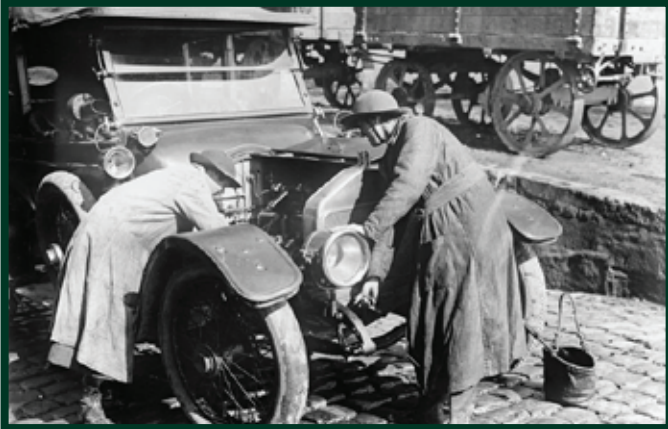


LIONESS





WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

Registered Charity No. 206184, founded in 1919

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The Archbishop of Westminster

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STATE OF THE NATION



I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and an enjoyable start to 2017.

Following on from my previous message, we have made progress towards starting to deal with some of the issues facing the Association. I wish to express my thanks to all those members who sent in their comments both on our financial situation and also on the proposals for an Association Vision Statement and Strapline. All of your comments have been discussed in depth by both Council and the Trustees and you will be able to see later in this edition of *Lioness* what the final decision has been. This has been a really important step in clearly defining who we are and what we do, not for ourselves but rather for those who served in the WRAC but do not know there is an Association. We must continually review how we are going to attract new members and only by doing this can we continue to celebrate our past, present and future.

We are undertaking a financial review of our overheads which will report to the Trustees in the spring and we are also looking at methods of internal rebalancing. This will enable us to make savings where we need to and have a sustainable financial plan for the future. A full brief on our plans will be given by myself at the AGM in March and I hope as many of you as possible will be able to be there. In addition I will ensure that we improve our communications as it is clear to me that all of you, as members of the Association, must be kept informed as we move forward.

I am so very grateful to all of you who contribute to the WRAC Association in so many ways. Whether it be arranging activities at Area and Branch level, making donations or being involved in Benevolence. We have much to celebrate and we will be doing this at the WAAC/QMAAC Centenary Dinner in Stratford-upon-Avon over the weekend of 18th and 19th March 2017. Please do join us if you can, it is going to be a very good party.

My final thanks are to all those Branches who have invited me to their various events and lunches. I have loved being at every one of them and it is there that the real spirit of the Association is so evident. I hope to meet many more of you as the year progresses.

Ali Brown

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Photo Credits

Front Cover: Clockwise from top left.

WAAC marching in Rouen, 24 July 1917 © IWM (Q 5734)

WAAC drilling in Hyde Park © IWM (Q 54089)

WAAC clerks at an advanced motor transport depot, Abbeville, 15 September 1917 © IWM (Q 5950)

WAAC tending the graves of fallen British soldiers, Abbeville, 9 February 1918 © IWM (Q 8467)

WAAC reading their orders for the day, Abbeville, 15 September 1917 © IWM (Q 5952)

WAAC mechanics at work, Abbeville, 15 September 1917 © IWM (Q 5956)

Back Cover:

Left: © IWM (Art.IWM PST 4881)

Right: © IWM (Art.IWM PST 13195)



Thank you to everyone who has contributed to yet another 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.

Our next big event is the WAAC/QMAAC Centenary Dinner in Stratford-upon-Avon on Saturday 18 March 2017 where 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. At the time of writing we had received 195 applications, we have the capacity to seat many more and it's not too late to apply if you would like to join us. You can apply online via the website, or complete the application form published in *Lioness* 2016/1, alternatively just give us a call on 0300 400 1992 (mornings). For those already booked to attend you'll find an event information sheet in the centre pullout section of this magazine.

Don't forget that in addition to the Dinner we will also be holding a Prize Draw at the AGM with a 1st prize of £500 (2nd £250, 3rd £125 plus further prizes). If you would like to buy more Draw tickets please give us a call on 0300 400 1992.

You will no doubt be aware that there are many ATS and WRAC (and to a lesser degree WAAC/QMAAC) branded products available out in the marketplace. Regimental badges are covered by MOD copyright, trademark and intellectual property rules and as such should only be reproduced under license. The reality is that the WRAC Association is not in the position to 'police' the use of badges. We would therefore ask that the use of any Regimental badge is 'appropriate' and in 'good taste'.

And finally a quick reminder that if you are a taxpayer making a donation to the WRAC Association we would ask that you complete a Gift Aid declaration (see centre pullout). You only need to complete the form once, not with each donation. If you are unsure if you have previously completed the form please submit one with your donation or phone us first on 0300 400 1992.

Sue Hatton
editor@wracassociation.org.uk

Disclaimer: The contents of *Lioness* are strictly copyright and all rights are expressly reserved. The views expressed herein are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the WRAC Association, and accordingly no responsibility for these will be accepted. The Editor reserves the right to amend or omit articles and photos. Photos will only be returned if a SAE is provided.

Dear WRAC Association Members,

The National Army Museum is currently working on a project regarding the service of colonial and Commonwealth soldiers in the British Army. We are looking to interview female veterans (so far we have only had male veterans come forward) who were born in ex-colonial or Commonwealth countries and served in the British Army. We want to document why they joined the British Army; their experiences, good and bad, and the contributions that colonial/Commonwealth soldiers make. If you would like to assist please email me on kparsons@nam.ac.uk or phone 020 7881 2459

Kirsty Parsons
Community Curator
National Army Museum

Dear Editor,

I wish to thank all those lovely WRAC ladies who attended the London Remembrance parade on Whitehall last November 13th. What a friendly, happy crowd they were, all 120 of them, and so nice to the three of us ex ATS who were there. I hope we get to meet up with them again...it made our day.

On a more sombre note, I was so saddened to hear about the loss of Barbara Green. I was privileged to have her visit me at home when she was gathering information and writing the book "Girls in Khaki". I also visited her regularly when, for some part of her illness, she was in a small hospital close to me. She was a lovely lady and we ATS owe her a great deal for keeping us, and our exploits during WW2, in print.

Barbara Danter

BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS



Belated congratulations to Anne Robson nee MacWatt who celebrated her 105th birthday on 14 September 2016. Anne served in the ATS from 1942 to 1947. Initially she was a PTI and went on to complete her service in the rank of Senior Commander (Major) as Assistant Inspector ATS Physical Training.

Dear WRAC Association Members,

How has the army changed your life?

I am a filmmaker keen to research a wide range of stories regarding a documentary on how women's roles in the Army have changed and progressed over the past 100 years.

I'm particularly interested in hearing personal experiences of Service during key moments in our country's history during conflicts, emergencies and support roles at home and abroad.

By focusing on your unique perspective I'd like to broaden the public's understanding and appreciation of women's broader role in the military.

Please get in touch via the WRAC Association Office (in writing or telephone 0300 400 1992) and they will pass your details to me, or contact me by email on mail@ruthcarslaw.com.

Ruth Carslaw

Dear Editor,

You may like to know that our Annual "Service Women's Commemoration Day" will be on Sunday 13th August 2017.

The Women's Air Services Memorial was established here many years ago at the request of many WW2 veterans and has been a regular event here since. 2016 was especially significant as many RBL Women's Sections were disbanded, but we shall maintain their standards here and the parade will continue to include them. Many other service organisations are also invited to this unique and special day, and we would be delighted if any of your members would like to join us.

*Yorkshire Air Museum
Elvington
York
YO41 4AU
Tel: 01904 608595
www.yorkshireairmuseum.org*

Dear Editor,

I was lucky enough to take part in this years Remembrance Day parade and was really proud to join the WRAC contingent on the march past at the Cenotaph in London. This was my first time, and probably the only time I'll get to take part in this event as I'm planning to emigrate with my husband to Australia in 2017 to be with our family.

I had a lovely day. It was an amazing experience which I will never forget. I met some lovely people and it took me back to my time in the WRAC in the mid 1970's.

I would like to say a huge thanks to Babs (Birmingham Branch) for her guidance. She helped ease my nerves and kept me on the right track throughout the morning. Also thanks to Ann from Spain who was on my left in the column, she made me laugh!

Well done to all the lasses. I will always be proud to have served with the WRAC.

Lynn Kelly

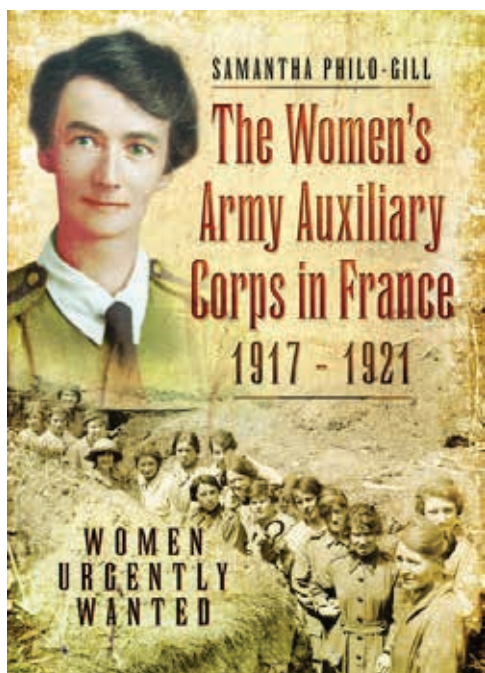
Dear Editor,

Three ex ATS members (Vi Rawlings, Barbara Danter and myself), one marching and two in wheelchairs, took part in the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph. We would like to say a big "thank you" to our WRAC comrades for the kindness shown to us; Rose Friend who pushed my chair had no easy task over a gravel covered parade ground; the marshall who gave Rose clear instructions for certain point of the march and kept the ladies in step; and the good humour and friendship of all the ladies. After many years taking part in the Whitehall service and parade we had decided this year would be the last, but the marshall said "see you next year", so who knows?

Our WRAC ladies looked smart and in step. My family watching declared "they were the best group on parade". Thank you ladies, the companionship is alive and strong - long may it continue.

Lilian Hollis

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in France 1917-1921: Women Urgently Wanted



The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in France 1917-1921: Women Urgently Wanted by Dr Samantha Philo-Gill will be published by Pen and Sword Books on 28 February 2017. The book details the establishment of the Corps and subsequently explores the experience of the WAACs who served in France. It follows the women from enrolment to the camps and workplaces overseas, through to their experiences of the Spring Offensive of 1918, the Armistice and demobilisation.

The final chapter reviews how the women have been remembered in art, literature, museums and memorials.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017

The 2017 AGM will be held in the Crown Plaza Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon at 14:00 on Saturday 18 March 2017. Any Branch Secretary or HQ Branch member who wishes to submit an item for inclusion in the agenda is to do so by 27 February 2017 to sue.hatton@wracassociation.org.uk.

Provisional Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of 2016 Minutes
4. Business Arising
5. Trustee & Council Reports
6. Financial Report
7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal
8. Reports of Committees
 - a. Executive & Finance Committee
 - b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee
9. Resolutions
 - a. Trustee/Council Resolutions (Constitution 2017)
 - b. Branch Resolutions
 - c. Re-election of Honorary Treasurer
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A woman's war: WAACS, WRNS and women's work

Thu 30 March 2017
13:00 – 16:00 BST

Join The National Archives for an afternoon of talks focusing on women in the First World War. Elisabeth Shipton will look at the voluntary organisations that preceded the WAAC, and focus on how perceptions of women changed in the two and a half years between the start of the war and the formation of the WAAC in 1917. Dr Samantha Philo-Gill will focus on the establishment of the Corps and explore the experiences of those who served in France – from enrolment to demobilisation. Our First World War Diverse Histories Researcher, Louise Bell, will talk about the Women's Royal Naval Service – from the formation of this ground breaking organisation to stories of the actual women who enrolled, utilising sources from The National Archives. These talks will be accompanied by a document display of relevant original material held here at The National Archives.

The talk is free, to register go to www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/visit-us/whats-on/events or phone 020 8876 3444. The National Archives, Bessant Dr, Kew, TW9 4DU.

AGM 2016. The 2017 AGM will be held at 14:00 on Saturday 18 March 2017 at the Crown Plaza (formerly Holiday Inn) Stratford-upon-Avon, an agenda can be found on page 59.

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 61 (inside back cover) before making a donation. Donations can also be made on line via the Association website or by phone 01962 887570. 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 or USB stick. 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 21 July 2017**. 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 39 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 09 Nov 17 Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
Sun 12 Nov 17 Cenotaph Parade - Please note that the RBL have changed the criteria for this Parade. Participation is only open to Veterans (no carers, unless they also served) and you will need to be in possession of 2 forms of ID, one of which must be photo ID.
Sun 12 Nov 17 Westminster Abbey Service

Tickets: Ticket applications for all three events to be made no later than 01 Jul 17 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 for UK, £15 overseas) 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 also set up a recurring payment by debit/credit card via 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 25 November 2017. For more details email wracofficersdc@gmail.com



WAAC/QMAAC CENTENARY DINNER 1917-2017 Saturday 18 March 2017 Crown Plaza 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. The WAAC was formally established by Army Council Instruction 1069 of July 1917. On 9 April 1918 the service was renamed Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC).

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, Stratford-upon-Avon

What? A formal Dinner (the WRAC Association 2017 AGM will be held earlier in the afternoon) and a short (voluntary) Parade on the Sunday morning.

Who can Attend?

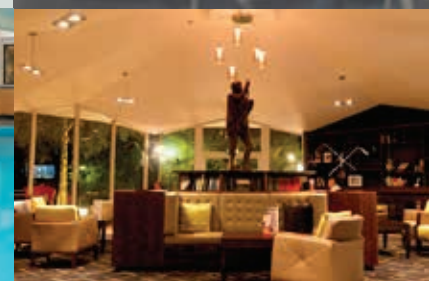
All WRAC Association members (and those eligible to join).

Entertainment?

Music will be provided by The Yorkshire Military Band, including their Corps of Drums, led by WRAC Association member Louise Lingard-Shape.

Can I Still Apply?

Late applications are very welcome. The cost of the event (excluding accommodation) is £35 per person (WRAC Association members only). This includes; Saturday afternoon AGM, Beating Retreat, Pre Dinner Drinks, three course Centenary Dinner (including a glass of wine), entertainment, room hire & decorations and a Parade on the Sunday morning. You can apply online via the website or call us on 0300 400 1992 (mornings).



Women's Auxiliary Army Corps 1917



Tending British war graves at Abbeville, 15 September 1917 © IWM (Q 5953)



Working on printing presses in the Army Printing Works, Abbeville, 15 September 1917 © IWM (Q 5963)



WAAC in their dormitory at Rouen, 24 July 1917 © IWM (Q 5757)



WAAC on parade outside their billet, Rouen, 24 July 1917 © IWM (Q 5735)



WAAC clerks consulting a card index in the Central Registry Office. Rouen, 24 July 1917 © IWM (Q 5737)



WAAC car drivers in Dieppe, 24 July 1917 © IWM (Q 5744)



WAAC clerks consulting a card index in the Central Registry Office. Rouen, 24 July 1917 © IWM (Q 5737)



Bathing at Paris-Plage, 25 July 1917 © IWM (Q 5762)



Christmas Grants Lunch: Madge Cole, Sue Donovan, Helen Andrews, Bimbo Coleman, Jean Simmons, Sue Hatton, Audrey Merton BEM, Ali Brown, Pam Richards



Dorothy Hughes helping to stir the Christmas pudding

TIME FLIES AT THE ROYAL HOSPITAL Madge Cole

Here we are at the start of 2017, I can't believe that I have been a Chelsea Pensioner for over 7 years. 2016 was an extra special year with two particular events that I took part in. The first of these was to be the first lady Pensioner to participate in the Maundy Thursday foot-washing in Westminster Cathedral. The foot-washing was carried out by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster. Barbara Whild (ex QARANC) also took part, up until 2016 it was only the male Pensioners who had had their feet washed in Holy Week. It was a memorable event and after the service we had supper in the clergy house with the Archbishop and other members of the clergy.



Helen Andrews



Jean Simmons and Mary Johnston



Audrey Merton BEM meeting the Duchess of Cornwall on a visit to Battersea Dogs Home



Maundy Thursday foot-washing

The second memorable event was attending Westminster Abbey on the evening of 30th June to commemorate the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme, the Queen and Prince Philip attended. At 23:30 that evening three male Pensioners and myself undertook a 15 minute vigil at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, it was truly moving.

October, November and December are my busiest time of year; visiting schools, Remembrance weekend, nine carol services in the Wren Chapel where I am a Chapel Attendant. Sometimes there are not enough hours in the day but being busy keeps your mind active and physically fit. In October I also managed to attend a fantastic WRAC Dinner Club weekend, congratulations to the committee. 2017 marks the 325th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Hospital Chelsea.



Joan McLoughlin at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION TOUR OF THE NORMANDY BEACHES

Helen Morse

I was very lucky to be accepted as an ATS representative on a Not Forgotten Association Battlefield Tour of the Normandy Beaches in October 2016 and I was accompanied by Virginia Hopson. On arrival at the Union Jack Club on 11 October we had a welcome reception and a summary of the tour that we would be doing. The next morning we departed from the Union Jack Club for our journey to Dover and the crossing to Calais where we arrived at 12:45. The coach took us to the Mercure Hotel Caen, where we would be based for the duration of the tour. We were extremely fortunate to be under the guidance of Colonel Piers Storie-Pugh and Rosie Thompson along with a few volunteers from the Not Forgotten Association.



