

LIONESS



80 YEARS OF THE A.T.S. (AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE) 1938 - 1949





WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

(Incorporating the QMAAC & ATS Comrades Association)

Registered Charity No. 206184, founded in 1919

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STATE OF THE NATION



Association Vision Statement

“To be a recognised and accessible charity, supporting women who served in the ATS, ATS TA, WRAC, WRAC TA and WRAC TAVR, to which our members are proud to belong”.

It has been another busy 6 months as we have started to work towards celebrating the Centenary of the Association and have commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the formation of the ATS. This edition of the Lioness is full of articles on these events.

Welcome to Julie Winks who takes over from Gabi as the Benevolence Funds Casework Secretary. We wish Gabi all the best and my personal thanks to her for over a decade of commitment and dedication to the WRAC Association.

Changes to Area Chairmen Role and Title

At the last Council meeting it was agreed to make changes to the Area Chairman role and the title. It was felt that we needed to recognise the changes since 1992, both in terms of our membership and also in terms of the actual role of the Area Chairman. After considerable discussion it was agreed that the Area Chairman will be re titled to Area Co-ordinator as this better reflects the actual role. A new role description will now be drawn up and the required amendments made to the Constitution. The Area Co-ordinator will continue to be the focus for all members within a given Area and will continue to represent all of you at Council.

Branches

Since 1992 we have seen a fundamental change in the nature of Branches, both in terms of members but also in how Branches want to operate, how members chose to keep in touch and what the Branches decide to do in terms of meetings and activities. I want the WRAC Association to be totally inclusive, while continuing to celebrate our past but also planning for the future. In recognition of this, and from the evidence I have heard from members, Council has decided to remove the division between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ Branches. All will be Branches of the WRAC Association as all are representative of those who Served in the ATS and the WRAC. How your Branch is structured is up to you. It is my belief that some structure in the form of Secretary and Treasurer is advisable, as this gets things done, but I do feel it is a real shame if Branches close due to a lack of anyone willing to take up posts.

The Association HQ is always there for advice, but my message is clear: If you are a group of women who meet on a regular basis and who Served in the ATS and the WRAC then you can call yourself a Branch. All I ask is that you notify Association HQ and your Area Co-ordinator, that you provide a Point of Contact for the website and the Lioness and that you encourage all to join the WRAC Association.

I remain extremely grateful to all Area Chairmen, Branch Secretaries and Treasurers and anyone who organises and provides for any kind of meet up or fund-raising activity; this is the only way our Association will be able to continue in its current role and the only reason our Branch network has survived thus far. I will go wherever I am invited and I enjoy meeting as many members as I can. Our members are the heart and soul of our Association and deserve the best we can give them.

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Registration of the WRAC Association Logo

For some time now I have been aware of the existence of memorabilia that uses the WRAC Association logo outside of the WRAC Association shop. I am now looking at the options to protect our logo with a view to trademarking both the logo and the words "WRAC Association" across the classes of jewellery, clothing, books and stationery, and possibly others. By doing this I can protect the use of the Association logo with the aim that those who use it to sell items at a profit are requested to make donations to the Association. A full notice will be in the Lioness once this work has been completed.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible over the next 6 months and I hope that as many of you who can sign up to the events we have planned for you in our Centenary year. 2019 is going to be a very special year.

Ali Brown

Editorial



Thank you, one and all, for your contributions to this edition of Lioness. We have tried to include as much information and as many ATS stories etc. as possible, but if your contribution hasn't appeared here this time it could be because: it missed the deadline; we have filed it and will use another time (in the forthcoming book and/or on our website and/or social media feeds); or, sadly, we didn't receive it. But we love receiving and reading your stories.

This edition, as promised, pays due homage to all those who served in the ATS. Reports and photos from the ATS 80th Anniversary commemoration in July are within. We have also identified possibly the oldest two surviving members of the ATS. These venerable ladies are still going strong at 105 and 107 – do you know anyone of similar, or greater, ages?

Plans for 2019's celebrations to mark the Association's Centenary are well under way, and details appear within this edition. The year will kick-off with an Attended Evensong at Guildford Cathedral in February, then move onto the Grand Reunion in Southampton in March, and include a summer Act of Re-dedication and Commemoration at the National Memorial Arboretum. Of course, Remembrance-tide 2019 will be significant for the Association and everyone is encouraged to attend at Guildford, your 'home' city, to honour the memory of all who trained and served at Queen Elizabeth Barracks. More details about the NMA event, in July, and Remembrance-tide will appear in the next edition – for now Booking Forms for February and March are enclosed. We are also in discussions with the National Army Museum about a special display cabinet next year; and REME are asking for donations towards an exhibition titled 'HERstory' – see within.

We'd love to hear your ideas and plans for celebrating the Association's Centenary – so please do email or write to us, so we can tell everyone else. Your Trustees approved the making of a short documentary film about the Association, including interviews with those who have served, those who are serving, and those who are undergoing training to serve. Hopefully what you, at Branch and Area level, are planning, along with the 'national' events, will increase the Association's profile and visibility in the wider military community and society – and hopefully increase Membership across the board, so we can truly say that we are "Supporting (more) Women Who Served" by providing comradeship, support and Esprit de Corps.

Your Trustees and Council have been busy considering the new/updated 'Societal Trends' report, produced by Monica Jones – a precis of which is included. The fuller report can be found on our website. We have also updated our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement, in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) that were introduced across Europe in May – a copy of our Privacy Statement is within, and on our website.

As you will see, there have been a few changes in personnel (see Comings & Goings). We thank Gabi Shanahan for all her hard work and enthusiasm for the Association over more than ten years of involvement, during which time she undertook every one of the now 4 part-time roles, latterly, of course, as Benevolent Fund Secretary. We all wish her good health and best wishes for the future.

Remembrance-tide is fast approaching, and Tanya has been busy taking requests from you to attend London Cenotaph. However, numbers in London are limited by the Royal British Legion, so we encourage you to get involved at the Guildford, and/or, your local events.

Penny Muxworthy
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.*

STOP PRESS

We are pleased to announce that we will be welcoming very special guests to our March 22nd Guildford Cathedral Reception. These guests have been invited, and will be attending, to mark the Association's Centenary.

We apologise for the slightly later publication of this edition, but we have been waiting on this important piece of news, so we could keep you as up-to-date with plans as possible.



WRAC Association Data Privacy Statement

May 2018

Introduction:

The Women's Royal Army Corps Association (WRAC Assoc.) is committed to maintaining the trust and confidence of our Members, volunteers, staff and visitors.

Personal data relates to information about a living individual who can be identified from that information. From 25 May 2018 the processing of data protection is governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The WRAC Assoc. has updated its Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement in line with these regulations. The Data Protection Policy and this Privacy Statement only applies to the WRAC Association (national branch/head-office), as registered with the charity commission (206184) and Information Commissioner's Office (under registration reference ZA115848).

Please be assured that we do **NOT** share your information with any third-party individual (including individual WRAC branches) or organisation.

This Privacy Statement explains more about what data we hold, why and how we hold it, how you can access the data we hold on you and how you can get data amended or deleted.

We hold your data in order:

- To run an efficient and effective Membership organisation that "supports women who served" by encouraging "comradeship, esprit de corps, benevolence and preserving traditions" (ie friendship, community and support)
- To edit and distribute the Members' Lioness magazine
- To update Members' on our own and associated organisations' news and activities
- To organise Members' events and to promote others' events to which Members are invited
- To administer our Members', volunteers and staff records so they can all be supported appropriately
- To manage our own finances and records, including Gift Aid processing
- To manage the ATS and WRAC Benevolence Fund – all information relating to beneficiaries is provided by approved case-worker organisations (eg Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Army Benevolent Fund); stored on a dedicated 'contact management system' that holds information in encrypted files and accessible by only two dedicated WRAC personnel.

The legal basis upon which the organisation holds data is in order to carry out its 'legitimate business activities'.

The use of 'cookies'

The WRAC Assoc. uses Google Analytics to collect information on use of its website by visitors eg pages accessed and files downloaded. This helps us determine how many people use our website and how popular various elements of it are so that we can improve the content we share. This information does not identify anyone or where they live.

How we contact you

Upon becoming a WRAC Assoc. Member, and paying your subscription, you give us your contact details, so we can contact you with news, events, etc, in order that we can encourage "comradeship, esprit de corps, benevolence and preserving traditions" (ie friendship, community and support). We will also ask you to confirm which methods of contact we can use (all or one of: post/hard-copy, email, telephone).

Occasionally we use Mailchimp to let you know of forthcoming events, news updates and to garner opinions for a piece of possible WRAC Assoc. work. This will only be used if you have signed up to receive email updates from us.

Sharing data

We do **NOT** share or sell Members data with/to any outside organisation.

We share staff employment information only with statutory and regulatory bodies as required by law and to ensure appropriate staff management.

Data storage

All data is stored on encrypted IT packages. Hard-copy data is transferred to the computerised system and destroyed after six months.

Data is kept for as long as Membership is up-to-date (ie subscriptions are current). If your Membership lapses, your data is transferred to a 'lapsed' category for two years (during which time you will not receive Lioness magazine or other contact), and thereafter archived. If you renew your subscription, and thereby Membership, within this time your record will be transferred back to 'active'.

Personal data on those applying for jobs (including CV's, accompanying notes, in whatever form) will be retained securely for six months from the date of interview; after which it will be securely destroyed.

Data on employed staff (including staff management records) is kept for as long as the individual is employed by the Association and for six years after termination (ie in line with regulatory requirements); at which point it will be destroyed.

Access to your personal data

All data we hold for you will be as supplied by you. The WRAC Assoc. will not undertake any research in connection with your own data (ie it will not research to check the current validity of any such data or permission to use information supplied to Lioness magazine for publication). However, you have the right to request:

- a copy of your personal data which WRAC Assoc. holds about you
- that WRAC Assoc. corrects any personal data if it is found to be inaccurate or out of date
- that your personal data is deleted where it is no longer necessary for WRAC Assoc. to retain such data
- withdraw your consent to WRAC Assoc. processing your data at any time.

All such requests must be made in writing (by hard-copy letter or email) to the WRAC Assoc. office (at Unit 11, Basepoint, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 0LD; info@wracassociation.org.uk). All such amendments will be made as soon as possible, and within one month at the latest.

Data Protection advice for Branch Secretaries and Area Chairs

Some/many of you will have heard that on 25th May 2018 the 'General Data Protection Regulations' (GDPR) come into force. The WRAC Assoc. has updated its Data Protection Policy and produced a Privacy Statement, in line with the new regulations, that are suitable for the size and type of organisation that we are. In the main the GDPR as relates to the WRAC Assoc. requires little/no amendments – except that we now stress even more than ever that the Assoc. does / will NOT share or sell Members' data to any third party. The data held and processed by The Association is for 'Legitimate Purposes' (ie in order to fulfil the charity's obligations, objectives and purposes).

However, we make the following suggestions / recommendations to Branch Secretaries and Area Chairs:

Do ... :

... Double-check that your Members are happy for their information to be shared with other Branch / Area Members (and HQ if they are not an Association Member).

... Double-check that those people in a photograph that you are submitting to HQ and/or Lioness are aware and happy that it may be included in the Lioness (the Lioness Editor will not make any double-checks for such permissions).

Don't ... :

... Share any personal information (*) with other people, unless you have their express permission to do so (ie if HQ send you information on a Member, we will have received that person's permission to share with you, the Branch Secretary. We will not have requested permission to share with anyone else in your branch or Area).

... Publish anyone's personal information / details without their permission.

... Worry! The Regulations apply to those organisations registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). (Most / All of the WRAC Branches and Areas are not registered with the ICO).

HQ office have the regulations covered regarding future contact by email etc – and those of you on email will receive a message from Tanya seeking your express permission to continue contacting you in that way. The New Members' Application Form will be amended accordingly.

(*) Personal Information is anything that could easily identify an individual by revealing where they live, what they do, how to contact them, etc.

May 2018



'Job' Adverts

The following roles within the Association have come / are coming available in the next few months. If you feel this is something you would, and could, like to take on please contact Ali Brown to discuss.

AREA CO-ORDINATORS

This new title (were Area Chairmen), as Ali Brown has mentioned, reflects the evolution of Areas and the links between Council, Association HQ and Branches. Area Co-ordinators will still be part of your Council, which meets in London twice a year – the Area Co-ordinators arriving the previous evening for Area Forum, the ideal opportunity to talk through issues you all have in common. Nominations for WRAC Association Mention in Dispatches will still come from Branches to you, before going to Council. It is hoped that you will continue to organise a regular / annual AGM or get-together for your area – another great opportunity to share and promote 'comradeship, support and esprit de corps' for "Women who Served".

Northern – Anna Orlinski has announced that she will be standing down next February, so if you are in the Northern Area (branches include Bury & Rochdale, Chester, Cleveland, Cumbria, Grimsby, Lancashire, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle and Wirral) and are interested please let us know.

