamworth, the Wirral, Phoenix and the Mediterranean Branches and our regular contingent from the Shropshire REME. This event turned out to be a weekend affair for those who had to travel a distance and a good time was had by all.

February saw the first branch meeting of the year after our winter break and plans were already being made for forthcoming events. March 12 was the Association AGM at the Victory Service Club in London. Chris and Sheila were able to attend and enjoy the cream tea that was served in the afternoon. April saw three of our members, Chris, Sheila and I fly out to Benidorm to visit the Mediterranean Branch. We spent over a week there being totally looked after and thoroughly entertained (I am sure we provided some of the entertainment!). We would like to thank Melanie Howell for all her hard work in making it such a fabulous holiday.

On 15th May we hosted the Wales and West Midlands Area Reunion, once again at the Mytton and Mermaid in Shrewsbury. After the Secretary's meeting all enjoyed lunch with speeches from the Vice President of the Association, Ali Brown, and Maggie Purkis our Area Chairman. We were very lucky with the weather and had a lovely photo taken by the river. In June Chris, Debbie and Sheila attended Armed Forces Day at RAF Cosford, Shropshire. Unfortunately there was not a march but they were happy to attend and mark the date. Also in June Chris was able to attend Chester Branch celebrations of the Queen's 90th Birthday.



Wales and West Midlands Area Reunion



On 9th July Shropshire Branch held a Race Day and invited other branches, friends and family along. There was lots of shouting during the dog races and lots of cheering for the winners. The climax was the judging of the ladies hats, the winner being Lynda Armstrong from Hereford Branch. We had a buffet lunch followed by a variety of cakes from a local bakers.

Race Day

Our last outing before this report was on Wednesday 13th July when we visited the Severn Valley Railway. We boarded the train in Bridgnorth and were delighted to have been seated in the observation carriage with panoramic views from the windows. Tea, coffee and scones with jam and clotted cream were served on our journey to Kidderminster. Nancy and Irene in the photo. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the trip and we are planning to return at a later date.



Nancy and Irene enjoying a cream tea

Thanks to all those from other branches who have attended our functions and helped to make them so successful. I would like to extend our best wishes to members of the branch who are not able to attend our meetings or activities for whatever reason, we think about you often. To any new members who wish to attend one of our meeting the details are in this edition of Lioness and we would love to see you.

SOUTHAMPTON **Jean Doe**

Sadly the first quarter of the year saw four funerals for Southampton Branch, including once suddenly brought forward to 4th January meaning we had no time to inform everyone. However we picked ourselves up and had a very successful New Year lunch, topped up with the Vice President joining us - thank you Ali.

We have carried on our monthly meetings and in June four of us were fortunate enough to take part in a boat trip on the Solent followed by a fish and chip lunch. All courtesy of the Not Forgotten Association, a really enjoyable day out. In July we went to the SeaCity Museum in Southampton and in August we enjoyed lunch at the home of one of our members. We look forward to meeting our new Area Chairman, Sharon Bingham.

STIRLING **Liz Dixon**

Hello to all Association members. It's been a couple of issues since the Stirling Branch put an entry into Lioness but we have enjoyed reading all the stories and keeping up to date with other branches. Sadly over the past year we have lost quite a few of our elder members to the big NAAFI in the sky. They are greatly missed and we still giggle at some of their antics as we remember them. We would like to welcome Dawn Menday to our wee branch and its great seeing a new face across the lunch table.

Camelon community came together on Saturday 23 April 2016 to remember its war dead at the dedication of a new memorial for WW1. Stirling Branch was represented by Jean Halliday, Isabel Bodman, Anne Borthwick, Pauline Edmond & Lynne Connelly.

They marched with their heads high and did the branch proud.



WW1 Memorial

Back in February we had our yearly outing, a wee bit later than usual. Off we went for afternoon tea at Gleneagles. Most of you will have heard of Gleneagles, it's a posh hotel in Auchterarder, Perthshire. As you will see by the photographs the food was great, wee savouries, sandwiches (yes there was a cucumber one), and scones with delicious lemon curd, strawberry jam and not forgetting the clotted cream. Then the piece de resistance, a selection of fancy wee cakes. The staff could not do enough for us and cater to our every whim. We're now planning our next outing, "doon the water" this time me thinks.



I would like to say a big thank you to Joyce Logan our treasurer for all her hard work; organising flowers, attending the Area meeting, doing the monthly raffle to name but a few of the jobs, greatly appreciated.

SUFFOLK **Sheelagh Wilson**

We ended 2015 with not one but two Christmas lunches, the first at the Labour Club where we hold our meetings, and the other at the Golden Lion. Both were very good lunches, enjoyed by all who attended. Due to an oversight on my part, I forgot to mention our new members who have joined in the past year; Lesley Norris, Lindsay Harrison, Patricia O'Dwyer, Julie Bloomfield and Doris Sagar. Hopefully you will be able to come and see us soon and chat about 'the good old days'.

The year numbers attending meetings have been quite good. We've had the usual Quizzes from Sylvia Johnson and myself, put the world to rights with our debates and discussions, and mentioned the Referendum a couple of times! At the end of June several members had lunch at The Robert Ransome, very enjoyable and good value for money. As another year edges towards December, enjoy the festivities and raise a glass to a happy and healthy 2017.

TAMWORTH **Marie Smedley**

Tamworth and District Branch have had a quiet start to the year with many of us fighting off seasonal bugs, but we are back stronger than ever and ready to celebrate life. We are now the proud sponsors of a rescue Donkey called Oscar, who is lodging at the Birmingham Donkey Sanctuary in Sutton Coldfield, members of the Branch can often be seen (Polo's and ginger nuts in hand) trudging up the hill to the Sanctuary.

In May, Pat Williams, Ann Gwynne and Lesley Wallace made merry in Shrewsbury for the Annual Wales and West Reunion and had a wonderful day. In June the country celebrated Armed Forces Day and Ann Gwynne, Christine James and Marie Smedley were found catching the sun at the National Memorial Arboretum, where we made many new friends and enjoyed the festivities.



National Memorial Arboretum **Christine James, Marie Smedley, Anne Gwynne**

You can meet the members of Tamworth & District Branch at our monthly meetings on the last Wednesday of the month at the RAFA (Flarepath) Club, Lichfield Street, Tamworth at 7.30pm and on the 3rd Saturday of the month at the Swadlincote Veterans Breakfast Club at the Sir Nigel Gresley, Market Street, Swadlincote at 9.30am.

ULSTER Joan McCabe

Our first meeting of 2016 was on 13th February, hosted by Marie Jenkins in her local hotel in Carrickfergus where we met for lunch. Three ladies from the Royal Signals joined us for the first time and were welcomed into the group like old friends. We also invited two speakers, one from Veterans UK and the other from the Not Forgotten Association. They spoke of the services they provided for the Veterans and it was interesting to learn, especially as most of us had never heard of the Not Forgotten Association!



Annual Lunch

In March some of us participated in a protest march to Stormont where a "letter of Concern" was handed to a local MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) called Andy Allen. Andy is also a Veteran who lost three limbs in Afghanistan and works tirelessly for Northern Irish Veterans. After the March what else but a meeting in the lounge bar of the Stormont Hotel opposite! Here we met another female veteran called Shelley Ashe and it was only a matter of moments before we were swapping numbers.



Veterans For Justice march

In May some of the ladies went on a trip to Cookstown for a day out shopping, Rosemary Stewart very kindly hosted this occasion and organised lunch in a local hotel. Everyone had a great day catching up and the sun was out for the day.

For me personally the highlight of my year was an invitation from a friend to attend the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, where I was introduced to Princess Beatrice. It was an honour, and I made some new friends, a few days I will always remember. I also got to meet up with Pat Saunders from the Chester and Wirral Branches and it was great to catch up. Our girls put their glad rags on as they went to the Queens 90th Birthday Flyover at Hillsborough Fort On 11th June, they all looked beautiful and enjoyed the day, ending with the traditional 21 gun salute.



Queen's 90th Birthday Fly Past, Hillsborough

WINCHESTER Herme Emary

On 25 Jan 2015 thirteen members and two husbands came to the lunch at the Winchester Hotel, I think for the first time no one got lost finding the hotel! We all gathered in the bar and managed yet again to totally rearrange the furniture so that we could sit together, bet the barman loved us. The meal, as last year, was very good but there were no doggie bags this time. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and my thanks to Janet and Chris for the lift home.



On 10th March twelve of us met up at Prezzo in Winchester. We were able to welcome our WRAC Association Vice President Ali Brown who joined us for the first time. We also welcomed Margaret Davies who was starting her next charity walk from Winchester. Because of difficulties at home I joined the party late so only had time for an ice cream. Everyone seemed to enjoy the meal though, despite a bit of bad press. I suspect that as they were not very busy service was quicker than in the evening.

On 12 May we met up as Zizzi's. A select gathering as only six of us were able to attend. Sandy and Emma having never visited Zizzi before, managed to walk past the restaurant at least once without realising that it was Zizzi. Next time I will send new members a map or should that be directions? With lower numbers we were actually able to have a decent chat without having to shout. For a change service was quite fast so we did not have to wait around to be served. I don't know about everyone else but I had a very nice meal.

Maggie Gardner and Lynn Blowes took a trip to Wimbledon for Ladies semi-final day. Their seats were well positioned giving them a good view of the matches and the Royal box. The matches were enjoyable but unremarkable and were over too quickly but a men's doubles semi-final followed which was played at a much faster pace and lasted about 3 hours. They of course had to have the obligatory strawberries which were delicious.



Maggie Gardner and Lynn Blowes

Friday 8th July saw a welcome return to Porterhouse in Winchester, in the end we had nine of us make the meal (down from twelve which was not bad). At the request of a couple of the members I changed the meeting from evening to lunch so unfortunately some people could not make it, sorry.

I would like to welcome our new Area Chairman, Sharon, and hope that she will be able to join us at a branch meeting at some stage.

WIRRAL BRANCH Pat Sanders

Wirral Branch has had a busy year so far with our trips out with the Chester Branch. We started with a trip to Shropshire Branch for a lovely Post-Christmas Lunch. May was a very busy month with trips to the Albert Dock in Liverpool and an invitation to lunch with the Chester Branch Royal Signals Association.

Our Secretary Joy Griffiths and Chairman Pat Sanders had an amazing few days with the ATS ladies of the Chester Branch when they were invited to Buckingham Palace by the Not Forgotten Association. They came back with loads of amusing tales of what the ATS ladies got up to too.



June saw us having our trip out to a bowling alley where we had a mini competition with a lot of laughs. Lynne Cook and Joy Griffiths were in the winning team and Stella Joseph was in the runners up team.

We were invited to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday at the Chester Branch June meeting. Everyone dressed up in red, white and blue, Pat did a quiz and managed not to give the answers out first. We had our annual outing to Shropshire Branch for a great day losing our money on the greyhound racing, although Stella managed to win £50 on a draw. We had a lovely lunch and the coach driver looked rather puzzled when he saw the girls all piling on the coach with trays of eggs and raffle prizes.

As you can see we do like to enjoy ourselves when we have our trips out and we still have plenty more to look forward to for the rest of the year and you will hear all about them in the next issue. We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

WORTHING Janet Goldsbrough-Jones

Although numbers attending our monthly meetings are dwindling, several of us meet weekly for lunch, frequently for someone's birthday! In March three of us went to the Association AGM in London.



Jean Pointer, Janet Goldsbrough-Jones and Eddie Sinclair at the AGM

On 12th April several of us went on a day trip to the Blind Veterans UK home, were shown around and made a few friends! A very worthwhile trip to see just how much is being done for these veterans. Some of the gadgets are amazingly clever but simple to use. Jackie Bentley, Greta Carlisle, Caz Hill, Eddie Sinclair, Brenda Mead, Janet Goldsbrough-Jones, Margaret Ladd, Jean Pointer, Janet McKechnie and Maggie Costan all had a great day at the Blind Veterans Home.

At the end of April three of us went to the Combined Ex-Services St George's Lunch, lots of well cooked food and seconds if wanted! It was good to meet up with other veterans. Eddie Sinclair and Jean Pointer went on a lunch trip with the Not Forgotten Association on The Bluebell Railway. The weather stayed good for them, they had a wonderful time and, again, made some friends.



Caz Hill, Janet McKechnie, Sylvia Stubbs, Marion King, Janet Goldbrough-Jones, Jackie Bentley, Greta Carlisle

In May five of us went on holiday in Lincolnshire, sharing a gorgeous chalet for a week. We went there to meet up with the two members we lost when they moved there. Sometimes we had a riot of a time; sometimes we were just totally laid back; we had lots of shopping trips and meals out, but mainly catered for ourselves in the evening. We also went to the Lincoln Branch meeting, where we were made very welcome.



Worthing and Lincoln Branches

On 4th June Eddie Sinclair and Jean Pointer travelled to London for the Colonel's Review of Trooping the Colour 2016. This was a personal invitation having met Brig James Stopford CBE and Rosie Thompson of the Not Forgotten Association on the Bluebell Railway trip.

We had yet another highly successful Armed Forces Weekend, exhausting but brilliant over 25th and 26th June; then on 30th June we went on a trip down the Thames for the Queen's birthday, sailing behind the flotillas. We even went under Tower Bridge which was open – just for us of course!

We have changed our venue again. We still meet on the last Tuesday of the month at 10.00, at Lancing Parish Hall. We have settled in there nicely. Come and see us sometime!



Eddie Sinclair and Jean Pointer

WRAC Association (incorporating ATS and WRAC Benevolent Fund)

Anti-Discrimination Policy

The WRAC Association does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its' activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, employment of staff, selection of Trustees and Council members, membership and esprit de corps activities, and the distribution of Benevolence and other services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all our members.

If you wish to amend your details please email editor@wracassociation.org.uk or phone 0300 400 1992. If there is no Branch listed for your area but you would like to meet up with like minded members, and consider forming a Branch, contact HQ WRAC Association.

SOUTH EAST

Bexhill-on-Sea (Informal Branch)

When: 14.00 on the 1st Thursday of the month (except January)
Where: Poppins, 40 Devonshire Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 1AX
Contact: Jenny Nye Tel: 01424 731882

Canterbury

When: 13.00 on the 1st Wed of the month
Where: Housing 21, Cowdray Place, Canterbury, CT1 3PB
Contact: Sue Foulks Tel: 07797 947214

Greater London

When: 14.00 on a Saturday in March, May and September
Where: Hyde Park Barracks, Knightsbridge, London
Contact: Val Gaff Tel: 020 8854 8477

London (Informal Branch)

When: 1st weekend of each month
Where: Location varies, phone to confirm
Contact: Lauren Fia MacKenzie Tel: 07709 172351

Medway (Informal Branch)

When: Meetings held monthly, location varies.
Contact: Margaret Gallafent Tel 0208 308 0521

Worthing

When: 10.00 on the last Tuesday of the month (except December)
Where: Lancing Parish Hall
Contact: Janet Goldsbrough-Jones Tel: 01903 207485

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

Bath

When: 14.00 on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month, except on a Bank Holiday when the meeting is held on a Wednesday
Where: Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW
(www.manversstreetbaptist.wordpress.com)
Contact: Sylvia Musgrave Tel: 01225 339904

Bournemouth

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, except January and August
Where: Premier Inn, Poole Road, Bournemouth, BH2 5QU
Contact: Val Wright Tel: 01202 314047
or Jillian Hurst Tel: 01202 679433

Bristol

When: 10.30 on the 1st Thursday of the month
Where: Broadmead Baptist Church, 1 Whippington Court, (entrance on Union Street), Bristol, BS1 3HY
(www.broadmeadbaptist.org.uk)
Contact: Jackie Naysmith MBE Tel: 0117 971 2524

New Forest (Informal Branch)

Contact: Madge Evans Tel 01425 620995

Plymouth

When: 13.30 on the 4th Tuesday of the month (except December)
Where: Lower Abbey Hall, Catherine Street, Plymouth, PL1 2AD.
Contact: Jean Cundy-Borge Tel 01752 567844

Portsmouth

Contact: Sally Watson Tel: 02392 666712

Southampton

When: 19.00-21.30 on the 1st Thursday of the month
Where: Eastleigh Working Mens Club, 18 Upper Market Street, Eastleigh, SO50 9FD
Contact: Jean Doe Tel 01794 523146

Swindon (Informal Branch)

Contact: Sharon Bingham slbingham1@yahoo.co.uk

Torquay (Informal Branch)

Contact: Elaine Harwood Tel: 07821 942947 or 01803 394323, alternatively email elaine.wayne@hotmail.co.uk

Weymouth & Portland

When: 13.00 on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month (no meetings from late December to late February and late June to late September)
Where: RAFA Club, Maiden Street, Weymouth, DT4 8AY
Contact: Di Lawrence Tel: 01308 425149

Winchester

When: 2nd Thursday of January, March, September and November plus a summer outing
Where: Location varies depending on lunch or evening meeting
Contact: sec.wrac.winchester@gmail.com

EASTERN

Cambridge

When/Where: Location varies, phone for details
Contact: Avril Williams Tel: 01954 210859

Chelmsford

When: 13.30 - 15.30 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, except January and August
Where: RAFA Club, Oliver House, Hall Street, Chelmsford, CM2 0HG
Contact: Georgina Shadrack Tel: 01245 251088

Colchester

If you are interested in joining the newly forming Colchester Branch contact Vinnie Vincent on 07814 869520 or via Facebook.