Visiting the Normandy beaches

On Thursday 13 October we departed from the hotel for a visit to Juno Beach. Having stood and looked at the mass of water we tried to visualise what it would have been like for the troops trying to reach the beaches through the water and to realise that the Germans were still around them. After a coffee break we carried on to Gold Beach where we were told about the exploits of CSM Stan Hollis who was awarded the VC for his actions in attacking a German pillbox on Gold Beach. After lunch we moved on to Arromanches and the 'Port Winston' Mulberry harbour, followed by a visit to Longues Battery near the village of Longues-sur-Mer. We then travelled on to Bayeux to visit the Memorial Museum of the Battle of Normandy where we saw some of the equipment that was used. From there we visited the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Bayeux.



Cafe Gondree Pegasus Bridge

On Friday 14 October we visited Sword Beach and the Hillman bunkers at Colleville-Montgomery. We visited the Cafe Gondree for coffee, then on the Melville Battery followed by a visit to

Pegasus Bridge for lunch. After this we travelled to Ranville War Cemetery where the Colonel asked if I would read out the citation for a young soldier in his early 20's who was awarded a VC. At the end of the citation the Colonel asked if someone could produce a VC - lo and behold Virginia said 'I have found this in my pocket'. It was a replica which made us all realise how sad that citation was, my tears were not far away but in the true spirit of all service members I stood the test.



Helen Morse reading a VC citation in Ranville War Cemetery

On the tour there were some special highlights and so many incredible moments. Amongst the group was a Royal Navy veteran who carried a letter with him from his mother, asking him to try and visit the grave of her 20 year old brother at Heremenville as no one had ever visited it. I think he had accepted that this would not happen, but unknown to any of us our guide, Colonel Storie-Pugh, had decided to take us to the cemetery. The veteran was speechless but he managed to take some pictures of the grave to give his mother.

There were so many things to see and the imprint on our minds will, I am sure, live with us forever. Virginia and I are both very grateful to the Not Forgotten Association for allowing us the chance to visit Normandy.

ANTI AIRCRAFT BATTERY BUTT FARM BEVERLEY

Dennis Chapman



ATS manning a Command Post of identical design to Butt Farm © IWM (H32337)

In World War 2 almost a thousand Anti Aircraft Batteries were built in the UK. However only about 60 survive with any remains that are considered by English Heritage to be well preserved enough to be of national importance. The Battery at Butt Farm, Beverley is one of these and has been listed as a Scheduled Monument by English Heritage. Once it became redundant in the 1950's, most of the ancillary buildings were removed but the Gun Site, comprising 4 Gun Emplacements and a Command Post were simply abandoned. They remained unused and inaccessible and became overgrown with 60+ years of vegetation growth. This was until 2014 when the Farm changed hands and the new farmer, Oliver White, recognised the important piece of military heritage he had acquired. With the help of volunteers, in particular a local Scout Group, he set about clearing the site and revealing the wartime structures once again. Historic England have become actively involved in the project and it is hoped that in 2017 they will finance further clearance and carry out essential works to preserve these remarkable buildings. This should then enable the Battery to be available for the general public to have accompanied visits.



Aerial photo taken in 1945 showing the whole Battery with, to the left, the 4 Gun Emplacements set in a semi circular arc around the oblong Command Post

Research has been carried out into the wartime history of the site and it appears this was a mixed Battery which was also used for training purposes. Therefore, at any one time during its operational life there would have been in excess of 300 personnel on the Site. About half of these would have been Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) serving as Spotter, Height Finder Operators, Telephonists, Radar Operators, Cooks, Predictor Operators, Clerks, etc. We are very keen to make contact with anyone who may have served at Butt Farm, or their relatives, to hear their recollections. We also welcome hearing from anyone with any knowledge or experience of other Anti Aircraft Batteries as our team of volunteers are keen to obtain any relevant first or second hand experiences to help in their understanding of the workings of a Battery. This can then be shared and passed on to our visitors, as part our informative tours.



Command Post



Gun Emplacement

Butt Farm Anti Aircraft Battery must be regarded as one of the best preserved examples of its kind and one of the very few remaining where public access is available. As a trial run, the Battery was opened for public tours in September 2016 as part of the Heritage Open Days weekend. In 2017, it is the intention for the Site to be developed and promoted as an educational facility. Also in 2016, Butt Farm opened a Caravan and Camping Site on the working farm which has generated a lot of interest in the Battery from visitors. The website can be accessed on www.butfarm.co.uk.

If you wish to make contact you can reach Dennis Chapman either by email on dennischapman@dennischapman.karoo.co.uk, by phone on 07472762921 or in writing to 17 North Street, Anlaby, Hull, HU10 7DD.

GIBRALTAR Felicite Vosper



Inscription on pew end in King's Chapel, Gibraltar

ALL IN THE SAME BOAT Debs Ashton



Are you ex HM Forces they asked?

Do you have a disability, injury or mental illness? Want to join an inspirational group of men and women in a sport?

Yes, yes and yes I answered and I haven't looked back since...

Purple Warriors is a Dragon Boat Club, created specifically for serving and retired members of HM Forces who have some form of disability or impairment as a result of their service. Purple Warriors has been formed to give individuals the opportunity to take up a new sport, to train (hard!) and then to compete – on equal terms – against club dragon boat crews from around UK (who will probably have no impaired paddlers!).
www.purplewarriors.org



Training in an 01 on the river



Purple Warriors out training in a 10 man boat (normally race in a 20 man)

19240 SHROUDS OF THE SOMME

Editor: Article by Mel Bradley published on www.thesomme19240.co.uk, photos by Jackie Naysmith MBE.

Bristol Cathedral hosted the breathtaking 'Shrouds of the Somme' during a week (11-18 Nov 16) which marked both Armistice Day and the end of the Battle of the Somme. 19,240 hand-stitched shrouded figures each representing a serviceman of the British Empire who died on the first day of the Somme were laid out on College Green in the centre of Bristol. 80,000 visitors came to see the shrouds, including one couple who travelled 250 miles from North Yorkshire having seen it on the news.



The sight of so many 'bodies' was overwhelming and moved many to tears. Names of the 19,240 were listed on boards along with the names of 53,000 others killed at the Somme – one of the bloodiest battles in history. Somerset artist Rob Heard who took three years to complete the shrouds said, "the response from the public has been incredible. I really feel this brings home the scale of the loss to people, but still represents each soldier as an individual – something which is so important to relatives, even several generations on."



The project relied heavily on support from 6 Rifles, Bristol Port Authority and BT Openreach who provided volunteers throughout. Over £16,000 was raised for the Bristol branch of SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity which supports servicemen, veterans and their families in times of need. Rob hasn't finished yet – he plans to create a shroud for each of the 72,246 British servicemen killed at the Somme whose bodies were never recovered, "in some small way I would like to bring them home," he says. Provided he can find the funding, Rob hopes to complete this enormous challenge in time to display the shrouds in November 2018 to mark the Centenary of Armistice Day. "It would be like nothing else – quarter of a kilometre of bodies laid out in rows, hopefully somewhere central where it will be seen by hundreds of thousands of people, reminding them of those who made the ultimate sacrifice."



Mike Donne (left) of ssafa and Nicky Tulloch (right) of the Alzheimer's Society present a new laptop to WRAC veteran Sophia Krywyszyn at her home near Cockfield in County Durham.

A Veteran who helped military families cope with the challenges of Army life has received a helping hand from the ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund after being diagnosed with dementia.

During her 22-year military career, Warrant Officer Sophia Krywyszyn supported families at times of peace and conflict, ensuring their mental and physical needs were taken care of. Her welfare role included tackling issues such as domestic violence, and breaking tragic news to the loved ones of soldiers serving in campaigns including the Falklands War.

When Ms Krywyszyn, 61, was diagnosed with dementia in 2015 she never considered approaching a military charity for help, but was delighted when the Alzheimer's Society did so on her behalf. Nicky Tulloch, one of the Alzheimer's Society's dementia advisors, was concerned Ms Krywyszyn could become isolated in her rural home at High Lands, near Cockfield in Teesdale, County Durham. And when she discovered her client's laptop was not working, she contacted the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (ssafa) for help.

"ssafa carried out an assessment and arranged for a replacement laptop," said Mrs Tulloch. "It's wonderful to have achieved this positive outcome. Sophia will be able to use the laptop over the winter months for shopping and to talk to friends and family. It's also great to work in partnership with another agency."

Ms Krywyszyn said: "The laptop means I can stay in touch with my family through Skype and email. I also hope to get some special games to exercise my brain. I know what dementia is and how it can affect people. My mum had it and I looked after her for 14 years. I want to stay positive. I have my down days of course, but my dogs always cheer me up."

Ms Krywyszyn, originally from Scunthorpe in Lincolnshire, joined the Women's Royal Army Corps in 1972 and initially served as a driver.

Mike Donne, chairman of the ssafa County Durham branch, said the charity had secured funding for the laptop from the ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund.

Editor: With thanks to The Northern Echo (published 08 Nov 16) and with the permission of all individuals.

Who is eligible for help?

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

Are there any other criteria?

Yes, you must be in need of financial help.

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

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

"I would just like to say a huge thank you for your help. I received a new mattress and cooker. I have also been awarded a maintenance grant which has come as a lovely surprise and will; be most helpful. Thank you once again for the assistance from the ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund – you have been fantastic". £80 for a mattress, £260 for a cooker and £34 per week maintenance grant.

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	house repairs
house adaptations	central heating/boilers
electrically powered vehicles	carpets and flooring
electric wheelchairs	clothing
riser-recliner chairs	furniture
stairlifts	white goods
disability aids including electric beds	removal expenses
annual maintenance grants	rent, deposits and bonds
care home fee topups	funeral expenses
general needs	priority debt
respite breaks	food vouchers
travel and transport	

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 free via the NHS.

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 means-testing 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 thank your Association for your donation which enabled ssafa to purchase a riser-recliner chair for me. I have been using this for over a month and feel the benefit of it already. Once again, thank you very much for your gift". £800 riser-recliner chair.

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 annual 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.

A wife writes, I want to thank your Benevolent Fund for the generous contribution via ssafa towards the installation of a stair-lift for my husband and myself. Without this funding he would remain a prisoner in his bedroom as we were unable to carry him downstairs all the time. It has made a great deal of difference to his life, even though with his dementia and other complex medical issues he did not realise it, and the fact is, my life is a lot better for it. Thank you so much for your help". £1,000 for a stair-lift.

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

WELFARE SPOTLIGHT ADMIRAL NURSES

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

Admiral Nurses are specialist dementia nurses who provide practical and emotional care and support for family carers, as well as the person with dementia. The Royal British Legion has teamed up with Admiral Nurses (a service run by Dementia UK) to provide expert support, information and advice to ex-Service personnel with dementia, as well their families.

What do Admiral Nurses do?

Admiral Nurses provide support to families throughout their experience of dementia that is tailored to their individual needs and challenges. They provide families with the knowledge to understand the condition and its effects, the skills and tools to improve communication, and provide emotional and psychological support to help family carers carry on caring for their family member.

The service includes:

- Skilled person-centred assessments of the needs of the carers, families and individuals with dementia.
- Practical advice and information on dementia, its impact and how to cope.
- Psychological support to help family carers understand and deal with their feelings.
- Helping Carers to develop and improve skills in care giving.
- Therapeutic, educational and social support carers group.
- Guidance on eligibility for other Legion support and services.
- Referrals to other appropriate services.
- Advocacy support.

How do I get help?

To use the Admiral Nurse Service, the person with dementia or their carer must be a beneficiary of the Royal British Legion. The Royal British Legion Admiral Nurse Service currently only operates in Lancashire, West Midlands and Somerset/Hampshire. If you do not live in any of these areas, Admiral Nurses can still provide information and support through one of their regional centres.

Contact Admiral Nurses.

For more information about the Admiral Nurses service in any of these regions, please call the appropriate number below:

Lancashire/West Midlands helpline: 0845 257 9406

Somerset helpline: 01823 218443

Hampshire helpline: 02382025787

For more information direct@dementiauk.org or phone 0800 888 6678

THE 100 YEAR SOLO WALK 1917-2017 Marg Davies



To mark the centenary of the formation of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), later renamed the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC) I am undertaking a 100 mile solo walk to raise funds for the WRAC Association and Cancer Research UK.

WRAC LIONESSES 5th ANNIVERSARY FUNDRAISING EVENT Asda Foundation Hull 10k Sunday 18th June 2017



Hull will be the City of Culture in 2017 so why not join the WRAC LIONESSES team as a runner, walker or supporter in Hull for their 5th Anniversary? For more details contact Wendy Hooton on wendyhootonski@aol.com, on Facebook or via the WRAC Association Tel: 0300 400 1992.

Fundraising has already begun, which this year will be for the WRAC Association only. With grateful thanks to the WRAC Dinner Club for allowing us to raffle 2 items which had been donated by WO2 Wynne Pickard and WO1 Pat (Budgie) Rosewell, we raised £220. Our winners were Vinnie Vincent and Debbie Kay.

In 2016 we raised over £12,000 with Gift Aid and hope to achieve the same in 2017. To sponsor us online go to www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/wraclionesses5, all donations gratefully received.

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.



The walk will start on 13th March 2017 at the WRAC Association Plot, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire. Using the canal towpaths of the Trent & Mersey, Birmingham & Fazeley, Coventry, Oxford, Grand Union and Stratford Canals, I will complete my 100 mile journey on 17th March at the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal Basin in time for the WRAC Association AGM and WAAC/QMAAC Centenary Dinner.

If you can, please donate via my
Virgin Money Giving fundraising page
<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MargaretDaviesWRAC>
For more information email me at 43margied1@gmail.com

ABERDEEN **Joan Bartlett**

Greetings from a very cold Aberdeen where we are still ticking over. At the time of writing our Christmas lunch is but a few days away but I feel safe in saying "we enjoyed ourselves". Three members from Fife & Tayside were due to come and join us which we were very pleased about.

The Scottish AGM in Perth was most enjoyable and the talk given by Ali Brown was informative, the Q&A at the end cleared up a few points. The meal and service from the staff was excellent as usual and Mhairi Irving, Moira Thom and I enjoyed our day. The trophy was won by Aberdeen this year and will take pride of place at the lunch table, it's the first time I've won anything arty crafty. It was also nice to see Lady Martha Bruce back in her appointed role saying Grace. We wish all Association members good health and companionship in 2017.

BIRMINGHAM **Babs Anderson**

Birmingham Branch are living the life. If there are any events in the offing we are there like a shot, consequently we have barely recovered from one thing before we are onto the next. We have been happy to welcome June Hopkins into our Branch since the last Lioness. She has already settled in with us and getting involved in all aspects of Branch life. We have had quite a long list of ladies occupying the sick bay but everyone seems to be recovering nicely from various operations and treatments. Birmingham Branch's Bionic Babes will be back on the team sheet very soon.

Four members of the Branch made it over the finishing line in the Olympic Stadium having completed the Great Newham London 10K Run. Times became unimportant as we all encouraged each other to complete the course. The route was undulating, which means more ups and downs than we like, but we managed to get the whole contingent of 50+ round and raised a whopping amount of money. This year we are tackling the Hull 10K.

In September thirteen of us gathered in Stratford-upon-Avon for a jolly day together. Jules Calder had arranged for us to have lunch in a lovely place called Fourteas. It was all done out on the theme of the forties and it seemed that they had paid attention to every detail. We all got a bit of discount using our Defence Discount cards so we were very pleased. A pleasant ride along the river followed by an ice cream and a mooch around the shops finished off the day nicely. Some of us used our bus passes to get there so the trip was a bargain for us. This is one day out we plan to do again.



Enjoying Stratford-upon-Avon

Our regular Quarterly Pizza Night in September was another jolly affair as we were joined by 4 members of Tamworth Branch. It was a fun filled night as usual, made more special by having guests. There was a great turnout of Branch members for the annual Northern Ireland Remembrance service at the NMA. It was nice to catch up with members of other Branches who had also turned out. There were ladies from as far as Glasgow, Newcastle and Leeds. Despite the mizzling weather we all looked very smart. As expected, members of the Branch who attended the WRAC Dinner Club weekend had an absolute ball. There was singing, dancing and laughing our socks off. Roll on next year.



N Ireland Remembrance at the NMA

A group of us gathered for the Armistice Day Service on Friday 11 November at the Hall of Memory in Birmingham. It was well attended by members of the general public too. Obviously, we mustered in a local pub for lunch after the veterans had dismissed and enjoyed each other's company for an hour or so. Later on, we were thrilled to see that the event was covered on local TV news and we were all in shot. Autographs are available for a small consideration. A good number of Brum Branch paraded past the Cenotaph in London on Remembrance Sunday. The Royal taking the salute on the day was HRH The Prince of Wales. Our families and comrades not marching were all very pleased to see the amount of coverage we received this year. They were able to spot each of us as the camera lingered on us.



Brum Branch at the WRAC Dinner Club

Our famous Christmas Jumper Bash went off with a bang at the beginning of December. It was fun and laughter from the start and everyone had a great time. We were pleased to welcome Ali Brown, Sue Westlake, Maggie Purkis, members from Hereford and Leicester & Notts Branches and our special birthday boy, John Dolphin. A few people scratched their card from Santa to discover that they had won a couple of pounds so that was a bonus. Joyce Nichols from Hereford Branch won the champagne and seemed quite happy about it. There also appeared to be raffle prizes for all those present so we saw lots of smiling faces.