South & South West – Sharon Bingham has also announced she will be standing down later this year so, again, if you are in the South and West Area (branches include Bath, Bournemouth, Bristol, Isle of Wight, New Forest, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Swindon, Torquay, Weymouth & Portland and Winchester) and are interested please let us know.

It matters not whether your branch is / was 'formal' or 'informal', well-established or new.

BAND SECRETARY / CONTACT

As you will see from Ann Jones' Band-Branch report, she is definitely stepping down end of this year. If you are interested in seeing this branch continue and to liaise with fellow band members, please let Ann or ourselves know.

We thank each of these ladies for all their time and dedication over the years – and we look forward to still seeing you at various functions.

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.

Comings and Goings

CATHERINE MUNRO MBE East Midlands Area Co-ordinator



As someone who enlisted into the WRAC (TAVR) in 1984, as a young Royal Signals Data Telegraphist, I never would have dreamed that one day, I would be taking over as East Midlands Area Chair of the WRAC Association some 34 years later. I have been fortunate to have had the chance to serve a full and varied career within the Army. From those first tentative steps as a young 18-year-old marching on the hallowed square at Guildford, a year later joining the Regulars as a WRAC PTI and running (lots of running) in the hallowed and huge Fox Gym in Aldershot, to modern day, still serving as a RAWO within the AGC (SPS) today. I have watched as the roles of women in the British Army have evolved (some may say for the better and some may say for the worst) and I would like to think that as someone who has served all over the world, I too have helped with that evolution in a small way to where we are today.

I count myself lucky to have been surrounded by some fantastic role models. Women who were trailblazers in their own right. Many unsung heroines and I hope that I can justify their faith in me as I take over as Area Chair for the East Midlands Area. I know I have big shoes to fill, Dot Ryder is a hard act to follow.

Apparently, it is customary to give an introduction as the new Area Chair, but what can I say that is not already known? I have (as already stated) served all over the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas all the way to Winchester and beyond, in a variety of roles. During that time, I have seen the doors being kicked down as women have fought for equal billing, and I am incredibly proud to have been a small part of that change. I have been blessed to have been surrounded by some amazing teams who have helped me develop, who have guided me and indeed told me to get back in my box when needed, the accolades given (not least the MBE some 22 years ago as a young Cpl) are a true reflection of those who have helped me through the journey that has been my military career.

Many years ago, my then boss, Helen Sleightholme gave me the nickname of "Reg", apparently short for Regimental, and how right she was. I am as passionate about the military today as I was all those years ago. I am grateful that times have changed for women in the services, I am grateful for the role models I have had, amazing women in their own right.

So, what now? Why the WRAC Association? Why Me? What can I do as Area Chair? That is yet to be discovered, but I see it as my duty to help the Association in their mission to bring people together, to help tell the tales that have yet to be told and help keep the history of our predecessors alive. To challenge, but to help develop, what is already an amazing organisation. For me though, perhaps more importantly, to encourage others to take us forward in readiness for the generations that follow. After all, if we do not tell our stories then who will? 100 Years of Women in War, we have only just begun.

WO2 (SQMS) CBM Munro MBE AGC (SPS)

JULIE WINKS ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund Secretary



I am excited to have joined the ATS & WRAC Association as Benevolent Fund Secretary and look forward to being able to make an impact on the lives of women who have served.

As the Daughter of a Police Officer in the Metropolitan Police I grew up on the outskirts of London in leafy Surrey. I was fortunate to have a great childhood surrounded by my first love - horses! On my Father's retirement we moved to the New Forest enjoying a quiet lifestyle. However, as a young adult I missed the bright lights of London and returned after securing a job as a Legal Secretary in the City. I vowed never to leave London again - 18 months later I met and later married a serving member of the armed forces and have never lived there since!!

For 20 years, until my husband retired from the AGC (SPS), I enjoyed life as a military wife and being part of its unique community. As a family we moved 10 times with postings in various locations in the UK, Germany and even a fabulous 2 years in Canada. We have two children who have grown up with military life - they have even inherited the military sense of humour!

Our numerous moves have enabled me to undertake various professional administration roles - from the charitable (not for profit) sector to local authorities (Social Services) but a focus for me has always been about supporting those in need. In one role I even learnt (and taught) Braille to the visually impaired. It is these professional skills, combined with the military background, that will enable me to support our wonderful women.

The last 5 years has seen us settle in the Winchester area and I have been working for the Hospital of St Cross - a local charitable organisation that is an Almshouse with 24 elderly residents - it seems that I like community life.

In my spare time I enjoy walking my two Wire-Haired Dachshunds (Robbi and Frank) and sewing. My husband and I also enjoy getting out and about on our motorbike, a Triumph Thunderbird Storm, (Andy's mid-life crisis purchase!) and attending events with the Royal British Legion (Riders' Branch).

I look forward to meeting some of you along the way and feel fortunate to be joining the Association as it approaches its centenary year - exciting times ahead!

Julie Winks

PROMOTING YOUR ASSOCIATION

Earlier this year the Association started a partnership with Curious PR with the aims of:

Raising the profile and awareness of the Association

Increasing Membership of the Association

Raising awareness of the Benevolence Fund

The forthcoming Association Centenary provides the ideal platform and focus for promoting the Association. 332,000 ladies served in the ATS between 1938 and 1949; 156,000 in the WRAC 1949 – 1992. Of those numbers the Association has just around 3,000 Members. Naturally some of those who served, particularly in the ATS, are no longer with us, but there are many thousands out there who have not joined the Association –

Because they are unaware of us and what we offer?

Because they are unaware they can join and belong?

Because they are unaware of what benefits (friendship, support, etc) they may gain?

Because they just are not interested?

Additionally, of course, the Association manages the ATS and WRAC Benevolence Fund (working with SSAFA and RBL case-workers) which is open to any lady who served in either of these, even for just one day.

Curious PR is a small company based in London consisting primarily of Hannah Kapff and her colleagues, Francesca Crutchfield and Molly Gunton. They were engaged in order that the Association may gain the expertise of people within the marketing and public relations field – a very specific skill-set that your Trustees and Staff do have to the required depth.

Initially, we had a workshop day when we had a small group representing Officers, Trustees, Areas and Staff, to discuss who we are, who we believe to be our 'market', what the potential may be to reach our target audience, what sort of organisation are we currently and what we might [like to] look like in the future, and what outcome might we like to see. It was also an opportunity for Curious to learn more about us.

Some of the things we discussed have been actioned and include:

Wonderful Women stories –

Getting Members to give us their stories, both of their time in the army and afterwards

Promoting some of those stories into the press and media

Producing a book (in-house) to re-tell those stories

We still need more / your stories – so please make use of the enclosed form

Promotional film –

A 20-minute DVD, and some 'shorts', which has been completed to promote and make available to press and media to highlight the Association and Members

Press releases and subsequent interviews –

with BFPO, Army & You, and KCW Magazines

More are being worked on in relation to Remembrance-tide and next year's celebrations

Also looking to link the Ben. Fund's work into national campaigns on fuel poverty etc.

Pat Rosewell (aka 'Budgie') has been interviewed on the "Lady She & Friends" programme on www.coriniumradio.co.uk (based in Cirencester, Glos). This is a digital station that goes out to 56 countries; every Wednesday 13.00 – 14.00, and is hosted by an ex-PTI.



Pat Rosewell (aka 'Budgie') being interviewed on the "Lady She & Friends"

Media training – for handful of Members and Trustees, to ensure consistent and engaging messages.

Ideas for how to celebrate the centenary that would engage Members, Branches, Areas and HQ

Some of our Members have already been interviewed, by both the documentary film-makers and others. These have included ATS ladies, as well as WRAC.

Curious, and the film-maker, Martin Frith and his team, attended the ATS 80th event at the NMA in July and did a lot of filming and interviewing there – including with Dame Kelly Holmes. The resulting film and 'shorts' are very good, and we look forward to making full use of them. We are hoping to launch this later this year.

Curious are now working on creating links with other charities that operate in similar demographics to the Association (eg Age UK, etc), particularly those who run appropriate seasonal campaigns, eg Fuel Poverty. Hopefully linking in with these campaigns will help raise the profile of the Ben. Fund, in particular.

We are also looking at how certain press releases may be drafted such that they can be tailored to individuals and/or geographical areas – eg if a named Member has a particular role at an event, for that to be included within a generic press release, that can then be shared with the media in that individual Member's area.

While your Officers, Trustees, Council and staff work with Curious to try and raise the profile through high level media placements, it is always good to hear if any individual Member, Branch or Area has had any success in getting the Association's name and aims into their local press – so please do let us know.

Penny Muxworthy
Assoc. Secretary



My mother (Morag Storie nee Hutton) was a WO II in the 495 S/L Battery, she is 95 now and has asked me to try find out if there are any of her comrades are still alive. She served under the name 'Micky McLean Hutton', having enrolled at Brechin in Scotland. She trained at Oswestry (Predictors/Height finders) and Kimmel Park, Rhyl (Searchlights equipped with radar). She went on to serve in the Harefield

THQ, of 93rd Searchlight Regiment, in the 2nd AckAck Group.

Any help is appreciated, thank you.

Brian Storie

[Editor: Please send your replies via the Assoc. office]

Dear Sir/Madam

I rang your association the other day and was told that maybe you could help me find my long-lost Army mate.

We first met in Guildford, Surrey, to do our basic training, then onto Yeovil to do our drivers training, but Anne didn't pass her driving test first time so she was back-squaded and so we slowly lost touch. I was posted to Donnington and she went on to Catterick, where we lost contact all together.

I do hope you can find her. Here's hoping and thank you.

Pam Cowen (nee D'Eath).

Army no. W/423794.

Guildford Nov. 1964; Yeovil Feb 1965; Donnington April/May 1965

Now of Yeovil, Somerset

My friend was: Anne Boulton. Army no. W/423800. Think she was originally from Stafford.

Dear M'am

I have enclosed this photo, taken in 1953. I was a Mess Orderly (waitress) with a large group of WRAC girls. This was taken on a Regimental Dinner night for Officers, at Roberts Hall, Military College of Science, Shrivenham, Wiltshire.

I hope some of your Members will recognise themselves (or their friends). I would love to hear from some of them, although now live in the USA.

Mrs J Bradley (nee Ross)

(who is 2nd left, 2nd row)

[Editor: Please contact the office if you recognise anyone and we will put you in touch – she is keen to be in touch with someone]



Dear All

If you know of anyone with a story to tell whether it be the Land Army, ATS, WRAC, Navy, Airforce etc, I would love to hear from them.

Ann Fowler

a1n13fow@gmail.com



Dear Editor

On a recent visit to a house I saw the attached two photos (actually, it's the same photo, from two slightly different angles) and the family have shared them with me for this request.

The name of the soldier is Viola Allen (maiden name: Glendinning). Born 21 December 1911, in USA. Died: October 1978, in Somerset, in the village of Norton-sub-Hamdon. Her husband, also in the armed forces during WW2, was Eric Gordon Allen.

From the photo, I understand she was in 394 Battery (39-45). I don't know if that last figure is a reference to the years she served, or not.

The family have given me their blessing for you to publish something in your magazine to see if anyone, or their families, might remember either Viola and/or the Battery.

Thank you again for your interest, and the offer to help.

All the best,

Bernhard Warner

[Editor's note: Bernhard, who is a feature writer for the Guardian and other papers, believes she may have been recruited straight from university for her mathematical skills in plotting and advising on bombing and artillery strikes. He has already searched American records and cannot find anything on Viola, so has asked if we might be able to help in any way. Please contact the Association Office if you might be able to help.]



Dear Editor

I expect many ladies have been watching *Strictly Come Dancing*, like myself. Watching this weekend, suddenly I recalled that some parts of the building seemed familiar. I was stationed there at Elstree Studios. It was about 1945, Boreham Village was nearby. The army had made offices inside the building. It was for 'army cinematography' sending films etc to Burma.

Maybe some ladies are still here and remember the nearby Elstree Station? If you are out there, please get in touch [Editor: via HQ office].

Your sincerely
Vera Denning (nee Skimmer)
Army No. 108112

[Editor: This letter was sent October 2017 but did not arrive in time for the 2018/1 edition]

Dear Editor

Ssgt Alan Bush REME and Sgt Peggy Wells WRAC
Golden Wedding: 18th May 1968 – 2018

It almost didn't happen as HRH The Duchess of Kent was due to pay the unit a visit on the Friday and all leave was cancelled. I had to beg the RSM to let me off to get married which, bless her, she did.

Yours sincerely
Peggy Bush



ATS 80th ANNIVERSARY INTRODUCTION



This year marks a very special anniversary, as you will all be aware – it being 80 years since the Royal Assent was given to form the Auxiliary Territorial Service. With its founding being 9th September 1938, this was obviously a visionary decision as Britain would not be drawn into the second world war until September 1939, nearly a whole year later.