Norfolk (Informal Branch)

When: Once per month (most months) for an outing or lunch, phone for details.
Contact: Joan Awberry Tel 01603 455070

Suffolk

When: 14.00 - 16.00 on the 3rd Thursday of the month, except December

Where: Ipswich Labour Club, 35 Silent Street, Ipswich, IP1 1TF

Contact: Sheelagh Wilson Tel: 01473 725707

EAST MIDLANDS

Derby (Informal Branch)

Contact: Judy Smith at judy.hirst123@ntlworld.com or phone 07790 848364.

Doncaster

Contact: Veronica Hanson Tel: 01226 714575

Grimsby

When: 14.00 on the 2nd Friday of each month

Where: Cartergate Social Club, Cartergate, Grimsby, DN31 1QZ

Contact: Gail Davy Tel: 01472 347868

Hull & East Riding

When: The 1st Friday of the month

Where: Wenlock Barracks, Anlaby Road, Hull, HU3 6PB

Contact: Confirm details with Janet Mitchell Tel 01482 508087 or Janet Marshall Tel 01482 806799

Lincoln & District

When: 12.00-14.00 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month

Where: Central Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Lincoln, LN5 7PR

Contact: Sylvia Stubbs Tel: 01507 622575

Peterborough & District

Contact: If you are interested in joining Peterborough & District Branch contact Pam Sussex on 01733 243946 or email pamandnorms@btinternet.com

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/groups/WRACPeterborough

Sheffield

When: 11.00 on the 1st Thursday of the month except January and August

Where: The Benjamin Hunstman (Wetherspoons), Cambridge Street, Sheffield

Contact: Brenda Colley Tel: 01709 365828

York

When: 14.00-16.00 on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except August), phone to confirm

Where: Haxby & Wiggington Methodist Church Hall, Haxby, York, YO32 2JJ

www.haxbyandwiggingtonmethodistchurch.org.uk

Contact: Feona Dixon Tel: 01904 633438

NORTHERN

Bury & Rochdale

Monthly Meeting at 13.30 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at The Old White Lion, 6 Bolton St Bury, BL9 0LQ

Contact: Pat Oldham Tel: 0161 761 7926

Informal Evening Meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Toby Carvery, Burnley Lane, Chadderton, OL1 2QS.

Contact: Susan Feeney Tel: 07813 313508 or Kath Kirtley Tel: 07910 925070

Chester

When: 13.00 on the 2nd Monday of the month

Where: Chester Military Museum, The Castle, Chester, CH1 2DN

Contact: Pat Sanders Tel: 07733 270567

Cleveland

When: 13.00 on the 4th Wednesday of the month

Where: Newport Youth and Community Settlement Centre, St Pauls Road (off Union Street), Middlesbrough, TS1 5NQ

Contact: Hazel Crammen Tel: 01642 290830

Cumbria (Informal Branch)

If you are interested in joining a newly forming Cumbria Branch please contact Kerryanne Wilde on 07972 799307 or email khtraining@aol.com

Lancashire (Informal Branch)

If you are interested in meeting for the occasional informal Saturday lunch at the Walton Fox, Bamber Bridge, Preston contact Gail Newsham on 07939 505485 or email gaildki@talktalk.net

Darlington

Contact: Sandra Hubbard Tel: 07923 572917

Leeds

When: 12.30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month (except January)

Where: The New Headingley Club, 56 St Michael's Road, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 3BG

Contact: Pat Harpin Tel: 01226 201628

Liverpool

When: 13.30 on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 12.00 in the hotel foyer if you would like to join us for lunch

Where: The Adelphi Hotel, Ranelagh Place, Liverpool, L3 5UL

Contact: Pat Brown Tel 0151 733 3453

Newcastle

When: 12.00 on the 3rd Thursday of the month

Where: Newcastle Companions Club, 45-47 Leazes Park Road, Newcastle, NE1 4PG

(www.newcastlecompanionsclub.webs.com)

Contact: Tanya Hall Tel: 07552 758093

Wirral

When: 19.30 on the 1st Wednesday of the month

Where: TA Centre, Chetwynd, Wexford Road, Birkenhead, L43 9TF

Contact: Pat Sanders Tel: 07733 270567

WALES & WEST MIDLANDS

Birmingham

When: 12.00 on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except January). There is also an evening meeting every quarter (phone for location)

Where: Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, B2 4RX

Contact: Babs Anderson Tel 07921 832094

Cardiff (Informal Branch)

If you are interested in joining a newly (re) forming Cardiff Branch contact Karen Francis on ranaridibunda@hotmail.com or phone 07702 618100

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month

Where: Earl Haig Memorial (Royal British Legion) Club, 23-25 Penlline Rd, Cardiff, CF14 2AA

Derby (Informal Branch)

Contact: Judy Smith at judy.hirst123@ntlworld.com or phone 07790 848364.

Gloucestershire (Informal Branch)

If you are interested in joining a newly forming Gloucestershire Branch please contact Monica Parrott on monica_parrott@hotmail.co.uk or 07745 103359.

Hereford

When: 19.00 on the last Tuesday of the month
Where: The Herdsman, 54 Widemarsh, Hereford, HR4 9HG
Contact: Sharon Joyce Tel: 01905 821189

Leicester & Nottingham

When: 13.30 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month
Where: Devonshire Place, 78 London Road, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 0RA
Contact: Sue Slattery Tel: 0116 259 2743

Marches & Mid Wales

When: 3 - 4 times per year
Where: Location varies, phone for details
Contact: Carys Palmer Tel: 01588 640985

Oxfordshire (Informal Branch)

If you are interested in joining a newly forming Oxfordshire Branch contact Christine Townsend Tel: 07756 681441 or 01869 324319

Phoenix (a regional Branch covering Wales, parts of the Midlands and North West)

When: Every 3 months
Where: Phone for details
Contact: Maggie Purkis Tel: 01952 251717 or 07808 139543

Shropshire

When: 14.00 or 19.00 (alternates month by month) on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except December and January). Come 1.5 hours earlier if you wish to join us for lunch/dinner
Where: The Red Lion, Holyhead Road, Wellington, Telford, TF1 2EW
Contact: Chris Powell Tel: 01743 241646
chris.powell3@mypostoffice.co.uk

Tamworth

When: 19.30 on the last Wednesday of the month
Where: RAFA (Flarepath) Club, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7QD
Contact: Marie Smedley Tel 01530 273980

SCOTLAND & N IRELAND

Aberdeen

When: 10.15 on the 1st Monday of the month (except January & May)
Where: Ma Cameron's (Snug Bar), Little Belmont Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1JG
Contact: Joan Bartlett Tel: 01224 596520

Dumfriesshire

Contact: Susan Marcroft BEM Tel 01556 611944

Edinburgh (Informal Branch)

When: 2nd Saturday of the month
Where: Location varies, phone for details
Contact: Senga Palmer Tel: 07876 782773
Facebook: Edinburgh and area WRAC/women who served, social group

Fife & Tayside

When: Last Thursday of the month
Where: Salutation Hotel, 34 South Street, Perth, PH2 8PH
Contact: Kate Arnold Tel: 01577 830136

Glasgow

When: 13.00 on the 2nd Monday of the month
Where: RHF Museum, 518 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3LW
Contact: Joyce Steele Tel 0141 322 5639

Stirling

When: 12.00 on the last Saturday of the month
Where: Allanpark Hotel, 20 Allanpark, Stirling, FK8 2QG
Contact: Liz Dixon Tel: 01786 743635

Ulster

When: Meetings 3-4 times per year
Where: Location varies, call to confirm details
Contact: Joan McCabe Tel: 02842 788013 or 07702 751010, joanmccabe24@gmail.com

NATIONAL & OVERSEAS

Band

When: The Band Branch is a national Branch and does not meet on a monthly basis. Phone for details of our next meeting.
Contact: Ann Jones Tel: 0117 9406185

Griffin Branch

Griffin Branch is a virtual Facebook group primarily designed to unite those ex members of the WRAC who do not yet belong to the Association, or if they do already belong do not have a geographic branch to attend.

Mediterranean

When: At least every 6 months or more
Contact: Melanie Howell melphil@britvegas.com
Tel: 0034 9658 78963 Mob: 0034 622 036333

Postal & Courier (Informal Branch)

When: A WRAC Postal & Courier reunion is held once per year.
Contact: Margaret Grant MBE Tel: 01875 611777 or mgrant2009@live.co.uk

MOVING HOUSE?

If you have moved recently, or are about to move **please** let us have your new address (and email address) as soon as possible. This will help us reduce the number of Lioness magazines which are returned undelivered. Please email your change of address to office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk, phone us on 0300 400 1992 or post to WRAC Association, Unit 39 Basepoint, Winnall Valley Road, Winchester SO23 0LD.

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR OLD POST CODE.

ACK ACK LADIES CELEBRATE WITH THE ROYAL ARTILLERY Betty France

For a number of years, along with other ex Ack Ack ladies, I have attended the Royal Artillery Assembly in Blackpool. This year was special as the occasion was to be included in the global relay of the Captain-General's Baton to mark the tercentenary of the Royal Artillery. My friend and WRAC Association member Rose Watson was present at the launch of the Baton from Woolwich last year. We were therefore determined to be at the final destination of the Baton at Larkhill in 2016.

As representatives of all Ack Ack ladies who served with the RA during WWII we were honoured to be asked to join a small party which escorted the Baton to the top of Blackpool Tower, 'wow', what a day we had. As we had carefully planned, we followed the Baton down to Salisbury Plain where we joined present and past members of the RA for a day of celebration, including the handover of the Baton to HM The Queen. The Queen drove around the arena in an open top car to great cheering, then after the ceremony to hand over the Baton she gave a short speech. There was then a review of the Regiment and band followed by a 21 Gun Salute and Drive Past by the Royal Horse Artillery.

Following a picnic box lunch I was interested to view a display of artillery pieces dating from 1800 to present day drones and missiles. The soldiers were only too pleased to explain the current computer control systems. I made them laugh when I suggested that if Instrument Control of my time was used the target would be 300 miles away!

We were constantly stopped by people interested in our medals and badges and wishing to know what we did in WWII, we did our best to spread the word. We finally found refuge from the sun in the RA Association display tent and enjoyed a free ice cream. After finding a picnic bench and a welcome cup of tea we were again asked about our service in the war, what a shame that the young soldiers knew very little about it.

The entertainment was not for our generation, too loud, so we decided to call it a day. We sought the assistance of the RMP on duty and they were only too happy to transport us to the gate. Fancy being seen off the premises by the Military Police! On arrival back at our hotel we were again inundated with questions and plied with drinks. Our association with many ex Service organisations has given us many exciting occasions but Rose and I counted this week as a 'once in a lifetime' one.

LEGION D'HONNEUR

Editor: This article, by Judith Hawkins, was published in the Melton Times on 30 December 2015. Barbara has since been awarded membership of the WRAC Association.

A 91 year old from Plungar has received France's highest award, the Légion d'honneur, for her role in the country's liberation during the Second World War. Thanks to the efforts of her daughter, Vicky, just before her 91st birthday Barbara Kemp received a very special package in the post containing the most prized medal in France.

Barbara was one of just eight women in a company of the Auxiliary Territorial Service sent over to France following the

D-Day landings. In December 1942 18-year-old Barbara was walking past the recruitment office when she decided to sign up on the spur of the moment. Within a week she was sent to Pontefract for training.



Barbara Kemp

After the D-Day landings in June 1944 a small group of women were assigned to join a men's unit in Roubaix, France. However, it was a treacherous journey over. "We had the E-Boats chasing us," Barbara remembers. "We were on a troopship, and it took us four days to get across the Channel because the E-Boats could hear the engine. We had to keep stopping and listening. But that was great fun!" Barbara says her signing of the Official Secrets Act prevents her from detailing her duties, but she describes it as clerical and admin work which the women took over from the men so that they could go to the front. "I didn't think I'd get the Légion d'honneur, being a woman, because the women weren't allowed to be on the front line like the men on D-Day," she says. Yet, although not fighting at the front, they were still very much in the midst of an ongoing battle. "Some of the time the Germans pushed us back," she said. "And we could hear the guns at Dunkirk."



Later, she was posted to Malines, Belgium, and was still far from safe. "This Messerschmitt used to come over, we used to see it coming, and we all dived for cover. I used to think he was getting rid of his ammunition," she said. "But it only happened for about a week. And it didn't worry me, actually. The strange thing is, because you had other people there, you weren't scared. I was young then, and I wasn't scared. Now I'd be terrified."

Vicky has no doubt of the risk her mother took, which prompted her to call the Ministry of Defence about the award. "She takes it all for granted," Vicky says, "but they checked the dates when she was over there, and they know that at that time it was very much about putting your life on the line."

Barbara says she would like to share the honour with her late husband, Bill. He too saw service in France, with the Royal Navy minesweepers. "He was there the night before D-Day, so if he was here today he would have got the medal, too," she said. Vicky agrees, adding: "Both Mum and Dad had a role to play in the war and in some respects I see it as a recognition of both of them."

Their eventful military careers saw Bill returning home with an injured knee after his ship hit a mine, and Barbara suddenly struck by illness. "I spent two months in Antwerp and then they brought me home on a hospital ship. They never diagnosed me but they did think it was polio because I couldn't move anything except my head," she said. Back in England, the couple recovered and were soon married. While Bill qualified as an architect, Barbara continued clerical work in the much calmer surroundings of an insurance company, and later Rushcliffe Borough Council.

They enjoyed 60 years of marriage, and have another daughter, Tina, a son, Travis, two grandchildren and one step-great-grandson. For many years Barbara has read the homage at Plungar's war memorial on Remembrance Day, proudly wearing her France and Germany star and war medal. Now she looks forward to adding this rare decoration of the Légion d'honneur. "I'm so pleased with it," she said: "It made my day when it arrived."

FERNHURST CAMP Norma Kinson



Fernhurst Camp Haslemere 1948

Norma Kinson standing, 2nd row, 6th from the right. The photo also includes two officers who would subsequently hold the post of Director WRAC. Front row 8th from the right is Controller Mary Railton ATS, 6th from left is Major Jean Rivett-Drake ATS."

REMEDIAL PT COURSE Beryl Manthorp

As a full time PTI I was selected to teach remedial work, in conjunction with the RAMC. We taught small courses under the supervision of the senior physiotherapist, Major Baker. She was a lovely lady, based in the War Office she travelled hundreds of miles visiting units who had a Remedial PTI and servicewomen who required help.



South Wigston February - March 1945
Back: Cpl Cottam, Cpl Kemp, Cpl Klemp, Cpl Elms, Cpl Turnbull
Middle: Cpl O'Donovan, Cpl Edwards, Cpl Speirs, Cpl Armitage, Cpl Kershaw, Cpl Foster, Cpl Myre
Front: Cpl Robinson, Sgt Manthorp, Sgt Pratt, Cpl Anderson, Sgt Ollerhead, Sgt Petersen

NATIONAL ARMED FORCES DAY 27 JUNE 2017 LIVERPOOL

The 2017 National Armed Forces Day event will take place in Liverpool. The announcement was made by Earl Howe, the Minister of State for Defence, who said "Liverpool has long and deep links to the Armed Forces, particularly the Royal Navy, and is well-known for hosting spectacular celebrations; we're delighted to select it for Armed Forces Day 2017. The city's national event will be a fantastic focal point for the UK to come together to acknowledge the hard work and sacrifice of those that serve." Liverpool City Council will now develop its own plans and the event will be linked with the International Mersey River Festival.

Plans for WRAC Association Branch participation will be published in *Lioness* 2017/1 and via the website and Facebook page.