Christmas Jumpers

Members of Brum Branch were invited to attend the Not Forgotten Association's Christmas Lunch in Solihull. The ladies had a lovely time as usual and look forward to receiving another invite next year as their behaviour was impeccable. Some of the members managed to finish the day off with a pizza at the quarterly meet-up. By the time you read this 20 members will have attended the pantomime in Birmingham "oh yes, they will". If last year is anything to go by we will have a lovely Chinese meal and then laugh ourselves silly at the antics on stage.

We are looking forward to the WAAC/QMAAC Centenary Dinner and WRAC Association AGM on 18 March. Hopefully, we will meet up with many of our friends and get down to some serious reminiscing and tear inducing laughter, see you there. Remember - you can count of Brum Branch, we have an abacus.

BOURNEMOUTH

Val Wright

Our previous report went AWOL on its way to the Editor, so this is a double report. Bournemouth Branch is getting slimmer each year, but we are still here. We have the names of 27 members on our books, but only a few of those are still able to get to meetings. Sadly, in 2016 we said our last farewells to Kathleen Brownbill (89), Connie Deakin (98), Margaret Fox (94), Paddy Jefferis (96) and Mary Myles (91). We learn so much about members at their funerals that we wish we had known beforehand.

At the AGM in November 2015 Carol Stephenson retired from her role as Chairman, and Jillian Hurst was elected to take her place. We finished 2015 with our Christmas Lunch at the Mayfair Hotel in Bournemouth, enjoyed by 15 members and one guest. We had a parking corner for Rollators, which indicates our members' determination to keep going!

We had a very successful Spring Lunch in April 2016 attended by 19 members and guests. We were delighted that Col Nan Robertson was able to join us. In June Jillian gave us a most interesting talk on the Fromelles War Graves, from their formation up until the present day. Unfortunately we were unable to be represented at the S&SW Area Reunion in May, hosted by Bristol Branch but we trust that other Branches were able to enjoy the event.

We are very pleased that Freda Lyon and Margaret Drew were awarded the WRAC Association's Mention in Dispatches. They both served for many years on the branch committee, holding various roles during this time and were invaluable in their support in helping the newer committee members. Pearl Penny was awarded the Bletchley (and Outstations) Commemoration Badge, together with a Certificate signed by Theresa May.

Our Branch was represented by Lois Taylor at the Bournemouth Commemoration of the start of the Somme offensive in 1916. The service commenced at 0730, in line with when the whistled command was given to "go over the top". In July we had our Summer Lunch, followed by our 'summer recess' when Bournemouth fills up with members' families and tourists generally. In September Col Nan Robertson, who is a branch member, talked to us about her most interesting career in the WRAC, which provoked much lively discussion at the meeting.



Lois Taylor, Bournemouth Commemoration of the start of the 1916 Somme offensive

In November Lois Taylor laid the Bournemouth Branch Wreath at the Remembrance Service in Poole. She is pictured on page 43, wearing her late husband's medals, together with Councillors David Brown and Sandra Moore. At our AGM in November, there were only six members present, due to ill health and mobility problems. However, a plan to save the branch yet again was proposed and unanimously agreed by all. On 14 December we enjoyed our Christmas lunch at the Lynton Court Premier Inn in Boscombe.

From February 2017 we shall meet monthly (except January and August) at 12:30 at the Lynton Court Premier Inn in Boscombe. The monthly meetings will be informal in the bar, but we shall sit down to lunch together every third month. Anyone visiting the area is welcome to join us any time.

BRISTOL

Jackie Naysmith MBE

In 2016 it was decided that, for the first time, we would cancel meetings in July and August, mainly due to members being on holiday. It is something we will repeat in 2017 as it proved very successful. We did however meet in August for our annual Fish & Chips at Weston-super-Mare, this coincided with our Chairman's birthday and made it special for her. The weather was good and 20 members attended.

In September we were planning for our AGM in October and hoping that we could encourage more members to join the Committee. At our October AGM we did have 3 members join the Committee, Officers were elected and there was no change in the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The meeting was well

attended which is always good. A committee meeting was held and it was good to receive input from those members who had joined us. Planning was for our December meeting, when we would be having a Bring and Buy, Christmas nibbles and a Raffle. We also decided on our meetings for 2017. Our main plan was for our Annual lunch in Feb and the theme we would have. Plans were made for meetings up to and including June when we always honour HM Birthday. Newsletters have been sent to members informing them of our future events. I think we are going to be quite busy. Sadly due to age and illness our ATS members are not always able to attend, they have been so supportive and in turn we are organising for them to still come to our Annual Lunch.

Our December meeting was busy with the Bring and Buy and our Christmas Nibbles (the table was laden!). Sadly one of our members, Pat (Stevie) Wiles, is moving house so our loss is Colchester's gain, we presented her with a Bristol Blue mug. Although she had a distance to travel to our meetings Pat always made the effort and her support was appreciated.



Pat (Stevie) Wiles

Unfortunately for the first time there will be no representation at the Association 2017 AGM, due to the location and expense. We are sure that Branches that are able to attend will have an enjoyable time. We look forward to receiving information afterwards.

On behalf of Bristol Branch I'd like to thank each and every one who have given their support to the Branch over the past year, our Area Reunion was brilliant. May I also thank our Association Trustees and Members of Council, Secretary and Editor, Finance Officer, Benevolent Fund Secretary and Office Manager for their continued commitment for our benefit. Best Wishes for 2017 from members of Bristol Branch.

BURY BRANCH **Susan Feeney**

As a Branch we found ourselves selling Poppies for 2 weeks in Marks and Spencer and Debenhams in Bury, with our members doing what they could. The automatic doors in Debenhams were broken so this meant we were so cold it felt like we were in the Arctic, hopefully by next year they will have fixed them or will move us somewhere warmer! The totals have not been finalised yet for the Bury area but we have been told we managed to collect around £6,000.

On Remembrance Sunday seven of us marched proudly through Bury Town Centre with the veterans, this was a very moving morning and thankfully the weather was fine (see page 43). As we got into December it was time again for Christmas Lunch,

we had a very good meal and Secret Santa and was well attended. The following night the girls from Oldham met up for their monthly meal so all in all a lot of food was consumed.



Christmas Lunch in Bury



'Toby' Christmas meal in Oldham

As the year drew to a close we found we didn't manage to do as much as we wanted to due to members having other commitments, however 2017 will find some of us going to the Centenary Dinner in Stratford-upon-Avon and to the WRAC Dinner Club. We're also planning Afternoon Tea and an extra Christmas Lunch at The Midland Hotel.

CAMBRIDGE **Josephine Teague**



Five members of the Cambridge Branch met for a fantastic Christmas Lunch on 1st December at the Gonville Hotel in Cambridge. The lunch was attended by Jean Farrington, Fay Warnes Wendy Hooton, Avril Williams and Josephine Teague. The food was excellent and the chef, Hans, came to the table twice to make sure we were enjoying the meal. He is the only chef in Cambridge who can make sugar spun baskets to decorate the desserts. We met at 12:30 and were still chatting and eating till nearly 4pm. Good food and excellent company to start the Christmas period.

CANTERBURY

Jenny Smith

As I have recently taken over the role as secretary from Sue Foulks, she advised me to tell you a little about myself - so here goes! In 1967 I joined the WRAC, after spending my childhood in a small country village in Shropshire. There was no cinema, pub or restaurant, but we did have a well stocked village shop and the local bus came through the village once a week to take us to the nearest market town. So as you can imagine I was a little 'green' when I arrived in Guildford!

After training I was put in charge of the ration store which meant daily visits to Aldershot to collect our order/quota and meet up with the men collecting for their camps, where some bartering would take place. I left Guildford as a Corporal when I married and moved to Aldershot, where we lived for the next 7 years. I moved back to Shropshire with my two daughters and in 1980 I joined the local TA unit. Due to the gap in my service, I had to enter as a Private and my first parade within weeks of joining was for HM The Queen and the presentation of our new Gideon. In 1983 when I left the TA I had reached the rank of Sergeant, so that's me in a nutshell!

Some Branch news before I go, in November Mrs Audrey Doddman passed away aged 95. She was a WAAF associate member for many years and an active member of our monthly meetings, she will be sadly missed by us all.

Thank you for a wonderful meal and great company on 7th December for our Christmas lunch at the Millers Arms in Canterbury. We will next meet on Wednesday 5th April 2017 at 1pm at Newport Court, Cowdrey Place, Old Dover Road, CT1 3PB. We are also to be joined by members of the East Kent WRNS & WRAF associations, so please do come and join us and help keep one of the remaining branches in East Kent in existence. If you want any more information please give me a ring on 01843 833867.

On behalf of everyone, I would like to thank Sue for the last 15 years service as our secretary. Her hard work and support, will be big shoes I have to try and fill. Now all that is left for me to wish you all a very prosperous 2017.

CARDIFF

Karen Francis

Cardiff Branch is a very friendly group which was formed in the summer of 2015; our meetings started in August of that year and have continued since, with between six and sixteen ladies attending every month. We meet at the Royal British Legion Club, the Earl Haig, in Whitchurch (23-25 Penline Rd, Cardiff CF14 2AA).



Armed Forces Day, Caerphilly

Members of our group have attended various events throughout the year including the WRAC Dinner Club in Dudley, the Wales & West Midlands Area Reunion in Shrewsbury, the Patron's Lunch in London, the National Service of Remembrance in London and others. On Armed Forces Day, Saturday 25th June, seven of us marched with service personnel and other veterans at Caerphilly; it was a chilly day but the rain just managed to hold off until after the Drum Head Ceremony and then it poured down as the public enjoyed the military displays, music and refreshments. With an estimated ten thousand spectators the event was both moving and exciting; it will be held in Caerphilly again next year but may move back to Cardiff thereafter.



Bowling in Cardiff

Our August 'meeting' was held at the Hollywood Bowl in Cardiff Bay and was enthusiastically attended by a dozen or so of us who, divided into two teams, showed admirable competitive spirit in trying to out-bowl one another. The event was such fun and so successful that an informal motion was proposed, seconded and carried - that we repeat the activity in the future!

A little further afield, ten intrepid souls ventured all the way to Bletchley Park on the 24th September. We travelled up the night before and spent a very jovial evening having dinner and drinks at the Campanile Hotel and being entertained by a couple of local characters who will not be easily forgotten! The following day we went to the Park and spent several hours looking around the many exhibits and visiting the numerous huts and offices wherein members of the Government Code and Cypher School, including the now famous Gordon Welchman and Alan Turing, changed the course of World War II. It was an impressive and memorable outing and, given that our tickets are valid for free re-entry within a year, an experience that will almost certainly be repeated by some of us.



Visiting Bletchley Park

On a more personal note, on the 11th July, our honorary member, Mrs Sylvia Wild (née Cook), was awarded the Legion D'Honneur by the French Consul in Wales, Mme Marie Brousse. A member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service, Sylvia was one of the first women to land on the D-Day beaches as part of Field Marshall Montgomery's 21st Army Group. Sylvia's story is told in her book: 'Woman at the Front: Memoirs of an ATS Girl' which is highly recommended as a fascinating read.

Our first full calendar year came to an end with our Christmas meal. I think we're getting more organised now and we can look forward to 2017 with optimism; if you live in the Cardiff area and would like to join us then email me: ranaridibunda@hotmail.com

CHESTER **Pat Sanders**

Hopefully you have all got over the Christmas and New Year celebrations and did not get snowed in or a roof blown off! By the time you read this hopefully the weather should be starting to get warmer. Once again we have been busy with our outings, we managed an outing every month from May to December in 2016, lucky us. We had a trip out to Shropshire and had a great day betting on the dogs, the driver of our coach wondered what was happening when we all piled on with our trays of eggs. Some of our girls had a lovely holiday in Ireland and enjoyed themselves so much we are planning to go to the Isle of Wight next year. Our canal trip was a resounding success with lovely food, company and glorious weather.



Astronaut!

Sadly we have two members who are now not able to attend our meetings due to ill health; Megan Jones and Doris Wallington two of our ATS ladies, they will be missed as they have both been members of the Branch for many years. Well that is all the news from us; hope to see you at the WAAC/QMAAC Centenary Dinner. If anyone would like to join us at our meeting at Chester Military Museum on the 2nd Monday of the month please contact our Secretary Pat Sanders on 07733270567 or email psand444@btinternet.com

CLEVELAND **Audrey Grainge**

I start my report with the sad news that one of our long standing members has passed away. Gwynne Friday was a founder member of the Cleveland Branch, taking on the position of Secretary a job she kept for almost 25 years until ill health forced her to give up the post. Gwynne still took great interest in the activities of the Branch even when she wasn't able to attend the meetings and managed, with the help of family, to attend the 30th Birthday Celebration in June. She was also Secretary of the Northern Area for many years and was highly regarded by everyone. She also held the post of Secretary to United Services Club in Hartlepool. She was a generous and loyal member until the very end. The last post was played at her funeral which took place on 10th November, our Standard bearer Anne and seven members of the Branch attended. RIP Gwynne, you will be sorely missed.

As usual this year we had our stall on display for Armed Forces Day firstly at Stockton then Middlesbrough. Suzanne Allen took over the job of organising our part in the event, attending the planning meetings beforehand and manning the stalls on both days. Unfortunately due to prior commitments by other members she had to take on quite a lot of the work with just the help of Irene Mclean at Stockton and Jan Landess at Middlesbrough, so a big thank you to them.

In August we had our annual summer outing, we went to Skipton this year. The weather was kind to us and everyone had a great time. Our Expat member, Sylvia Cree, was visiting England so she was able to come too, allowing her to catch up with the rest of the branch. Although no lunch venue was pre-arranged we all managed to descend on the same Fish Restaurant, I think the staff wondered what had hit them such was the hilarity.



Enjoying a Canal trip

Dot Apps attended the Remembrance Parade in London and although she found it very tiring she really enjoyed meeting all the other WRAC and marching in the Parade. Joy Griffiths laid the wreath on behalf of the Branch at Chester Cathedral on Remembrance Sunday.

The funniest outing we had was when we went to a 60's Party and we dressed up as hippies, Pat came as an astronaut and won 1st prize in the fancy dress. Our last outing of the year was to our Christmas Lunch where we were joined by the Wirral Branch had a great time, luckily for us Pat forgot the Christmas Quiz so we had a game of Irish Bingo instead. After an excellent lunch and a humongous raffle we all left weighed down with our raffle prizes. We must have all put on loads of weight considering the number of Christmas parties we have attended.



Summer outing to Skipton

Our wreaths were laid in Middlesbrough by Suzanne Allen and Hazel Adams (see page 42) and in Eston by Maxine Lane and Wendy Wall. Suzanne also marched with the Veterans, well done to her. Jenny Severn went to London to join the Remembrance Day Parade at the Cenotaph. Ann Mahony, our Branch Standard Bearer continues to do a sterling job flying our Standard all over the UK as she regularly attends many parades with The Royal Artillery. In September she carried the Queen's Colours and led the parade at Eden Camp. She has also paraded at Blackpool at a Drumhead service in Remembrance of 100 years of the Battle of the Somme.



Ann Mahony

Ann had a busy November with the Poppy Appeal as did a few other members, Judith Gallacher in Hartlepool and Audrey Grainge in Great Ayton. Ann also attends as many funerals as she is able to, one of which was an ex member Liz Hansen who sadly died in October.

Cleveland Branch continues to thrive, our meetings are well attended and very noisy! Anna Orlinski visited the branch in July and gave us an update on the re-organisation of the new Northern Area. We planned to send 8 members to the meeting in Leeds in January. That just leaves us all from Cleveland Branch to wish you a very happy and successful 2017 in all your Branch ventures.

COLCHESTER

Kerry Warnes

July 31st 2016 saw our get together known as 'seaside havoc' held at Clacton-on-Sea beach. Carole (Vinnie) Vincent and our guest photographer, Jenny Buchanan, invaded the beach early to set up our base camp for the day. The day was attended by our VIP guest Ali Brown, who obviously never got the email regarding the fun games we had planned, which included, dodge ball, volleyball, sandcastle competition and the highly amusing Tug of War! The tourists as well as ourselves were in hysterics at the scene of us competing against each other, as well as the kids trying to help too, which they regretted when Karen Beard fell and crushed them into the sand.



Seaside Havoc!

We all enjoyed the buffet lunch before the games well and truly began, we even managed to do the 22 day push up challenge. On behalf of the branch I would like to thank Ali Brown for not only attending, but for taking part in all of the activities. All in all it was a fantastic day out with great company and brilliant weather.



The next branch meeting was held at the Bricklayers public house. It was great turn out with new and existing members. Yvonne Wilson, Vinnie Vincent, myself, Debbie Green and Gwen Greenwood all attended the WRAC Dinner Club in October. I don't think Debbie or Gwen believed us about how much dancing would take place, but the next morning it became evident with their sore feet and lost voices.

Our Xmas Dinner was held at The Best Western Claydon Country House Hotel in Ipswich on 26th November. It was an awesome night with a great selection of xmas jumpers and hats. There was a free raffle (which seemed never ending) and we all enjoyed the

4 course meal and the party atmosphere. Those of us who stayed at the hotel enjoyed a hearty breakfast before bidding a fond farewell to the guests who travelled great distances to be with us.



Christmas Lunch

The next branch meeting will take place at The Bricklayers public house (our second home) on 4th March 2017, this is our popular meeting place as it is only a 5 minute walk away from the main train station. "Seaside Havoc" will be taking place on 30th July 2017 at Clacton-on-Sea beach (tug of war rematch Ali?), where we will enjoy a Fish n Chip lunch as well as more fun and games. Bring on the summer! We look forward to welcoming new members and hope everyone had a very happy Xmas and New year.