Many of you will be much more familiar with the ATS's history and the achievements of those who joined up than I, particularly in relation to military service, but also to society as a whole. Once more, just 21 years since women had first been able to join-up and serve in non-nursing roles (in the WAAC/QMAAC); and 19-20 years since they had been forced back into the more traditional roles (of the time) of home-maker, teacher, nurse etc, women were able to join the military and become an important and integral part of the 'war effort'.

The strides made in what women could do, and proved they were capable of doing, was immense and went on to form the basis for what women were ultimately able to achieve both in military service and wider society. As Dame Kelly Holmes has said in the past, the women serving in today's army do so on the shoulders of all those who served in the past and forged a 'new way'.

Yes, particularly after the war, the military services went back to some of their 'old' ways of doing things, and society tried to go back to their old perceptions of women's roles and places in society and the workplace. But the mould had been broken, and once the genie is out of the bottle it is difficult to put it back in again. So, while some changes have been very slow, be proud of what you achieved, and that you were one of the ground-breakers and role-models for the future.

In the last edition we asked you send in your memories of the ATS, and a huge THANK YOU to everyone who has done just that. We have tried to include some of the stories and recollections here – if yours is one that we have 'edited' and/or not used this time please take our grateful thanks and keep an eye out for the Wonderful Women book we will be putting together for early next year, which will include memories from across the Association's last 100 years, and therefore more ATS stories as well.

80th ANNIVERSARY SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION & REDEDICATION Penny Muxworthy

I have been exceptionally lucky in my time to have been involved with some amazing and memorable events – whether as a guest or having organised it. And Sunday 8th July this year is another such event to add to my memory bank. What a truly wonderful day which I felt did appropriate justice to all those amazing ladies who served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) between 1938 and 1949.

As you will know, the ATS was formed by Royal Assent on 9th September 1938 – yes, just shy of a whole year before the outbreak of World War Two. As Ali Brown mentioned in her Welcome to the 8th July event, many thousands went on to serve in the ATS, not just in the war years but beyond, until it was disbanded in 1949 at the birth of the Women's Royal Army Corps (1st February 1949).

With age taking its toll on more and more ex-ATS ladies it was decided that we should do something to honour all those who served in the Service, ideally at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). Added to this, the NMA approached us as they needed to move the ATS Lady statue from its original site – as this would now be under the new Events Space they are building. It was agreed that the natural and obvious 'home' for The Lady would be the WRAC Association plot.

We invited a number of Guests, particularly from the local area, and were honoured to welcome: the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire and her husband; the Chairman of Lichfield Borough Council and his wife; the Mayor of Burton-upon-Trent & E. Staffordshire Council; Dame Kelly Holmes (who is also a Life Member of the Association); Andy de Comyn (the original sculptor); Col. Frances Castle (Col. Of the AGC); and eight in-pensioners from The Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The Rev Sue Wing (Assoc. Chaplain), Ali Brown, Betty Webb and Kelly Holmes all played a role in the Act of Commemoration and Re-dedication, along with Antonio Socci the bugler. It was wonderful to see our National Standard and 8 branch Standards present as well, who escorted us all to afternoon tea.

When organising any outdoor event you always hope, and pray, for good weather, whatever time of year. The weather was wonderful in the run-up and the forecast was "set fair" – so much so, that we booked first aid cover who, along with Cathy Munro, did a wonderful job of ensuring we were all kept hydrated with glasses of water; and air conditioning was put in the tea Marquee. I certainly went home a little sunburnt!

Sue Wing put together and conducted a wonderful Act of Commemoration, when we remembered with pride and gratitude all those who served in the ATS, in whatever way and wherever in the world. Ali Brown set the scene with her Welcome, and Dame Kelly said as few words as The ATS Lady was re-dedicated into her new home. Although a short service, and relatively informal, it was very powerful and appropriate.

The Standards led us to tea, which was a truly traditional affair with sandwiches and other savouries, scones and fancies. We had commissioned a cake to further recognise this important occasion.

Curious PR, our marketing and PR partners, joined us for the day, which included interviewing some for a forthcoming short documentary. Unfortunately, England were doing quite well in the football world cup at the time, so journalists were otherwise occupied! However, the actual 80th Birthday of the ATS formation is 9th September, so we hope we may get another bite of the publicity cherry then.

It was lovely to see everyone enjoying themselves so much while re-living memories, re-counting stories and catching up with friends, old and new. My personal thanks go to:

Ali Brown for all her support and encouragement in organising this event.

Sue Wing for putting together and conducting the Act of Commemoration.

Betty Webb for reading the Royal Assent, that formed the ATS. Dame Kelly Holmes, for attending and participating in the Act of Commemoration, but also for all the time she gave to everyone, signing autographs and reminiscing about the past – I know she met up with some who she had not met since she served.

The Royal Hospital Chelsea for enabling so many ladies to attend – and make the event even more colourful.

Tanya for all her hard work and support – promoting the event to Members, keeping a running list of who was attending, sending out tickets/'joining instructions', for taking and putting up the Association banners, flags and new display stand, for staffing the Welcome Desk on the day, and for being the general great help that she is.

The NMA for their help in the planning and on the day – they ensured we had support from their staff and volunteers in welcoming people and getting them around (with the buggy).

Antonio Socci for playing Last Post and Reveille.

Andy de Comyn for ensuring The Lady looked her very best after the move.

All the Standard Bearers for adding pomp and colour.

Jasmine Doig for making and icing the cake.

Cathy Munro for acting as water-carrier extraordinaire.

And all of you who attended. See you next year, 7th July, for the Association's Anniversary event?



ACT OF COMMEMORATION

AND

RE-DEDICATION

TO MARK

80 YEARS OF THE A.T.S.
(AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE)

1938 - 1949

8th July 2018

At The National Memorial Arboretum



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Colonel A K Brown,
Vice President and Chairman of the Trustees,
Women's Royal Army Corps Association.

Please convey my warm thanks to the Trustees of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association for their kind letter sent on the occasion of today's Service of Celebration marking the Eightieth Anniversary of the formation of the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the re-dedication of the Statue commemorating the service of the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

I was interested to learn that attendees at the Service will include those who served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Women's Royal Army Corps from 1938 to 1992.

As your Patron, I send my best wishes to all those who are gathered together at the National Memorial Arboretum for a most memorable and enjoyable event.

ELIZABETH R.

8th July, 2018.



Service of Commemoration for the ATS 80th Anniversary & Rededication of the ATS Statue

Sunday 8th July 2018, 14.00
National Memorial Arboretum

The WRAC National & RBL County Standards will be in attendance

We are also pleased to welcome the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mrs Lesley Knighton MBE, DL; Civic Representatives from East Staffordshire Council and Lichfield Borough Council.

Welcome Col (Rtd) Alison Brown
WRAC Assoc. Vice-president and Chairman

Introduction Rev Susan Wing
WRAC Assoc. Chaplain

We have come together today in the presence of God to rededicate this Statue of an ATS servicewoman and give thanks in this 80th anniversary year for all who served in the ATS and those who were their forebears in uniform and those who have succeeded them.

First let us give thanks for all those who served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service on this their 80th Anniversary year.

Lord, we thank you for all those, and there were very many, who volunteered or were conscripted during the war years and those who served on until the formation of WRAC in 1949. We thank you for their courage and steadiness, their pioneering spirit and willingness to do new jobs in dangerous places and the verve that was brought to their situations. Father, we thank you for them and we celebrate their service. In your Son's name. **Amen**



Royal Assent to form ATS Mrs Betty Webb MBE (ex ATS)

FORMATION OF THE AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE ARMY ORDER 199 of 1938

GEORGE R.I.

Whereas We deem it expedient to provide an organisation whereby certain non-combatant duties in connection with Our Military and Air Forces may from time to time be performed by women;

OUR WILL AND PLEASURE IS that there should be formed an organisation to be designated the Auxiliary Territorial Service;

OUR FURTHER WILL AND PLEASURE IS that women may be enrolled in this Service under such conditions and subject to such qualifications as may be laid down by Our Army Council from time to time. Given at our Court at St James's this 9th Day of September, 1938, in the 2nd year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command

WRAC Association Collect

O merciful God and Father of us all, whose will it is that we should help one another, give to us, the members of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association, grace that we may fulfil the same. Make us gentle, courteous and forbearing. Direct our lives that we may have courage and resolution in performance of our duties and hallow all our comradeship by the blessing of thy Spirit. For his sake who loved us and gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayers of remembrance

Let us pray for peace in the world; for political leaders and rulers that they may have the vision to see what is right and true and just and the courage to do what is right; Those who work to improve international relations and speak for those who are oppressed or have no voice.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. ALL

We pray for our country and the Commonwealth and for our Queen, once a member of the ATS and now our Patron. Give her and all who govern us, wisdom and strength that together we may seek the welfare of all.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. ALL

Let us remember those members of ATS who died in the struggle for freedom in World War 2, those of their predecessors and successors who also gave their lives. We also remember with gratitude the service of all over-seas members of the ATS serving

in their own countries or here. We pray for the injured, the handicapped, the mentally distressed who still suffer quietly and with courage. We pray for God's healing hand to be with them.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. ALL

We pray, too, for those women currently serving whose service reflects the courage of the women of the ATS. May they be courageous and resolute as they face the challenges of today's soldiering.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer. ALL

The Lord's Prayer ALL

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done; On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, And the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.

Re-dedication of the ATS Lady Statue Dame Kelly Holmes DBE (ex-WRAC)

Bugler plays 'Last Post' Antonio Socci

Re-dedication prayer

Father, we rededicate this statue to the memory of all those who served in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, may she be a reminder of their courage and commitment and service and an inspiration to those who follow in their footsteps today. **Amen**

Minute's silence ALL

Bugler plays 'Reveille' Antonio Socci

Prayer of Commitment

Let us all pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men and women:

Lord God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humankind, in the cause of peace, for the relief of want and suffering, and for the praise of your name.

Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope; and keep us faithful now and always. **Amen**

Blessing



Message from Col (Rtd) Ali Brown, WRAC Assoc. Vice-president

I am absolutely delighted that there are so many of us here to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the formation of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) through the re-dedication of the ATS Memorial Statue. We are especially delighted to have so many members of the ATS with us along with our invited guests.

The ATS Memorial Statue was unveiled on Saturday 15th July 2006 and was the brainchild of Mrs Mary Beeston and Mrs Margaret Rogers. Dedicated to the memory of all those who served in the ATS from 1938 to 1949, the "Lady" has stood for the last 12 years in its own plot and has been visited by many. Due to current building plans at the National Memorial Arboretum, the decision was taken to move the statue to the WRAC Association Plot where it can be looked after for many years to come.

Over 350,000 women served in the ATS in over 100 roles including clerical, postal, communications, catering, logistics, anti aircraft batteries, and transport. Also there were ATS present at Bletchley Park and in the Special Operations Executive (SOE). The Theatres they served in included France, Germany, the USA, the Middle East, the Caribbeans, East Africa, Italy, Algeria, Denmark, India and the Far East.

The debt we owe to those who served in the ATS is enormous. Many of their stories remain untold and uncelebrated and we at the WRAC Association are endeavouring to change this. The ladies we are celebrating today answered their Country's call and set women firmly on the road to equality within the Army.

Today we remember everything that the ATS stood for; their courage, loyalty and comradeship. We, within the WRAC Association, will always remember their Service and achievements.



History of the ATS

The Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) was the women's branch of the British Army best known for its service during the Second World War (1939-1945). However, it was actually formed almost a whole year before WW2 broke out, on 9 September 1938, and existed until 1 February 1949.

The ATS had its roots in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), which formed in 1917 as a voluntary service (going on to become the Queen Mary's Auxiliary Army Corps (QMAAC) such as her high regard for the ladies in the WAAC and the work they were doing). During the First World War its members served in a number of jobs including clerks, cooks, telephonists and waitresses. The WAAC was disbanded after four years in 1921.

The government-established advisory council, set up before WW2 started, decided that the ATS would be attached to the Territorial Army, and the women serving would receive two thirds the pay of male soldiers. All women in the Army joined the ATS except for nurses, who joined Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMS), and medical and dental officers, who were commissioned directly into the Army and held Army ranks.

The ATS in action

The first recruits to the ATS were employed as cooks, clerks and storekeepers. At the outbreak of the Second World War, 300 ATS members were billeted to France. As the German army advanced through France, the British Expeditionary Force was driven back towards the English Channel. This led to the Dunkirk evacuation of troops in May 1940, and some ATS telephonists were among the last British personnel to leave the country. As more men joined the war effort, the size of the ATS was increased, with numbers reaching 65,000 by September 1941. Women between the ages of 17 and 43 were allowed to join, along with WAAC veterans up to the age of 50. The duties also expanded to ATS orderlies, drivers, postal workers and ammunition inspectors.