WRAC Reminiscences

COLCHESTER



Colchester Tattoo 1960



CYPRUS



WRAC Episkopi Garrison June 1986



All Island Rounders Tournament winners 10 August 1991 L-R: Cpl Cox, Sgt Ford, Sgt McMurchy, Sgt Ramsey, LCpl Joy, Cpl Kelly, Cpl Day, Sgt Cheeseman, WO2 Moore, Sgt Pike, LCpl Barker



Corporals Course November 1986

29 COY WRAC RHEINDAHLEN



Director WRAC Visit 15 May 1990



29 Company WRAC November 1989



29 COY WRAC 'A' TEAM - WINNERS OF THE BAOR 7-A SIDE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS 1989.

BACK ROW - L TO R - LEAF M GILLIGAN, LOR KELLY, COL. KELLY, SGT. THOMPSON
R/PTE SNEELGROVE, LT. BOXELL.
FRONT ROW - L TO R - CPL. BOHE, SSGT ROSE, PTE GUNNER, PTE WILLIAMS



The 29 Company WRAC Orienteering Team - Winners of the 1989/90 RCZ Orienteering League -

L to R : LCpl Amanda Rodgers; Cpl Tina James; Cpl Nathalie Yare;
Pte Louise Higgins; Lt Sandy Gibbins; WO1 Pat Rosewell;
Cpl Debbie driver; Pte Michelle Hewson; Cpl Ann Daldorph.

1MM TEAMS 1989



Cpl BRYDEN-SMITH Cpl BARBE
LT GIBBINS Cpl AWANG



A DIARY OF THE UNIQUE WRAC STAFF BAND Ann Jones

It was not often that the Band was in residence at Queen Elizabeth Barracks through the very busy summer months. When we were there it was much to the dismay of the Cookhouse, having to turn out at some awful hour to feed us. The crack of dawn or midnight depending on where we were off to next.

The Woolwich Tattoo was quite an experience as we were joined by the United States Air Force Band, who to our eyes seemed a bit scruffy up to the high standards set for our turnout. However it was in a way good for us as the USAFB and asked if we could explain our "black patent" shoes, the poor things had never heard of 'bulling' so we set about showing them. No big deal to us but my goodness the rewards we received! Unable to buy such things after the war as chocolates, cigarettes, wine, and best of all sheer black nylons after wearing the awful black itchy woolly things we had, so smooth and smart.

We played alongside the Uganda Band and Corps of Drums and at the end of the shows their bandsmen were lining up and wanted to marry some of us girls, hardly suitable even if we thought it was a laugh. We bet they already had a few wives at home. The Royal Albert Hall was a wonderful opportunity to play in a place with such great acoustics. A complete change of environment was the BBC presentation of the Billy Cotton show in November 1955, sharing the bill with Alan Breeze and Jewels and Harris.

In 1958, after several days of rehearsal, the Band ended up performing at the close of the film Carry on Sergeant. I think the payment was £4.00. Another of the regular jobs was the Lords Mayors' Show. It was a very long march playing all the while rain or no rain. Stops for the necessary visits and were solved by us putting a sixpence in our stockings suspenders as most loos had to be paid for. Marching behind the Mounted Services was also something of a hazard. The wonderful bit was passing St Paul's and the ringing out of the Bells, and there was always the much appreciated audience lining the streets.

Visiting Berlin was quite something, we were experiencing the Cold War then but there were some very bright spots. The barman who served us in our hotel was very generous with the champagne, he had a marked Australian accent and it turned out his parents had sent him to relatives overseas to escape WW2. We saw the huge statue of Mother Russia, guarded by boy soldiers who were terrified their Officer would see them taking food from us (they were starving) and having a laugh. We did get into trouble for that ourselves.

MEMORIES OF THE WRAC STAFF BAND IN THE LATE 1960s

W/425309 Cpl. Brenda O'Rourke
W/429351 Sgt Pauline Wiles
W/429527 LCpl Doreen Arnell

We remember playing at Sandown Racecourse for the All Stars Race meeting. We met and chatted with Sir John Mills, who came on the coach to speak to us. Frankie Howerd, Des O'Connor and others were also there. Joe Loss and his band played after us, which was quite entertaining.

We also appeared in the film Patton with George C Scott and Karl Malden which was filmed in Knutsford, we had to wear ATS uniform. Also appearing in the film were Florrie Lindley and Minnie Caldwell from Coronation Street. We were rained off one day so we had to perform an impromptu concert to entertain the actors, extras and film crew.



We played at the London Palladium in front of Princess Anne. Also appearing on the show were Harry Secombe and Dame Vera Lynn. We had to play 'There is nothing like a Dame', from South Pacific whilst marching around the small stage, which was rather difficult but fun. We went to France and played at the 24 hour race in Le Mans which was great fun. During this visit we also played for a carnival and were plied with drinks, mostly wine, throughout the parade.

Amongst many of the Passing Out Parades that we played for, one of the memories is of the time when we were playing

St. Louis Blues March. The recruits did not know whether to march or dance. Most entertaining, well we thought so anyway! Apparently the Director of Music was told that under no circumstances was there to be a repeat performance of this tune on the parade square.



The marriage of Zara Bowness (Director of Music) to Robert Smith at Kneller Hall

MEMORIES OF LYN HOPKIN MBE

Editor: An obituary for Lyn Hopkin appears on page 72, there are also a series of photos available to view online at www.lynettehopkin.muchloved.com

Jane Smith (nee Stark) WRAC Staff Band 1965-1969. In 1965 I joined the WRAC straight from school at the age of 17, and for three years sat next to Miss Hopkin (as she then was) on the solo clarinet stand. She was the first person to take my ambitions to learn the clarinet seriously which meant a lot to me. She was a quiet, private person with a dry sense of humour who devoted her life to the WRAC and the WRAC Staff Band. She showed me that it was possible for women to succeed in the musical world by dint of sustained hard work and that there's a lot to be said for sheer persistence. It was a privilege to serve with her. It's very appropriate then, that one of the roads on the housing estate on the site of the WRAC Depot where she worked for so long, should be named after her, Hopkin Close.



Bandswoman Lynette Hopkin and Bandswoman Dorothy Hall perform a xylophone duet (early 1950s)

Marjorie Downward WRAC Staff Band 1968-1974. The WRAC Staff Band was unique. For those of us who were fortunate to be selected to serve in it the opportunities were many. Excellent accommodation, smart uniforms and good food! Tuition from members of the band and the professors at RMSM, Kneller Hall ensured a good standard of playing at all times. Travel to many parts of the UK and Europe to give concerts to those serving in the armed forces and to civilians was fantastic. Playing and marching at the same time was a learnt skill requiring an

This story is to be continued.....but for now, I must say how very grateful I am to have had the experience. It gave me confidence, independence and self-discipline. In my own work I certainly used a style influenced by Lyn Hopkin. I have succeeded in everything I set out to do as an oboist and along with other ensembles, I very proud to have been a member of the WRAC Staff Band.



Basic Training, Guildford 05 June - 10 July 1959



WRAC Staff Band 1970

1959
Mary Marshall



**12 Battalion WRAC, Richmond Park
Christmas Pantomime 1959**

WRAC JUNIOR LEADERS II

Betty Gash nee Samms

A trial of junior recruit training for females took place between 1975 and 1977 with 3 x 6 month courses held at the Women's Royal Army Corps Centre, Guildford. Selected 16 year olds were recruited into the Junior Leaders with the potential to become future JNCOs or higher. The aim was to mould and develop the character of the girls so that they left the Centre as a trained leader. Up to this date Junior Leaders and Junior Soldier basic training was for men only. This article is highlighting the busy 6 months training for 21 recruits that joined Junior Leaders II from March to August 1976.





Back Row: Jane Merritt, Carol Twinn, Sue Ford, June Lewis, Sandra Vaill, Angie O'Connell, Carol Robotham, Cara Price

Middle Row: Mandy Shuttleworth, Sue Cawte, Dawn Southern, Gina Cordingley, Betty Samms, Marion Mason, Dawn Taylor, Claire Raynor

Front Row: Thora Jones, Judy Arbon, Janette Graham, Cpl Downes, Sgt Owen, Lt Beaumont, Cpl Cardy, Sue Puttock, June Rigby



The Directing Staff: Lt Catherine Sneddon, Cpl Babs Mangan, Sgt Nerys Owen, Cpl Glynn Cardy

The early days were testing with some girls feeling homesick. The 21 girls quickly bonded together and gave each other support and encouragement, both in the barrack block and with all aspects of training. Early signs of this were shown when it was agreed, with very close together birthdays, that 50p would be collected from each girl towards buying a birthday present of a cuddly toy! There were also nicknames introduced; Duchess, Geordie, Leo, Pid, Rigga, Scouse, Taff, Twinny, plus Buttocks, Fish, Luvi, Mouse, Robot, and Windy.

The Recruit training programmes covered all that of the 6 week Adult course; Kit preparation, General Service Knowledge/Military Law, First Aid, NBC/Gas chamber exercises, physical training instruction/testing and drill. It was also structured with adventure training and days away from the WRAC Centre. The latter part of the course was conducted at Guildford to concentrate on drill lessons, to prepare for the Passing out Parade and the Military Clerk trade training at Blackdown Barracks, Deepcut. All the Junior Leaders recruits passed and gained the B3 Clerk qualification.



From the Junior Leaders recruitment brochure

Thursday evening was hobbies night, with a choice of extra-curricular activities such as reading, arts and crafts and board games. An education lesson placed into small groups would be newsreaders, which was assessed. Another was taught how to map read and take part in an orienteering competition. A sponsored walk and swim were completed. Further afield a visit to the annual Aldershot Army Show, Imperial War Museum in London, Royal Army Chaplains' Department at Bagshot Park in Surrey, Naval base at Portsmouth including the historic dockyard for a tour of a submarine. A trip to the Junior Leaders Regiment at the Royal Armoured Corps Centre in Bovington Camp, Dorset to participate in organised games of Hockey and Netball against the male junior recruits and a visit to the Tank Museum. There were organised discos throughout the course. Leave weekend after 5 weeks and a week's leave midway through the course. The girls also took part in a WRAC Sports Day.



Adventure Training

A particular part of the training that holds the fondest and long lasting memories were the three Outward Bound courses. Capel Curig Training camp in North Wales was the base for hill walking every day and conquering Snowdon. Ripon in Yorkshire for canoeing, rock climbing, abseiling and potholing. JSSC Gosport in Hampshire to learn offshore sailing, held in July the hot summer of 1976. One recruit had a serious case of sunburn

with large blisters on her shoulders and back and was admitted to the Royal Military Hospital Haslar in Gosport. Some other girls were rushed to the MRS with sickness and diarrhoea on return, with 2 recruits hospitalised in the Aldershot Military hospital due to the drinking water contamination. On the adventure training the girls pushed themselves to the limits, tested their fitness and overcome many fears such as claustrophobia and heights and also had a lot of fun!



JSSC Gosport

A highlight of the training was the productions of an end of course 'show' to the audience of the training staff and adult recruits. This included a spoof on "Snow White and the 7 Dwarves" and "It Ain't Half Hot Mum!" with all the Junior Leaders doing a 'Pan's People' type of dance and singing the song "When will I see you again?" By The Three Degrees; culminating in a farewell poem written and read out by June Rigby (Rigga):

On behalf on the Junior Leaders, I hope you enjoyed our show,
But now goodbye has got to be said for we have got to go.
We've only been with you just half a year,
But we'd like you to know, to us, you're all very dear.
So Ma'am, Sgt Owen, Cpl Cardy and Mangan too,
Thanks and a salute I give to you,
For working so hard and being there in our hour of need,
For picking us up when we were down and making us succeed.
None of you will we ever forget, And joining the army, we'll never regret.

You've changed our lives all for the best and now it's up to us to do the rest.

So we'll leave you now and go our separate ways,
And we'll be thinking of you until the end of our days.
So keep on smiling and remember the good things in life,
And we'll remember you, who gave us need for strife.
You taught us to get on with one another,
With our fellow soldiers, like sister and brother.
Well, I guess that's about all I've got to say,
So au revoir my friends and "good day"

Thanking also Lieutenant Suzette Beaumont and Corporal Anna Downes who were the instructors in the early part of the training. The Junior leaders were well prepared for a great future in the WRAC. Forty years since reporting for duty the Junior Leaders 11 former recruits and training staff are looking to arrange a reunion. To reminiscence the excellent and special junior training course, that they were all privileged to be part of.

HQ BRANCH MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

YOUR BRANCH NETWORK NEEDS YOU!

FACT: Of the 3,100 members of the WRAC Association just under 50% are listed as HQ Branch members, this represents over 1,400 members.

The WRAC Association has a long standing network of Branches, divided into Areas, which have been a testament to our esprit de corps for many years. Some of these Branches are struggling to attract new members and numbers are dwindling.

Membership of a Branch provides for many things; from access to regular Branch meetings, participation in local events and many opportunities to meet up with the wider community of those who have served in the ATS and WRAC. Many Branches now have active social media groups for the sharing of Service memories and there are many examples of old friendships being renewed.

There may be a Branch near you? All of the Branches are listed in *Lioness* along with contact details of the Secretaries. If there is no Branch in your home area then why not consider starting one? This is very easy to do and doesn't need to be on a formal basis, we will provide any advice you may need.

For many years our Branches have been the very essence of the Association, please support them.

Ali Brown

BAND BRANCH REUNION Ann Jones

I am delighted to tell you we had a very good reunion in Manchester in May, with the wonderful weather "hotter than Spain at the time" and the marvellous staff at the Premier Inn, Trafford Centre West where we were so well looked after. The Trafford Centre was just 5 minutes walk from the hotel and was well worth a visit, not just to shop but also to admire the architecture and decorations which made it a pleasant stop and stare with a cool drink.

Later, after a bus ride, we found the area with the TV Studios and several other river complexes including the Lowry Centre which incorporates theatre, galleries and exhibition space. The building is of a fascinating design and layout including a theatre unlike most theatres I have seen. We were very impressed with the rebuilding in Manchester especially the Georgian style.

The Branch meeting was held at the hotel in a very well laid out conference room which the management let us have for free, so for the two days I was allowed to leave our table sale out. As there were eleven of us we were so glad to have a visit from WRAC Association Vice President Ali Brown, who found our photo albums interesting and the general chat amusing.



Enjoying the Reunion

The idea of putting a memory tale together was suggested by Ali Brown, so I do hope you all enjoy my entry 'A Diary of our Unique Staff Band' (see page 44). This was a collaboration of all of us who attended and should be an interesting read. I could have gone on for ever so perhaps if there are any of you would like to tell the tale I would be delighted to do a Diary 2. There are also further Band reminiscences on page 45.

Carol Tupling one of our Tuba players has been mentioned in her local paper for appearing in 'Carry on Sergeant' and 'What's My Line' with Major McDowell. Carol went on to join the police force and although now retired still has dealings with the force. Far from being totally retired she now is a visitor for the Royal British Legion. Well done Carol and all of you that continue to help others.

We were sorry to learn of the death of our former Director of Music, Lyn Hopkin MBE on 03 July 2016 (obituary on page 72). I'm pleased to report that a number of former Band members were able to attend her funeral in Guildford.

19TH ANNUAL WRAC PROVOST REUNION Sue Steel



THE 19th Annual WRAC Provost Reunion was held on 5th March at the Pia Bella Hotel, Kyrenia, North Cyprus. Twenty two former Provost, four partners and two guests sat down to a Gala Dinner in the Pia Bella hotel to enjoy a 5 course meal of traditional fayre. After the meal and raffle a very well received presentation was given by author Jarra Brown MBE on his book 46 Miles – The Story of Wootton Bassett's Repatriations.



Organisers Eileen Cox and Sue Steel

The reunion, organised by Sue Steel (nee Johnson) and Eileen Cox (nee Fenn), themselves former military policewomen, is usually held in UK. However Sue and Eileen offered to host the 2016 reunion in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and at the 2015 reunion in UK the ladies gave their unanimous vote to the venue.



Pepita Simpson and Vida Parsons

As you well know, when you join the Army one of the first things you learn is "never volunteer", but Eileen and I thought North Cyprus would be a fantastic place to host a reunion so we looked into the costs involved and with the help of Cyprus Paradise, came up with a great package. We then canvassed the ladies, had a good response and started planning over a year prior to the event.

Old friends came from far and wide and I personally met up with an old friend, Barbara Hitchins, whom I had not seen since 1973. My sister and her husband, both also former military police (Mary and Steve Haskins) came over for 6 days so it was great to see them too. We also had some ladies who had never attended any of the past reunions but leapt at the chance to visit North Cyprus. One former Provost, Irene "Skip" Menhinnitt travelled from Darwin, Australia, via a few days in Istanbul, and the remainder travelled from all four corners of the UK.

With a grant from the Royal Military Police Association and a donation from our travel agents, Cyprus Paradise, we were able to give the ladies quite a few free things to take away, including a commemorative plate individually made by the ladies from the Help Those With Cancer Association (Tulips) here in North Cyprus. We were also able to dress the tables to reflect the Turkish Cypriot culture.