FIFE & TAYSIDE Margaret Selfridge

On 25 August Fife & Tayside Branch, plus three members from Aberdeen Branch, visited the Weeping Window of Poppies at Balhousie Castle in Perth. The majority of us arrived around noon and as afternoon tea was booked for 2 pm we had lots of time to visit the Black Watch Museum situated in the Castle. Then it was on to visit the gift shop where we purchased many souvenirs, especially the boxes of fudge! Afternoon tea in the lovely Copper Beech Cafe consisted of scones, cakes and sandwiches and the best cup of tea I have ever had while dining out. The Castle is well worth a visit if you are visiting or passing through Perth.



Balhousie Castle



Enjoying afternoon tea

The Scottish AGM was held in Perth in late September. Thirty five members attended and WRAC Association Vice President, Ali Brown, ventured over the border to join us. During lunch there was much hilarity as we introduced her to the various Scottish accents. She was interested to learn that between 1965 and 1977 three Selfridge sisters served in the WRAC and suggested we write an article for Lioness.

Our Christmas Lunch and raffle was held at The Salutation Hotel on 5 December. We had 14 members attend, a good turnout considering we are scattered around the countryside. As usual the hotel did us proud with excellent food and service. The Branch meets for lunch the last Thursday of the month in Reid's Bar of the Salutation Hotel in Perth.

GRIMSBY Gail Davy

Grimsby Branch had a memorable day out to see the Poppy "Wave" at Lincoln Castle, part of the Poppy display from the Tower of London. Afterwards we had a look round the shops in Lincoln and a cup of tea in the castle tea shop. As usual a meal was planned, this time fish and chips at the Elite. In August we celebrated Lynne Bradley's 65th birthday with fish and chips at our local restaurant, where the manager gave Lynne a lovely birthday cake.



Lynne Bradley enjoying her birthday celebrations

In September our adventures took us to a donkey sanctuary where we had a lovely couple of hours feeding carrots to a variety of donkeys. All had their own character and pushed each other out the way to get more carrots, some banging on the fencing to get more attention.



Visiting the Donkey Sanctuary

Our AGM was held in October, with all officers being voted in once again, the year's work was reviewed and venues for outings invited for 2017. During November some members helped sell poppies in the shopping centre and Carole carried the Association Standard at the poppy launch. Betty Beeby laid the WRAC wreath on Remembrance Sunday at the Grimsby Cenotaph. At the monthly meeting Monica surprised us with Scones, cream and homemade jam, yummy. The end of November was the Christmas lunch at the Cleethorpes Golf Club once again, the food at this venue is superb and we are booking again for 2017. Our guest of honour was Ali Brown who spoke to us about the work of the Association and to all members individually.



Christmas Lunch

At the last meeting of 2016 we celebrated Christmas with wine and mince pies. We hope you all had a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

HEREFORD Lynda Armstrong

As always it's been a busy period for the Hereford Branch. In August, Sharon Joyce paraded our Branch Standard at Hay on Wye for the Centenary Act of Remembrance for those who fell at the Somme. The parade was well attended by the British Legion and a few of our members. August also saw our annual picnic at Queenswood Country Park, arranged as always by Joyce Nicholls. A fabulous day was enjoyed by our members, families and friends, with plenty of good food and equally good company. The lovely dry weather resulted in a great turn out with an excellent raffle.



Picnic at Queenswood Country Park

In September Miriam Unwin arranged a day trip to Weston-super-Mare for 19 ladies, and a few partners, from our branch. The luxury coach picked up up from various points along the way and dropped us off on the sea front. After a lovely walk along the promenade, we enjoyed a wonderful lunch at Tiffany's on the Grand Pier. We were joined for lunch by 5 members from Torbay's Informal Branch. Post lunch activities involved a dodgem car spectacle followed by a VERY competitive game of crazy golf. The day ended on the beach with a sandcastle competition. Again, there was some degree of competitiveness, involving flags, sea creatures, buckets, spades and shells a plenty. Banter reigned high between the teams, but eventually Mary Woollard and her team came out the worth winners.



The golf team: Ali Brown, Heather Bradbury, Sharon Joyce, Margaret Davies, Lynda Armstrong, Barbara Davies, Mary Woollard MBE

WRAC Dinner Club 2016 was next on our agenda and what a night we all had. Twelve members from Hereford Branch attended and it was enjoyed for the first time by Alison Brown and Mary Woollard. The beginning of October saw a number of our members attending Hereford Courtyard for an ABBA revival show. An excellent night of entertainment and embarrassing singing and dancing by our wilder members.



Hereford Branch at the WRAC Dinner Club
Jo Foster, Joy Harvey, Kath Smith, Ali Brown, Mary Woollard MBE, Miriam Unwin, Heather Bradbury, Margaret Davies, Lynda Armstrong, Norma Heath, Joyce Nicholls

October was also our AGM and it was there that Sharon Joyce took the decision to stand down as our Secretary after being in the position, and doing the job so diligently, for the past 8 years. Subsequently I was voted in and took over the helm so to speak. Mary Nicholls our Branch Chairwoman and one of our branch founder members, was offered the position of President which she accepted.

Remembrance Day saw Sharon Joyce and Jo Foster parade the National and Branch Standards respectively at Hereford. Heather Bradbury laid the branch Poppy wreath on our behalf. A few of our members attended the Cenotaph Parade in London. At our end of year meeting in November Rosemary Jones accepted the position of Branch Chairwoman. December saw many other branch Christmas parties, to which our members were cordially invited. As the Lioness goes to print, our members will have enjoyed their post-Christmas meal which is held at The Greenman, Fownhope.

LANCASHIRE **Gail Newsham**



Enjoying lunch at The Walton Fox 17 September 2016.
L-R: Helen Rolley, Jane Barmer, Sue Brown, Ann Butcher, Sue Barrett, Nancy Holmes, Mags Turner, Lee Telford, Gail Newsham



Christmas Lunch at The Walton Fox Saturday 10 December

LEEDS **Pat Harpin**

We had a very quiet six months with attendance at meetings falling due to the ATS ladies who have always supported the Branch finding it difficult to travel. We have lost another member this year Lucy who had served in the WRAF during the War passed away in October. Lucy had been a regular member until ill health prevented her from coming to meetings, she will be sadly missed by us all.

We had a very enjoyable Lunch in the Queens Hotel, Anna our new Area Chairman visited and gave us an insight into the way forward for the Association. We are looking forward to another meeting at the Queens Hotel in January and meeting with ladies from the Northern Area. Several ladies attended the Remembrance Parade in Leeds and supported various ex Service events.



I have handed over to a new Secretary, Helen Rowan. She came forward with some new ideas and ways to try to involve younger members who find it difficult to meet during week days. I would like to thank the ladies who have supported me during my time as Secretary and wish everyone a very happy 2017.

LINCOLN

Sylvia Stubbs

On a lovely summer day in August 14 of us attended a BBQ at Nora Jones and Ann Watkiss house. They laid on a lovely spread all topped off with one of Gwyneth Stratten's special trifles. Wine flowed, the sun shone and what a relaxing day we all had.



Summer BBQ

In September, after the usual meeting, we had a lovely shared lunch and then Gwyneth Stratten put on a Beetle Drive. What a time we had, the shouts got louder and laughter resounded around the room until finally a Beetle was born! Some of us had never played the game before and were coached by experts, we all had loads of fun and went home on a high from laughing so much.

In November Beryl Butcher laid a wreath at the Lincoln Memorial on behalf of the branch and Sylvia Stubbs and Marion King marched with the RBL in Mablethorpe, also laying a wreath (see page 43). On 15 November twenty of us had Christmas Lunch at the Methodist Hall we were joined by the Mayor of Lincoln, Yvonne Bodger, and the Sheriff of Lincoln, Hilary Willerton. Yvonne is a former member of the WRAC TA, she was a driver and brought her book for us to see. Every one joined in the spirit of the occasion, we had a lovely lunch and after the mince pies and After Eights were polished off every one pitched in to wash up ready for the games to begin. Again plenty of laughter (no cheating of course), prizes won, Secret Santa gifts given, all too soon it was time to go home. We all left the hall with happy memories of a good day.



Christmas Lunch



LEICESTER & NOTTINGHAM

Sue Slattery

By the time you read this we will be in 2017 with the Christmas festivities well behind us, so may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year. So this is what the branch has been up to: In July Donna (one of our new members) gave a very interesting talk about her 23 years service. Her career was varied and it would be easier to say where she had not served sooner than where she had. It was amazing how she remembered the names of all the places she had travelled to, the number of medals she has said it all. Thanks Donna for sharing with us your many years spent serving your country. Our Branch Standard and members attended a service at Leicester Cathedral to remember the battle of the Somme.

Sadly Irene Bell ex ATS/ WRAC, one of our founder members, passed away in July, 15 branch members attended her funeral on the 29th July.

In August we welcomed Doris Doswell back to our meetings, it's great to see you back again. Our yearly day out at the Syston Sailing Club on the 16th was a great success and the weather was sunny and warm. Thirty members and 15 guests attended, including our new area Chairman and Secretary, Dot Ryder and Chris Corker. The lunch, provided by outside caterers for the first time, proved to be most enjoyable. There followed the usual afternoon cakes provided by Sandra Smith which is very popular with the ladies as they all take large pieces home with them for their tea, also Maurice kept the drinks flowing much to everyone's delight. From the feedback received we'll be using outside caterers again in 2017. The day was enjoyed by all and the success was down to the hard work of Carol and all her team. Sadly we lost Doreen Peters in August, she was ex ATS aged 96.



Sailing Club Lunch

In September our Harvest Festival raised £92 and we welcomed Chris Gardner from Melton Mowbray to the Branch. On 2nd September we attended the funeral of Brian Derbyshire at the request of his wife Chrys who is one of our branch members. The Great Glen RBL Standard carried by Carol and our Branch Standard carried by Lyn, plus 9 ladies, formed a Guard of Honour. Chrys said she felt so proud to see the ladies in green standing to attention as a mark of respect. On Saturday 3rd September 15 members travelled to Grantham for our first East Midlands Area lunch, where we were able to meet new friends from other Branches. Thanks to Dot and Chris for an enjoyable lunch and afternoon, despite the rain!

Also in September our Branch Standard and ladies attended 2 services and parades, first at Somerby with the Parachute Regiment and then the Battle of Britain in Leicester. A visit to the NMA on Tuesday 20th was attended by 14 members and 9 guests, for some it was their first visit. Some of the ladies with restricted mobility found the use of electric scooters a great help as they were able to visit the different memorials to pay their respects. Each person has different reasons to visit the NMA, especially Chrys Derbyshire one of our committee members who had sadly lost her husband Brian a couple of weeks prior to our visit. They had both planned to come together but Chrys, as determined as ever, still wanted to come. For the 3rd month in succession we said goodbye to one of our ATS members, in September it was Jean Harvey.



Joan De-Vall and Lynda Pollard at the NMA

Our AGM was held in October, all officers remain the same apart from Chris Gardner who is now on our committee. Lyn and the Branch Standard, accompanied by Joan De-Vall, attended Jean Harvey's funeral on 5th October. On 23rd October 6 ladies attended a service for the laying up of the Normandy Veterans Association Standard at Leicester Cathedral. On the 29th The Festival of Remembrance at the De Montfort Hall was attended by the Branch Standard and 3 ladies.

In November our Christmas Fayre raised £191. Many thanks to all our members who made donations, also thanks to Pam Hughes and Roz Stewart for bringing the mince pies and biscuits which were washed down by fruit juice and wine. On 6th November the Branch Standard and 4 ladies spent the afternoon at the King Power football stadium for the annual poppy match. We sold poppies before the game, then at half time we marched with other Veterans around the pitch to the applause of 32,000 fans, a very special lump in the throat 15 minutes. Ten members travelled to London to join the rest of our Association ladies for

the march past on Whitehall. The contingent marched off with 2 of our own ex ATS members in their wheelchairs at the front (see page 41), how smart they all looked in green. Well done ladies, you made us all so proud.



Lilian Hollis and Vi Rawlins

A few of our members have suffered ill health over the past months. Some have been in hospital or care homes for a time, with some recovering at home. However the MO has signed them off to return to their duties ASAP! We were glad to have some of them back with us for our Christmas lunch on the 13th December.

MEDITERRANEAN Ann Colclough

This has been a relatively quiet time for the Med Branch. Although Branches in the UK are very generous in their invitations to events sadly the cost of travel from Spain plays an important part in our decisions!

However both Mel and I were at the Dinner Club in October and had a great time. I shared a room with Shirley Taper, a "stranger" who has become a friend through the Association and never seemed to stop laughing. One of my treasured (but scary) memories is Shirley in the Merry Hill Shopping Centre on a Saturday afternoon pushing me through the crowds in my rented wheelchair shouting "look out, woman coming through!" The Yankee Candle shop was the worst, the damage we could have done in there!

Mel and I were also in London in November. I was at the Royal Albert Hall for the Festival of Remembrance on Saturday evening and both of us were with all of our other colleagues at the Cenotaph Parade, a very emotional event. I also have a place booked for the Centenary Dinner Weekend in Stratford-upon-Avon, one of my favourite places. I'm looking forward to the weekend very much, and the chance to be a part of what will be a "historic event!"

I'm glad to say that the Med Branch is slowly but surely increasing in numbers, there are about 10 of us now. Something I know Mel is working hard on is how to get us all together for a "Proper Branch Meeting". We all live a fair distance away from each other, but I know Mel will make something work!

Something else Mel is working hard on is the "Benidorm Babes on Tour 3" which is due to take place in May. I know some of you have already told Mel you would like to come, and she's working hard on trying to find somewhere which will suit both pockets and requirements! We hope to see lots of you then, it's just a few months away, save your pocket money!

NORFOLK **Lyn Hatch**

In August the WRAC/ATS Veterans Norfolk Facebook page was set up with a view to having occasional social get togethers and the chance to catch up with friends. Saturday 1st October saw our first dinner at The Castle Carvery in Norwich where we were joined by 8 members of the ATS. It was a huge success and we welcomed new members that had joined through Facebook, within minutes new friendships had been made and memories of time spent serving in the WRAC shared.



Carol Larkins, Dawn Billman, Jane Fountain, Elizabeth Winter, Susan Seaward, Mary Rezlik, Ann Simm, Marilyn Hodge

Sadly the ATS ladies had decided that this would be the last time they would be joining us and as a thank you Joan Awbery was presented with flowers. For many years Joan has been the driving force of the Norfolk Branch and had recently been recognised by the WRAC Association for all her hard work.



Lyn Hatch presenting Joan Awbery with flowers

OXFORDSHIRE **Christine Townsend**



Oxfordshire Branch enjoying lunch after participating in the Bicester Remembrance Day Parade

PHOENIX **Sheila Johnson**

Diane Lewis kindly agreed to organise our Summer Luncheon on 20 August 2016, attended by 7 members. Once again the venue was the Crewe Arms Hotel, which, apart from its' excellent catering, has the distinct advantage of being an ideal destination for ladies travelling by public transport. With the month of August being high season family holidays, Diane was to be congratulated for bringing the event to a very pleasant conclusion for those able to attend.



Enjoying Christmas Lunch

The Branch membership currently stands at 43 so it was very gratifying that 19 ladies were able to attend our Christmas Lunch, held on 10 December at the Crewe Arms Hotel. Maggie Purkis well and truly braced herself for the task of organising the event in co-operation with Janet Edwards. Janet's fabulous table decorations and goodie bags were exceeded only by her personal charm!

The event was made even more memorable by the presence of five esteemed 'ladies in red', AKA residents of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. Given the composition of the gathering Ali Brown took the view that bonhomie ruled big time and accordingly wished Phoenix Branch continued success with its social events. Best wishes to all Branches for 2017.



Phoenix Christmas Lunch

PORTSMOUTH **Margaret Bush**

Here in Portsmouth we continue to meet once a month, we regularly have around 8-10 attendees but it would be lovely to see some new faces. With that in mind we now have a more permanent meeting place, we will meet at The Royal Pub, 334a Commercial Road, Portsmouth, PO1 4BT at 11am on the 1st Saturday of each month, all are welcome.



We ventured across to the Isle of Wight to meet with Rose one of our ATS members and enjoyed a very nice lunch. Kay one of our ladies from Bognor also joined us as she was enjoying a holiday on the island with her daughter. It was lovely to see you again Kay!



Christmas Lunch

We held our Christmas Lunch at the Maritime Club in Portsmouth and had a very enjoyable afternoon. We hope everyone had a lovely Christmas and best wishes to all for a happy and prosperous 2017.

PLYMOUTH **Jean Cundy-Borge**

What an eventful year 2016 was for the Plymouth Branch. We had a very busy first 6 months with our regular meetings and enjoyable lunch dates. Ruth and Jane were able to enjoy the WRAC dinner club weekend but had to hurry home in order to attend Eileen Morgan's funeral, a sad end to an enjoyable event.

But now for an event which I never thought would happen, at the AGM in September it was decided that the Plymouth Branch would close at the end of 2016. The existing officers will continue to do any necessary work and Ruth will continue to attend The Federation Of Plymouth And District Ex-Services Associations meetings for us, to keep us in touch with future events in Plymouth. We have decided that we will not 'lay up' our Standard.

So, from opening the Branch in February 1978 when our numbers ranged between 20-40 members to our final meeting in November 2016 when only 5 members attended, how sad we were. But paying fees to rent a room for so few seems pointless.