The National Service Act

In December of 1941 Parliament passed the National Service Act, which called up unmarried women between 20 and 30 years old to join one of the auxiliary services - the ATS, the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS), the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and the Women's Transport Service. Other options included the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS), or the Women's Land Army. Married women were later called up, although pregnant women and those with young children were exempt.

Provision was also made for objection to service on moral grounds, (about a third of the conscientious objectors list were

women). Although a number of women were prosecuted or imprisoned as a result of the Act, by 1943 about 90% of women were taking an active part in the war effort.

Women were barred from serving in battle, but due to shortages of men, members of the ATS and other women's voluntary services, took over many support tasks, such as radar operators, being part of the anti-aircraft guns crews and military police. By VE Day, there were over 190,000 members of the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Famous members of the ATS included Princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the King, and Mary Churchill, youngest daughter of the Prime Minister.

Post-war

After the cessation of hostilities women continued to serve in the ATS, the WRNS and the WAAF. The ATS was succeeded by the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) - formed on 1 February 1949 under Army Order 6.







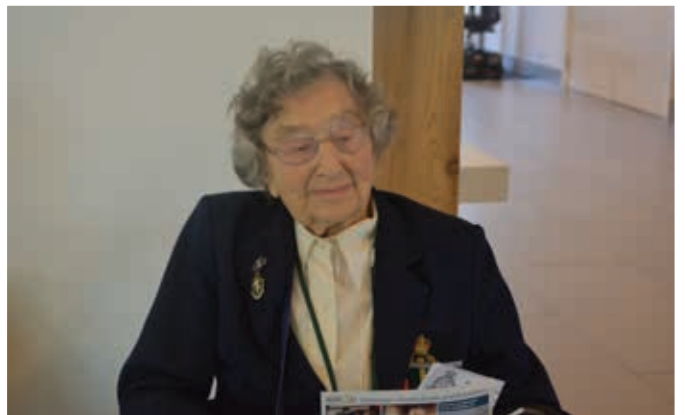






















Dear Barbara [Johnson],

Thank you for the photos. We look a 'happy crowd' and that without the help of alcohol! Eileen and I had a most enjoyable afternoon in the company of you all and many thanks to you for looking after us.

Best regards Bob.

Councilor Bob Awty, Chairman of Lichfield Borough Council

ATS MEMORIES

MEMORIES:

From: Miss Marshall (W/403621)



Ex-WRAC who were at 12 Battalion, Richmond Park, Kingston, Surrey. 1959 – 62 (?)

Miss Marshall sent us some memories of those she trained and/or served with over the years, principally 1959 – 1962. These include:

Joyce Marfell, now married, Mrs Joyce Roberts (possibly of Ruardens, Glos)

Janet Massey ("Nai") her name because she came from Nairobi. White. Based in Richmond Pk. Last known address G(ops) HQ MELF EPKSKOPI, BFPO 53 Cypress. 1959 – 62 (?) she worked for Lord Mountbatten, in the Ministry of Defence / War Office. Shorthand writer (PA?).

A Miss Rutter was a PA in that area too. She travelled on the coach from Richmond Pk to Whitehall etc. Last known address 1960's, Bedford Hill, Balham.

A Margaret Marshall WRAC (I think). Last known address Aspley Estate, Nottingham. W/394567 4 Indep Coy WRAC HQ Farelf c/o GPO Singapore

Lt Shenton, OADO, MofD, London Rd, Stanmore, Middx. London Corps HQ SA, 6 Queens Rd, MofD. She may have gone via Ranks to Commission.

Elsie Renshaw, 22yrs, bat-lady to Lt Col Tansley Witt. Elsie died. Good service Medal, I think. She lived Barrowby, Grantham, Lincs., a one-up-one-down wooden cottage since pulled down. She attended local church regularly there and wherever she was. Elsie died and buried in the area.

W/403440 RUSSELL, Sandy. I think she came from the north (not Scotland). Orderly Room, Admin Unit, EPISKOPI, Cyprus BFPO53

Delma Reid (W/401484) – Jamaican. I think she left to have a baby

From Training Guildford there was a Pat Page, later Rhodes, who left to have a baby which, I think she 'lost'. Last known address Heanor, Derby

In War Office, London (one of the depts AR Army Requirements). GSWI (General Service Weapons) of MO3 (Military Ops 3) was a Male soldier Staff Sgt Tom(?) Percival S/21125118, STOBED, Stobbendan CK, Belgium. That may have been his next posting (not sure now).

L/Cpl Partridge, Veronica, W/410970, C/o O.C. WRAC HQ Miderst Command, Aden, BFPO69. Chantry Lane, Bexhill on Sea, Sussex.

This lady I'm in touch with. She has onset of Parkinson's. 76 yrs(?) Husband retired dentist. She was an MO4, 1960/2 (?), War Office, main building. Mrs Esme Putt (nee Steede), West Hill, Ottery St Mary, Devon. She modelled new style uniform (by famous fashion designer – Hardy Amies? Norman Hartnell?) In main press & Daily Express. I recall her well. We shared a bunk.

Cpl Margot Insoll(?) also modelled the then new uniform

Miss Pat Page (ex Pre) was at Guildford. I've photos – she may too, if alive. Address 1959-62 was Best Wood Estate, Bulwell, Notts.

ex Pte Jean Steer, telephonist, Horse Guards, Whitehall 1959-62; Hindhead Cadet Telephone. Now a widowed grandmother, she has one son and one daughter.

Mrs Jean Howells, 1959-62, ZO Rhyl, Denbighshire, N.Wales – I am in touch with her. At one time 'Bernie', as she was known, after St Bernadette I think – was/is sociable kind who passed at 1 Squadron, 14 Signals Regiment, Robinswood Barracks, Reservoir Rd, Glos. She is now a widow and grandmother; uses a walking stick. She was generally singing pop song "Look at me, I'm as helpless as a kitten up a tree ...". "Misty" was title, I think.

There was Cpl/A Sgt? Paddy McDade at Kingston 12 Bn 1959-62. I understand she married a military man (an MBE) – later divorced. Her mother's address was North Baddesley, Southampton. Became Sgt & Mrs D J Clark RASC & Amanda, HQ ALFCE British Army Element BFPO6; then UK. Support element AFNE Kolsas Norway

W/403643 McCabe, Veronica, was at Guildford Training, then to 9 Independence Company, School of Artillery, Stirling Barracks, WRAC Larkhill, Salisbury. She may have been a cook?

Cpl (?) Margaret Marshall, Appleyby Estate, Nottingham. W/394567. a) H&D Coy WRAC Depot & Training Centre, Hobbs Barracks, Lingfield, Surrey. 4 Indep Coy WRAC HQ FARELF, c/o GPO S'pore

Marty McSeveney who was in training with me at Guildford. She kept falling out of bed. She was called 'Bo Bo' (ghost?). Home: Shotts, Lanarkshire, Scotland. She married and became Mrs Winsor c/o Gunner Winsor, 32/46 Med Regt RA, BFPO1 Hong Kong; then Mrs M Winsor, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

This (male) person was in MO3 War Office Whitehall. I think Chief Clerk was male WO1 Cooney or Staff Sgt Davidson. S/ sgt R Murphy RASC (male), MofD (AD), Room S113, Whitehill Gardens, London, SW1

Hazel Killion, W/405604. Pte Killion HD, A Coy 14 Battalion WRAC HQ BAOR, BFPO40

I think a Margot (Margaret) Insall. Cpl at 12 Bn Richmond Pk. Old address West Molesley, Surrey

Mary (Marg?) Herrington, Sgt W/395677. Personal Assistant (PA), Commander HQ Libya & Triplitanian Area, BFPO57, Libya

Major Harford (WRAC?), MofD, Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square

I got to know very well over time Miss Margery Goodwin of War Office Main Building. Type 1 'R'. Living with elderly mother at Chislehurst, Kent. She was mentioned in despatches. Travelled on 'Windrush'. She had military funeral at St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst and has a niece 'Val' – still alive? After military she went to police,

Audrey Dawe, 12 Bn Kingston. Became Mrs Cake. I've several addresses eg Kingston, Surrey; Heavitree, Exeter; and St Andrews Park, Bristol

Lt (QM) H L Cooney (male), Medway Pk, c/o GPO Singapore. I think he was in charge Chief Clerk, MO3 War Office Whitehall 1959-62.

S/7700853 Staff Sgt Jim L G Davidson RASC (male) who was at War Office Main Building, Chief Clerk, British Army Element HQ ALFCE BFPO6

Anne Bayes of IZBN Richmond Park, became Mrs M Coqher, Newton Abbot.

There was an Angela Young, married name. Married a policeman (not military one). Maiden name Bunkall, 12 Bn Richmond Pk

While I was at 6 Training Battalion RASC Houndstone Camp, Yeovil, Somerset, there was a Ptr Mary Lawrence / Laurence? From Redruth Grammar School, Cornwall, I think

A Pte / L/Cpl? Zoe Scott (Draughts Lady). Home address was Elburton, Plymouth. I stayed/visited. Her mother was a teacher. Zoe had older sister.

There was a Joan Bedford. Very nice lady. C/o Camp Commandant, HQ Southern Command, Hounslow, Middx.

There was a Scottish Cathy Bold on War Office bus. Scottish. Pte? (1954?)

In one of my War Office 'jobs' was Cpl Stanley Bird RASC (MO4) Military Ops 4. I attended his funeral (cancer) about 4 years ago. There was a Cpl David John Bailey (national service) in Army Requirements 1 or 2. I'm indirectly in touch. He went onto Cambridge University.

Mrs Hazel Wood, Cleobury Mortimer, Nr Kidderminster, Worcs. Maiden name Brick. She was War Office, I think.

[Editor: All address' are as supplied and in many cases 'last known address', and all information as received]

MEMORIES: Maggie Purkis

Many thanks to Maggie Purkis, who found these two newspaper-cuttings tucked inside her copy of "A Heroine in Her Lifetime", the biography of Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan. Remember, these were written some time ago, so the invitation to all the wartime ATS girls for a reunion in Guildford on May 26th is somewhat out of date! Please do not try and attend on that day – rather, book to attend the Grand Reunion in March (see enclosed information and booking form).

Reveille call to war girls

Are you (*) in this picture? Among these second world war ATS girls is the Queen (centre back). All the girls who so proudly donned the uniform of the ATS during the last war are to be called up again in May for a reunion. An open invitation is being given to all the women who formed such a vital part of Britain's home defences during the war to go to the Women's Royal Army Corps

Centre at Guildford, Surrey, on May 26, for a big get-together. The Queen herself, a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service during the war will attend. Further details can be obtained from the local ATS or WRAC association secretary or WRAC Association, Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford.

(*) – or your relative? If so, let the Assoc. office know and we will credit accordingly another edition.



Maggie also found, tucked into the same book, a copy of the Obituary printed following the death of Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan:

H. Gwynne-Vaughan, ATS leader

The career of Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, who has died aged 88, was distinguished as much for scientific research as for her organisation and leadership in the women's Services.

The first woman to become a member of the Council of the British Association, she was a recognised authority on fungi and protoplasm. For many years she held the Chair of Botany at London University.

In the 1914-18 war she commanded the Women's (later Queen Mary's) Army Auxiliary Corps and from 1918-19 the Women's Royal Air Force. From 1939 to 1941 she was Chief Controller of the A.T.S. now the Women's Royal Army Corps. Her rank was equivalent to that of Major General.

Married Botanist

A Welshwoman* whose father was an officer in the Scots Guards, Helen Fraser was educated at Cheltenham Ladies' College and at King's College, London. She was a B.Sc. by 1904 and a D.Sc three years later. In 1911 she married Prof. D.T. Gwynne-Vaughan, the botanist. He died in 1915.

She commanded the W.A.A.C. from its formation in February 1917. When the organisation disbanded it had 57,000 members, 10,000 of whom had served in France. She was made D.B.E. in 1919, and G.B.E. in 1929.

In 1938 she was one of seven women who formed an advisory council which discussed the formation of a women's army. Dame Helen had previously formed an Emergency Service with the object of training women as officers should the necessity arise for them.

Appointed Director

She was appointed Director of the Auxiliary Territorial Service in July 1939.

Initially members served as drivers, cooks, clerks and telephonists. Later they worked on balloon sites, with anti-aircraft batteries, and on duties connected with radar. By D-Day there were more than 200,000 women in the Service, and there was no theatre of war in which they had not served.

Dame Helen's Chair at Birkbeck College was kept vacant for her during her war service in both wars. She finally retired in 1944.

Among her many other interests, she was formerly chairman of the executive of the Girl Guides' Association and honorary secretary of the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, County of London. She was the author of several scientific works and "Service with the Army" published in 1942.