WRAC OCDT COURSES No. 48 - 52 REUNION Pippa Jarman

Members of WRAC Officer Cadet Courses No. 48 - 52 gathered for a Reunion in July 2015, hosted by Cathy Ranford (nee Lewis). Present were: Ruth Macaulay (nee Henderson), Pippa Jarman, Di Lloyd-Jones (nee Kinchin), Rosemary Scoffham, Mary Thomas (nee Rosser), Sue Stewart, Bar Crabbe (nee Rowbottom), Carrie Blanch (nee Sykes), Bobbie Hooker (nee Barrett), Wendy Greenfield (nee le Gassick).



L-R: Pippa Jarman, Bar Crabbe (nee Rowbottom), Cathy Ranford (nee Lewis), Sue Stewart, Ruth Macaulay (nee Henderson), Bobbie Hooker (nee Barrett), Mary Thomas (nee Rosser), Rosemary Scoffham, Carrie Blanch (nee Sykes). Kneeling: Wendy Greenfield (nee le Gassick)



Commemorative Plate

Some of the ladies came over for 5 days but others were here for 7, 10 or even 14 days to take advantage of what North Cyprus has to offer. Luckily, the March weather was beautiful and made the whole experience just so much more enjoyable. Some of the group also attended a Michael Bubl  tribute at the Savoy Ottoman Hotel in Kyrenia on Wednesday, 9th March.

It was well worth all the effort to organise the event in order to see all our old friends again and to meet new ones. We wish to thank Cyprus Paradise for undertaking all the travel arrangements and the Pia Bella Hotel for hosting us so well and for a fabulous Gala Dinner, and of course, our guest speaker Jarra Brown MBE.

The next reunion will take place in the Southampton area in March 2017.



**Standing L-R: Bobbie Hooker, Cathy Ranford, Mary Thomas, Bar Crabbe
Seated L-R: Carrie Blanch, Ruth Macaulay, Rosemary Scoffham, Wendy Greenfield**

WRAC COMMISSIONING COURSE 853 30 YEAR REUNION

Sue Hatton

Twenty four members of WRAC 853 (out of a course of 44) and three of their Directing Staff gathered at Old College, RMAS on 16 April 2016 to celebrate 30 years since they were commissioned on 11 April 1986.



11 April 1986



16 April 2016



WRAC Wing RMAS 1985

Standing: Cpl Cook, Cpl Murray, SSgt Wilson, SSgt Rimmer, Pte Ayres, SSgt Barclay, SSgt Curran, Cpl Cross, Pte Storrs

Seated: Capt Foggin, Maj Lindsay, WO2 Kay, Lt Col Kelly, Capt Gordon, Capt Ransom, Capt Stewart

WOMEN'S ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY CORPS 65TH ANNIVERSARY

Editor: In February 2016 the WRAAC celebrated the 65th anniversary of the formation of the Corps with a Sapphire Dinner, part of a 4 day reunion in Canberra. The following is a speech given by recently retired Major General Liz Cosson, the first female Major General in the Australian Army.



Maj Gen Liz Cosson and Louise Green

I would like to start by acknowledging the WRAAC 65th Anniversary Organising Committee. I am sure that we are all aware that there is considerable effort bringing us together to celebrate this milestone. I feel very privileged to be invited to speak at this Sapphire Dinner.

I want to commence on a reflection on our history. The origin of the Corps was in 1941 with the formation of the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) which was formed with the intention of filling positions to release men to war like employment. Importantly many AWAS also saw war like employment! AWAS was disbanded in 1947 after WW2. The emergence of the cold war and the threat of conflicts in Malaya and Korea the Australian Army was seriously undermanned. National Service was introduced in 1950 and special recruiting campaigns were initiated.

Cabinet gave approval in 1950 for the raising of a women's Corps within the Australian Military Forces (AMF) to be briefly known as Australian Women's Army Corps (AWAC) before formally announced on 5 April 1951 as the Women's Australian Army Corps. Two month later King George VI granted Royal in recognition of the wartime contributions of the women's services.

The aim of the WRAAC was to develop a fabric for expansion in time of war. Its function was to enlist women to replace men in suitable duties, this released men for training and other duties required in the preparation for war. The women were administered by women. Appointments were deemed as general duty, stewardesses, cooks, draftswomen, clerks, typists, store women, drivers, coders, librarians, signallers and projectionists.

Discipline was dealt with by women. Training was for women, by women first in Point Lonsdale, Victoria, Queenscliff, Mildura then George's Heights. When I marched through the WRAAC Gates at Georges' Heights on 22 Feb 1979, little did I appreciate that I would be following in the footsteps of so many wonderful ground breakers. Little did I know that so many women have the capacity and willingness to step up to some remarkable challenges. Little did I know that one day I would be honoured with being the first Major General in our Australian Army.

I grew up in an Army family and observed my father's love of the Army and of what this service offered. From this early time I had a dream to join the Army and be a soldier. I remember when I was leaving school I mentioned to my parents that I wanted to join the Army. The first response was no, this was not the life for a girl.

When leaving home at 20 to commence my officer training in Sydney, Dad was quietly confident I would not finish the training, it would be too tough. Well he was wrong about not finishing, I did, but he was right, it was tough. I was determined to succeed and it was my first real experience of learning personal discipline (plus military discipline). The year was 1979, the end of a decade that saw the military remove the marriage bar for serving women, remove the requirement to separate from the service if you were pregnant and in 1978 equal pay for equal work was awarded. 1979 was the first 12 month officer course for women, it was the first year women were to handle weapons, call in artillery fire, learn field craft, military tactics and be required to qualify on the m16 semi-automatic rifle and pistol. It was the first year women were trained by men, a shock to the women and the men. There was a lot of learning and adjustments, some testing and stretching to understand the capacity and capability of women.

We started with 33 cadets and 21 graduated. Unfortunately my first position was very much the stereotype role as only about 23% of positions were open to women in the Army and most of these positions were seen to be traditional women's roles. My superior was quite happy to have me take minutes, make coffee and host visiting dignitaries.

Despite this disappointing early start, my career really came alive in 1990 when I was employed within the area of aviation logistics and I was leading a team responsible for the deployment of our new fleet of Black Hawks helicopters as part of Australia's commitment to Cambodian elections. An extremely rewarding appointment and this position inspired me and was the start of a wonderful career journey.

The doors that were opening for women really commenced in the 1980s when we saw the most change for serving women. The mid 80s also saw the integration of officer training in the army. In 1986 the Air Force had its first female pilots graduate. In 1988 the Nav appointed the first female Commanding Officer. By 1989 43% of positions were open to women in competition with males, when I left the Army it was 93% and tomorrow it will be 100%. Jane will talk more about this.

One of the major highlights of my career that provided a strong foundation for where I am today is the appointment as Chief of Staff to the peace monitoring group in Bougainville. I was operating in a predominantly male environment and to establish my authority was not simply through my rank but through training, proficiency and ability to adapt to changing circumstances. But I also recognised another unspecified role of influencing key women of Bougainville. A strong matriarchal society, I had the advantage of being a woman and being able to gain an understanding of the environment from the woman's perspective. Appreciating the importance of church, community and education provided insight to the ongoing reconciliation.

When I reflect on my service and of the opportunities open to women in our Defence Force today, I know that this may be attributed to the many women who have been serving our nation since the first Army nurses sailed to South Africa to serve in the Boer War. But I also acknowledge that there have been men who have also recognised the need for diversity and helped pave the way for women to step up and demonstrate the value we bring to

any workforce. We should never forget those women who have served our nation for over 100 years, overseas or here at home. I pay tribute to those women and to the women in this room who are part of the fabric of this history. I also acknowledge those leaders who are champions for change, champions for women and continue to recognise the value diversity brings to our nation. I am proud of our achievements and I look forward to the future achievements.



W/432958 Cpl Patricia Hinks WRAC (Nov 67 - Nov 71)
Louise Green (attached 326 Sqn City of London Regt as ATS)

W/433900 WO1 Jan Black BEM WRAC (Aug 68 - Jul 91)

WRAC OFFICER TRAINING COURSE NO 43 COMMISSIONED 9TH AUGUST 1967

On the 9th August 2017, it will be 50 years since Course No 43 was commissioned at the WRAC College. Gyda Warren (nee Brown) and Annabelle Massey (nee Cunningham) think that it would be an anniversary worth celebrating. We are in touch with some members of the course, but if you know of anyone who was on the course, please can you spread the word that plans are afoot for a reunion. Also, if you would like to help in trying to trace people or with the organisation please contact us.

Approval has been given by The Sandhurst Trust for a reunion at the RMAS, Camberley. We have been offered Wednesday 9th August 2017 which is the date of the Commandant's Parade and just happens to be our exact 50th anniversary!

A rough outline of the day would be to arrive in time for coffee, watch the parade, after which we would gather for drinks and lunch. Obviously, there will be much more information to follow, but meantime Gyda will compile a contact database so that you can be kept up to date with progress. Please can you register your interest with her and give her your contact details. Email gydanmike@gmail.com

We do hope that you think that this is a good idea and very much look forward to hearing from you. Please do put the date 9th August 2017 in your diary.



Memorabilia Shop

All items can be purchased online via the website, by post, or phone 0300 400 1992. Cheques should be made payable to WRAC Association and sent to: WRAC Association, Unit 39 Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD. All prices include postage & packing.

See page 59 for information on our new WRAC Association membership gift vouchers



WRAC Association Fleece

£28.00

Green fleece with embroidered WRAC Association logo.
Sizes XS, S, M, L, XL
(these are unisex and come up large)



WRAC Association 2016 Diary

£5.00

Get organised with the WRAC Association 2017 Diary, week to a page, facing page for notes



WRAC Association Polo Shirt

£20.00

WRAC Association Polo Shirt is a high quality, unisex Fruit of the Loom cotton shirt with embroidered WRAC Association logo.
Sizes S, M, L, XL



WRAC Association Umbrella

£15.00

Dark green golf style umbrella with WRAC Association logo



WRAC Association Brooch

£5.00



WRAC Pin Badge

£4.00



ATS Pin Badge

£4.00



WRAC Association Keyring

£2.00

Next time you go shopping don't be caught without a coin for your trolley



WRAC Association Tea Towel

£7.00

Superb quality large tea towel (50x80cm) with green WRAC Association logo



WRAC Association Notepad

£10.00

A5 lined hardback notebook in dark green with gold embossed badge and logo



WRAC Association Wristband

£2.00

A simple and stylish way to show your support for the WRAC Association



WRAC Association Ballpoint Pen

£5.00

High quality WRAC Association branded ballpoint pen in dark green



WRAC Association Paperweight

£15.00

A beautiful 4 inch diameter paperweight crafted from Bristol Blue glass (includes display stand)



WRAC History Booklet

£3.00

A short history of the WRAC from 1949 to 1992

WRAC Association Notepad and Pen

Purchase the A5 notebook and ballpoint pen together for only **£13.00**

WRAC LIONESSES 4TH EVENT GREAT NEWHAM 10K RUN QUEEN ELIZABETH OLYMPIC PARK Wendy Hooton

AND WE'RE OFF! With last years 10K run over, finishing in the Gateshead International Stadium, soon the WRAC Lionesses were asking "Where's the next one?". Where to go? When to go? Suddenly it was in front of me. A 10K run with a finish in the Olympic Stadium in London, in the middle of Westfield Shopping Centre, with lots of retail therapy to keep everyone happy! This had to be my choice. How amazing would it be crossing the finishing line where Mo Farah, Jessica Ennis and Usain Bolt achieved their dreams. There was a 2K Family Run too so more people could join in.

The next decision was who to raise funds for in addition to the WRAC Association. Nicky Murdoch, CEO DMWS (Defence Medical Welfare Services) had approached me the year before but we were committed to Cancer Research UK, a charity close to many hearts. So this year I decided it was to be DMWS. I requested t-shirts for all runners and supporters asking if a WRAC Association logo could be printed on somewhere. Amazingly they agreed to free t-shirts for runners with a small charge for supporters, and that they would print the WRAC Association logo on too. Fiona Walters and Lesley-Ann Rattue were brilliant. They helped me coordinate t-shirt sizes for everyone, ranging from age 5yrs to 67yrs, and even arranged a dog hoodie for Ben belonging to Dawn Mackender (Klingon). This was on show for our Street Collection in Bury St Edmunds at the end of July. Thank you so much.

With the run venue and date released, confirmation of entries came pouring in. Last year we had 25 runners this year the final number was 51! We had 2 German runners, Annette and Caroline Palfalvi and a French runner Catherine Bouchez-Hooton. With our contingent of Welsh runners it was quite a European affair! Our Vice President Ali Brown took the challenge, leading from the front, thank you Ali it was great to have you with us. Our Family Runners were Jon Saunders (5yrs), Willow Saunders and Roen Saunders (7yrs), Lily-Rose Hooton (11yrs) and Jake Topping-Green (15yrs). Fantastic effort by them all.

So the training began with Betty Gash giving some really helpful tips and training schedules on the WRAC Lionesses Fundraising Group facebook page. Admin details were posted as the weekend was approaching, when and where to meet. Hotels, trains and ferries were booked. Our first meet up was on the Friday at The Cow in Chestnut Plaza, Westfield where 20 of us met in the evening. T-shirts were distributed and the excitement began. On Saturday Jo Foster had organized a 'Special Guest' to visit us at The Cow. It was the amazing, inspiring Comedienne Jo Brand. Our grateful thanks to Jo for arranging this and to Jo Brand for giving her time to meet us all. I hope we weren't too scary!



Special guest Jo Brand

Sunday was race day, everyone met by the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park sign at the entrance to the park for a group photo. Sandy Stanford-Barclay had brought the original WRAC flag from the Duchess of Kent Barracks when it closed down. It was absolutely awesome as many hadn't seen our flag for several years. Thank you so much Sandy, that made my weekend. We had runners in different waves (start times) orange, white, green but mostly pink. The countdown began at the start area by the ArcelorMittal Orbit which I called the Angela Merkel Orbit as I had a job saying/remembering the proper name! Betty Gash and Helen Meades-Davies were the first to leave and were back before we had started as they both did sub one hour runs. Congratulations to both Lionesses.

Christine Ohuruogu MBE, 400m Olympic Gold Medalist and former World Champion, saw everyone off as we headed towards the Aquatics Centre, Copper Box Arena and Lee Valley Velo Park before heading back to the Olympic Stadium. Once in the tunnels of the stadium by the 9K point, Chariots of Fire was booming from loud speakers to spur you on until finally, with 300 metres to go, you entered the stadium. Your name appeared on the screen as you entered and in a glance you could see our fantastic supporters at the front with flags and banners fixed to the railings. It was unmissable, so my thanks to Dawn Mackender and Steve Green (Klingons) for organising the pitch!

En route and in the stadium our paparazzi photographers Heather Gaughran and Rosie Garrison were there, clicking away, as was Janet Edwards. The support was wonderful, an absolute spectacle with the sea of green t-shirts. At last the finishing line was approaching, where athletes made their appearance at London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. I personally felt elated crossing the finishing line, even getting down and kissing the ground. I was a bit unsure how I was going to get up again but managed of course!





I handed over our mascot, Mo Bear, to Babs Anderson to take on the run with instructions to blag a medal for her at the finish. Mission accomplished (I had no doubt) and therefore Mo Bear has been promoted to Corporal for completing her 2nd run. We had a mascot, Lenny the Lion, for DMWS which was carried by Lily-Rose Hooton in the Family Run. As we began our 10K run, Dawn 'Baggers' Bagnall, who couldn't join, us did a sponsored 50 mile cycle ride around Guernsey to support us. Absolutely brilliant Dawn thank you so much. Congratulations to all the Runners and walkers.....you did it!



With the run over, new friendships made and “see you next year” heard above the chatting, we said our farewells to those leaving. For the others it was back to The Cow for light refreshments! The free drink for registering online @ The Cow was an added bonus (wink, wink). Showered, changed and it was off for a meal at the The Real Greek, all 39 of us. A big thank you to Annette Jackson for meeting me for the recce of the Park and booking an area in The Cow and tables at the Real Greek for the weekend. A fabulous end to an unforgettable weekend. I am so proud of all our 10K and 2K Family Runners, you were all absolutely brilliant. Your determination to get round on a hot humid day was commendable.



A massive thank you to all our supporters in the stadium and in their armchairs at home, and to all those who have sponsored us a huge thank you, we are truly grateful. A special mention to Budgie (Pat Rosewell) and to Birmingham Branch for their awesome fundraising.