In November a group of our members attended the Remembrance Service in Plymouth. On 9th December twenty one of us attended our Christmas Lunch, including a group of former WRNS who always join us for this celebration.

We are not going to lose touch though, on the 24th January we met for coffee/lunch together in Dingles on Royal Parade. We will meet there again at midday on the 28th February and we will arrange future outings. Anyone who would like to join us can telephone Ruth on 01752 363118 or Jean on 01752 567844, for more up to date youngsters Evon will post details on Facebook.

SHEFFIELD **Brenda Colley**

I feel I should wish everyone a Merry Christmas, but of course you won't be seeing this until after the New Year, so I hope you had a Merry one and all my Good Wishes for 2017. We had 2 meals at our favourite venue in 2016; a Spring Lunch in March and again in October for my birthday.

On 1st July I attended a Service and Parade in Weston Park to dedicate a new Memorial for the beginning of the Battle of the Somme, Chris Spencer was Parade Marshall. The bronze plaque is quite lovely and over two yards long. I learned that day that my Uncle didn't die on the Somme but before he even got there. The KOYLI were sent to Egypt first and he was killed as soon as he landed in France. As a result my Poppy Cross which I place at Westminster Abbey every year had a different inscription this November.

In September three of us went to Grantham for our Area Reunion lunch, a new venue which we enjoyed very much. It was the same day as a Parade at the Sheffield Cenotaph to dedicate a new plaque to our 2nd VC holder. Chris was once again Parade Marshall. Four of us travelled to London for Remembrance weekend, once again a truly remarkable 3 days. For a change 3 of us attended the Service in the Abbey. Only one of us marched but we were out and well positioned in time to watch Iris and the WRAC Association contingent march past



Maureen, Iris and Brenda enjoying the Area Reunion



Iris, Brenda, Jean and Maureen in London

We held our Christmas Lunch on 8th December, at the Novotel as is usual. We had excellent food once again and dancing until we were told "time to leave". Our new member, Cheryl Jones, who joined us in October thoroughly enjoyed it and has fitted straight in with our team. She served for 23 years leaving as a WO2 and has medals for NI, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan and LS&GC.

In the second half of 2016 we sadly lost 2 members, Sandra Childs and Eileen McBride, both are listed in the Last Post section. In addition, Mary Tong, who used to attend regularly and never missed a Christmas dinner (or any of our social gatherings), has gone into a care home. She was with us in 2015 at the Novotel and really enjoyed herself, we raised a glass to her and said how much she was missed.

SHROPSHIRE

Ali McGowan

Hello once again, greetings from the Shire. It hardly seems 5 minutes since I was typing the last report and here we are again. Unfortunately I have to start this report with the sad news of the passing of 2 of our ATS members, Irene Wardrobe and Sadie Morgan. Irene was 95 and regularly attended our meetings and outings when she was able to. I finished last time with a report of our trip on the Severn Valley Railway which Irene thoroughly enjoyed and was pictured tucking into her cream tea with Nancy Tipton. Sadly Sadie hadn't been able to attend our meetings in the last couple of years but liked to keep in touch with what we were doing. Members of the Branch were able to attend both funerals and Sandra Davies took the Standard to Irene's which the family really appreciated.

On 17th August five members of the Branch attended the Chester Branch Annual Canal Trip, and were doubly delighted to be there on the correct day this year! Of course the day had to be finished off with the compulsory visit to a cocktail bar or three. Saturday 3rd September saw Nancy Tipton, Lucy Bowyer, Chris Powell, Debbie Wilson, Sheila Johnson and myself gather at the Tayleur Arms at Longdon-upon-Tern for a delightful cream tea (with prosecco). Our Area Chairman, Maggie Purkis, was also able to join us and Frances Bilton popped in to see us on her way home from work. A really enjoyable afternoon which I am sure will be repeated in the near future.



Enjoying a Cream Tea

October bought around the annual WRAC Dinner Club Weekend held in Dudley. Chris, Debbie, Mel, Sheila and myself attended and a thoroughly good time was had by all. Chris, Debbie, Nancy, Sheila and I also attended Donnington Barracks on 26th October for the REME's race night, I had quite forgotten how good Mess prices were! Although we donated quite a few of the raffle prizes we were able to win most of them back which was quite a result!



Shropshire Branch at the WRAC Dinner Club

In November Sandra and Nancy represented the branch at the local Remembrance Day Parade in Wellington. Chris, Mel, Debbie, Sheila and myself travelled to London and most of us stayed in the Victory Service Club. We attended the Cenotaph Parade and I was so pleased that the coverage of the Association contingent on the television was exemplary this year.



Relaxing after the Cenotaph Parade

Well I think that covers most of our branch's events and outings and that is another year over. The Shropshire Branch would like to wish each and every one of you a happy 2017 and would welcome the chance to meet up with you in the coming year.

SOUTHAMPTON

Jean Doe

Southampton branch has been 'soldiering on' and continuing to hold our monthly meetings but 2016 was a difficult year for us. At one meeting we had an interesting talk from a representative of The Not Forgotten Association, Peter covered a range of topics and we look forward to a follow on in 2017. Jillian Hurst from the Bournemouth Branch of the WRAC Association also came and gave an interesting talk.

A group of us attended the 36th Annual Memorial Service of the Earl Mountbatten Royal British Legion Memorial Branch held on Sunday 4th September at Romsey Abbey. This was followed by tea and cakes at the Legion, a good afternoon. Despite being called Southampton Branch our meetings are held in Eastleigh on the 1st Wednesday of the month. It was always my intention that our Poppy Wreath is laid in various locations around Southampton, so in 2016 we were very happy when Beryl Allison volunteered to do the honours at Eastleigh. I do hope and intend to have photographs in the next issue, we wish everyone a healthy and happy 2017.

STIRLING

Liz Dixon

Hello everyone, hope all are fit and well. Well what have we been up to since we last spoke? We had a wee trip doon the watter aboard the steamship Waverley, sailing down the Clyde on a glorious summer evening in Scotland (10°C). We all arrived to board the ship only to find that one of the younger members had forgotten her ticket, yes you 'Dawn Munday'. Next we all got our bags searched to make sure we were not smuggling in any alcohol, didn't find any on the women did they. Just as well they didn't search husband/partners. All aboard we set sail, myself and Dawn ran for the bar, (they should have had a bar at the end of BFT routes, they would never have been any failures). Once we were fully "loaded" we joined the other at the bow/sharp end. The sensible ones were by now sitting inside with their (hip) flask and pieces, laughing at us outside with our drinks freezing. We sailed along in good form waving to all in sundry as we past. The next couple of months were socially quiet, just our monthly meetings to organize our next venture.



Enjoying the boat trip

Remembrance weekend: A big thank you to Isabel Bodman who represented the Stirling Branch at Falkirk Town for the Festival of Remembrance. Also to Lynn who once again flew the flag for Stirling Branch by attended the Cenotaph Parade down in London. On Saturday 10th December we held our Christmas Lunch at the Allan Park Hotel. Once again the Hotel did us proud with a nice laid out table including the must have "crackers with terrible jokes". My dinner was served and you'll never believe it....they had forgotten to give me sprouts! I wasn't having that, I ended up with a big bowl which I munched through and then had pay back on everyone who laughed.



Christmas Lunch

By the time you read this Christmas will be over and we will be a quarter of the way through 2017. We hope all your dreams come true and the Easter bunny leaves you a golden egg. Cheerio from Stirling.

SUFFOLK

Sheelagh Wilson

Not a lot has been going on in this part of the world. Unfortunately numbers have been quite low recently due to missed buses, various ailments and other appointments, it was however good to see Margaret Shaw again at a recent meeting. Barbara Norton, a great supporter of our group, is now on the mend after a heart attack. My sister, Mairi Hartnell (Brown), was left shaken but not stirred after the earthquakes in New Zealand, fortunately there was no major damage to her property.

We have had the usual quizzes arranged by Sylvia Johnson and myself, and on many occasions put the world to rights. We held our AGM in October resulting in Sylvia and I continuing in our respective roles (keeping everyone under control!). On Remembrance Sunday I laid a wreath on behalf of ATS and WRAC, the service was well attended and the weather sunny.

One year has ended and another one has begun, time certainly flies by the older we get! Take care until our autumn report.

TAMWORTH

Marie Smedley



Lesley Wallace at The Ankerside, Tamworth

Lesley Wallace was spotted having fun raising funds for the 2016 Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. Many of the members of Tamworth Branch were spotted fundraising in the Ankerside Shopping Centre during November. We also held our most successful Annual Poppy Quiz at the RAFA (Flarepath) Club a few days before Remembrance Day.

Remembrance Day saw the Branch in many locations; Vee Moore represented the Branch at St Editha's Church in Tamworth whilst Pat Williams and Lesley Wallace went to London to see the Queen and our fellow Lionesses march down the Mall. Other members of the Branch were on Parade at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas.



Tammy Kirkwood and the Branch Standard at the NMA

Tammy Kirkwood, Ann Gwynne, Nicola Scott, Shirley Gladwin, Christine James and Marie Smedley paraded at the NMA and met fellow Lioness Lesley Murphy. We were also joined on parade by Dunkirk and D Day veteran George Wagner (aged 96) and the feisty Terry Brewer (aged 75) who joined us after the parade for lovely lunch in the Rose Room.



On Parade at the NMA ***(photo courtesy of Jayne Yardley-Gosney)***

All the Ladies of Tamworth & District Branch WRAC Association would like to wish our fellow Lionesses a happy and healthy 2017.

ULSTER

Joan McCabe

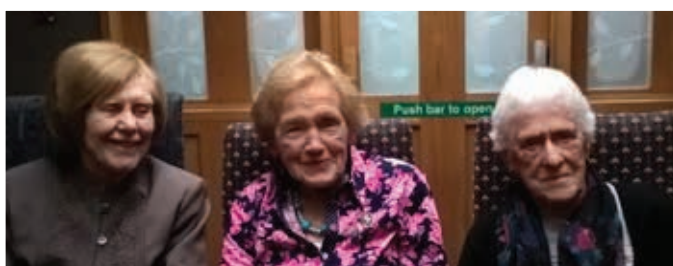
Hello from the Ulster Branch, where did last year go? We met at a local Italian restaurant for lunch and enjoyed catching up with all our news, before heading off to the British Legion in Lisburn where we held our Branch AGM on 10th September. The election of officers took place and all were re-elected, we also decided to add two more committee members to the team. Everyone seemed to have a good day, unfortunately some of the usual members were unable to attend and they were missed.

Sylvia Connaghan and I attended the Garden of Remembrance Service in Belfast City Hall on Monday 7th November, where Sylvia planted two crosses in the WRAC Plot for two of our Branch members, Ruby and May, who have passed. I also planted one for Cpl Channing Day, a local girl from Comber who was killed on patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan on 24th October 2012. Sylvia, Mary Wilson (Our Chairperson who is 87) returned on Sunday 13th November for the Annual Remembrance Service, Sylvia laid the wreath on behalf of the WRAC Association Ulster Branch. It was nice to see her caught on film doing this on the local news that evening. It seems the WRAC Association finally got television coverage, both locally and of course at the Cenotaph in London, which was wonderful to watch.



Christmas Lunch

On Saturday 10th December it was time for our Branch Christmas Lunch, and we ended up going back to a hotel which the Branch has used for many years. It was great to see some brand new faces at the table and I look forward to getting to know them all. We have three Branch members aged 86, 87 and 93, how fantastic to see these ladies turning up at our Branch meetings every time. I had the privilege of sitting beside our oldest ATS member, Robina "Binnie" Crothers. What an eye opener that was as she told me about her duties in WW2, identifying enemy planes through a telescope in order that the Royal Artillery could shoot them down! I felt humbled in her presence and slightly embarrassed that I had never actually taken the time to ask her about her life before that! We really should put these stories in a book of some sort before they are lost forever.



***Binnie Crothers (93), Mary Wilson (87),
Phylis Liggett (86)***



Binnie Crothers ATS

Our afternoon ended much too quickly as life is very busy at this time of year, we all had a fantastic time and we look forward to our next meeting in 2017. I did manage to ask Binnie's niece for a photograph of her when she served in the ATS during the war, and also took a photograph of the three oldest members whose stories we look forward to hearing the next time we meet. May I wish you all a very peaceful 2017.

WIRRAL Pat Sanders

Well what a time we have had this year what with trips out with the Chester Branch, BBQs, holidays to Ireland, the WRAC Dinner Club, lunches with the Royal Signals and Christmas Parties to name but a few. This year we even went to a Pantomime (oh no we didn't, oh yes we did).

Some of the highlights were; the Race Day at Shropshire where the coach driver wondered what was happening when we all tramped out with trays of eggs; the meal at our local pub The Caernarfon, when one of the girls misheard and was actually driving to Caernarfon in North Wales (it was only when she rang and asked what was the name of the pub that we told her to turn around and come back); and of course the WRAC Dinner Club. Pat managed to get to go even though she was in a wheelchair as she fell down the stairs, and no she didn't do it deliberately just so that she could go!



Enjoying the WRAC Dinner Club

This year again we marched in the Remembrance Parade with the Veterans, how proud we felt as we marched behind the band. Sharon Broderick made the trip to London and marched in the Cenotaph Parade, we tried to see her on the TV but couldn't find her. Didn't the girls do us proud.



Wirral Branch Standard on Parade

In October at our AGM Joy Griffiths, who had been our Secretary for the past few years, stepped down and Andrea Jenkins took over the role. We would like to thank Joy for all her hard work and wish Andrea the best of luck. Hopefully 2017 will be just as eventful as this year with our trips out, we are already planning our outings and Andrea will tell you all about them next time. On a closing note Wirral Branch would like to send their congratulations to Sharon Broderick for the award of MBE in the New Years Honours List for services to the police, we are all really proud of you.

WINCHESTER Herme Emary

On 8th September we once again gathered at the Golden Lion for our Branch AGM. Eleven of us gathered and we sat in the main pub area. Unfortunately it was very noisy so most of the AGM was conducted by me walking around the table! I once again sent out the Agenda, which included the Secretaries report and Treasurer's report. The main order of the day was the re-election of officials (which we never got round to) and where and when we were meeting in 2017. Having produced a tick sheet, which included the views of some of those who could not attend, the final choices were quite clear.

On Thursday 10th November eight of us; Herme, Lynn, Kim, JJ, Jane M, Sandy, Margaret and Ray met at ASK for lunch. It's a shame that 4 others who wanted to come were all ill (time of the year) hope everyone is feeling better now. I arrived late (surprise) so things were underway when I arrived, everyone seemed to enjoy their meal.

FACEBOOK EVENTS

Editor: Facebook has enabled former ATS and WRAC comrades to reunite and has spawned many informal regional group get togethers, hopefully some of these will evolve into WRAC Association 'Informal' Branches (see Lancashire listed above). Just to clarify, you don't need to have a formal committee, AGM etc to bring your group under the WRAC Association umbrella, we just need one volunteer to be the main point of contact. We can also contact Association members in your area, who are not on Facebook, to let them know of your group meet ups.

HERTS, BEDS & BUCKS Elaine Forman



Elaine Forman, Val Dixon, Lynne Martin, Carole Mant, Wendy Hooton, Mary 'Rusty' Blake, Rose Morris

A huge thank you to Wendy Hooton for getting the Herts, Beds & Bucks WRAC Association group off the ground. Our first lunch was held on the 16th October 2016 and brought together a fabulous bunch of ladies. We held a second lunch on 8th January at the Six Bells in St Albans. If you live in the area do please join us for our next get together, we have a Facebook group called WRAC (Herts, Beds and Bucks).

STOKE-ON-TRENT



Breakfast meet up 01 October 2016

KENT



Margaret Ahmed Mohammed, Eve Carroll, June Christie and Kay Styles at the White Rabbit, Maidstone on 26 November 2016

AYRSHIRE VETERAN'S BREAKFAST CLUB



Suzanne Fernando (left)



If you live in or around Ayrshire feel free to join our FB Group Ayrshire Veterans Breakfast Club

Branch Meetings

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

Canterbury

When: 13.00 on the first Wednesday of the month (except Jan, Feb, Mar)
Where: Newport Court, Cowdray Place, Old Dover Road, Canterbury, CT1 3PB
Contact: Jenny Smith Tel: 01843 833867

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: Lynton Court Premier Inn, 47 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, BH1 3PA
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 (Informal Branch)

Contact: Jean Cundy-Borge on 01752 567844 or Ruth Jennings on 01752 363118

Portsmouth

When: 11:00 1st Saturday of the month
Where: The Royal Pub, 334a Commercial Road, Portsmouth, PO1 4BT
Contact: Sally Watson Tel: 02392 666712

Southampton

When: 19.00-21.30 on the 1st Wednesday 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 Bell Tel: 07914 936079, 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: Occasional social events
Contact: Lyn Hatch Tel: 07929 070665
Facebook: WRAC/ATS Veterans Norfolk

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

Leicester & Nottingham

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

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: Pam Sussex Tel: 01733 243944.
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.haxbyandwiggintonmethodistchurch.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, phone for details
Contact: Susan Feeney on 07813 313508 or Kath Kirtley on 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 gaildkl@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: Helen Rowan Tel: 07842 772681

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: Leazes End Club, 45-47 Leazes Park Road, Newcastle, NE1 4PG
Contact: Tanya Hall Tel: 07590 323497

Wirral

When: 19.30 on the 1st Wednesday of the month
Where: TA Centre, Chetwynd, Wexford Road, Birkenhead, L43 9TF
Contact: Andrea Jenkins Tel: 07808 648509 or email andrea-jenkins1@hotmail.com

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

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month
Where: Earl Haig Memorial (Royal British Legion) Club, 23-25 Penlline Rd, Cardiff, CF14 2AA
Contact: Karen Francis on ranaridibunda@hotmail.com or phone 07702 618100

Gloucestershire (Informal Branch)

If you are interested in joining a newly forming Gloucestershire Branch please contact Frances Fairclough on fran.f@btopenworld.com or 07739 344846

Hereford

When: 19.00 on the last Tuesday of the month
Where: The Herdsman, 54 Widemarsh, Hereford, HR4 9HG
Contact: Lynda Armstrong Tel: 01443 837592

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: The Moat House, 35-36 Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7QQ
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: Margaret Selfridge Tel: 01738 639882

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 melpil@britvegas.com
Tel: 0034 9658 78963 Mob: 0034 622 036333

Perth (Australia)

Contact: Ann Page ann.page3@bigpond.com

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.**

ATS Babs Anderson

Recently, I was in the coffee bar of my Church (I do the garden) when a lady called me over whilst she rummaged in her handbag. "I've been looking out for you," she said. "I was given these photos by my cousin's son and thought you would enjoy seeing them. That is my cousin, Alma Jeavons on the right and I believe she is in the long squad in the Bristol photo." Obviously, I was thrilled to see them and I hope you are as interested as I am. These photos were destined for the skip but Alma Jeavons' son recalled that my friend had mentioned me and my Army connections.