[actually, her father was a member of the Scottish aristocracy ~ obviously, or he'd have been an officer in the Welsh guards]*

MEMORIES: Morag Storie (W/87936)

Surname: Storie
First Name(s): Morag
Army Number: W/87936
Maiden name (if applicable): Hutton
Name used during service: Micky McLean Hutton
Rank: W.O.II
Main base: Defence of London Middx B.H.Q. Swakeley
Training base: Oswestry – Predictors/Height Finders
Kimmel Park, Rhyl – Searchlights equipped with radar
Enrolled at: Brechin, Angus, Scotland
Platoon/Section: Harefield T.H.Q
Company/Battery: 495 S/L Battery
Group/Regiment: 93rd Searchlight Regiment
Command: 2nd AckAck Group
Year(s) of service: 16/10/1941 to 16/10/1945
Reason for discharge: End of W.W.II October 1945
Trade: Dgt Commander (D.C.)

Uniform Issued:
S.D.
Shirts
Ties and shoes
Stockings
Underwear
Shoulder bag
Respirator
Grip
Reg Cap
Battledress
Boots and Webbing
Leather Jerkin
Fur coat
Gloves, etc



Description of daily tasks:

- Searchlight Detachment Commander. The duties of the Detachment Commander were many and varied, eg a roster had to be set up each day detailing duties. We had maintenance to do every day on the huge searchlight, plus No 9 maintained the massive Lister generator. Then we had Manning Drill. We trained during daylight with the help of either a Lysander or a Tiger moth Aircraft Nos 6, 7 and 8 would use the radar to 'lock on'. The other operatives would be busy carrying out their duties.

- On really bad days we would be inside going over Aircraft recognition and morse code.

Pay Book

Memorable moments:

- I enlisted at Brechin, Angus, Scotland 16 October 1941 and was posted to Newbattle Abbey, Glencourse Barracks, Midlothian. We were issued with our uniform, sat tests etc. I passed for Kinetheodolite, the only one. Because of this my posting hadn't come through and I was left cooling my heels along with a future P.T. instructor (A.T.S.) whilst the rest of the intake were sent on their way. However, 'they' found me something to do – report to the Officers' Mess where I was given the princely task of peeling spuds. I carried out my first day's duties, but informed the Sgt in charge of the Mess that I would not be back next day!! She was none too pleased!

- Next day I reported to Camp Office and informed the A.T.S. Officer that I had joined up to do something worthwhile – not to peel spuds. I was given a job in the Camp Office!! However, I still had a long way to go – learning that given an order you obey it!

- When my posting came through it was to an AckAck Camp in North Wales, Oswestry. Mary Churchill had just finished the course. We were training on height finders and predictors and were to work alongside the guns.

- Our course was almost finished when 20 of us were called to the Company Office (we were now Bombardiers with two stripes) and informed that 10 of us would go to Rhyl and 10 to Taunton. We were the nucleus of the new Regt. 150 cm Searchlights equipped with radar. As it was top secret we were told not to discuss it.

- We entrained for Rhyl (the other 10 Taunton) Parkhall Camp – a huge rambling Camp. This was essentially a male camp. We were given our sleeping quarters but the powers-that-be had forgotten to tell the soldiers returning from leave that A.T.S. were now in their beds!! Yes! We had a few laughs, woken up by the clumping of heavy boots entering what had been their domain!

- I passed out as Sgt D.C. (Detachment Commander!) given my Detachment. These girls came in later, don't forget we had a Regt to make up.

- My site was Streatham Sports Pavilion. Our huge S/L slap in the middle of houses. Don't know how the residents managed to get any sleep. Night-time being the time we were out in action.

- I shall never forget our first 'Take Post'. We were now on our own – a handful of girls and I do mean girls, 18 years old (that being my age the rest around that). Illuminating our first German plane was mind blowing; we didn't have time to feel scared. Then the guns opened up on our target and that was that, bits of debris flying everywhere.

- Our other Detachments were scattered around the Capital, Morden, Clapham, Mitcham and Wimbledon where our T.H.Q. was.

- We were sorry to leave our comfy site, but it was decided to move the whole Regt comprising 495 Battery, 301 and 342 further away from the Capital stopping the German planes en route, before they hit London, but now we liaised with Fighter Command. Our fighters would shoot down German planes once we illuminated them. We never found our life boring! The German fighters would dive down and strafe our very powerful beam.

- My site was now situated beside (of all places B.H.Q.) Swakeleys, Ickenham, Middx. This meant we were always under the watchful eye of our O.C. Major Soloman.

- I was then promoted to Troop Sgt at our T.H.Q. Harefield Middx. Wasn't long there when the Major asked if I would come into B.H.Q. and be the Sgt Major. The female Sgt Major was retiring, the male Sgt Major was being posted and I was to take over from both (aged 21!!)

- A.T.S. Sgt Majors at this time were admin trained, but I was operational. It made sense, and I accepted, but before I left T.H.Q. a buzz-bomb dropped near the Camp, flattened a farmhouse close by killing the farmer and his wife. They had been so good to us, allowing us the use of their phone. The blast had sucked all the walls out of our Camp. Luckily no-one was hurt. Gen Sir Fred Pile came to visit with us and to survey the damage. I found him easy to talk to.

- My job entailed going round all our sites (495 Battery) and instructing. Whilst at Greenford we had our first initiation into coping with a buzz-bomb. We hadn't a clue what to do with this terrifying object. Our expensive equipment was useless. The guns were useless. These flying bombs flew so low, guns couldn't cope. We knew we were in great danger but it missed us and crashed on a supply depot full of armaments and many, many A.T.S. In the meantime we still had to cope with the bombers coming over.

- I was in London when the first rocket dropped on the city. We all thought that a gasometer had blown up! These were massive bombs and again nothing could stop them.

- Yes, we were out in all weathers. Our winter gear comprised a teddy bear fur coat with a muff at the front where we could tuck our hands in. Nos 6, 7 and 8 worked the sensitive equipment and they had sheepskin mitts. No 6 had a very important job. She worked the radar equipment. It was truly amazing we could tell whether a plane was friend or foe!

- We as a Regiment were the first in the field to work with radar equipped Searchlights and the only all women Searchlight Regiment in the world! We 'took action' in all weathers at all hours. Sometimes when we had had an exhausting night in action, we would be called out once more, but this time not enemy action. We had 3 mins to get up, get the huge generator going to supply power. No need of radar this time. Our orders were to illuminate our Searchlight beam towards a given aerodrome. This enabled very badly shot up B26s American Flying Fortress to get safely back. They used our beam as a flight path! I have often wondered if they realised just who worked this massive beam! Can you imagine our state of dress when given 3 mins to get out and get the homing beam up. Pyjamas with always our steel helmet on top of curlers!!

- We wore battledress with pride. Had to know so many things, about so many things, but we did it! As Gen Sir F Pile wrote 'we fought our lights like men and died like men'.



**Sgt Major McLean Hutton at Rhyl
(front row, second right)**



**male escort, Lily Peach, male escort, Blackie Stanley
Shakie Shakespeare, male escort, Ann Chapman,
Jony Moore, male escort, Mgt Laird,
Micky Sneddon and her dog
Gertie Maddox, Mac Neave, Micky McLean Hutton
Vera Coffey and Kitten Connolly**

ATS BLETCHLEY PARK Betty Webb

**ATS ladies who served/were employed in various
departments at Bletchley Park (GCCS) 1939 – 1945:**

Jun. Comdr Helen Mary Little – Translator
Sub Marie Bennett

June Collins (later Solloway) – Italian Section
Enid Nokes
Maisey Sarney (nee Hodder)
Gaynor Fickerly (became Dame Stephenson)
Gladys Taylor MA (W/256922)
Charlotte Elizabeth (Betty) Wine-Stevens (later Webb)

The Testery, named after Major Ralph Tester, was a department which broke the Lorenz Code (Hitler's).

Names of ATS working in the Testery at Bletchley Park

Bell (Roots), Agnes McLean
Bridgewater (Gill), Anne
Buckoke, Yvonne M
Cammaerts (Lindley), Jeanne Henriette
Darby (Sealey), Jean Louise
Evan-Jones, Mary

Evers, Elizabeth G
 Hampson, Joyce
 Herbert (Tovey), Gwen
 Jaques (Leatherday), Joan
 Palmer (Kynaston), Margaret Gwentyth
 Pollard (Currie), Helen
 Saward, Olive M
 Sproston, Joy
 Stuart-Taylor, Lesley
 Tickle (Marshall), Mavis
 Tucker, Angela D
 Worsley, Eleanor (?)

A MEMORABLE JOURNEY – MY FIRST TRIP ABROAD

Miss Mary Davies

Mary Davies was a member of Wolverhampton Branch until it folded, when she joined the newly formed Phoenix Branch. The following article was found amongst Mary's papers by her family upon her death in March 2017. It appears that she had written it for her Church magazine. The family were good enough to let those of us at her funeral see it and take a copy:

As a member of the A.T.S. attached to the Control Commission for Germany in London, I had the opportunity to travel abroad when the C.C.G. moved to Germany after VE-Day.

My turn to travel came on the first Saturday in July, 1945, when, with 3 other A.T.S. girls, 2 A.T.S. Officers, 1 soldier and some office furniture, I climbed aboard a "3-tonner" Army vehicle to be taken to Fenchurch St. Station. Here we boarded a train for Tilbury Docks to embark on a Dutch Ship which sailed at 8p.m. For several hours we were anchored off Southend, then took a diverted route to avoid minefields, finally reaching Ostend at 10.30 a.m on Sunday morning. While the ship was sailing we had to wear blown-up lifebelts, very uncomfortable when trying to sleep. Being the only females on board we were given Officers cabins and ate in the Officers Mess.

We stayed in an A.T.S. Holding Unit (a requisitioned hotel) until Monday afternoon. This gave us time to explore Ostend and walk along the promenade and cliffs to look at the old German defences. Shops were open and local people were out enjoying their freedom again – a truly holiday atmosphere. On Sunday evening we visited the Salvation Army Canteen, listened to a soldier playing a saw, and joined in the hymn singing.

The Monday tea-time train to Brussels was full of commuters, and we became objects of interest! Arriving in Brussels at 8.30 p.m. we were taken to the old Gestapo HQ for a meal, then to another Holding Unit, and were put on the 5th Floor of a block of flats. It was now midnight, and nobody told us anything. We were woken next morning and informed that our transport was outside, we must have been forgotten! What a scramble to get up and dressed (did we wash, I wonder). Outside we found another 3-tonner and our 2 Officers had been joined by 8 more high ranking A.T.S. Officers. A bumpy ride to the aerodrome, followed by a long wait before boarding a small Dakota troop-carrier, gave us time to think about the breakfast we had missed! The luggage was strapped in the centre of the plane, and we sat around on metal seats fixed to the sides of the plane. The pilot was very informative, flying low at times to show us extensive bomb damage and water-filled craters. After 1 and a half hours we landed in a field "somewhere in Germany" and were taken to an army camp, which was not the C.C.G. HQ!