Lastly massive thanks to all the Facebook groups who have allowed us to promote the WRAC Lionesses event on their pages. WRAC/ATS, WRAC and ATS (women who have served or serve in the Army), WRAC/Royal Signals-ex-Switchboard/DTG/Comcen Ops, Womens Royal Army Corps (WRAC), WRAC/ATS Veterans of Colchester, WRAC Crazy Festivities, WRAC Mediterranean Branch, WRAC Fort William Event, WRAC Griffin Branch and our Australian sisters WRAAC/RAANC. We have made a difference to our Charities, thank you to you all. See you next year, you all RRROOOOAAAARRRRR!

WRAC LIONESSES 5TH ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISING EVENT

**Asda Foundation Hull 10K
Sunday 17 June 2017**

Hull will be the UK City of Culture in 2017, why not join the WRAC Lionesses team as a runner, walker or supporter in Hull for their 5th anniversary event on Sunday 17 June. For more details contact Wendy Hooton on wendyhootonski@aol.com, on Facebook or via HQ WRAC Association (Tel: 0300 400 1992).



100 MILE WALKING CHALLENGE 2016 THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

Marg Davies

Day 1 Minus . I decided to walk the 4 miles from Cheesefoot Head Car Park into Winchester on a gloriously sunny Sunday in case I got lost in the confusion of streets! On Monday 18th April 2016 I would be starting the walk proper along the South Downs Way from Winchester to Eastbourne in aid of the Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Women's Royal Army Corps Association. Sadly on this Sunday my little bear with his rucksack decided to go on his own trip. I lost him somewhere between the car park and Winchester. He just jumped out of my rucksack without me knowing. I can only hope that someone will find him and love him.

Day 1. The first day's 19 miles were very tiring. We started at around 8am in glorious sunshine just outside Winchester and had completed 9 comparatively easy miles by midday. Our lunch-stop was at the rather disappointing Shoe Inn in Exton. The poor service was made more than tolerable by my welcome party of family and WRAC Association HQ staff. The afternoon walk was cloudier and a lot harder. Our progress was severely hampered by the overflowing river in the Meon valley and the miles of waterlogged, muddy pathways. I have never walked 19 miles on my first day before, and I probably will never do it again! We finished walking at just past 5pm, weary but very pleased with ourselves! My thanks to Jo Foster for helping me through a grueling first day's walk.



**Three quarters of the way through Day 1
(Old Winchester Hill is actually some 15 miles from Winchester)**

Day 2. The second day had started a bit more difficult than I had thought. I was up and down hills like a fiddlers elbow. I don't know why they call it the South Downs Way, it should be the South Ups and Downs! The downhill bits were quite tough on the old knees but I survived. The weather had been kind and it was looking even better for the following day. Hopefully I could ditch the wet & cold weather gear and make my backpack a little lighter. Again there were no pub stops today or the following day. Two days in a row was just bad planning! I had managed to get the second day under my belt (well, under my slightly sore feet). So that was over 40 miles in two and a bit days.

Day 3. Ouch! It had been grueling but at least I'd broken the back of the walk. Sixty miles in three and a bit days. The terrain was (slightly) easier than the previous day and the views from the downs on such a sunny day were breathtaking. Views to the north towards the Hogsback reminded me of my time stationed at Guildford. The views towards the Channel revealed themselves through the haze as the day progressed. Yes I had a few aches in the legs and slightly sore feet (but no blisters - yet). My worst problem on Day 3 was windburn on my face, I'd got a really ruddy glow, and without the alcohol!



Day 4. The terrain and mileage was much easier today. Most of the day was spent on the high Downs. It was very windy however; maybe next time I'll walk from Eastbourne to Winchester (note to self - there will not be a next time for walking the whole way)! Over 70 miles done and I was still feeling ok. I cannot accurately say how far I walked today as I had forgotten to switch off my Satmap GPS machine when I got into the car. Apparently I walked somewhere between 12 and 24.5 miles and my fastest speed was 63 mph!

Day 5. Friday 22nd April and another 14 miles ticked off. The lovely weather that I had been experiencing took a turn for the worst today. It rained whilst I was in the car to the start and it rained on the way back. In between, while I was walking, it threatened. There's nothing like the threat of inclement weather to spur you on. I did just over 14 miles in 6hrs, including 3 food & rest breaks. Despite the weather the scenery gave me quite a few "Wow!" moments. Sadly, because today was so gloomy most of my photos were very dark. I had three big climbs today. Firstly from Plumpton to Blackcap, then from the A27 up and around the 'bowl' of Cold Coombes. Finally I climbed from Southease up to Firlie Beacon. In each case I climbed to over 600 ft. My maximum altitude was 646 ft and the minimum was 6 ft! Altogether I climbed a total of 2,221 ft today! Eye watering statistics. At least the descents were getting easier on the knees, perhaps proof of the old adage 'use it or lose it'.

Day 6 Final Day. The weather had been brilliant, so OK I could have done without the wind, but at least it didn't really rain on me. Today however I underestimated the task ahead. A leisurely saunter down towards Seaford, then (I thought), a 'gentle' climb up to Beachy Head, meet some friends for a pint or two & stagger down to Eastbourne and the finish. Ha! The 'saunter' started well enough, down to Alfriston and a meander beside the river for a while. Then came the steps; uneven, worn, very steep and long! They went up, they came down, and again! The only reward was a view of the White Horse carved into the hillside in the distance. Finally I reached the rather lovely Cuckmere Meanders (after another steep downhill) and a wonderful walk beside the river until I could almost touch the English Channel. Happy days. But then I saw the Seven Sisters (well, to be fair, not all of them in one go as there are eight of them). My heart sank, my knees trembled and my leg muscles screamed 'Nooo!' I was beginning to panic as I had changed my original plan and had told Chris Wolfe that I would meet her, Anne Eden, Jan Hall and Julie Wickings (all ex WRAC) at the Beachy Head Hotel at as close to 1pm as I could manage! Time was ticking on. I have to admit that getting on top of the first Sister was exhausting, seven of them nearly killed me! It was 1.30 when I left Birling Gap and I still had a couple of climbs to go. I pushed onwards, in a short-sleeved blouse whilst everyone else in fleeces, waterproofs and hats looked askance at this crazy woman! I made it to the hotel by 2pm. No sign of 'the gang' so I had a pint of local ale whilst I caught my breath.

WALKING THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA Christine Townsend



ENDEX: Julie Wickings, Anne Eden, Marg Davies, Jan Hall, Chris Wolfe

I hadn't drunk more than a few sips when they arrived, delayed by the dreaded A27. They insisted on buying me another pint and a packet of crisps (we had intended having a meal but it was heaving with a very long wait for food). Two pints on an empty stomach does not help with walking in straight lines! All five of us left Beachy Head at just after 3pm and 'rolled' down the hill to Eastbourne. We marched across the promenade which was flanked by very posh beach chalets (very posh, they weren't huts) until we met up with my lovely, supportive Denise at Eastbourne Pier.

After six glorious days I had come to the end of yet another challenging but very enjoyable and spectacular 100 mile walk. My thanks to everyone who has supported and sponsored me. At the time of writing this I had raised a fantastic £2,595 (£3,068.75 with Gift Aid) Thank you so much. Now.....where to next year?

In October 2015 I walked 40km along the Great Wall of China and in doing so raised £200 for the WRAC Association. While there I was allowed to put a brick in the wall and leave a special memento under the brick, I placed a WRAC cap badge. What more special memento could I have found to leave in such a special place. Naturally the event was discussed in great detail before venturing out but I still blame in on the red wine that was being drunk! It has to have been the most amazing experience in my life.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Major Sue Hutton,
Association Secretary,
Women's Royal Army Corps Association.

I much appreciated the kind words you have sent on the occasion of my
ninetieth birthday.

As your Patron, I was grateful for your thoughtfulness in writing as you
did and, in return, send you all my warm good wishes.

ELIZABETH R.

21st April, 2016.

WRAC ASSOCIATION PATRON'S LUNCH PRIZE DRAW

The Patron's Lunch Prize Draw took place at the WRAC Association AGM on Saturday 12 March 2016 at the Victory Services Club, London. The following Association members won a pair of tickets to attend the event on 12 June 2016:

Andie Smith
Gillian Jones
Ann Farmery

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB DINNER

The WRAC Officers' Dining Club 2016 Dinner will take place on Saturday 26 November at The Rag (Army and Navy Club), 36-39 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5JN. For further details and an application form email wracofficersdc@gmail.com or phone 0300 400 1992. The closing date for applications is Friday 28 October 2016.

MOVING HOUSE?

If you have moved recently, or are about to move **please** let us have your new address (and email address) as soon as possible. This will help us reduce the number of Lioness magazines which are returned undelivered. Please email your change of address to office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk, phone us on 0300 400 1992 or post to WRAC Association, Unit 39 Basepoint, Winnall Valley Road, Winchester SO23 0LD.

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR OLD POST CODE.

WRAC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP GIFT VOUCHERS

Do you know anyone who served in the ATS or WRAC who is not yet a member of the Association?

Why not give the gift of WRAC Association Membership?

Membership Gift Vouchers are now available to purchase online, by phone (0300 400 1992) or by post. Cheques payable to WRAC Association.

UK Annual Membership £10
Overseas Annual Membership £15



WRAAC 65th Anniversary Organising Committee

Colonel (Retired) A K Brown
Vice President
The Women's Royal Army Corps Association
Unit 39, Basepoint Business Centre
1 Winnall Valley Road
WINCHESTER, Hampshire SO23 0LD

Dear Colonel Brown,

The members of the WRAAC 65th Organising Committee would like to express our thanks to you and your members for the greetings you sent to us as we celebrated the 65th Anniversary of the Formation of our Corps recently.

Your very kind letter was read (in its entirety) at our Sapphire Dinner on Saturday 13 February 2016 by Mrs Louise Green, the deputy chair of our Committee. Louise was attached to 326 Squadron City of London Regiment, stationed at Finsbury Barracks, ATS when she was on a working holiday in the UK.

We note that you are approaching your 100th Anniversary in 2019 so wish you well for your preparations for the celebration of such an amazing milestone.

Thank you again for your thoughtfulness.

Greetings from us all,

Merrie

Merrie Hepworth
Chair
WRAAC 65th Anniversary Organising Committee

21 February 2016



Armed Forces Day National Event Cleethorpes:
Betty Gash,
Chris Corker,
Dot Ryder,
Chris Salvidge,
Diane Walsh



Weymouth: Louise Ann Bridgeman



Armed Forces Day National Event Cleethorpes
Elizabeth Kemp



Cardiff Branch in Caerphilly



Swindon: Sharon Bingham



Cardiff Branch in Caerphilly
3rd Row: Carol Holland
2nd Row: Debbie Amphlett, Maria Hughes
Front Row: Karen Francis, Kath Smith, Lynda Armstrong



**National Memorial Arboretum: Judy Smith,
Jayne Yardley-Gosney,
Pauline Milnes**



Liverpool
Jayne McDonough



**Tamworth Branch at the NMA: Christine James,
Marie Smedley, Anne Gwynne**

Women In The British Army 2016

WHAT DOES AN ARMY TANK TECHNICIAN HAVE IN COMMON WITH THE QUEEN? MORE THAN YOU THINK...

Editor: This article was first published in the Huffington Post (online) 21 April 2016.



As a 25 year old soldier in the British Army, I didn't think I had much in common with The Queen. I'm from Grimsby, covered in tattoos and fix tanks for a living. But it turns out there's more in common than I realised. For a start we have the same birthday, 21 April. I don't know what The Queen will be doing for hers this year but I'm going to be on a battlefield tour in France.

And during the Second World War, she rolled up her sleeves and got her hands dirty serving as a mechanic in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), doing a job just like mine. My job involves diagnosing and fixing electrical problems with the Challenger 2 main battle tank. It's a dirty job and your hands are permanently black but someone has to do it, and I wouldn't do anything else.

I think it's admirable that during the war Princess Elizabeth joined the ATS. She was 18 and by the end of the war she reached the rank of Junior Commander and passed out as a fully qualified driver. It's important that on her 90th birthday our nation pays tribute to what she did during that time. It's good to know that our Queen mucked in for the country.

For me, it's nice to know that we did a similar job all those years apart, and that we share the same birthday is a nice connection. This job isn't one that many people would want to do, it's dirty and there's a lot of time spent on exercise living in a field. So the fact The Queen did it in the military is extraordinary. It's an interesting side to her character. She could have got a job anywhere, doing something far more comfortable but she chose the life of overalls and elbow grease, and I don't blame her.

I love my job. I got here after a lot of training having joined the Army because I wanted a career where I can do different things every day. I always knew I wanted to join the Armed Forces, it was just a matter of when. I was going to join the Royal Air Force but I met a guy called Sergeant Matt Telford who said I should look at joining the Army. He told me that I shouldn't join until I was ready and 100 percent committed to it. Until that moment there was no point, he said, because you should be ready to commit yourself.



Cpl Rebecca Smith

While serving in Afghanistan in 2009 Matt was shot and killed. I was in the Middle East at the time, teaching at an international school in Qatar. When I heard the news I came home and joined up straight away. I had been in my own world, doing my own thing, and it made me realise I needed to crack on with my life and get things done.

People who knew me back home knew a slightly different me and they said I couldn't do it. They laughed at the idea of me doing as I was told and taking orders. But I knew it was what I wanted to do and I didn't let anything get in the way. I knew I wanted to work on tanks, after I saw the Challenger 2 I decided it was what I wanted to work on and I've loved it ever since. My job is to support the tanks' electronics. The tanks have objectives to meet and it's the job of me and my colleagues to support them and keep them running if anything goes wrong.

It takes a lot to get this far, there are a lot of tests and training you have to go through before you qualify to do the job but it was worth the effort. So when I celebrate turning 25 this year, I'll be remembering my special connection to The Queen, wishing her a happy birthday and a job well done.

STAYING POWER

What does it take to break the brass ceiling?

Editor: This article was published in Soldier Magazine April 2016 and is reproduced by permission of the author.

When 2Lt Sharon Moffat commissioned into the Army in 1992, times were very different. The then 21-year-old signed a waiver to say she would leave the Service if she fell pregnant and on arrival at her first unit was told she couldn't deploy to Bosnia because of her gender. Fast forward some 24 years and not only are such outdated rules long in the past, but Brig Nesmith, as she is now, is one of the military's highest ranking female officers.



Ex ARCADE FUSION 2014
(NATO photo/WO2 Ian Houlding GBR Army)

But despite now being one of only five female Brigadiers, she disagrees that there is a "brass ceiling" preventing other Servicewomen from climbing the ranks. "There are particular roles or appointments that women haven't yet done but that's not the same thing as there being a brass ceiling," she explained. "My generation was the first to be cap badged on leaving Sandhurst instead of automatically joining the Women's Royal Army Corps and we are now just coming through to these senior officer appointments so it's actually the result of natural career progression. "If you look at the cohort behind mine there are some really high quality women who will go on and do all sorts of great things."

A mother to two boys, aged eight and nine, Brig Nesmith describes juggling her job and young family as "a struggle everyday," but credits her husband, a self employed tree surgeon, and a supportive chain of command, for helping her to make it possible. "It's a very personal choice about how you manage that work-life balance and everyone looks at it in a slightly different way," she adds. "I don't think I've made any sacrifices that were different to my male contemporaries." "Yes, I've made compromises but they will have too."

Looking back on her years in uniform Brig Nesmith admits that in the early days she might have put herself under unnecessary pressure to hold her own in a male-dominated environment, but today she says she has learnt to cut herself some slack. Instead of worrying about coming under more scrutiny because of their gender, she thinks Servicewomen should risk pushing their own personal boundaries. "No one wants to let anyone they work with down, but I guess as females we do go out of our way to make sure we don't put ourselves in the position where [our mistakes] could be labelled." "Over time I've learnt to beat myself up less and I'm more comfortable in my own skin." "My message to other Servicewomen would be that they can achieve whatever they aspire to achieve and not to think of doors being closed to them." "I've been reluctant to share my story and there are probably lots of female personnel who are the same because we don't want to be seen to be championing gender issues but actually we have some really fantastic opportunities and lot to celebrate."



Brigadier Sharon Nesmith

As commander of 1 Signal Brigade she is in charge of 1,500 personnel, a role that much to her discomfort has seen her dubbed the "most powerful woman in the Army". "I've always tried to avoid that female tag, as I imagine most Servicewomen do, because that's not what it's about, she told Soldier. "We joined up to do the same things our male colleagues are doing in every aspect but I've realised more recently that I have a role to play in showing that I've had really great career and in that sense it's good news story."