Alma Jeavons (right) in Oswestry



Bristol 1943

WRAC 1950s



Middle row, far left Elizabeth Waller nee Sloan (obituary page 58)



The 3,000th girl to enrol in the F.S. in Birmingham is the girl in the middle here. The Central recruiting Office in James Watt Street this morning for her training. "Report," "Somewhere in England." She was an ex-serviceman, 17½-year-old Joyce Perkins, of 3, Ryeon Road, Bordesley Green East, and the one thing she wants to do, as she told a "Mail" reporter, is "to get on a uniform and do something useful in the war." So she volunteered. Already Joyce's 25-year-old sister, Laura, is in the W.A.A.F.'s, and her father, Mr. H. H. Perkins, served with the Royal Corps of Signals in the last war. "Mum and dad will be felt at home now," she said, "but they are glad Laura and I are serving the country, and they know we can look after ourselves." Joyce has mastered, among other things, French and German, which she learned at Solihull Grammar School.

3000th ATS recruit in Birmingham



Guildford 1951



STAFF SERGEANTS & SERGEANTS COURSE CAMBERLEY 1967 Madge Cole



Madge Cole, far left, 2nd row from rear.
Anyone recognise themselves?



Camberley Sgts Course 1970



176 Pro Coy RMP, 1972 (181 Provost Company WRAC),
Londonderry Meeting Lord Carrington



Left to right—L/Cpl. Marianne Phillips, L/Cpl. Shiels
Garnham, L/Cpl. Carol Black, Cpl. Denise Scrivener,
Cpl. Judy Ward, L/Cpl. Brenda Walton, Cpl. Lynn
Loche, L/Cpl. Joan Charlesworth, L/Cpl. Margaret
Smith, S/Sgt. Renee Robertson.



Chichester RMP Training Squad D120 1968-1969 (Back
row, 4th from left)

WATCHBIRDS

Whenever the Battalion has had to deal with the female members of the population, whether at checkpoints in the City or house searches in the Bogside, the Watchbirds have been called in. Since they are short in numbers and their tasks are legion, the girls of 176 Provost Company are worked off their feet and usually hear the brunt of some of the foulest language the Bogside can produce.

There are now 17 Watchbirds with 176 Provost Company but only one Scot! She is the girl in charge, Staff Sergeant Renee Robertson on the right of the picture.

"Watchbirds"



"Campsie Killers" Football Team, Londonderry 1973

**12 BATTALION WRAC, RICHMOND PARK
1960
Janet Knight**



Capt Bradley & Lt Hodges



Elsie Renshaw

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

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 38 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 Umbrella

£15.00

Dark green golf style umbrella with WRAC Association logo



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 Trolley Token

£2.00

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



WRAC Association Brooch

£5.00



WRAC Pin Badge

£4.00



ATS Pin Badge

£4.00



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

FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE WESTMINSTER ABBEY



Rowena Patrick MBE, Elaine Osborne, Pauline Milnes, Virginia Hopson Field of Remembrance Westminster Abbey



*Ali Brown and Joan De Vall
Field of Remembrance Westminster Abbey*

CENOTAPH PARADE Carol Traynor

The Cenotaph Parade in London has always been the main event of the year for us, a time to reflect, and a time to be in unison in our thoughts of men and women long gone. As we march proudly along it gives us the chance to recapture the spirit and the comradeship of our own service days. Marching along Whitehall with the echo of our footsteps we are taken right back to those exciting days, days of new experiences, of learning, of friendship, and travel. We had such fulfilling times and so much to enhance our lives, and which now we are fortunate to still be experiencing.



*Christine Barnwell
Field of Remembrance Westminster Abbey*



*Forming up on Horse Guards Parade
Photographer: Cpl Ben Maher RLC Crown Copyright 2016*



Betty Herschel and Lesley Roberts



Scottish Contingent



Cheryl Pugh-Jones and Janet Palmer enjoyed their first participation in the parade



Barbara Danter, Vi Rawlings, Lilian Hollis, Rose Friend



After the Parade



Joan McCabe and Sylvia Connachan in Belfast



Poppy Collecting in Bristol



Ellen Hunton in Portsmouth



Carole Turner parading with her parents in Guiseley



Phyl Cox ready to attend Remembrance events in Doncaster



Suzanne Allen and Hazel Adams, Middlesbrough



Elizabeth Kemp Ride To The Wall 2016 (NMA)



Penny Hemsley in Heathfield, East Sussex



Sylvia Stubbs, Mablethorpe



Lois Taylor, Bournemouth



Marion King, Mablethorpe



Suzanne Fernando, Patna, East Ayrshire



Wirral Branch, Birkenhead



Sylvia Prior, Weymouth



Bury Branch

WRAC JUNIOR LEADERS II Betty Gash

As mentioned in the Lioness 2016 No. 2 the WRAC Junior Leaders II were trying to arrange a reunion after 40 years of joining the Army in 1976. We all agreed to meet up in 2016, even as a mini-reunion, and to keep on looking to arrange a main reunion in the future with all the 21 trainees plus the training staff.



L-R: Glynn Cardy, Angela Fenton, Betty Gash, Sue Ainley, Cara Price, Sandra Birchall, Susan Smith



L-R: Glynn Cardy, Betty Gash, Angela Fenton, Sandra Birchall, Susan Smith, Cara Price

Sue Ainley did the organising and it was agreed to meet in Birmingham "centre-ish" of where we all live for a lunchtime meal and drinks on Saturday 15th October 2016. One by one we all met in a local bar at Birmingham New Street before a brisk walk to the Zizzi Italian. It was such a brilliant afternoon - delicious food, drinks flowing, chatting away reminiscing and having a good catch up in wonderful company. After the meal we headed back to the train Station for more social drinks before going our separate ways by car or train. A superb day had by all and we are very much looking forward to the next reunion!

WRAC PT REUNION 2016 Kate Bettison

The 10th WRAC PT Reunion was held alongside the RAPTC Reunion during the weekend of 16-17 September. Our base was once again at the Hogs Back Hotel, which has proved to be ideal for our activities.

The popular Friday Theme evening was this year devoted to Pantomime Characters. Some of the costumes were out of this world and it was obvious that much effort had been made. While Lynne Greer and Helen Ikert appeared as two pretty fairies, Sheila Lloyd Graham, and Jenny McMahon made very believable witches! Pat Rosewell appeared as Little Red Riding Hood with Sue Barker as Tweedle Dum, Paula Berry as a Fairy Queen, Sue Jennings as Aladdin and Josette Foster as Robin Hood. The two judges, Jackie Whitehead and June Dabbs clearly had a very difficult time selecting a winner, but eventually decided upon our two wonderful dames, Widow Twankey and Dame Trot, alias Joyce Tuomey and Jackie Walker. Their colourful costumes, wigs and makeup were truly magnificent. Following a delicious supper we divided into teams for a brain testing quiz!



Our traditional Saturday morning netball match for the Peglar Trophy was once again held in Fox Gymnasium, but this time with a slight difference. Whilst the RAPTC ladies were struggling with numbers and we were having problems with creaking limbs, the Army Medical Services ladies came to the rescue. They were invited to play in a triangular tournament with the proviso of supplying subs when needed! The outcome of this very friendly tournament was yet another win for the Golden Oldies. Quite unbelievable, given the age differential. Sheila Lloyd-Graham once again supplied the much needed half-time oranges and strawberries and the RAPTC provided some delicious post match refreshments. Afterwards our ladies enjoyed soaking up the atmosphere of their spiritual home with visits to the museum and Naafi.



In the evening we all assembled for drinks and the customary group photo before heading in for Dinner. We were delighted to welcome former Army athlete and badminton player Marcia Holder-Reece to her first PT Reunion. As has become customary to select a guest speaker from our ranks, it was the turn this year of Joyce Tuomey, who gave a very interesting account of life as a Life President of England Squash. In recent years they have been campaigning vigorously to have squash recognized as an Olympic sport alongside badminton and tennis, but as yet to no avail. Meanwhile the battle continues!



Two years ago we decided to re-designate the Dora Nightingale Bowl to a bi-annual Achievement Award and the first recipient was Sue Westlake in recognition of her MBE. This year there appeared to be no contest for the coveted trophy, because of Jenny McMahon's magnificent 33 mile walk along the Basingstoke Canal, to raise funds for a disabled man to enjoy a holiday. With the support of many people, Jenny managed to raise a magnificent sum of £2,139 to send her friend to Spain. Sue was delighted to present the Trophy to an overwhelmed Jenny, who for once was lost for words!



Our Reunions are always great fun and this time we had a surprise invite from Josette Foster to visit Cyprus next year for some sun and frolic. Everyone jumped at the idea, so no doubt arrangements will be firmed up in due course. We'll just have to give advance warning to the residents I suspect! The next official Reunion will be in September 2018.

WRAC POSTAL BRANCH 28TH REUNION Margaret Grant MBE

Our 28th Reunion weekend was held at York from 20th to 24th October 2016. The Hotel, accommodation, service, and meals were very good. The Manager and his wife and staff were most helpful and very kind. In fact everything was perfect and we would willingly return.

Members enjoyed the Quiz, Bingo and Raffles and all our chat. Many thanks to all the volunteers who assisted during the weekend, they were greatly appreciated. Our group photograph is a bit dark this year, hopefully you can make members out. Our journey back home going North was a disaster as two trains were out of action and passengers were put on other trains. People were standing all over the place and off course all reserves were cancelled. I was lucky and got a seat.



*L-R: Doreen Phillipson, Pat Carter, Isobel Duffy, Janice Bond, Margaret Grant MBE, Brenda Griffiths, Val Sanders, Pam Sussex, Val Hicks.
Back row L-R: Maggie Watt, Jean Legg, Ella Reast, Margaret Moule, Sylvia Knowles, Margaret Smith, Kath Leighton, Pat Gray, Isabel Bodman, Chris Fretwell.*

WRAC DINNER CLUB Andy Rosholm-Olesen

As a fairly recent member of the WRAC association (March 2015) I attended my first Dinner Club this year, and to say I was impressed would be an understatement! I had done a flying visit the previous year as I'd been told someone from my first posting (51 years ago) would be there, so I popped in to say hello. I picked up on the sheer excitement and buzz that was going on and straight away determined that I would attend the next one.

I wasn't disappointed from the minute I walked in. I was overwhelmed with the sheer camaraderie and open friendship that was offered from complete strangers. The excitement was tangible, you could all but taste it. The first day flew by with settling into our rooms, buying every conceivable raffle ticket, lottery ticket and tombola (you need to take your pocket money but it all goes to various good causes). I spent the first evening with some friends from the Birmingham Branch at a lovely Indian restaurant, then back for a few drinks in the very busy bar before retiring to boost up the energy for the next day, which was going to be very busy.

The whole of the next day went by in a flash. Surrounded by so many like-minded people, ducking and diving, going off on shopping jaunts in the mini bus that Babs Anderson's son was driving back and forth to the Merry Hill Shopping Centre, much appreciated by one and all. Still many chances to win raffles and lotto prizes throughout the day, then it was time to go and get ready for the main event - the actual "Dinner".

As Chris Fretwell and I walked through the doors of the venue a cheer went up. I looked around expecting a superstar to be walking in behind me, but no, it was for me as I'd actually won £100 in one of the lotteries I'd had a go at! Well that was an excellent start to the evening which was only going to get better by the minute. Having just been handed my winnings the first person I walked into was Jack Sparrow the Pirate. I thought it

didn't take long for the news to get around but all was well. Jack Sparrow and Will Turner (Pirates of the Caribbean) were our surprise entertainment and boy did they earn their money. They mixed and mingled with everyone. Millions of photo shoots took place and nothing was too much trouble for them. They actually seemed to be enjoying the event as much as everyone else. The meal was lovely, served with no long delays. Sarah Lee was a smashing singer who got us all going in a sing-along, with we all joined in and thoroughly enjoyed.





SINGAPORE 1960s REUNITED

Carol Traynor



Irene Maclean, Anne Gurney, Jackie Foulds, Carol Traynor, Rita Broomfield

Some of us served with Jackie Foulds in Singapore in the 1960s where she carried out her supervisory role in the Signals Centre with a good natured friendliness which we never forgot. When she turned up at the Liverpool 2007 WRAC Dinner Club we were so delighted to see her once again, since that dinner we have enjoyed Jackie's company many more times.

In 2015 Jackie invited us to visit her in the lovely Lancashire pennine countryside where she lives, so one sunny week in summer we made the journey from all different locations around the country. We had a lovely couple of days with Jackie, the sun shone and showed the stunning setting of Jackie's home at its best. We sat with cups of tea and cake enjoying seeing photos of our service days and reminiscing, and had a lovely lunch at the pub where we stayed for the two days.

Little did we know back in the 1960s in Singapore, that 40 years later we would be visiting Jackie in her home town! it's just amazing and mind blowing, and it's all due to the WRAC Dinner Club which has brought so many girls together. So thank you Ann Deakin and all who have helped to create such a fantastic event. It has made it possible to regularly see old army friends and make new ones, you have enabled the laughter and fun we had in our service days to continue.

WRAC OFFICERS' DINING CLUB DINNER

Over one hundred serving and retired Officers and guests enjoyed an excellent evening at the annual WRAC Officers' Dining Club Dinner at the Army & Navy Club on Saturday 26 November 2016. The event marked a return to The Rag after an absence of 12 years. It was lovely to welcome a significant number of first time attendees, please do spread the word for 2017. Please mark your diaries for Saturday 25 November 2017, details to follow. For any further information email wracofficersdc@gmail.com, for those on Facebook search for WRAC Officers' Dining Club.



Debs Steele, Carol Prosser, Guy Harnby, Anne Griffith, Jo Myers



Gemma Fesemyer, Gordon Corrigan MBE, Nicola Dawtry, Imogen Corrigan, Netty Wright



Sue Westlake MBE, Nan Robertson MBE, Barbara Harris, Sue Donovan



Diana Small, Suzi McCullough, Janet Lawson MBE



Carys Palmer, Joanna Finlay, Rowena Patrick MBE



Jo Young, Bobbi Chilton, Helen Wilkie, Diana Small



WRAC 861

*Standing: Rowena Griffiths MBE, Kate Voss, Tina Wisener, Tanya Leech, Ruth Littlejohn
Seated: Gillian Cane, Lynne Joyce, Susie Byrne*



Sue Westlake MBE, Anne Williams, Peter Williams CMG OBE, Jane Freebairn, Frances Canham



WRAC 853: Katy Attfield, Fiona Gardner CBE, Ishbel Thomson, Frances Castle, Sharon O'Connor, Glynis Gunning-Stevenson, Sue Mackenzie, Sue Hatton

CAD KINETON 75TH ANNIVERSARY FRIDAY 21 JULY 2017

The 75th Anniversary of the opening of the ammunition depot at Marlborough Barracks, Kineton will be marked in July 2017. The Station Commander would like to invite those who previously served at Kineton to attend. The initial plan is to give an open invitation to all who previously served at Kineton to visit the site on Friday 21 July 2017. On Saturday 22 July 2017 the Station will be carrying out a Freedom Parade March through Warwick. If you would like to register your interest in attending please email office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk or phone 0300 400 1992 (mornings). If you have already registered via the online form published on the WRAC Association website and Facebook page please do not make a duplicate application.

BABS ANDERSON **Birmingham Branch**



Babs was elected as Secretary of Birmingham Branch in 2010, and since then, Birmingham Branch, already one of the strongest in our Association, has grown and thrived. Not only does the Branch continue to meet on the first Wednesday of each month the members enjoy the opportunity of getting together for an evening meeting four times each year, which also accommodates those who are unable to attend meetings during the day. Birmingham Branch's Christmas and Birthday Parties are well known and very popular with Association members from all parts of the UK and beyond.

In 2013, Babs was also elected Area Secretary, and since then Babs has provided support to the members of the Association in Wales and the West Midlands and also to me as Area Chairman.

Babs is also a member of the WRAC Lionesses team which participates in the various 10k runs around the country; she supports the team and takes an active part in their endeavours, fund raising for the WRAC Association and other very worthwhile charities. Added to those roles, Babs was the Treasurer and Webmaster of the WRAC Dinner Club from October 2010 to October 2016 (and remains the Webmaster), and while, like the WRAC Lionesses, not an Association role, it goes to show the commitment which Babs shows to supporting all ex-WRAC members.