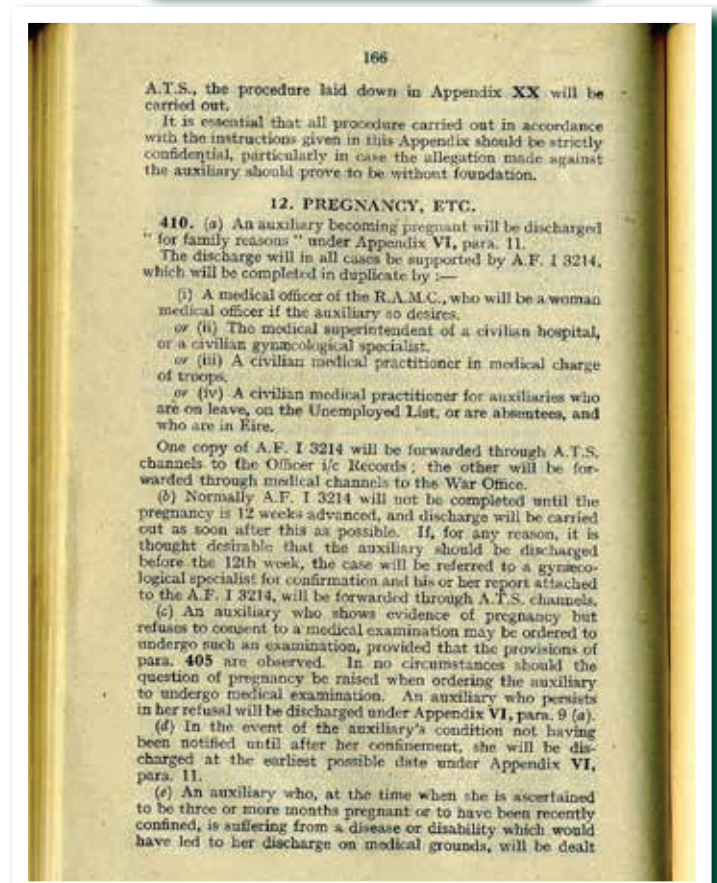
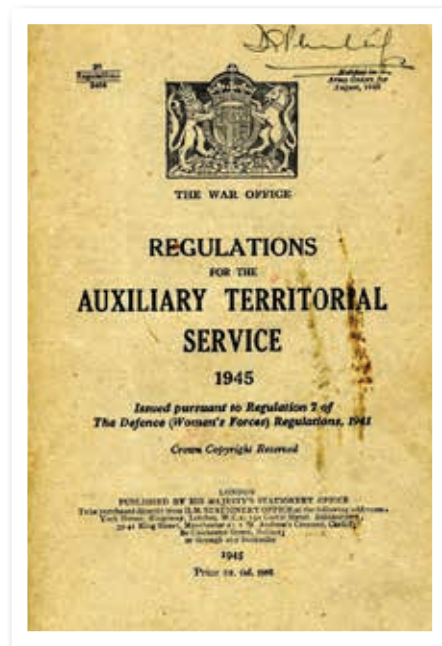
Fortunately, I knew I was to join the office I had been with in London, so passed on the information, and after much investigation it was found that I had somehow got put with the wrong draft, and was "lost". This meant an overnight stay in the A.T.S. Quarters (formally German Army Barracks), and eventually on the Wednesday afternoon I was taken to Minden, my original

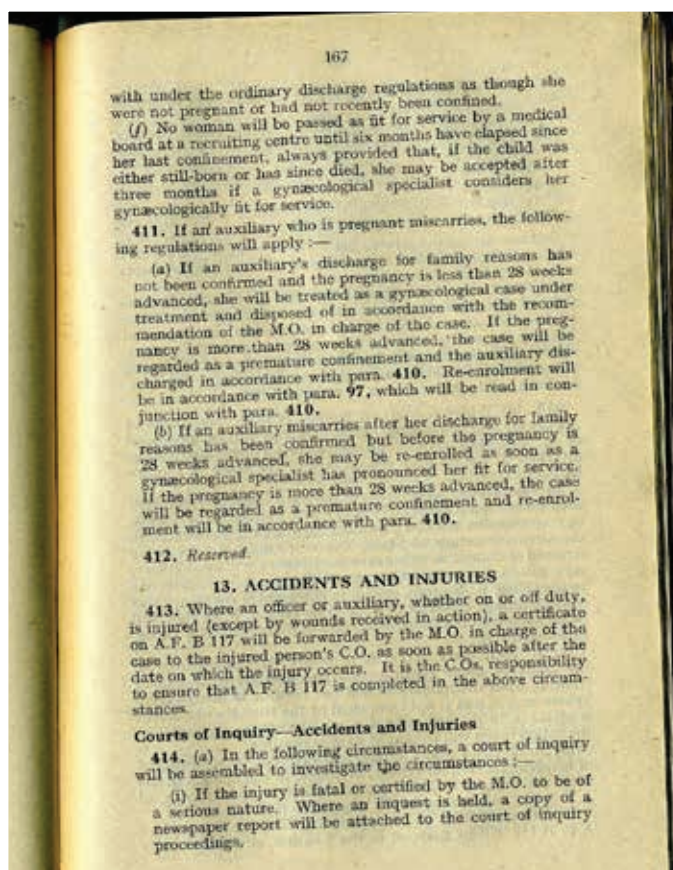
destination, this time travelling in the back of a much smaller vehicle, fondly known as a "Tilly", an A.T.S. Officer sat by the driver – no chance of me getting lost again. We travelled through lovely countryside, small towns and villages, at one time the road ran parallel with a railway line and the driver pointed out a V2 Rocket still on a railway trailer; one which fortunately had never reached its launching range. In Minden we crossed the river by a pontoon bridge, the road bridge having been blown up. (The replacement was opened early in August and named Francis Bridge after the O/C in charge of the work).

I stayed in Minden for 13 months, making many journeys in Germany, and to and from leave, all providing "memories", but the most memorable has to be "my first trip abroad".

MEMORIES: Cathy Munro

Cathy Munro kindly shared these images as part of our ATS celebrations





APPENDIX VI
TABLE OF DISCHARGE—continued

Cause of Discharge	Competent Officer to			Special Instructions
	Authorise Discharge	Carry out Discharge	Confirm Discharge	
10. Deemed to have been improperly enlisted. (a) Misstatement of age on enlistment. (b) Incorrectly enlisted.	Unit Commander.	(a) Company Commander. (b) Company Commander or Officer in Charge.	Officer in Charge.	(a) Applies:— (i) to auxiliaries under 17½ years of age; (ii) to auxiliaries between ages of 17½ and 18 years whose parents or legal guardians make application for discharge within two months from date of commencement of service. (Note: This will not apply to auxiliaries who have reached the age of 18 years.) (b) Applies:— (i) in the case of a voluntary recruit whom the current regulations for enrolment have been incorrectly or incorrectly complied with; (ii) in the case of an Army Class recruit whose calling up is incorrect or invalid. In the case of (i) 13 days' notice will be given. (c) Applies to auxiliaries who are discharged for pregnancy or recent miscarriage. The auxiliary discharge on receipt of pregnancy certificate. (See para. 410.)
11. For family reasons.	Unit Commander.	Company Commander.	Officer in Charge.	

(Margaret) Anne Carter (nee Garrad)
April 1943 – December 1946
(and 1950 – 1953) ATS (WRAC)



Trained: Wrexham, north Wales
Served: Wales, Scotland, Italy, Palestine & Austria

Jobs: Instructor at Training Camp, Wrexham
Shorthand-typist / Clerk, Inverness and AFHG, Caserta, Naples, Italy
On staff of ATS Transit & Assembly Centre, Naples, Monza and Villach, after OCTO in Palestine

Final rank: Junior Commander

Favourite time: Immediately after the war, on the staff of the ATS Transit & Assembly Centre, Villach, Austria. In charge January to August 1946.

Everlasting memory: Working through the night at North Highland District HQ, Inverness, October 1943 – June 1944, prior to D-Day. Everything was TOP SECRET.

1st or last to do something?: First at the ATS Transit & Assembly Centre, Naples, in June 1945 – was second in command. Then in command at Mona, near Milan, Italy and Villach, Austria.

Anne now lives in Norfolk.

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

Mrs Norma Kinson

ATS & WRAC: Nov 1948 – June 1950



I joined the ATS June 1948 and did 6 week's training and 6 weeks education course to be a clerk. Part of the course we went to the Tower of London, and the Palace Theatre to see Ivor Novella's 'King's Rhapsody', and then had to write essays (happy days).

The next move was to Drivers & Clerks Camp, Horsley Hall, Gresford, north Wales, for two weeks with my pal, Pte Doreen Joyce Wright - both of us failed the course and were sent to a Holding Unit in North Mimms, Hertford for two weeks; then onto Sloane Square to an overnight house, where we met up with a corporal and four other girls for our posting to RCB Regular Commissions Board. We got to Waterloo Station and hadn't been given travel warrants, the other girls took our kit bags and my pal and I walked back to Sloane Square and were given our rail warrants, for the train to Hazelmerne and Hernhurst Camp.

We arrived in a staff car, Humber Super Snipe, in style. The camp had been empty for some time after the Canadians had gone home when the war ended. We scrubbed it out (on our hands and knees) ready for the rest of the staff, cooks, batmen and women, clerks, etc. My friend and I (Pte Doreen Joyce Wright from Wilsden, London) were sent to work in the Officers' Mess. Weekends were quiet, all offices went home, only the CO stayed in Camp (our Captain Thorn, a quiet spoken Scottish lady, was slightly deaf), so from 12.00 Saturday we were both given the afternoon off duty. We laid her place at the table and Paddy, the cook, served her soup and cold salad and coffee; we cleared the table on Sunday and washed the dishes. Thursday was still Regimental Dinner night; we were inspected by Staff Sergeant Pauline Yates, who called us the terrible twins - we were always singing and laughing while we polished floors, etc.

We stayed there till November 1949. When the camp disbanded we asked the CO if we could get a posting to Germany, as we were asked where we wanted to be posted. Her reply was "I couldn't let you young girls go to Germany, it's a place of evil"; we were 19 years old. Getting in the truck the CO shook hands with us, there were tears in her eyes.

Our next camp was 1st Batt. Royal Scots Dragoon camp, Colinton, Edinburgh – a cold Regimental camp, a vast difference from our home from home. I waited on Princess Royal, Princess Mary the Queen's aunty, at the Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh, which had been taken over by the WRAC, this was April 1950. I had to go to St Omer Camp, in Aldershot for two weeks to learn silver service, just weeks later in June 1950 I was demobbed. Apart from Pt D J Wright I never saw any of these lads and girls again – I forgot Pte Ea Krauckle from Latvia who filled in on Regimental Dinner nights and relieved one of us on leave from time to time.

I've never forgotten Fernhurst Camp, a happy year in my life. Thanks for the memories.

Cpl B K Walsh (nee Pringle) ATS



Born in November 1915, Barbara Pringle was the daughter of James William, who had served in France with the RASC. He had 5 brothers, all of whom served in the British Army during WW1. One brother, Sgt George Pringle, was killed at the Somme. This had a profound effect on a young Barbara growing up, her younger brother was named George after their uncle.

She stayed in school until she was 15 but left as her father died of mouth cancer and being the eldest had to go to work to support her Mother and Brother.

She was initially employed as a cook/maid in a large country house in Bellingham (Northumberland). The staff and family found out she was exceptionally good at maths and book keeping, and was also the same age as the daughter of the house, so was assigned as a ladies maid to her. (The maths talent explains why Gran ended up in the Royal Signals).

When War was declared in 1939, she immediately volunteered to join the ATS, she was successful and completed her training, being assigned to the Royal Signals. (Throughout her life she was so proud of her Jimmy, I have it now and carried it woven into my bouquet on my wedding day).

She was initially stationed at Fulford near York. Then into the HQ, (now Imphal Barracks). After 3 years, she moved to Kedlestone Hall in Derbyshire, a Y Station intercepting messages and signals which were relayed to Bletchley Park. She was billeted in one of the local villages. She told stories of also helping the local WLA girls during lunchtime and holidays, planting vegetables and harvesting.

In 1942, on leave in Northumberland, she met my Grandad, he was stationed at Otterburn Camp waiting to deploy to the Far East. They married in 1943 and surprisingly, Gran stayed in the ATS. At this point she had been promoted to Corporal. Interestingly, the family she had worked for before WW2 gifted her the silk for her wedding dress as she had remained close and in contact with them.

In late 1944 / early 45 Grandmother was discharged from the ATS and had my Mum in March 1945 - if she could have stayed in the Army, or gone back after having a child, she would have done. The Army gave her independence, responsibility, opportunity and financial stability. She always spoke fondly of her time, friends, loss of friends and disappointment of not having been able to stay in - she genuinely loved it.

*Sally Barber
Grand-daughter
(I was OC TFAO (Theatre Field Admin Office) in HQ BRITFOR, Pristina, (University), Jan - Jun 2000. I worked for Alison Munro & Fiona Grundy. I'm still in touch with a handful of people I met on that tour, all of us bar one are now civilians. I persuaded my Mum to apply for my Grandmother's medals last year, we now have them for Gran & Grandad.*

She inspired me to join the TA at University, I then went on to join the RAF and served for 16 years. I'm positive that I worked with you (Ali Brown) in Kosovo, but may have met you before then when I did my pre RCB/RCB. The only reason I ended up in the RAF was the place came up before RMAS).



Winifred Paul (Nee Story)

My mother sadly passed away two years ago at the age of 93, and when I was looking through her letters and keepsakes, I came across an application form filled in, but not sent, to join the WRAC Association.

During the second world war, my mother was in the ATS (she always said she was in the RA and RASC) working on radio location (not RADAR!). and was moved all over the country – Devon, Kent, Northern Ireland, Anglesey were just some of the places she mentioned.

She spoke so much in later years about the comradeship and a feeling of pride in what they were achieving. She was with her group in Edinburgh at the end of the war and said how sad it was that the friendships built up over those few years had to end. She kept all her photographs and badges, together with those of my father. I would like to put them together in a memory box.

I have enclosed a copy of a piece she wrote remembering the day she joined at Fenham Barracks in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

My mother's Army No. was W/210370, 641 Company RASC.

She talked so much about her army experiences that I felt I needed to write this letter as a final piece of the story.

*Mrs Jean Hillaby
(Daughter)*

"It was in August 1942 I took a trolley-bus ride and fairly soon my fate was sealed when a jolly sergeant at the barrack gates roared "Come inside, we're waiting for you!"

Very soon I was kitted out at the QM stores and joined the other rookies, and a sorry sight we looked. Our jackets didn't fit, and the skirts were all too long – so off we went to the tailor to be altered and turned into regulation ATS. But the result was even worse, half khaki and the other half civvies, until the alterations could be done.