Having accepted her part as figurehead, albeit reluctantly, she now believes the Service should shout louder about its successes in the field of gender equality. "I genuinely think we have come a huge way and we don't always celebrate that; we focus on the bits we haven't yet achieved which we are working hard to change." "To put it into context, at my passing out parade I didn't hold rifle, I held a stick for goodness sake, which shows how different things were then." In the end, Brig Nesmith did deploy to Bosnia, three times. Later she led 1st Mechanised Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron (215) on Operation Telic 10 and commanded 22 Signal Regiment.



There are currently just over 7000 women in the British Army. The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery has 67 females and 74 males in the Regiment. WO2 Rachael Ballard along with the Duty Sergeant check the Gunners kit before they are inspected by the Duty Officer. Photo: Sergeant Rupert Frere RLC, © Crown Copyright



Army v RAF



*Musician Elizabeth Ward, 23. The talented flute player from the Irish Guards Band won the Musician of the Year Competition
Photo: Sergeant Rupert Frere RLC, © Crown Copyright*



Army Powerlifter LCpl Leonora Brajshori is in the process of changing disciplines to weight lifting so she can try and compete in the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. Photo: Cpl Lu Scott, © Crown Copyright



Royal Artillery, Cardiff



*Royal Military Academy Sandhurst
Photo: Cpl Jamie Dudding, © Crown Copyright*

Editor: 'Mentioned in Dispatches' replaces the long standing system of considering regional Branch members for the award of a Certificate of Appreciation. This will allow all Association members to be eligible for nomination, and enable everyone to read about the contribution an individual has made, either to their Branch or to the Association. The method of nomination for an individual remains via Branch Secretaries to Area Chairman for regional Branch members, or direct to Association HQ for those who are HQ Branch members (i.e. not a member of a geographic Branch). All nominations are submitted for approval at a meeting of the Council of the WRAC Association (held twice per year).

JOAN AWBERY **Norfolk Branch**

Joan has been the driving force for the Norfolk Branch for many years holding several positions on the Committee. She has kept copious records since the Norfolk and Suffolk Branch went their separate ways in 2005. She has it recorded the the Branch was mentioned in the local paper Eastern Daily Press as early as 1977. Joan's daughters, son and grandchildren have all helped and been involved throughout the years with the Annual Garden Party she hosted which raised lots of funds. Joan's love of gardening won her prizes in the Norwich Gardening Competitions which in turn attracted her neighbours and raised more funds.

Joan has been the backbone of the Branch supporting and helping others in times of need, She has been there to help the WRAC members and they are extremely privileged to have access to all that knowledge. Even now, with her failing sight, Joan is still organising meetings for the ladies of the ATS and they meet monthly for lunch and other events. As a 96 year old I am amazed at her determination and passion for life. She has attended courses with Blind Veterans UK and has learnt how to use her new laptop. Her hunger to overcome this small disability has been courageous. Joan has certainly been a fantastic representative of all the Corps values - Gentle in Manner, Resolute in Deed.

Wendy Hooton

GINA SHADRACK **Chelmsford Branch**

In 1998 Gina was appointed Hon Secretary of Chelmsford Branch and formed a committee of 7, plus a Chairman and Treasurer. She arranged a programme of events including guest speakers, leading an annual craft workshop and hosting a garden party. In the winter months Gina organised games or quizzes. She published a monthly newsletter to keep in touch with members unable to get to meetings. She had regular committee meetings before a meeting and attended WRAC Association AGM's. Gina also attended meetings held by the United Services Association and those of the Army Recruiting Office (for publicity). She visited those in hospital and attended all funerals.

Gina has been an absolute rock for Chelmsford Branch often running it single handed. She is continuously organising meetings and lunches, but sadly with lesser numbers. On a brighter side they do have 4 WRAC members which is encouraging for the future of the Branch. As a nonagenarian I am amazed at her energy, passion and dedication. Whatever the occasion if Gina can get there she will.

Wendy Hooton

FREDA LYONS **Bournemouth Branch**



Freda Lyon served in the ATS from 1943-1946 with 494 Searchlight Regiment. She is a Life Members of the WRAC Association and a stalwart member of Bournemouth Branch having held various Committee posts including; 1998-2000 Welfare Coordinator, 2002-2004 Social and Welfare Secretary, 2009-2013 Committee Member.

In 2008, when there was a major change of committee members, Freda was a tower of strength to the new Branch Officers providing knowledge and continuity to assist a smooth transition. Even since her retirement from the Committee she has been dedicated to the Branch, always keen to support internal and external events including Area Reunions and the S&SW Area AGM.

Val Wright

MARGARET DREW **Bournemouth Branch**



Margaret Drew served in the ATs from 1946 to 1948, she is a Life Member of the WRAC Association and a long term member of Bournemouth Branch. Margaret has been a stalwart member of Bournemouth Branch, during recent years she has held a number of posts on the Committee; 2001-2008 Chairman, 2008-2010 Vice Chairman, 2010-2013 Chairman.

In 2008, when there was a major committee change, she was a tower of strength to the new branch officers, providing essential background information and continuity to ensure a smooth transition. Ever since her retirement from the Committee Margaret has been dedicated to the Branch, always keen to support internal and external events, including Area Reunions and the South & South West Area AGM.

Val Wright

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, LONDON SATURDAY 12 MARCH 2016

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks. The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending. She thanked everyone for making the effort to make the journey to London, she continued by introducing her support team:

Rowena Griffiths MBE	Chairman of the Executive & Finance Committee
Isabel McCord	Honorary Treasurer
Audrey Smith	Chairman of the Grants Committee
Sue Hatton	Association Secretary & Editor Lioness
Julia Doig	Finance Officer
Gabi Shanahan	Benevolent Fund Secretary

The Chairman thanked several members who had raised significant funds since the 2015 AGM; in April 2015 Marg Davies walked 100 miles of the Llyn Coastal Path raising money for Dementia UK and the WRAC Association, on 05 July 2015 Wendy Hooton and a team of 'Lionesses' ran the Gateshead 10K raising money for the WRAC Association and Cancer Research UK and in December Karen Radford and a Facebook team raised funds with an Online Festive Fitness Challenge. The Chairman thanked all members and Branches who had made donations to the Association.

The Chairman paid tribute to all Branch Secretaries and thanked them for their hard work and support, appreciated not just by Association HQ but by each one of their members. Every Secretary was part of a significant team which included their Chairman and Treasurer and together they underpinned the Branch network which was at the core of the Association. She also thanked all members who continue to support the aims of the Association, be it through organising events, acting as Admins on Facebook groups, or in another capacity. The Chairman thanked all the Branches who had hosted her in the preceding 12 months, she also thanked the HQ team of Sue Hatton, Gabi Shanahan, Julia Doig and Tanya Jayne Park for their work and support throughout the year.

The Chairman read a message from the Patron of the Association thanking all members for their loyal greetings and support. She also read a message from the President of the Association thanking all members for their loyal greetings to mark her 83rd birthday on 22 February 2016.

2. Apologies for Absence. Apologies had been received from a number of individuals, several Branch Secretaries and the following Life Vice Presidents, Trustees and members of Council: Sue Westlake MBE, Karen Loftus, Helen Merrington Rust MBE and Jo Young.

3. Confirmation of Minutes. The Minutes of the previous meeting had been published in Lioness 2015/2, no comments had been received.

Proposal: It was proposed that the Chairman sign the minutes of the 2015 AGM as a true record.

Proposed: Chris Corker **Seconded:** Jo Young
Agreed

4. Business Arising from the Previous Minutes.

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

5. Chairman of Trustees & Council Report. Trustees had met four times and Council twice since the 2015 AGM; The main items of interest were:

a. Retirement of Trustees. Brigadier Shirley Nield CBE stood down as a Trustee in February 2015 but remained on Council as a Life Vice President.

b. Appointment of Trustees. Helen Merrington-Rust MBE had been appointed as a Trustee in April 2015 and Monica Jones had been appointed in May 2015.

c. Life Vice Presidents. Sadly two Life Vice Presidents had died; Mary Soames OBE on 22 November 2014 and Eleanor Bowles on 04 February 2016. Sue Westlake MBE had been appointed as a Life Vice President in November 2015.

d. Area Chairmen. Anna Orlinski had been appointed Area Chairman North West in April 2015 (Northern Area wef February 2016). Mack Maskens-McIntyre had stood down as Area Chairman South & South West in July 2015 and Kate McGregor as Area Chairman South East in November 2015. The Chairman thanked them both for their long and dedicated service.

The Area Chairmen Forum had conducted a review of the Area boundaries and allocation of Branches to Areas. They had also agreed a 'job description' for the role of Area Chairman. Both documents had been agreed by Council on 10 February 2016 and copies published on the website.

There were vacancies for Area Chairman in South East and South & South West. Maggie Purkis, Area Chairman Wales & West Midlands, gave a short presentation on the role of an Area Chairman. Potential volunteers were requested to contact Association HQ.

e. Appointment of Auditors. Rothmans LLP were reappointed as auditors on 10 February 2016.

f. Branches. Salisbury Branch had closed. Branches had opened in Cardiff (informal), Colchester, Edinburgh (informal) and Oxfordshire (informal).

g. National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). The Chairman reported that the rear beds (WRAC Association plot) had been refurbished, the timbers on the front beds would be replaced in 2016. The installation of a stone path leading to the central plinth to improve accessibility would not be considered until drainage issues had been resolved by the MNA.

h. Parades. The Chairman thanked all members who had participated in the parades at the Armed Forces Day 2015 National Event in Guildford and at the Cenotaph. Members were reminded of the requirement to wear 'appropriate' smart dress.

i. National Standard. The Chairman thanked the National Standard Bearer, Sharon Joyce, and her deputy, Tammy Kirkwood, for representing the WRAC Association at several events throughout the year including VE70 and VJ70 in London.

6. Financial Report. The Honorary Treasurer presented the Annual Report 2015 and explained that the total value of the funds (Association and Benevolent Fund combined) as at 31 October 2015 was £5,919,691. This was a decrease of £149,055 from the Annual Report 2014 and represented a drop in overall value of 2.4%, the decrease reflected the difficult state of the financial markets in 2015. It was explained that the funds were divided between 'Restricted Funds' (Benevolent funds), 'Unrestricted Funds' (Association Funds) and 'Designated Funds' (Life Subscription Funds). The value of the Benevolent funds was £5,278,654 and the combined Unrestricted and Designated (Association) funds was £641,037. Trustees had reviewed and formalised the Investment Policy in 2015 and had appointed Brewin Dolphin as Investment Manager.

The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 31 October 2015 would be published in Lioness edition 2016/2. The Honorary Treasurer thanked the former Finance Officer Gabi Shanahan for managing the accounts effectively during 2015, and thanked the new Finance Officer Julia Doig for working with the auditors to produce the Annual Report.

Proposal: That the financial statements be accepted and that the audited accounts be ratified.

Proposed: Sue Donovan **Seconded:** Barbara Davies
Agreed

7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal. The Editor reported that Lioness would continue to develop and evolve. She reminded members that it was 'their' magazine and that any suggestions for new content be submitted. Readers were encouraged to submit concise articles (ideally in the body on an email) accompanied by 3 or 4 carefully selected photos. Winchester & District Talking Newspaper Association recorded an abridged version of Lioness which was available to any member who required an audio version.

8. Reports of Committees.

- a. Executive & Finance Committee.** The Executive & Finance Committee (EFC) had sat 4 times since the 2015 AGM. The Chairman EFC outlined the 4 key areas of work:
- Internal Audit (IA) Policy. The policy had been implemented and the IA was being conducted by Association member Sarah Morris (RAO ATR Winchester).
 - Risk Register. An Association Risk Register had been created.
 - Trustee Skills Audit. An audit of current Trustee Skills had been conducted; this identified existing skills and highlighted gaps that could be filled by training or when recruiting new Trustees. Any member wishing to be considered as a Trustee should contact the Chairman of Trustees.
 - Review of Constitution 2013. A review of Constitution 2013 would be conducted and presented for ratification at the 2017 AGM.

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee. The Chairman of the Grants Committee gave an update of the work of the Benevolent Fund in the financial year 2015.

The Trustees authorised a budget for 2015 of £200,000 for one-off and NHF top-up grants and a further £31,500 for PRMF maintenance grants. The Trustees increased the budget to £210,000 at their meeting in July 2015 in response to an increase in the number of applications. In total, the Benevolent funds received 370 applications for assistance on behalf of former servicewomen of the ATS and WRAC in 2015, an increase of 10% on 2014. In all, 103 applications were on

behalf of former ATS servicewomen and 267 applications on behalf of former-WRAC servicewomen. Of the 370 applications received, 316 met the criteria for assistance. A total of 16 former servicewomen were assisted with NHF top-ups and 21 ex-servicewomen received annuities from the PRMF.

The total amount of money distributed, including in-year refunds and returned grants, was £198,473 from the Benevolent Fund and £32,320 from the PRMF. This represents an increase of expenditure on 2014 of £15,553 (8.5%) for the Benevolent Fund and £9,466 (41.42%) for the PRMF. The underspend from the Benevolent Fund of £11,527 (5.5%), or £1,527 (0.75%) on the original budget of £200,000, resulted as the increased caseload did not require the anticipated additional funds of £10,000. The overspend of £820 (2.6%) from the PRMF resulted from the increase in both the numbers of eligible applicants and the rate of the allowance. Of note is that the Benevolent Fund expenditure on NHF top-ups of £19,181 represented a decrease of £10,961 (36.36%) on 2014.

As well as making grants from its own funds, the Benevolent Fund received support from many other Service and civilian charities, the Trustees thanked the external organisations for their support. The Chairman thanked the Benevolent Fund Grants Secretary for her continued hard work in administering the grants process.

9. Resolutions.

- a. Trustee Resolutions.** There were no Trustee proposals.
- b. Branch Proposals.** There were no Branch proposals.
- c. Election of Honorary Treasurer.** The AGM is required to ratify the appointment of Honorary Treasurer on an annual basis.

Proposal: To ratify Isabel McCord in her appointment as Honorary Treasurer.

Proposed: Sharon Joyce **Seconded:** Monica Jones
Agreed

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting. Subject to confirmation the 2017 AGM would be held on Saturday 18 March 2017 at the Crown Plaza (formerly Holiday Inn), Stratford-upon-Avon.
Signed as a true record.

Chairman:

Date:



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES For the year ended 31 October 2015

		Unrestricted		Restricted Funds £	Total 2015 £	Total 2014 £
	Notes	General Funds £	Designated Funds £			
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Incoming resources						
Incoming resources from generated funds:						
Voluntary Income	1	24,046	1,450	34,249	59,745	68,385
Investment Income	2	19,953	-	154,396	174,349	142,484
Incoming resources from charitable activities	3	31,986	-	-	31,986	3,777
Other incoming resources	4	8,665	-	520	9,185	12,471
Total Incoming Resources		84,650	1,450	189,165	275,265	227,117
Resources Expended						
Charitable activities	6	124,976	-	264,788	389,764	322,179
Governance costs	7	11,005	-	10,008	21,013	12,831
Total resources expended		135,981	-	274,796	410,777	335,010
NET (OUTGOING)/INCOMING RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS		(51,331)	1,450	(85,631)	(135,512)	(107,893)
Transfers between funds	14	3,075	(3,075)	-	-	-
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR		(48,256)	(1,625)	(85,631)	(135,512)	(107,893)
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS & LOSSES						
Gains / (losses) on investments	9	(5,629)	-	(7,914)	(13,543)	57,511
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		(53,885)	(1,625)	(93,545)	(149,055)	(50,382)
Fund balances brought forward at 1 November 2014	17	668,749	27,798	5,372,199	6,068,746	6,119,128
Fund balances carried forward at 31 October 2015	17	614,864	26,173	5,278,654	5,919,691	6,068,746

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

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

BALANCE SHEET**As at 31 October 2015**

	Notes	2015 £	2014 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Fixed Assets	8	4,199	3,903
Investments	9	<u>5,764,238</u>	<u>5,947,782</u>
		5,768,437	5,951,685
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock		4,181	5,526
Debtors	10	51,319	49,747
Cash at bank and in hand	11	<u>106,765</u>	<u>83,962</u>
		162,265	139,235
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	12	11,011	22,174
NET CURRENT ASSETS		151,254	117,061
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>5,919,691</u>	<u>6,068,746</u>
FUNDS OF THE ASSOCIATION			
Restricted Funds:			
The Benevolent Funds	15	4,475,229	4,562,415
The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund	16	803,425	809,784
Unrestricted funds:			
General Funds	17	614,864	668,749
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund	14	26,173	27,798
TOTAL FUNDS	17	<u>5,919,691</u>	<u>6,068,746</u>

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008)

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 10 Feb 16 and were signed on its behalf by:


Colonel (Retired) Alison Brown, Chairman

Obituaries - Their Final Salute

MARY E BARKER

15 September 1932 - 16 March 2016



I first met Mary when she and her friend moved from Richmond and transferred to the Southampton Branch of the WRAC Association, both ladies were like a breath of fresh air. Mary was a very good driver and taught many people to drive in her role in the Territorial Army (she was an ex Regular).