Birmingham Branch WRAC Association is always a clearly visible entity in Birmingham during Armed Forces Day, ably led by Babs Anderson. Thank you Babs, for your continued, unfailingly cheerful support.

Maggie Purkis

KATE ARNOLD **Fife & Tayside Branch**

Kate has been a member of Fife and Tayside Branch for 9 years and the Branch Secretary for 3 years, 2013 – 2016. In addition she has been the Scottish Area Secretary and Treasurer from 2008 to 2016.

Kate has been an admirable Branch Secretary. Her enthusiasm coupled with her formidable organisational skills has seen several members joining. In addition she has created fresh enthusiasm with members of the former Inverness and Edinburgh Branches. Her Branch Chairman, Isobel Gordon says that with Kate organising events she knows that the arrangements will be flawless and cannot praise her highly enough for the contribution she has made to the Branch.

During her time as Scottish Area Secretary and Treasurer Kate has worked tirelessly and has used her skills to the maximum effect. Area Committee meetings and AGM's work seamlessly well and added to this she has been very proactive in many ways and in particular her support for the ex ATs and WRAC ladies who are in Erskine homes throughout Scotland. Kate is an enthusiastic supporter of all events and always looking for ways in which to promote the Association, support all the office bearers and there is no doubt that we have benefited greatly from her enthusiasm, energy and sense of humour. When unable to attend the AGM last year because she was on holiday, Kate sent an email from the USA on the morning of the AGM wishing us well and I am sure to check up that we were doing things correctly! Having now resigned from her posts, Fife and Tayside Branch and the Scottish Area would like to thank Kate for her work and contribution over the past few years and we look forward to seeing her in an unofficial capacity at future Branch and Area events.

Jo Young

SHARON BAKER-JOYCE **Hereford Branch**



Sharon was the Secretary of Hereford Branch from 2010 until their AGM in October 2016, when she stepped back to encourage a member who is more adept in IT and social media networking to take over the reins. Hereford Branch has always been somewhat

of a flagship Branch of Wales and the West Midlands Area since 1992 when our Corps was disbanded. The Branch caters very successfully for both ex-ATS and ex-WRAC members, especially as it is understood that many of the ladies are loath to venture out of an evening (especially in the winter) and several are unable to attend daytime functions due to work and/or family commitments.

Sharon has organised many successful and enjoyable Branch functions, raising funds for the Branch, the Area and the Association, and was an excellent Branch representative at Area functions. As well as being the Secretary of a thriving Branch, Sharon has been the WRAC Association National Standard Bearer since 2012 and has proudly paraded our Standard on many occasions; several times featuring on national TV.

Thank you Sharon, for your exemplary support; provided to the members of Hereford Branch, to me as Area Chairman, our Area and our Association during your tenure of office.

Maggie Purkis

RUTH JENNINGS **Plymouth Branch**

Ruth has, through her years of service to the Association, held many roles. She has been Branch Secretary, Social Secretary, Federation Rep, Welfare Officer and Chairman, not necessarily in that order and not just one at a time. It is fair to say that Ruth has been the rock that has kept Plymouth Branch going throughout the years, and she continues to be the inspiration that keeps us going.

Her service to the Corps and the Association encourages all of us who work with her on the Committee to continue to serve the Lionesses who remain. Her tenacity to continue to enjoy life to the full is shown by her willingness to travel to different events throughout the UK to not only represent the Branch but also to meet other WRAC Association members with whom she has formed friendships. Plymouth Branch would be a lesser place without Ruth Jennings and we therefore as a group recommend her for a 'Mention in Dispatches'.

Jean Cundy-Borge

CHRIS POWELL **Shropshire Branch**



Chris was elected as Branch Secretary of Shropshire Branch in 2011 and has worked tirelessly to promote the Branch and the Association since then. She is also the Treasurer of the Mediterranean Branch, providing the ability for the Branch to deal in Sterling, as opposed to Euros. Chris has helped Mel Howell, the Mediterranean Branch Secretary, to organise two very successful and thoroughly enjoyable holidays for Association members in Benidorm, and the third which is to be held in the spring 2017.

Chris has organised several very successful Branch functions; including the very popular annual Post-Christmas Lunches, to which members of the Association as well as families and friends are invited, (and which can last for a very enjoyable 3 days), and the now biennial Race Days, during which the punters are encouraged to place their bets in support of Branch (and through donation, Association) funds. Chris's more recent speciality is the organisation of spectacular Cream Teas for the members of Shropshire Branch, their friends and families.

Chris and the ladies of Shropshire Branch organised the very successful Area Reunion at the Mytton and Mermaid Hotel, Shrewsbury, in May 2016. The event catered for the members of all Branches in Wales and the West Midlands Area and provided an excellent venue for the Secretaries Meeting.

As well as her WRAC Association roles, Chris is the Hotel Organiser for the WRAC Dinner Club. Her expertise in this field is obvious, given the excellent venue sourced by Chris for the 2015 and 2016 events. Her inherent organisational skills are put to the test with successfully sorting out the members seating and menu requests.

Thank you Chris, for your unfailing support of me as Area Chairman, Shropshire Branch, our Area and our Association.

Maggie Purkis

Correction: The Mention in Dispatches for Freda Lyon published in Lioness 2016/2 incorrectly listed her unit as 494 Searchlight Regiment. Freda served with the all women's 93rd Searchlight Regiment, 495 Battery.

BAND REUNION

What: WRAC Band Reunion, especially if you were in the band during the 1960's & 1970's

When: Saturday 20th May 2017 at 12:00

Where: Union Jack Club, London
Cost: £30, to include a buffet lunch (to be paid on the day)

Contact: Brenda Bailey (nee O'Rourke) at bbailey93@btinternet.com

PAYMENT SLIP

On the reverse of the mailing coversheet 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.

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. All photos are ©Crown Copyright.



WO1 (RSM) Jules Simpson

Regimental Sergeant Majors have been striking fear into the hearts of British soldiers for hundreds of years but female personnel remain in the minority when it comes to wielding the legendary pace stick on parade. Among a small cohort of Servicewomen to have climbed all the way to the very top of the senior NCO ladder is WO1 Jules Simpson (REME), RSM of 1st Army Training Regiment, Pirbright. The formation turns out some 1,500 new soldiers every year and while it is two decades since she stood in their boots, the 35-year-old tells her trainees it's never too soon to aim high. "When I speak to the female recruits I ask them whether they think they could be an RSM one day and no one ever puts their hand up," she says.

"I'm a middle-of-the-road person, from a very normal background. I wasn't the best in school or in basic training but I've managed, within less than 20 years, to get to be the most senior soldier within a regiment and lot of females don't realise if they try, they can achieve anything." There are so many roles open to them. I tell them 'the Army's your oyster'. At the age of 17 and newly qualified as a Vehicle Mechanic, WO1 Simpson found herself posted to The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, an armoured infantry battalion. She describes the experience of being the only female in the unit's workshop as "eye opening." Later assignments to The King's Royal Hussars and The Rifles would again see her very much in the minority but she says her willingness to "muck in" stood her in good stead. "As long as you don't expect any different treatment because of your gender there isn't an issue," she continues. "I think if you allow yourself to be segregated, you will be." So, if you don't pitch in with the boys to put up tents or fix vehicles or whatever, and you don't want to get your hands dirty that's when you'll cause problem for yourself." I deployed on Herrick with 4 Rifles and they were fantastic. They didn't single me out or treat me differently in any way." When we found ourselves in dangerous situations I never felt as if I was putting my colleagues at greater risk because I was the only female there." I always felt accepted as one of the lads."

At the same time, she believes being "one of the lads" needn't come at the expense of femininity." Some women think they have to be masculine to fit in but that's not true, she says. "I'm actually quite girly - I like Christian Louboutin heels and Mulberry handbags as much as the next woman." WO1 Simpson has done her time on operations, as well as Afghanistan she completed a tour of Iraq and her CV also lists some other impressive milestones. She was the first REME artificer to be selected as an instructor at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, a feat that remains a high point of her career. If all goes to plan when her stint at Pirbright is over, she hopes to become the REME's Command Sergeant Major and, eventually, the Army Sergeant Major the Service's top non-commissioned soldier.



There's no doubting her drive, but does she feel there is trade-off between ambition and personal life? "I've always put work ahead of everything else," she reflects. "I don't have children. I was married; I'm not anymore. So I have put the Army first but I wouldn't say that is a regret. "Anyone who's in my position, male or female, will have made some form of sacrifice." I don't think I would have been able to give my job the same amount of effort if I'd been a mother because I would want to be at home for my children." In my opinion, you can't give 100 per cent to both." Like any mum who works full time, something has to give."

Despite all she has achieved, WO1 Simpson insists she hasn't done anything remarkable, she puts her ascent up the ranks down to sheer hard graft. But she also urges Servicewomen not to fall into the trap of feeling they have to outshine their male peers to progress. "It's only now that I know I'm completely on par with the other RSMs at Pirbright and don't need to do anything in addition," she admits. "But I think it's a natural instinct for women in all walks of life to think they have to do that little bit more, even if their male counterparts don't do anything to warrant it." I understand now I don't need to be better than them but it's taken me long time to realise that."

MIXED MISSION

Sandhurst's first female College Commander oversees challenging times

Editor: This article was published in Soldier Magazine April 2016 and is reproduced by permission of the author. Report by Joe Clapson, photos by Graeme Main and MOD (all photos are ©Crown Copyright).

Steeped as it is in military history and prestige, The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst is more synonymous with producing inspirational leaders than breaking new ground in the realm of diversity. But, whether by design or not, the 110-year-old institution is now marking itself as a champion of equal opportunities. Lt Col Lucy Giles RLC recently became the first female commander of New College, tasked with managing 80 staff and preparing British Army officers for a career in the Service. Another major step-change is the introduction of integrated commissioning courses, meaning men and women now train together. "The key piece here is that we now have mixed platoons, explained Lt Col Giles." "It makes complete sense to prepare as you will work. When you become an officer you are going into mixed Army, so why would you not train that way?"



Lt Col Lucy Giles RLC

The former Officer Commanding 47 Air Despatch Squadron, added: "The first integrated platoons on the Regular commissioning course passed out last December. "Prior to that, it had a single female Platoon in one of the Company's. Because of that we were probably shaping behaviours, with men and women not having an understanding of team cohesion or of how each other worked." The course covers the progression of cadets in the broad areas of the military, academic study and physical development as well as learning social skills required for "an exemplary soldier". With the motto "Serve to Lead" at the core of everything at Sandhurst, instructors have 44 weeks to instil the crucial values of moral courage, high standards, strong work ethic and loyalty into their subjects. Being male or female does not come into it.

The first integrated platoons saw 139 officers passing out, eight of whom were women. Of the current crop of 177 cadets, 16 are female. One person with experience of instructing both single and mixed sex courses is Afghanistan veteran SSgt Alicia Jarman R Signals, the commander of 16 Platoon Falklands Company at the establishment. "I've been here two years and there have been no dramas at all with training becoming integrated," she said. "I actually think the males bring the best out of the females because they want to prove the point that they are just as good. At the same time, the lads don't like to be beaten by the girls so they

raise their game too." The experienced Servicewoman added: If you took their sex away and it was just name on piece of paper you would say they are all soldiers some are stronger than others and some struggle."



Witnessing the daily trials put in front of the cadets, it becomes clear that the inclusion of females into platoons is just part of wider integration, with the future officers coming from all over the world and from various backgrounds. The common denominator is that everybody wants to commission and nobody wants to be last on any of the tests. Physical training is streamed, based on performances on the Army's fitness assessment, so a female could find herself in the top tier and male in the bottom and they will develop from there. The training objectives remain unchanged, with the course focusing on leadership through various frameworks such as infantry tactics, sport, adventurous training and academic work.

OCdt Hannah Bisbas raises the point that although mixing the platoons has been seamless process, it may have had unexpected effects. "The boys just crack on as normal, although I would say that they are impressed by girls who can match them, which isn't necessarily a good thing," she said. "In an all-female platoon these achievements would've been seen as the norm, not something special. "We need to get to the stage where everyone is expected to achieve high standards." The cadet, who is at the mid-point of her training, added: "I do think that men and women approach things in different way. "Females can have a slower, measured approach whereas men might act faster. "That is generalisation and it does come down to the individual but I think it holds true."

2Lt Keely Porterfield, (Transportation Corps, US Army), had another take on the merits of men and women working together. "The US has now cleared it for women to serve in the infantry, which am happy with if the qualifying standards remain the same," she said. "Here at Sandhurst having mixed platoon and the same requirements means the boys take you more seriously because they see you do the same training as them. It also prompts better communication between everyone." On exercise, men and women carry the same weight and are expected to keep an identical pace. For conditioning drills in the gym, both sexes throw punches and launch their elbows into pads held by partner. There is no consideration of gender. "The girls do everything the blokes do, including sparring against each other," commented Sgt Josh Shackleton, Physical Training Instructor at the academy. "Initially, the lads will hold back in the boxing but once they're used to it, it's full-on."



One Officer Cadet, Steph Hislop, believes women honing their skills alongside men is not really an issue. "Training has been challenging for sure, both physically and mentally but I haven't found it overly competitive with regards to boys against girls," she explained. "When it comes to soldiering I think it's approached in a personal way and you apply your character, not your gender - this is especially true when it comes to leadership." OCdt Hislop, who hopes to join the Royal Artillery, added: "I think there's lot more focus about this 'women in the Army' thing than there needs to be. "To ignore gender is unhelpful, but we don't need to make song and dance about it."

That certainly seems to be the case with the male officers in training we spoke to, and from their perspective it seems to be business as usual. "There is competitive element but that is just a natural part of the training environment and it's not based on gender, it's result of what we're all doing here, commented OCdt Edward Elston. "People probably look too much at whether Service personnel are men or women; the fact is that the people who commission as officers are simply very good at what they do." OCdt Philip Williams added: "There has been no accounting for females in any different way, it's just case of cracking on with the job." It seems integrated training was long overdue. Now the individuals who will form the next generation of officers are measured purely on their talent and capability alone. And the result is improved communication, better understanding, respect for each other and an enhanced readiness for role that requires leading and working with both sexes.



Integrated training at Sandhurst
Photographer: Graeme Main



1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery as they mounted their first Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace
Photographer: Sergeant Rupert Frere RLC



Lance Bombardier Megan Beveridge, making history as the first Regular Army female piper to take on the prestigious role of the Lone Piper at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo



Armistice Day



Double Olympian Major Heather Stanning MBE retires from international rowing and returns full time to her Army Career

Obituaries - Their Final Salute

STELLA M ASHE nee Ellis **28 November 1920 - 29 August 2016**



Stella Margaret Ashe was born in Northfleet, Kent on 28 November 1920. She served in the ATS from 1940 to 1945 during which time she met her future husband Herbert L Ashe. They were married in 1945 and she emigrated to Canada as a War Bride in 1946. Stella and Herbert had five children; Jean (Walter) Klinosky, Joan Walch, Peter Ashe, Janet (William) Borgen & William (Brenda) Ashe. There were to be 13 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandson. Stella was Predeceased by her husband Herbert in 1997.

Janet Borgen

DULCIE M CHALCROFT nee Lamb **06 April 1923 – 21 February 2016**



Born in Northwich Cheshire Dulcie joined the ATS aged just 17 in 1940. After training in various parts of England and Scotland she joined the Military Police and was posted to Egypt. Dulcie worked out of a tented office in Ismailia on the banks of the Suez Canal, it was here that she met her husband Ron and they married in Moascar on 8 October 1945. Returning home they settled in Salisbury where Dulcie became a founder member of the Salisbury branch of the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association. She remained a member despite spending the last two years of her life in Kent living with her daughter.

Dulcie lost her beloved Ron in December 2001 but despite suffering much physical ill health she remained a strong minded, determined individual beloved by all who knew her. Dulcie passed away peacefully on 21 February 2016 in The Wisdom Hospice, Rochester Kent with her family by her side.

Jennie Moss

STELLA DAWSON **10 May 1931 - 05 December 2016**



Stella Dawson, aged 85 years, passed away peacefully in Australia on December 5th 2016, holding the hand of her loyal sister Lilian till the end. Stella served in the WRAC for 22 years and rose to the rank of Warrant Officer. She was stationed in Singapore for many years, which she adored every minute of. When she came to visit she would bring us the latest gadgets, duty free and would regale us with her Army stories.

When I was 5, still living in England, I have the vivid memory of running down to the end of our garden to watch the train go by when I knew Aunty Stella was coming to visit. There she would be, standing in full uniform, waving to us out of the train door and I would shriek "There she is" and we would jump in the car and pick her up from Redcar Station.

Injuring her spine in 1974, Stella was pensioned out of the Army and came to live with us in Australia, becoming an integral part of our family and home. She absolutely loved her Army days and those memories became a great solace to her in her later years. Although in constant pain she led a fulfilled life and had an extraordinary work ethic in everything she did, this I believe resulting from her army background. Always immaculately dressed and with a tenacious spirit, Stella was extremely kind with a generous soul and a contagious laugh. We will miss her greatly but she will be in our hearts forever; Lest We Forget.

Sally-Anne Upton (Niece)

If anyone remembers or served with Stella Dawson can they please contact me via email uptongirl@pacific.net.au as I am putting together a history of her life in WRAC.