At last the day dawned when we went into town wearing our smart new uniform, but dear oh dear, what if we met an officer, we hadn't been taught how to salute – we didn't want to be put on a charge so soon in our careers.

We wrestled with collars and ties and studs that wouldn't stay in, and early morning reveille then breakfasts of boiled sausages. Still, we survived it all and very soon we packed our kitbags for the first time and set off on the next stage – into the unknown, which turned out to be a training centre 'somewhere in England'.

We diligently learnt our trade and soon were ready to man a gun-site – although I should say sites – which were many, but all looked the same. The time came when we were no longer needed, and friends just had to say goodbye, as we were posted to various destinations and had to learn another skill before the War was ended, when we put away our khaki for good, and learnt to be a civilian again.

Iris Fenn (nee Clemmens) ATS: 14 May 1943 – August 1946

Trained: Initial training at Guildford; Transport training at Camberley

Served: in Dorking, Surrey

Jobs: Mixed transport

Favourite time: All of it – it was so very interesting

Dear Friends

I hope you will be pleased with my story [Editor – *this is precis version with more appearing at a later date*]. I am very sorry I will not be able to attend any meetings; my mobility is bad now, after a fall. I am very fortunate as I am looked after by my RASC life membership friends who collect me for outings. The Signals welcomed me too, as I worked with the pigeons for transport.

I went to a writers group at Age Concern in Exeter many years ago. It was helped by someone from the university. I noticed most people were writing about their lives and things they knew about – we were told it was Social History! Our tutor collected our stories for an anthology.

Following my friend joining up as a Dispatch Rider, I decided I would like to do the same. One of my first friends was Olive Perrot. On arrival we were issued with our uniform and a thing to clean brass button, penknife, scissors and 'Hussif' (sewing kit), and had dreadful vaccinations – the moaning was pathetic! Kit inspections were quite common. Our billet was a 'spider hut'. Our NCO was Cpl Gearing – very friendly and popular with us.



Next three weeks were basic training – marching on parade, route marching and running in gym kit; I began to feel very fit. We had to get used to Army food – breadless days weren't too bad as we had ship's biscuits, but raw cabbage was a bit chewy. There was also a NAAFI on site along with a "Sally Ann" canteen.

Some Free French girls joined us at Queen's Camp and one sang Ave Maria in the end-of-three-weeks concert – beautiful.

The Selection Board said I was too light (at 7½ stone) to be a Dispatch Rider but could become a Driver - so sent myself and Olive to the Driving Centre at Camberley for six week's training. There were 15cwt trucks, utilities (Tillys) and 3-ton ambulances. Our days alternated between mechanics in the mornings and first aid in the afternoons. I still have my notebook on the 16 tasks on vehicles and decontamination. I found it interesting to learn about the internal combustion engine.

Finding our way around the roads consisted of using public houses as signposts. Apparently, there was one pointing out to sea saying "Bath" – to confuse 'Jerry'.

One of the last things at Camberley was to pass our driving test. I had mine on an Austin K2 ambulance, which I passed. Having finished the course, it was time to receive our posting to our various – once we had had some leave.

My posting was to 158 Command Mixed Transport RASC, Nutfield, a small place east of Redhill in Surrey. I now had khaki trousers, battle dress, brown boots, leather jerkin and yellow gauntlets – clothing suitable for driving vehicles that had no doors, only canvas rolled back.

ATS STALWARTS

**Olive, The Lady Strathspey
(nee Olive Amy Grant)
ATS (1938 – 1949)
& WRAC (1949 – 1950)
105 on 6th August 2018**

One of my first trips was with the ambulance when, late at night with blinkered headlights, I encountered a soldier lying in the middle of the lane, obviously drunk. I dragged him into the seat next to mine, and delivered him to the sentry gate of the camp from which I guessed he had come.

My next job was driving a 15cwt truck to an Army Glasshouse (prison) at Oakwood, where I had my meals in the Sergeants' Mess. They were mature chaps, and one wanted to adopt me.

Then onto the Priory, Reigate, where I met our sergeant for the first time – Micky Middleton, a FANY. Onto Dorking and 'D' platoon at St Margaret's. Our day's work was put on a board in the hall – various units would send in a requisition for transport, and we would be sent out, sometimes for a day, or a week, or even 2-3 weeks. A lot of our work was loading up with food and supplies at Command Supply Depot, Dorking, for delivery to POW camps, hospital trains and other camps.

Canadian 86th Bridge Company was stationed up on Ranmore Common, near Dorking. Two outriders on Harley Davidsons used to tease me, as they found out I had to sit on a folded blanket to see out and I needed a brick under my right foot to reach the accelerator.

My favourite vehicle was a Ford Truck with a V8 engine – it could have gone a lot faster if the workshop mechanics had not put a governor on the carburettor. The vehicles were very thirsty, 12-miles to the gallon was quite usual.

In an old quarry, near Kingswood, Reigate, the homing pigeons had their lofts. These were looked after by the Signal Corps – it was thrilling to take these birds to the Ashford area of Kent for release. We would stop at oast houses so the birds could have a drink. They were in training for D-Day.

At St Margaret's the 'buzz bombs' started to come over regularly. We had to dig trenches in the garden – they were just knee-high and we soon became fed up with crouching in them, so we went under our beds instead. We always wondered where the bombs would fall when they fell silent – one day I came across a house on the Surrey/Kent border that had been hit. It was used by the ATS, but fortunately the drivers had left for work, but those left behind were killed.

The day came when we had to pack and leave St Margaret's – from where we went to Abinger Common; from there to Holmbury St Mary.

One day I took my truck to the workshops for a speedometer repair – after 12 miles it broke again, and the mechanic called me to look at the cable. I crawled underneath and looked into some lovely grey eyes – those of 'Slim'. I was surprised though, how many times he was on Sick Parade in Dorking. I soon found myself meeting him for a game of darts – the other boyfriend had to take a backseat! We married on 1st June 1946. The Army borrowed a wedding dress for me, which came from Canada. Since I was still in the army I had to return to my unit for a couple of months until I was demobbed.

I would not have missed it. I did things I would never have been able to do. Some things I will never forget – the sight of the road to Southampton on D-Day +5, mile after mile of troops and vehicles at the side of the road, under trees and hedgerows. Every bit of that road was packed with trucks and men waiting to go over to Europe.



In August I was honoured to represent the Association at one of our oldest surviving members of the ATS – Olive, The Lady Strathspey's (as she became upon marriage) 105th birthday. It was a beautiful, hot summer day at the home where Olive now resides in West Wittering, where she was surrounded by her many friends and family.

In 2004 Olive was interviewed by The Imperial War Museum, for the archives, and the following is an extract from that interview (which is available from their sound library):

Olive was born in Blowfield, Norfolk to an accountant father (who served in the Engineers in France between 1914 and 1920) and a stay-at-home home-maker mother (who was a very good amateur singer). She was the middle child of three, the other two being brothers.

On leaving school she went to the local art school, since she was very talented, but had to give up after a term as her father was ill and she needed to "earn a living" – so she went to teacher-training college in London, and then taught in Northampton.

Being a teacher made it an easy decision for her to join the ATS, as she wanted to escape teaching and was, with her friends, determined to fight Hitler. She wanted to fly, but there were too many applications and they did not take any women. The ambulance-drivers HQ were in Bedford, and she had no way of getting there, so she joined the Territorial Army in Northampton. She describes the extraordinary feeling of all the women joining together to march through the local town.

In July 1939 they went on camp, and this was the first time they interacted with men – who treated them kindly, and as children.

When she first enrolled it was apparent that she had no special skills, so became an Orderly (rather than a cook or clerk) – ie a dogsbody for the camp. She looked after her friend, who was Commander, as Batman – and was told to always bring two cups, so she too could enjoy a good cup of tea. The camp was very tough, with tin plates and mugs, peculiar tea and straw mattress'.

Eventually she was called up as Bombardier Store-keeper at Larkhill School of Artillery, in the Quartermaster Stores, issuing theodolites etc to the soldiers. Although still a Corporal really, in the artillery her rank was called Bombardier.

She thought she would be there forever but got tired and applied for a Commission Officer Training in September 1939. However, this was delayed by an accident in which she broke her nose and both knee-caps.

Her first Command was of a platoon of Free French girls. She found them very amusing, but her commander was upset that the French girls insisted on making their skirts look "very cheap" (although nice) – but Olive said she couldn't stop them.

She was sent to Doddington Hall, in Cheshire, to Command the clerks, cooks and orderlies for the Infantry Commanders Training Unit. Each group of around 60 young men were lovely – and she was the only female in the mess.

When asked if there was ever any trouble between men and women (ie romantic liaisons), Olive replied "No! never; not to her knowledge". Women in those days just never slept with men before marriage. During the war if anyone did get emotionally involved they would be posted along way apart.

Next, she was promoted up a rank and went on the Junior Commander course in Bournemouth to be a Captain. Three went forward for interview at the ATS Directorate in London – she thinks she was successful because she was interviewed by a 'Grant'. So she became a Staff Captain in the War Office,

handling complaints from the public in relation to women. The department was under the Adjutant General's Unit Director, Jean Knox.

She was at the War Office until August 1944 when she was posted to Italy, upon her request. On trying to find her a suitable job she was assigned to Civil Affairs and was promoted to Senior Commander. She was based at General Alexander's HQ, 'A' branch (ie Allied HQ Central Mediterranean) in Cassata. This primarily involved working with displaced persons (not Italians), particularly after the Armistice when troops had to be repatriated to their home nations. Each camp had their own nationalities working with them to screen their own people, but this was very tricky – particularly as the Russians did not want to return, as they would be shot, and tried to pass themselves off as Turkish; and the Poles were very desperate and sad.

She worked all over the Mediterranean, including accompanying Colonel Hicks to some high-powered missions in Athens, the Foreign Office and House of Commons relating to displaced Jews trying to get to Israel (as it became).

She was there for two years (1944 – 1946) returning in the summer to the ATS Directorate in the War Office, where she (along with others) insisted on wearing their overseas beret – until her commanding officer gave her the afternoon off and told her "to get a proper cap". People were still very keen on the army and they would get free bus journeys. Although she fancied being a stockbroker, she found military life an easy one, particularly for someone without a home. She didn't like teaching but did like people in the army.

She now worked on policy-making for the new Women's Royal Army Corps, where she got more and more involved. She went to the Selection Committee and easily passed, then being sent to the Officer Training Unit involved with the posting of personnel and record-keeping. She was there a couple of years ...

... then being sent to Scotland to Command WRAC 10th Battalion, based in Edinburgh. It was here that she met her husband (*) and left the army to marry and have a family.

(*) Olive's son, Michael, said that one of the tasks his mother had to do was oversee the building of a new HQ or camp in Scotland involving liaising with a land-agent/chartered surveyor. The assigned land-agent became his father.

Anne Robson (nee MacWatt) **ATS 1942 - 1947** **107 on 14th September 2018**

On looking through our records we have also been reminded that one of our ex-ATS Members is now 107 and still going strong, although her hearing and sight are failing a bit. She now lives in Edinburgh, and we are hoping to get someone to talk to her about her memories of her service and life – which will appear in a future edition.

.... – although you may know differently! In which case, please do let us know. Of course, in both cases these ladies have not only seen the start, and end of the ATS, along with the start of the WRAC, they have also lived through the First World War and with it the formation of the WAAC (even if they were unaware of its existence and the work it's members did).



A MESSAGE FROM THE LAST DWRAC Brigadier G K Ramsey CBE

It is now some months since we saw a series of events to mark the disbandment of the Corps. How very proud I was of all those who worked so hard to achieve such a high standard on every occasion, and how enjoyable each event was. The sheer volume of letters alone, from all corners of the world, showed how much that work was appreciated. On each of the days, I could not but admire the standing, bearing and professionalism of everyone in the public eye. Between us, we could not have given the Corps a more perfect, grand or proud send-off despite the bitter-sweet taste many of us shared.

My sincere thanks to the Corps, serving and retired, for their staunch support over the two-and-a-half years of my tour. It was not easy, but without your help, I do not think any of us could have gone forward so strong in our values and traditions, developed over the years so loyally by the members of the Women's Royal Army Corps.

Out with the old and in with the new, the saying goes! In my new appointment, as Commander Aldershot Area, I have already heard news of the first Sergeant Major RCT, Staff Sergeant R E Murphy of 41 Squadron RCT in Aldershot who goes to Berlin in July 1992, as SSM 62 Tpt & Mov Sqn RCT; although outside my area, WO1 (RSM) S Jones RMP, took over as RSM Donnington on 14 April 1992, and WO1 (RSM) L M Horton RMP who took over as RSM, Hong Kong on 29 May 1992. They have gained those appointments in competition with men, and represent a first for women in those two Corps. Our congratulations go with them. Progress is being made and at last women are gaining the recognition and status they so richly deserve.