After she joined the Branch we all worked hard to fund a Standard. Mary was to become our first Standard Bearer, a role unfortunately cut short when she became a full time carer to her friend. Sadly we did not see Mary very often after this. Mary helped many people and her contribution in her earlier days in the Branch was considerable.

Jean Doe

MARGARET BARNHAM nee Hope

08 September 1928 - 13 March 2016



On parade (left) at Romsey Abbey

From the moment Margaret joined the Southampton Branch of the WRAC Association she became a regular at meetings. She became our Standard Bearer, a role she excelled at and her uniform was always immaculate. On one parade she asked

the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire if she would be a guest at a forthcoming Reunion we were due to hold, and Mary Fagan accepted the invitation! Margaret attended many parades, something she very much enjoyed. she reluctantly retired from the role with knee problems.

Margaret was Treasurer of her local Royal British Legion branch and was also a regular attendee at the WRAC Dinner Club. When illness struck she was very stubborn, still attending meetings and came to our Christmas lunch in the New Forest. Sadly she lost her final battle.

Jean Doe

ISABELLA A BAXTER nee Murray

1925 - 20 December 2015



Isabella (Ella) served in the ATS in WW2, working on the guns and was later to develop deafness as a result. She joined the Southampton Branch quite late in life, having met another member. She thoroughly enjoyed the meetings and our Reunion at Romsey. Some of us went to visit Ella on her 90th birthday and it was clear she was very ill but typically she put on a brave face. A lovely lady missed by us all.

Jean Doe

JOAN BERRY

16 December 1926 – 30 April 2016



Joan Berry, a proud member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service and a founder member of both Crewe Branch and subsequently the Phoenix Branch of the WRAC Association, died in hospital after a brief illness on 30 April 2016.

Joan was always cheerful; even when we were aware that

she was not in the best of health, she never complained but assured us that "I'm much better than many folk of my age". Joan was a great supporter of the Phoenix Branch and never missed a meeting, an outing or an informal lunch party. Joan also supported St Margaret's Church, Betley, and was well known and loved by the whole congregation as well as her family and many friends.

Joan's service as a driver in the ATS saw her stationed in Shropshire, billeted in the mansion at Attingham Park. In September 2014 several members of the Phoenix Branch took Joan on a trip down memory lane to Attingham Park, where the National Trust staff stood by to show her to her old room on the top floor. According to Joan, "apart from a lick of paint it hadn't changed at all". Joan lived every one of her 89 years to the full and will be greatly missed by the members of the Phoenix Branch as well as her family and many friends.

Maggie Purkis

COLONEL ELEANOR J BOWLES **08 December 1921 - 04 February 2016**



I first met Eleanor in 1978 when she was posted to the WRAC College as Commandant. I was a young Captain instructor. I remember the long discussions we the instructors, and our OC would have with her over the performance of each OCdt and whether they were making the grade. This was typical of Eleanor, she was thorough, paid attention to detail and wanted to make sure we had got it right. We knew she had high standards and woe betide us if we fell short of the proper use of the English language or were less than perfect in our attention to detail. What a good training for those of us who went on to be Staff Officers in the future! I remember her visiting me when I was in North Wales with the officer cadets on adventure training activities. She enjoyed these trips and it gave me the opportunity to get to know her better.

Eleanor was born in Scotstoun near Glasgow on 8 December 1921. Her mother was Scottish and her father English, a master mariner & maritime engineer. She had one brother, Cyril, who became ordained and ended his days as Bishop of Derby.

Eleanor was very close to him. Her family moved south to Gidea Park, Essex when she was small and she attended Romford County High School. She became a lifelong fan of her local football team West Ham. Cyril went to university, which she would have liked to have done but the War intervened and instead she joined the Army Territorial Service in March 1942.

After attending officer training in 1944 she was commissioned, serving most of the remainder of the war with the Royal Artillery in the Anti Aircraft role. After the formation of the WRAC she served in a variety of roles both at regimental duty and, after attending the WRAC Staff Course in 1956, in staff appointments. These appointments will be familiar to those of us who served in the WRAC. Highlights of her long career included Adjutant of 14 Battalion WRAC, SO3 SD1 in MOD, OC WO & NCO Wing WRAC School of Instruction, DADWRAC Eastern Command, DAAG AG 16 in the MOD, DAQMG HQ Southern Command, 2IC WRAC College, ADWRAC HQ BAOR, Col GS WRAC Directorate, and finally Comdt WRAC College, retiring from there in 1978.

After 36 years in the Army she retired to her flat in Frimley, Surrey. This did not end her involvement in the Corps. She was a lifelong member of the Association and never missed a Reunion or official function. She was a member and then Chairman of Council for many years before becoming a Life Vice President of the Association. It was only in her final 3 years that she missed Council meetings when her failing health meant she could not get to them but she always wanted to know what had happened. She was a keen member of the Benevolent Fund Grants Committee and was always happy to volunteer to be at meetings. Indeed, one meeting was held in the Residents lounge at Pegasus Court as she could not get to Worthy Down. She was an undoubted asset to the running of the Association with her eye for detail, intellect and common sense approach.

She was devoted to the Corps. As one friend recounts she would defend its reputation against all comers and could be harsh with anyone who disgraced it in any way. As I found from my discussions with her at Pegasus Court, she was forward looking and took an interest in the present day Army and the progress women were making. No doubt she enjoyed keeping herself up to date reading the Lioness. So what else did Eleanor enjoy? She was very knowledgeable about many things and enjoyed a variety of activities ranging from playing bridge, driving and enjoying a glass of white wine or sherry with friends and colleagues. And she always enjoyed a good discussion particularly where politics, the monarchy and geography were involved. But her greatest passion (after the WRAC) was sport and particularly cricket and golf. She played cricket for Army women in the Inter Services Championship with the legendary Myrtle MacLagan and was very disappointed when cricket was taken off the sporting calendar. Since her retirement she became a golf enthusiast and joined Aldershot Army Golf Club where she became Lady Captain. She was also on the Golf Club's Rules and Regulations Committee where her acute eye for detail must have been an advantage! She was well known as a force to be reckoned with at the Golf Club.

Following a fall, Eleanor had to move to from Chantry Court in Frimley to a ground floor flat in Pegasus Court in Fleet. When she could no longer look after herself through failing health, she moved into Woodlands Residential Home also in Fleet where she saw out her final days very happily playing bridge and taking part in many of the organised activities. For a time she was Chairman of the Residents committee using her well honed organisational skills!

To those closest to her she was an outstandingly loyal and trusted friend whose kindness and generosity knew no bounds. As a boss she could be formidable but always firm and fair with a lovely sense of humour and a twinkle in her eye. She lived a long and happy life and touched many lives along the way. She will be remembered with the greatest respect and affection.

Isobel McCord

Eilean Cunningham: Eleanor was given a good send off, Aldershot Crematorium was packed with past WRAC friends, Army Golf Club past Lady Captains and her golfing chums. Following the Service of Thanksgiving a Wake was held at the Army Golf Club. Eleanor's ashes were subsequently scattered at the WRAC bridge on the 2nd hole of the Army Golf Club



WRAC Bridge, Army Golf Club: Sheila Johncey, Viv Scott, Sue Westlake MBE, Eilean Cunningham, Sue Barker

BARBARA A GREEN nee Castledine 19 January 2016



Lesley Scott, Carol Knight, Kate Bettison (all on same PTI training course)



Barbara served in the WRAC in the 1960's, initially at Regimental Duty where she was the Assistant Adjutant at the Regimental Depot. She later attended the Ordnance Officers course and then worked at CAD Kineton on the planning of the rebuild of the Explosive Stores.

On leaving the army she worked, during the 1970's, in the MOD and in the private sector as a Technical Writer before moving into journalism. In the 1980's she had two weekly columns in the Hong Kong Standard and wrote for expatriate magazines.

In the 1990's she lived in Spain and continued her writing for expatriate magazines concentrating on financial and animal welfare subjects. She was an acknowledged Labrador owner and worked during that period for changes to the dog quarantine rules.

Her final project was a history of the ATS based on the reminiscences of people who had served in the war. It was published as "Girls in Khaki" in 2012. She was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease shortly after the publication. She leaves a husband and three stepchildren.

Peter Green



Madeleine Craggs, Rev Sue Wing, Sheila Johncey



Sheila Johncey, Penny Gold, Eilean Cunningham

FLORENCE M GROVES nee Smith **05 June 1922 - 12 February 2016**

Florrie was born in Southampton and joined the ATS on 10 October 1941, serving in 489(M) Heavy Ack Ack Battery. She was known to all her friends as Smithy and during her service she helped defend the East coast, Bristol, Cardiff and Felixstowe.

During her service in Felixstowe she remembered the Navy torpedo boats that were based there. They would go out at dusk and return in the morning. The boats carried English, Polish and Canadians in their crews. However all was not plain sailing as the Polish and Canadians never saw eye to eye and had to be separated and not allowed to work together again. That meant the English crews had to take Polish crews one night and Canadians the next. Florrie had a Polish boyfriend (of whom she had fond memories) but the time came when she had to move on with her battery and parting came.

Florrie, recalled a time one night, when the alarms went off. A girl by the name of Jasmine tumbled out of bed in full battle dress with 30 to 40 pipe cleaners in her hair (there was no wash and blow dry then). She jammed her helmet on her head saying "Well if they come tonight I'll frighten them to death!"

Florrie was demobbed on 01 April 1946. Before the war she had worked with a young man called Alfred. He served his time as a Desert Rat and they wrote to each other all through and married in 1946.

Florrie, we have wonderful memories of you and will think and remember you, and at times talk of you. God bless you and we at the Southampton Branch of the WRAC Association salute you.

Barbara Bennett

MAJOR LYNETTE A E HOPKIN **MBE LRAM psm** **05 July 1926 – 03 July 2016**



Born in 1926, the younger of two sisters, Lyn started to play the piano at the age of eight. She was subsequently taken to a concert by her parents and it was during this concert that Lyn fell smitten for the sound of the clarinet. As she was already receiving piano lessons any further expense would put have put pressure on the family's financial status. The clarinet was therefore put on hold until much later.

In 1945 Lyn enrolled as a full time student at the Birmingham School of Music to study the piano. Having a grant to assist her studies, she used it to buy a clarinet! The following year Lyn added the clarinet to her studies as a second instrument. During the three year course at the BSM, she performed regularly in various locations in and around Birmingham with the student orchestra and chamber music ensembles.

Lyn enlisted into the newly formed WRAC Staff Band on 18 August 1949 as one of its' founder members. At the same time she commenced private tuition with the renowned British clarinettist Thea King. The tuition with Thea continued for eleven years and her perseverance in striving to do her best in music was well rewarded in 1952 when she was selected to be the first recipient of Naomi Wallace Memorial Prize. This award is made annually to the best woman instrumentalist in the Army, on the nomination of the Inspector of Army Music. The prize giving ceremony was held by The Worshipful Company of Musicians in London at Stationers' Hall, this of course, was many years before female equality. She told the story of how when she arrived at Stationers' Hall to collect the medal at a formal dinner, she was told that women were not allowed through the front entrance so she had to be taken in via the kitchen.

In 1954 she had a break in service of nine months while she worked for the BBC and then re-enlisted in 1955, in the rank of Lance Corporal. Also during the 1950s, she attended classes at Morley College, London and obtained her LRAM in 1958. She was promoted to Warrant Officer Class 2 (BSM) in 1961 and in 1968, received the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. The role of Band Sergeant Major enabled her to exercise her skills to the full as the band's principal clarinettist, teaching, guiding the progress of the players, and to be responsible in conducting and rehearsing the band for parades, mess nights and concerts. Lyn fulfilled this role with a formidable exactitude. Members of the band responded with the utmost respect to Lyn's quiet, but effective musical leadership. Later, she was given the local rank of Warrant Officer Class 1.

In June 1970, much to her own surprise, she was awarded the MBE for her services to music. Lyn was given the opportunity to leave the WRAC Staff Band to train as the next Director of Music. For two years Lyn became a full time student at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. Here she completed further studies in conducting, harmony, composition, arranging and military band practice. As expected Lyn sailed through the psm course with flying colours. On completion of the course she won the conducting prize. The names of all four female Directors of Music of the WRAC Band are displayed on the honours board at Kneller Hall as winners of the prize for conducting. However, Lyn is the only woman to have the distinction of appearing both on a Kneller Hall prize board and the Mary Naomi Wallace Memorial Medal Board.

On 12 June 1974 she was commissioned in the rank of Captain and became the Director of Music of the WRAC Staff Band on 1 August 1974. She was promoted to Major on 8 June 1982. The WRAC Staff Band was based permanently at the Depot and Training Centre in Guildford where daily life consisted of band

rehearsals of current and new pieces, Passing Out Parades, Church Services and concerts. The Band also went on numerous tours in the UK and abroad, including Germany, Gibraltar, Cyprus, Malta and Canada. Lyn was highly respected as a conductor, performer and teacher both in the WRAC Band and local music-making in Guildford. In addition, she was musically versatile, playing the bass clarinet and xylophone. She also had a practical bent, studying instrument repair and was responsible for maintaining band instruments. The band's musicians were always foremost in her mind and full consideration was given to all musicians she worked with; she knew their strengths and aimed to encourage the best from them.

On 19 March 1984 she retired after 34 years' service and ten years as Director of Music, the longest serving Director in the Band's 43 year history. She continued to live in Guildford and although "retired", Lyn continued to teach, conduct and play the clarinet with local bands, orchestras and in musical shows. Her last public performance was in 2011. It is very appropriate that one of the roads on the housing estate on the site of the former WRAC Depot where she worked for so long, was named after her, Hopkin Close.

Lyn's effective teaching and mentoring has had a considerable influence on a number of musicians both military and civilian. Past WRAC Staff Band musicians are or have been involved in teaching, playing professionally or semi-professionally and to this day many continue to play for pleasure in bands and orchestras. An intelligent and highly perceptive lady, Lyn will be always remembered fondly with respect for the quality of her musicianship; compassion and consideration to others; her sense of duty, high integrity and of course, her delightful sense of humour! Lynette Hopkin was a consummate professional. Lyn is survived by her older sister who also held a commission in the WRAC.

Editor: Thanks must go to the following whom all had input in the compilation of this obituary.

Marjorie Downward WRAC Staff Band Oboe player 1968-1974

Jane Smith (nee Stark) WRAC Staff Band 1965-1968

Sue Rummery (nee Harper) WRAC Staff Band Clarinettist

Mick Feehily, ex RAMC tuba player and Bandmaster

John Smith, Archivist Birmingham Conservatoire of Music (formerly known as Birmingham School of Music)

John & Hilary Steynor, friends of Lyn

JOAN LAUNDER

26 October 1920 - 04 February 2016

Joan was born in Paignton, the only girl with 3 brothers. They were very close in age and with the boy's influence Joan grew up to be rather sporty at school, preferring swimming and netball and represented her school at County Level. In her final year she was Head Prefect and Games Captain. When she left school she worked locally, she loved to sing and in her free time she sang in local concerts, eventually she became a member of a concert party which entertained at military camps at the beginning of WW2. It was at one such occasion that she met Ken Launder who became her husband a year later, a friendship which lasted for 64 years, 63 of those years in marriage.

Ken's war service took him away a lot and he would come home to Paignton when he could get leave but he needed to share his time with his family in Truro too. Their eldest son, Ken, was born in 1943, Ken (senior) was demobbed in 1946 and Joan, with Ken junior, joined him in Sussex where he was working. The following

year Ken's father died and the family returned to Truro for Ken to take his father's place at Jordan's Printing Works. A second son, Kevin, was born in 1949 and Kim, their third son, arrived in 1953. As the family grew up Joan worked in local stores and also joined the Territorial Army; her husband had been in the TA since 1947 and eldest son Ken was a Sgt Major in the cadets so Joan had to stand to attention and call them both 'Sir'! She made it to Corporal and left after 6 years service.

Joan and Ken were both members of the Royal British Legion and Joan was Honorary Secretary of the Truro Branch Women's Section for over 35 years, plus 3 years as Chairman and later President. During this time she was also Truro Branch Poppy Organizer so they were very involved with organizing cheese and wine suppers, coffee mornings, poppy garden fetes etc. In addition they were members of the Dunkirk Veterans and the Duke of Cornwall's Old Comrades. Joan was also very proud to be associated with the Women's Royal Army Corps Association, Plymouth Branch and was very active in RBL Club in Truro with her friend of 60 years, Enith Pentecost.