GWYNETH FRIDAY
nee OUGHTON/HISCOCK
07 September 1928 - 30 October 2016



Gwyneth enlisted in the ATS in September 1945 and served as a driver. In later years she was a founding member of the Cleveland Branch of the WRAC Association, serving as Secretary for several years. In addition she also served as North East Area Secretary. In recent years, due to ill health, she was unable to attend Branch events and was greatly missed.

Hazel Adamson

BARBARA HARPER-NELSON nee Rigby
1925 - 29 May 2016



Born in Liverpool in 1925, Barbara was studying for a degree when war broke out and immediately set to work to help wherever she could. As a young 19 year old and with the ability to speak French, she helped the British Council with their welcome centre for allied troops arriving at Liverpool Docks to join the war effort alongside Britain.

In 1943/4 French Air Force personnel, released from North Africa following the Allied Landings in Algeria, were arriving by ship to retrain and join the RAF. At one of the regular events for French servicemen, a young airman from Marseille caught her eye and began a close friendship which was recorded by daily letters from him and daily diary entries by Barbara. The young French airman was Francis Usai who was to join his countrymen at RAF Elvington, near York in the only two French Heavy Bomber

Squadrons of World War Two. He was to take part in many dangerous missions over Germany, where he saw his comrades and friends killed around him almost everyday. The love and friendship which he had with Barbara supported him throughout this intense and incredibly stressful period and their love grew for each other.

In 2009 whilst helping research for a new film by Genevieve Monneris, the daughter of another French veteran from Elvington, the Museum came across an old letter from Barbara. They managed to get in touch with her, then living in Australia, and was astonished to discover that she still retained the letters and her diaries from that period, amounting to well over 1000 pieces of correspondence. The letters themselves were donated to the Museum which, in turn were put on permanent loan to the French National Collection in Paris, becoming the largest such collection of it type in France. Meanwhile Barbara worked closely with Genevieve Monneris and also Michel Darribehaude, Senior Lecture at the Toulon University, and the son of another Elvington veteran, to translate and edit the diaries and letters into a fascinating two-way conversation during the dark days of the War.

In 2014 the Australian theatre director and actress, Jenny Davies was astonished at the content of the letters and diaries and wrote a play based on the book called "Cis & Barbiche" (the couple's pet names for each other), and following a tour of the play in Australia, the Yorkshire Air Museum commissioned it to come to York Theatre Royal during the Grand Départ of the Tour de France. The timing was very significant. 2014 was the 70th anniversary of the French squadrons being in York, and in 1944, Francis wrote: "In 70 years, they will talk of 'Barbara' who saw England invaded by all these odd foreigners who stole the hearts of all the young girls." Thus his 70 year old prophecy was fulfilled.

Barbara passed her BA in 1946. She taught and was involved in market research and opened a library and information centre for the Merchant Seaman College in Liverpool, organising postal education courses. In 1952 she joined Women's Voluntary Service, doing welfare for British servicemen in Malaya during the Emergency, and in 1954 she joined the Women's Royal Army Corps as a staff officer and served in Hong Kong, Malaya, Edinburgh and HQ London District. She subsequently joined the Colonial Service and was posted to do community development work for African woman in Kenya.

In 1960 she married Major John Harper-Nelson, King's African Rifles in Nairobi, who was then posted to Uganda. Her husband's ADC was a certain Sergeant "Idi Amin", who Barbara was well acquainted with and who later became the notorious President of Uganda. Barbara emigrated to Australia in 1962 where she served on the West Australian Council of Social Service, and became an archivist for Kalamunda and Districts Historical Society.

It was an honour to know such a fine and honourable lady. She spent most of her life working for the betterment of others and it was a privilege to know her for six and a half short years. We will miss her dearly.

Barbara's extraordinary story is the subject of the book "The Bright Squadrons" recently re-published in paperback in French and English as "The French Squadron", about her relationship during World War II with Sergeant Francis Usai, a mid-upper gunner with 347 Tunisie heavy bomber squadron based at RAF Elvington.

Ian Reed FRAeS
Museum Director Yorkshire Air Museum

BETTY A MITCHELL nee Ellis
06 August 1920 - 06 December 2016



Betty Anne Ellis was born on the 6th August 1920 in Kent. She was raised in Surrey and left school aged 17 to work for Sainsbury's in Farnham as cashier. She joined the ATS in 1940, trained at Aldermaston and was then posted to Salisbury where she worked in the Pay Office and was promoted to Sergeant. Here she met Douglas Mitchell, they married in 1941 and had 2 children, Barry and Elizabeth. They stayed in Salisbury and Betty eventually worked in various part-time jobs; school meals, an audience researcher for the BBC, managed a florists and worked in a Sub-Post Office.

In the early 1960s she completed teacher training and taught 6 year olds in a local school. By the mid 1970s she had gained promotion to Head Teacher of an Infants School and also earned a degree from Southampton University by studying part-time at Sarum College. In 1984 she retired and cared for Douglas until he died. Betty then decided to move to Plymouth, where by now, Elizabeth lived with her husband and family.

Betty joined the WRAC Association around 1953 and had been involved with Salisbury Branch until her move to Plymouth. She transferred to Plymouth Branch and from the 1980s until recently she helped with table-top and car-boot sales, plus took on responsibilities within the Branch. She held several positions from tea maker to Chairman, also Treasurer and Secretary on the committee as needed over the years. She was an accomplished poet and had many poems printed in *Lioness* over the years and had a small book of poems printed to sell locally in order to raise funds for her local St Mary's church in Plympton. She loved to attend the marches at the Cenotaph and has a taped interview of her WW2 memories in the Imperial War Museum. Her last few years were hampered by ill health, she died age 96.

Ruth Jennings

SADIE MORGAN
2 July 1924 - 11 October 2016



Sadie joined the ATS in 1940 and was attached to the Royal Artillery as a searchlight operator. However she only served for a year as by then it had been discovered that she had actually fibbed on her entry papers, she was only actually 16 on enlistment! So Sadie had to wait another year before she could apply again and that is what she did as soon as she was 18.

As a long time member of the Shropshire Branch, Sadie had not been able to attend for the last few years due to ill health but liked to keep in touch and was visited by Chris Powell and Nancy Tipton shortly before her death.

Alison McGowan

JOAN THORNTON nee Bradshaw
13 FEBRUARY 1920 – 24 MARCH 2016



Joan was 22 and living in Liverpool when she was conscripted into the ATS in 1942 and, like many others, she was sent off to Halifax for her initial training. This not only included the normal drill of 'square bashing', but also many aptitude type tests. When their training was over, four of the girls were sent to London to sit before members from the War Office for further aptitude tests, particularly referring to the sounds of Morse signals.

As a result, three of them were sent to Trowbridge for wireless instruction, although at this point, they were still not clear exactly what they were being trained for. It was here that they learnt Morse code and were taught to use radio sets. After their training they were on the move again, this time to live in Quorn in Leicestershire and work at nearby Beaumanor Hall.

The Beaumanor listening station worked around the clock so the girls' shifts covered all hours. They would be picked up from their billet by a 'troop carrier' and Joan remembered climbing aboard, sometimes at 01.00 in the morning, and on occasions being driven like the wind, by Nancy their driver, along Woodhouse Road and up past the Manor House Hotel. Soldiers were billeted at the Manor, and would wolf whistle and wave as the carrier passed by. The occupants (the girls) would, of course, retaliate!

When they arrived at Beaumanor, the girls would make their way to their stations. The listening itself was not carried out in the main hall, but in cold huts in the grounds. Joan was in J Hut. As soon as the shift started, they were handed a list of wavebands to listen to. They would then sit at their machines, put their headphones on and adjust the radio knobs to find one of the right frequencies and pick up signals. They would sit listening to the Morse code and interpret the individual letters, which were then recorded on grids in blocks of five on a 'Red Form'. The recordings would of course mean absolutely nothing to them, as they were simply letters from the alphabet. The information, collected by the listeners, was taken daily by dispatch riders down to Bletchley Park, to some of the best brains in Britain, the "codebreakers".

After being de-mobbed Joan married and settled in Syston near Leicester, where 2 years later her daughter Ann was born. After returning to work at the Gas Board offices for several years, Joan eventually retired and then took up another voluntary career in the office at the Little Theatre in Leicester, eventually retiring again at the age of 80.

Following her second retirement Joan spent her time between her garden and many outings and holidays with her daughter Ann and son-in-law Peter, including visiting the grave of her Uncle Cecil Mawdsley in France. Cecil was killed in August 1916 during the Battle of the Somme, aged just 19.

Joan passed away aged 96 on 24 March 2016 at the residential home where she had been since December 2015. At her funeral on 11 April 2016 members of the Leicester & Nottingham branch of the WRAC Association, of which Joan was a member, turned out in full to give Joan a Guard of Honour in respect of a much loved colleague.

Peter Cousins

ELIZABETH N WALLER nee Sloan **30 September 1922 - 03 November 2016**

Born in Belfast, but later moving to Manchester, Betty's working life started at age 14 at the local swimming baths. She then discovered the world of aviation and wanted to be an aircraft mechanic, eventually making aircraft instruments in a local factory. In 1947 she went on to enlist in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, initially as an Aircraft Assembler. She then became a WRAC training instructor as a full Corporal at the recruit training depot in Guildford. Betty left the service in the 1950s on marriage to WO2 Bill Waller but still moved around the country with Bill, his last posting being a TA centre in Liverpool during the 1960's.



When Bill left the service the family moved down to Woking in Surrey where Betty carried on working in a clerical post for various local firms. Betty never forgot her army days and was still in contact with some of her recruits right up to the last post.

Chris Prothero-Waller

IRENE WARDROBE Nee OLIVER **22 February 1921 - 21 September 2016**



Irene joined the ATS in Harrogate 1942 and trained at Pontefract as a cook. From there she went to Carlisle for two years where she was at Hadrian's Camp. Her final posting was to York where she was attached to the KOYLI, she was demobbed in 1945.

Originally from Dawley, Irene moved to Clifford Village, near Wetherby before the war when her Father's job took the family there. After the war she returned to Shropshire with her husband. She was an active member of the Shropshire Branch and regularly attended our meetings and also, when able to, joined us on our various days out which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Her funeral was at Christ Church, Wellington on 12 October 2016 and her family and friends appreciated the attendance of members of the Association in uniform and especially Sandra Davies who bore the Standard. Irene was a lovely lady who we will all miss very much.

Alison McGowan

HELEN C S WELBURN **30 December 2015**



Helen Welburn, who died on 30th December 2015 at the age of 96, had a distinguished career in both the ATS and the Police. She served in the ATS from September 1939 to April 1949, rising to the rank of WO2. Her Police career began in 1949, where she was a top student at Cheshire Police's training school. She quickly rose through the ranks, being promoted to Sergeant within four years and becoming the first female Chairman of the Cheshire Police Federation.

In 1970 she joined Essex Police and during her time there was hailed as a visionary who paved the way for equality for women in policing. She was in charge of the Women's Department, playing an instrumental role in preparing female officers for the disbanding of the department in 1975, when equal pay was established. After 1975, women could begin training to do the same jobs as male officers.

Helen retired in 1977, but remained a well-known and respected figure among Essex officers. Cat Barrie, Chairman of Essex Police Women's Leadership and Development Forum, said: "Superintendent Helen Welburn will be sorely missed by her family, friends, colleagues and community for the many contributions that she made during her life and she will also be missed by the many people who did not get the opportunity to meet her. The Women's Leadership and Development Forum in Essex are indebted for her innovative and modern thinking which helped to shape the way for women in policing throughout this County and in England and Wales. She will be remembered as an inspirational giant ahead of her time."

Editor: Contributions to this obituary came from Jill Hunt and the Essex Echo 21 Jan 16.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP **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.

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS **ASSOCIATION** **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **2017**

The 2017 AGM will be held in the Crown Plaza Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon at 14:00 on Saturday 18 March 2017. Any Branch Secretary or HQ Branch member who wishes to submit an item for inclusion in the agenda is to do so by 27 February 2017 to sue.hatton@wracassociation.org.uk.

Provisional Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Confirmation of 2016 Minutes
4. Business Arising
5. Trustee & Council Reports
6. Financial Report
7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal
8. Reports of Committees
 - a. Executive & Finance Committee
 - b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee
9. Resolutions
 - a. Trustee/Council Resolutions (Constitution 2017)
 - b. Branch Resolutions
 - c. Re-election of Honorary Treasurer
10. Any Other Business
11. Date of Next Meeting

LAST POST

ALLAN, Mrs Daphne M, nee Smith, of Farnell on 28 April 2016, ATS.

ARNOLD, Mrs Lauretta R, nee Le Croisette, of Canterbury on 27 October 2016, ATS.

ASHE, Mrs Stella M, nee Ellis, of British Columbia, Canada on 29 August 2016, ATS.

BARRON, Mrs Kathleen L M, nee Elmer, of Birmingham on 09 December 2016, ATS.

BINNS, Mrs Margaret (Peggy), nee Bell, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 10 December 2016, ATS.

BROWNBILL, Mrs Kathleen J, nee Coote, of Bournemouth on 29 June 2016, ATS.

BURY, Miss Patricia, of Stroud on 30 December 2016, ATS.

CHALCROFT, Mrs Dulcie M, nee Lamb, of Rochester on 21 February 2016, ATS.

CHESTERMAN, Mrs Sheila M, nee Fish, of Haddenham on 15 September 2016, ATS.

CHARLES, Mrs Beryl, nee Mallard, of Ilkeston on 24 June 2016, ATS.

CHILDS, Mrs Sandra, nee Dove, of Alfreton on 28 August 2016, WRAC.

COATES, Mrs Mary H, nee Emmerson, of Morpeth on 28 April 2016, ATS.

COLTART, Mrs Jean, nee Plant, of St Neots on 30 January 2016, ATS.

COPPING, Mrs Gwen, nee Ward, of Folkstone on 16 April 2016, ATS.

DAWSON, Miss Stella, of Sydney, Australia on 05 December 2016, WRAC.

DOWLING, Mrs Isabel L, nee Prentice, of Canterbury on 12 March 2016, ATS.

ELLISON, Miss Eva, of London on 17 December 2016, ATS.

FRANCIS, Mrs Edith, nee Brown, of Crewe on 22 December 2016, ATS.

FRANCIS, Mrs Joan M, nee Clarke, of Bodmin on 30 September 2016, ATS.

FRIDAY, Mrs Gwyneth, nee Oughton/Hiscock, of Billingham on 30 October 2016, ATS.

GRIEVES, Mrs Olive J, nee Goodacre, of Somerby on 11 January 2017, ATS.

HALE, Mrs Carol, nee Dickman, of Preston on 30 December 2016, WRAC.

HANSEN, Mrs Elizabeth, of Stockton-on-Tees on 30 September 2016, ATS.

HARPER-NELSON, Mrs Barbara, nee Rigby, of Western Australia on 29 May 2016, WRAC.

HARVEY, Mrs Jean, of Coalville on 16 September 2016, ATS.

HILL, Mrs Joan, nee Tonepohl, of St Leonards-on-Sea on 26 February 2016, WRAC.

HOOK, Mrs Barbara W, nee Stinton, of Stourbridge on 22 September 2016, WRAC.

JEFFERIS, Mrs Patricia (Paddy) M, nee Jolley, of Bournemouth on 01 November 2016, ATS.

JOHNSON, Mrs Marjorie H, nee Howarth, of Lytham St Annes on 01 August 2016, ATS.

MACINTOSH, Mrs Irene A, nee Trussler, of Great Yarmouth on 16 January 2017, ATS.

McBRIDE, Mrs Eileen, nee Johnson, of Sheffield on 29 September 2016, ATS.

MITCHELL, Mrs Betty A, nee Ellis, of Plymouth on 06 December 2016, ATS.

MORGAN, Mrs Eileen G, nee Rouse, of Plymouth on 26 September 2016, ATS.

MORGAN, Miss Sadie, of Wellington, Shropshire on 30 October 2016, ATS.

MYLES, Mrs Mary, nee Smith, of Poole on 18 October 2016, ATS.

PASSMORE, Mrs Florence W, nee Harper, of Bognor Regis on 21 December 2016, WRAC.

PETERS, Mrs Doreen J, nee Davies, of Ashby De La Zouch on 08 August 2016, ATS.

PRING, Mrs Ester M, of Weymouth on 10 September 2016, ATS.

PURSGLOVE, Mrs Diana V, nee Souch/Mason, of Witney on 08 May 2016, ATS.

RICKETTS, Mrs Dorothy, nee Abell, of West Bromwich on 12 May 2016, ATS.

SMART, Miss B E, of High Wycombe on 21 August 2016, ATS.

SMITH, Miss Marjorie, of Andover on 29 November 2015, WRAC.

SMITH, Mrs Joyce L A, nee Sharp, of Keynsham, ATS.

TAYLOR, Mrs Helen D, nee Myers, of Clacton-on-Sea on 23 September 2016, ATS.

THRIPPLETON, Mrs Mavis H, nee Bennett, of Leeds on 11 July 2016, ATS.

TOWNEND, SSgt Joanne AGC(SPS), on 12 January 2017, WRAC (1989).

WALLER, Mrs Elizabeth N Waller, nee Sloan, of Knaphill on 03 November 2016, ATS.

WARDROBE, Mrs Irene, nee Oliver, of Wellington on 20 September 2016, ATS.

WATT, Mrs Judith A, nee Wright, of Oswestry on 09 October 2016, WRAC.

WELBURN, Miss Helen C S, of Frodsham on 30 December 2015, ATS.

WHITFORD-JACKSON, Miss Pamela M, of Beaminster on 09 June 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