Ken senior died in 2003, and when their youngest son Kim had a stroke in 2006, she, a widow in her 80's, brought him home to look after him. He in turn looked after her in her last few years, she died aged 95. Ken junior and Kevin married and Joan was delighted with, and very proud of, their wives and her 4 grandchildren and 2 great grandsons. Well done and 'thank you', Joan; from all members of Plymouth Branch.

Ruth Jennings

ELIZABETH J LE HUQUET nee THOMAS 24 JANUARY 2016



**38th Course ATS OCTU, July 1947, Pirbright
Capt Elizabeth Thomas, 2nd on left on 2nd row from back**

Elizabeth was born in Cardigan, West Wales in August 1921. Educated at Howell's School in Cardiff, Elizabeth grew up in Taff's Well with her two younger sisters where her parents kept the local grocery shop. A natural and very successful sportswoman who captained the cricket, lacrosse and hockey teams she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service at 18 when war broke out in 1939.

She rose to the rank of Captain and was posted to Egypt where she met and married Lieutenant Colonel Reginald Le Huquet. Elizabeth and Reggie settled and made their home in Portishead, within easy reach of her family in South Wales and his family in the South west. A lover of the outdoors, Elizabeth was a keen gardener and almost everything grew under her green fingers. She survived Reggie by three years.

Mari Best.

WINIFRED M PHILLIPS
06 August 1926 - 30 January 2016



Win was born in Essex in August 1926. She joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) in Egypt in 1948 as a switchboard operator. Later she rebadged to the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC). In 1951 she returned to London working at Stanmore as a Signaller and four years later she was posted to Singapore. She left the Army for just 6 months in 1956. When she re-joined she was posted to Cyprus and further postings followed over the next few years to West Germany, Singapore and UK.

In 1969 she returned to Singapore for a third and final time where she worked as a Personal Assistant to General Sir Anthony Read. Coincidentally, General Reid actually became Governor of the Royal Hospital in 1975 and some 34 years later Win would follow him to the Royal Hospital.

Win was discharged in 1971 having served 22 years and been promoted to Warrant Officer Class 2. During her military service she was awarded three medals; General Service Medal with clasp Cyprus, General Service Medal with clasp Malaya Peninsula, Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Following her Army service she worked in a number of diverse areas including the Department for Education and caring for the elderly. Win had been interested in joining the Royal Hospital Chelsea for a number of years. Eventually she arrived in March 2009. Other female In-Pensioners have said that they perceived Win as a 'trailblazer,' which prompted and inspired several of them to apply to join the Royal Hospital.

Win wrote two books whilst an In-Pensioner. One was about her early life and time in the Army and the other was about her journey to becoming a Chelsea pensioner. She also had her portrait painted by Susan Edwards, and was understandably very proud of it. Win presented the painting to the Royal Hospital and it hangs in Nicholson Ward, where she used to reside.

During her early years at the RHC Win was very active. She marched at the Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall and attended a number of external events sponsored by the charity, the Not Forgotten Association. Win was very pleased to

be selected to ring the bell to start the sale of plants and trees on the final day of RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2009. She also participated in a number of Founder's Day parades initially as part of number 4 Guard and then as part of Mobility Scooter contingent, Cadogan's Horse, in 2012 and 2013.

Win was a very determined woman which was reflected in her desire to become a Chelsea Pensioner. It was a long road for her to reach the Royal Hospital and she was very proud to wear the scarlet uniform. Win Phillips, soldier and In-Pensioner of the Royal Hospital, you will be sadly missed by staff and fellow In-Pensioners in our community.

Colonel Mark Baker
Captain of Invalids, Royal Hospital Chelsea

LIEUTENANT COLONEL
AUDREY I PURTON OBE
08 May 1926 - 20 May 2016



Lieutenant Colonel Audrey Purton, who has died aged 90, was a pioneering member and life-long champion of the Provost Branch of the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC).

Audrey Purton was Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal (WRAC) from 1975 to 1982. At the time when she took up the appointment, morale among her military policewomen was at a low ebb and the retention rate was poor. This led to an acute shortage of experienced NCOs.

With great determination and a clear idea of what was needed, she set about revitalising and restructuring the Branch. She encountered strong opposition from many in the WRAC and the Royal Military Police (RMP), who held entrenched views, but with an adroit mixture of courage and tact she gradually won them over and problems were resolved without fuss or resentment. She recognised the need for senior NCOs to take on additional specialisations to match the operational commitments of their male counterparts, and implemented these new measures. Morale rose and the retention rate improved. Working long hours, often under great pressure, her policewomen demonstrated that, in an emergency, they could maintain an effective provost service in the garrisons.

The citation for Audrey Purton's appointment as OBE in 1982 stated that through her dedication, persistence and selfless concern for the Army and her policewomen she had created an elite branch of the Provost Service.

Audrey Irene Purton was born at North Cray, Kent, on May 8 1926. Her father served for 22 years with the Royal Horse Artillery in the First World War and in India. She was educated at Witham Senior School, Essex, and, in 1944, joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). She spent two months at Guildford as an Assistant Training NCO before being posted to the Ordnance and Vehicle Reserve Depot, where she carried out clerical duties and was given the chance to learn to drive.

Audrey Purton was a bit of a daredevil and took a vehicle for a spin through the camp against regulations. She was caught and her lessons were stopped.

She had always wanted to be a policewoman and, after being selected for the ATS Provost, in 1945 she was posted to London District. She was mainly on foot patrol duties and covered all main-line stations and the Piccadilly, Soho, Strand and Charing Cross areas.

Having joined the Absentee and Deserter Section, she had to work closely with the civilian police. This involved visiting sex clubs and mixing with prostitutes and, sometimes, the rather hazardous task of breaking into houses of ill repute.

On one occasion, she and two other WRAC Provost disguised themselves as prostitutes in order to get into a nightclub which was frequented by a soldier who had gone absent. They spotted her there, waited for her to leave and then nabbed her.

Her work was sometimes frightening. When making an arrest it was not unusual to get badly bruised or even injured. Once, she was struck in the face by a knuckle duster and ended up in sick bay. Another time, she fared better: assaulted by a 16-stone man, she put him on the floor.

For a few months after the war, she was stationed on a troopship sailing between Tilbury and Cuxhaven which was transporting service families to Germany to join their husbands. One of her tasks was to keep an eye on the children who got up to endless mischief.

When a boy went missing, the ship was stopped and it was "all hands on deck" to search for him. He was found eventually in a lifeboat. Another youngster was discovered half way through a port hole, face down. Fortunately, he was stuck.

In 1949, the ATS was superseded by the Women's Royal Army Corps and Purton transferred to WRAC Provost. Subsequent postings followed to Edinburgh, Chester, Egypt and Cyprus. She achieved rapid promotion and was the first regimental sergeant major for WRAC Provost and the youngest RSM in the WRAC at the time.

Commissioned in 1962 as a Quartermaster Tech for police duties, she was subsequently posted to BAOR in command of 145 Provost Company. After a spell at the RMP Training Centre, Chichester, she moved to Northern Ireland as OC Public Protection.

In 1972, she went to the WRAC College, Camberley, as OC Warrant Officers and NCO Wing. After returning to Northern Ireland as OC Provost Company, her final posting and the pinnacle of her career was to the MoD as Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal WRAC.

In 1972, she went to the WRAC College, Camberley, as OC Warrant Officers and NCO Wing. After returning to Northern Ireland as OC Provost Company, her final posting and the pinnacle of her career was to the MoD as Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal WRAC.

She was strict but scrupulously fair. Her Provost girls were like a family to her. She stuck up for them through thick and thin and had a well-developed sense of humour when dealing with them on or off duty. In return, they admired and respected her.

Audrey Purton retired in 1984 and settled in Bognor Regis, Sussex. She always attended WRAC and Provost reunions and enjoyed holidays with family and friends all over the world.

Audrey Purton never married.

Charles Owen

Daily Telegraph 23 June 2016



WRAC National Standard paraded by Jo Foster



Ex WRAC Provost and RMP provided a good send off

JENNIE STIMPSON nee Waymouth 1927 - 06 March 2016



Worthing Branch is sad to have to announce the death, on 06 March 2016, of one its' favourite members, the well loved Jennie Stimpson. We miss her so much, she was our 'Mum' and we will always

remember going with her to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace with her looking like the queen Mum herself! Her funeral was held on 29th March and there were more than a few tears.

Janet Goldsbrough-Jones

LAST POST

ASHFIELD, Mrs Mary, nee Lee, of Rochester on 09 December 2015, ATS.

BAILEY, Mrs Edna J, nee Grundy, of Maulden on 22 June 2016, WRAC.

BARKER, Miss Mary E, of Southampton on 16 March 2016, ATS.

BARNHAM, Mrs Margaret, nee Hope, of Southampton on 13 March 2016, ATS.

BAXTER, Mrs Isabella, nee Murray, of Eastleigh in December 2015, ATS.

BELL, Miss Irene P M, of Oadby, on 19 July 2016, ATS.

BERRY, Mrs Joan M, nee Challinor, of Crewe on 30 April 2016, ATS.

BOWDEN, Mrs Joan D, nee Whitehouse, of Ynysforgen on 20 April 2016, ATS/WRAC.

BOWEN, Miss Susan A, of Fleet on 20 February 2016, WRAC.

BOWLES, Miss Eleanor J, of Fleet on 04 February 2016, ATS/WRAC.

BURKE, Mrs Lily, nee Anson, of Pudsey, ATS.

BRABBINS, Mrs Susan, nee Scamadine, of Ashington in January 2016, WRAC.

DEAKIN, Mrs Constance E, nee Sutton, of Christchurch on 20 May 2016, ATS.

DENNIS, Mrs Doreen M, nee Evans, of Canterbury on 29 January 2016, ATS.

DEVLIN, Miss Mary L, of Prestwick on 02 May 2016, WRAC.

DEW, Mrs E, nee Simpson, of Beckenham on 27 January 2016, ATS.

DODD, Mrs Helen (Nellie) M Dodd, nee Hall/ Stringwell, of Higham on 21 July 2016, ATS.

ELMES, Mrs Alice M, nee Dury, of Bristol in February 2016, ATS.

FRISTON, Mrs Alma, nee Oldfield, of Thetford on 01 June 2016, WRAC.

FORREST, Mrs Ruth, nee Donaldson, of Dunfermline on 03 May 2016, WRAC.

FOX, Mrs Margaret M F, nee Price, of Bournemouth on 11 June 2016, ATS.

GREEN, Mrs Barbara A, nee Castledine, of Nottingham on 19 January 2016, WRAC.

GROVES, Mrs Florence M, nee Smith, of Southampton on 12 February 2016, ATS.

HARPER, Mrs Florence, nee Hunter, of Laindon on 20 February 2016, ATS.

HART, Mrs Elsie L, nee Shaw, of Bury St Edmunds on 01 February 2016, WRAC.

HENDERS, Mrs Joyce, of Macclesfield on 19 April 2016, WRAC.

HODGE, Miss Irene, of Norwich on 28 May 2016, WRAC.

HOPKIN MBE, Miss Lynnette A E, of Guildford on 03 July 2016, WRAC.

HUNTER, Mrs Ivie E, nee McKeag, of Holywood, County Down on 15 February 2016, ATS.

LAUNDER, Mrs Joan, nee Perrett, of Truro on 04 February 2016, WRAC.

LE HUGUET, Mrs Elizabeth J, nee Thomas, of Portishead on 24 January 2016, ATS.

MATT, Mrs Alice M, nee Piper, of Bexhill-on-Sea on 14 March 2016, ATS.

McKAY, Ms, formerly Reynolds, of Tenbury Wells on 12 May 2016, WRAC.

MERFIELD, Mrs Doris W, nee Elliott, of Kings Lynn on 29 December 2015, ATS.

MILLWARD, Mrs Margaret F, nee Gentry, of Dorking on 12 March 2016, ATS.

MORRISON, Mrs Christina J, nee Chisholm, of Inverness on 20 January 2016, ATS.

NASH OBE, Mrs Elsie E, nee Webb, of North Walsham on 24 November 2015, ATS.

PEGG, Mrs Joan D, of Smethwick on 13 January 2016, ATS.

PHILLIPS, Miss Winifred M, of the Royal Hospital Chelsea on 30 January 2016, ATS/WRAC.

PIERREPONT, Mrs Patricia E M, nee Coggans, of Witney on 05 July 2015, ATS.

PRANGLEY, Mrs Mairwen, nee Green, of Stanwick on 22 September 2015, ATS.

PURTON OBE, Miss Audrey I, of Bognor Regis on 20 May 2016, WRAC.

RAFFELL, Mrs Irene F, of Chelmsford on 21 January 2016, ATS.

RUSSELL, Mrs Catherine, nee Alexander, of Glasgow on 13 February 2016, WRAC.

SHAW, Mrs Nancy F J, nee Wilkinson, of Southampton on 29 August 2015, ATS.

SHIELL, Mrs Veronica, nee Stephenson, of Fareham on 11 February 2016, ATS.

STIMPSON, Mrs Jennie, nee Waymouth, of Worthing on 06 March 2016, ATS.

SULLIVAN, Mrs Eileen W M, nee Young, of Slough on 28 December 2015, ATS.

THORNTON, Mrs Joan, nee Bradshaw, of Leicester on 24 March 2016, ATS.

WARNER, Mrs Lesley, nee Lloyd, of Ormskirk on 04 June 2016, WRAC.

WAY, Miss Victoria L A, of Poole on 27 December 2015, ATS.

WEAVER, Mrs Hazel, of Newcastle upon Tyne on 05 February 2016, WRAC.





LEGACIES & DONATIONS

The WRAC Association Needs You



Those of you who read the Annual Report, or the excerpts published in *Lioness*, might have the impression that the WRAC Association is well provided for financially, with the total worth of our funds being approximately £6 million. However, due to the way that the original trust funds were set up the vast majority of the money, some £5.4 million, is mainly for the use of the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. This means that anyone who has served in the ATS or the WRAC for any period of time, who is in financial need, can be considered for help by the Benevolent Fund (providing they meet the grant giving criteria). The youngest person who served in the WRAC before it was disbanded in 1992 would now only be just over 40 years old and therefore, with life expectancy increasing all the time, there will still be applicants eligible for assistance for over 50 years. All costs of administration of the Benevolent Fund have always been paid for by the Fund and the Trustees are confident that the reserves held will be sufficient to provide for the all future needs.

The Association provides other functions to members who are not in financial need but are a great benefit and support to those women who have this special bond of having served, irrespective of the length of that service. You all wait eagerly for *Lioness* to arrive twice a year and for those who are visually impaired we have financed a recorded version. Many of you enjoy Area and Branch functions and attending the Grand Reunions. Additionally there are several important anniversaries to commemorate in the next few years, however there are financial implications that we now have to consider. As you know we have a plot at the National Memorial Arboretum, which has to be maintained, and we are always anxious to establish permanent memorials, most of which also need funds to maintain them. In order to ensure that all that was achieved by women up to 1992 is not forgotten we must make sure that we continue to have representation wherever possible, particularly connected with Remembrance events.

Until recently the staff and overhead costs of the Association was provided by the MOD, however the Association now has to cover the full cost of staff and office space. We must continue to provide these key functions and as part of this you have already agreed to increase the membership fee to £10.00. This was very welcome but this will not prevent the speedy depletion of the Association Funds, as we strive to maintain the Area and Branch network and continue our representation at a national level. We therefore need to consider raising funds in other ways.

Many members already make regular and one off donations or are kind enough to leave legacies which help the WRAC Association to continue its work, for which we are very grateful. As the future of the Benevolent Fund is secure, if you are considering making a donation or leaving a legacy please consider making such a donation or legacy specifically to the WRAC Association, rather than to the ATS & WRAC Benevolent Fund. This will enable us to continue to provide you with all of those activities that contribute to esprit de corps and comradeship, both now and well into the future.

The WRAC Association is so very grateful for all of your support so far. This appeal is made with the aim of ensuring that the Association can continue in its' key role; that of supporting and maintaining our esprit de corps.

Leaving a legacy to the WRAC Association is a special way to give help, as it costs nothing now and a gift of any size will make a big difference. Legacies do not get taxed, so every penny comes straight to the Association. It can also reduce Inheritance Tax because the taxable value of the estate is calculated after charitable bequests are made. We appreciate that leaving a gift in your will is a big decision and you will want to take professional advice prior to any decision.

Thank you.

WRAC Association Charity No. 206184

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