I end by taking this opportunity to warmly welcome on your behalf my successor, Brigadier Joan Roulstone, Director Women (Army). Her task ahead will also not be easy. She faces much challenge in continuing to ensure equality for women, and in developing policies which will take women forward to even better and greater things. I know she has the will, spirit and sense of humour to ensure women can never be forgotten ever again, and I know she will not mind if I pledge all our support to her in the years ahead.

(Taken from 1992 Lioness as the WRAC was disbanded)

MEMORIES: W/119926 Cpl Stitt le J. (Joan Awbery)



War was going very badly in 1941, I thought it was time I took a hand in it, so went to the Recruiting Office in Cambridge to offer myself to the WAAF. They were just about to close for lunch and told me to come back in the afternoon. The next door being ajar I found it to be the ATS recruiting office! Good fortune had smiled on me!

Nov'41 got called for medical; calling up-papers arrived in January '42, with instructions to report to Talavera Camp, Northampton with the minimum of baggage. Arrived to find Nissen Huts, communal feeding, washing of mess-tins and irons in communal tub of warm greasy water, hard beds, nights spent with thirty or more snorers, groaners and teeth-grinders under scratchy blankets. Tortoise stove not lit until 5pm and just got warm by lights out time. All this during the coldest winter for a decade.

Out on the barrack square in snow in civvy shoes and bits of ill-fitting uniform, under the eagle eye of male Sgt Majors learning drill and saluting. Breaking-in time but hardships endured with the comradeship engendered and natural cunning in evading the worst! Even life-long friendships made. Conditions greatly improved by the time we left after our six weeks training and scattered throughout the country.

I had volunteered to be a driver, but in the frost and snow opted for office work with shorthand and typing to offer. Asked where I would like to be posted, I said Scotland - sent to Cambridge, 25 miles from home to where I biked on my days off with my washing and the unexpired portion of the day's rations.

Life was quite cushy - interrupted by the night's fire-watching duty and hearing the distant sound of bombs, none dropped on Cambridge fortunately. Constant sound of bombers going out from local airfields. One night a distant explosion disturbed us and in the morning it was reported an ammunition train had blown up near the station at my home town. Rumours were rife that the town was obliterated, and I was taken home to investigate. The station and surroundings were no more, and the driver and fireman killed, but no casualties in the town due to their bravery in getting the blazing wagons into the countryside.

In Cambridge, billeted in big old houses on the Madingley and Grange Roads. Beautiful rooms divided with plywood sheets into small spaces for offices. Here I was employed in Eastern Area Sub-Command as P.A. to a particularly unpleasant Brigade Major. After complaining, my next job was with the Army Kinema Service - training films and one recreational film taken out to lonely outposts of gun and searchlight sites along the coast of East Anglia. They were transported by a 'Tilly', with a projectionist and a mechanic in case the film broke down (which it could be guaranteed to do). During these times monotony was relieved by attending three-week WO and NCOs' course at Nevilles Cross, Durham and a lively week in and out of gas chambers on a course at Winterbourne Gunner on Salisbury Plain. Once having to go overnight by train to Glasgow Police Station to bring back an absconded ATS girl.

After VE Day I was posted to Harpenden on admin. duties then in 1944 to Embarkation Camp in Bristol. After many false stops and starts finally off from Tilbury Docks, wallowing about on the Channel in convoy with overnight journey, no sleep, having started off from Bristol at 3 a.m. Arrived at war-damaged Ostenee, given a meal where the Belgian owner proudly displayed the signature of Mary Churchill who had been on the draft ahead of mine. Then to Brussels for remaining months of the War in the BLA Legal Service as secretary.

Billeted in the local Barracks, then for a short time in a house which had been the German SS HQ! VE Day in Brussels something to write home about! The day after day parades of returning Belgians from their forced labour and concentration camps, each parade headed by a band and hordes of local residents. Services in Cathedral, and noisy and frightening

demonstrations all over the city - for the return or the rejection, of King Leopold. Life fairly primitive in the barracks but we had the use of hotels converted to luxurious clubs - the Monty Club, the YMCA, the Canada Club - where we could have baths, hairdressing and substantial meals; Brussels being a Leave centre.

A week or two later my first-ever flight - in a Dakota, sitting on kit bag to Germany. The thrill of crossing over the vast Rhine about which we had heard so much. Sight of bombed towns below.

First to Harford, then to Rhine Army HQ in Bad Oeynhausen, still with the Legal Eagles. Then their offices were moved to Bad Zalzflfen, a lovely small Spa town where I was the only ATS - billeted with the circumspect ladies of the Control Commission, just out from England. To visit my pals in Oeynhausen I had to seek a friendly armed soldier to accompany me. The locals not at all pleased to see us, we had probably turned them out of their homes for offices. But we had friendly German cooks and maids - far better meals than army ones!

Had the chance to see other parts of Wesphalia accompanying my Major to duties in other towns. Going on leaves in Paris, Brussels, the Hartz Mountains and the Mohne dam. After signing on for another six, I was demobbed in Guildford in July 1946.

Fortunately my parents kept all my letters home from Harpenden through to Germany, so all memory of this time can be easily revived. Not much remains of the Cambridge time as my visits home were frequent.

MEMORIES:

Anne Carter (nee Garrad), W/258922 & Mrs Marjory Garrad



Anne Garrad at joining up at Anne Carter

My name is Anne Carter, and I am writing to you to tell you about my ATS Story. I am the daughter of Mrs Marjory Garrad, who joined up as W/1 in the ATS in 1938 (see photo), and inspired me to volunteer when I was old enough.

Joined ATS April 1943, until December 1946; trained in Wrexham, north Wales. Served in WRAC/TA 1950 to 1953. Served in Wales, Scotland, Italy, Palestine and Austria.

After service at Allied Force Headquarters (as shorthand-typist-clerk), Central Mediterranean Force, Caserta, Naples, Italy, I was sent to OCTU in Palestine before being commissioned in June 1946 (also served in Wales, Scotland and Austria). Anne also



Marjory Garrad in ATS

served as Instructor at Training Camp, Wrexham; shorthand-typist-clerk, Inverness. After Palestine, Anne was the first to serve on the staff of ATS Transit & Assembly Centre in Naples, Mouza and Villach, being in charge January to August 1946 - her favourite time. She also recalls working through the night at North Highland District HQ, Inverness, between October '43 and June '44, prior to D-Day - everything was TOP SECRET.

After University, I was appointed as a Probation Officer in Norfolk, later marrying a local friend, and have remained in the County ever since. I served in the WRAC / TA from early 1950 to late 1953, stationed at Nelson Barracks, Norwich. I am now 94 years old and remember my ATS and WRAC days as particularly happy ones.

[Anne's career in the ATS was particularly interesting after this date, and she has written about it in "My story" - which will appear in Wonderful Women 100 book - Editor].

MEMORIES: **Anne McCulloch**

(emailed in by her husband, Gordon)

My wife was in the WRAC during her teenage years and her early 20s - she trained as Private Soldier and then specialised as a M.T. Driver. However, she was significant in that she was placed at the Guards depot in Pirbright, which I am told by her was a first as women had not entered into this male bastion in an active role prior to that.

Some of her experiences are shockingly funny, particularly her stories of drill where she was forced to keep time with the male soldiers - and the uproar it caused because she could only move her knees a few inches in her skirt, whereas the troops were in full gait, causing mayhem in the process.

Anyway, she can relate all this and more to you of her time in the WRAC - it certainly was the making of her (in her own words) and I can confirm that she is a solid, loyal and faithful woman with a great moral and ethical compass - something she says she learnt in the Army.

[This is an extract of the pro-forma story sent to us, the fuller story(ies) will hopefully appear in the Wonderful Women book]

MEMORIES: **Flo Steel**

In 1941 aged 19 Flo Sheward married Aircraftman Norman Wormald at St Andrew's Church Nottingham whilst he was on a special 48 hour leave serving with the RAF in North Africa. He was killed in action aged 22 on his return. Flo never saw him again after their marriage. He is remembered with honour in Torbruk War Cemetery.



In 1943 aged 21 Flo joined the army and was deployed with the Expeditionary Forces. After training in various parts of the UK, she finally set sail in a troop ship from Liverpool. They sailed through the Med where her ship was chased by Italian U boats. They survived and she eventually arrived in Alexandria, Egypt where she worked in the NAAFI. It was there she met Corporal Bob Steel formerly of the Coldstream Guards and then serving with the Green Howards.



Romance blossomed through the remaining war years. In 1945 Flo was posted to East Africa where she celebrated VJ day with a few beers! In spite of a serious hangover she enjoyed a safari the following day shooting wilderbeest with her CO! She returned to Alex to plan her wedding Bob and in October 1945 they married at Mustafa Barracks, Alexandria. Bob was awarded the African Star for his war service.

After the war they settled in Nottingham where Bob became a Reservist and worked in Gedling Colliery. They had 4 children. Son Robert followed the military route and served with Royal Signals in UK, Northern Ireland, Cyprus and Germany. Rob's wife Sue served with WRAC in UK, Cyprus and Germany. Flo's granddaughter Sally served with WRAC and AGC in UK, Belgium and Kuwait.

She stayed in billets in Alex (I now recall the search for these on our trip) but she had a curfew which she frequently exceeded. She and dad used to walk along the corniche. One of them _ she can't remember which - was out on a charge for kissing under a lamp post!

She remembers being put on 'jankers' as a punishment but she can't remember the misdemeanour. Jankers usually involved peeling a lot of potatoes!

When she left she sailed from Liverpool and when she returned it was to London. then there was the bit about surprising grandma

The trip to London with grandma when they stayed in Romford.

Her final comment was 'I'd do it all again,'

MEMORIES: W/182096 CPL E TINKLER

A member of Grantham Branch, Sue Goodes, who in the course of her work, met Edna Tinkler aged 98. Edna had been working for Sir Edward and Lady Packe at the outbreak of WWII. Although her call up was delayed she eventually joined the ATS in 1942 determined to 'do her bit'. After three months at Leicester and then three months training on the Isle of Anglesey, Edna known as 'Tink', spent the remainder of the war years in and around London. At the end of the war Edna was stationed at Whittington Barracks at Packington, near Lichfield and worked at the Army Post Office in Nottingham.



Sue, during a conversation with Edna realised that she had not received her Veterans Badge and decided that this should be remedied. Consequently, on 18th May 2018 eight members of the Grantham Branch, Edna's son Philip, daughter-in-law, grandson and granddaughter arrived at Ward 5 of Grantham Hospital (as Edna had been admitted with a chest infection) for the presentation. (Happily, Edna has now recovered and returned to Red Court Care Community).



Also in attendance, much to Edna's delight, was WO2 Cathy Munro MBE who had made a special journey from Peterborough and said "Everything we do in the army today is because of people like Edna. Despite the amount of women who served in the war, they were not actually recognised by the government until long after the war was over." Edna's son Philip said "Mum has lots of fond memories of her years in the army and some of the people she met. It was a very happy occasion for all involved and the hospital pulled out all the stops to enable it to still go ahead." The Mayor of Grantham, Councillor Mike Cook, presented Edna with her Veterans Badge and she was delighted but just a little overwhelmed.

Chris Corker

MEMORIES: **Helen Morse (nee Black)** **W/335159 Service from 1946 – 1956**

In October 1945, I made a rash decision to join the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). During a visit from my cousins, who were on leave, I informed Lex that I would be in the uniform next, but he informed me that I was Yellow (lacking courage and would not step outside of my comfort zone). On Monday morning, I visited the Recruitment Centre and completed the initial application form.

I was called for a medical in early December 1945 and I passed! I felt that I was now on my way to joining the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). On 4th January 1946, I travelled from Glasgow to Leicester to be based at Glen Parva Barracks for my basic training and the beginning of a most wonderful and life changing life.

On completion of my basic training, I was posted to RAPC Office in Kidderminster (Worcester, England), where we were dealing with and paying the servicemen who had been demobbed for their final settlement. From there, I was transferred to the Royal Army Pay Corps (RAPC) Office in Glasgow, Scotland. Shortly after arriving, one evening I read a notice asking for volunteers to serve overseas. I was the first on the list and took this opportunity!

On the 6th May 1947, I was on embarkation leave. I had no idea where I would be going to, my only instructions informed me that I should travel from Glasgow to North Mymms in Hertfordshire, where transport would take us to the Holding and Drafting Unit. We went through the usual checking of health and ensuring we had received all necessary inoculations - for where we were going. We attended lots of meetings about different types of diseases we may come across, then we were given the usual forwarding address card to send to our parents. That was when we realised we were on our way to The Far East!

On a Friday morning, we left North Mymms Camp and travelled by road to Tilbury docks, where we joined the Troopship SS Toronto. What a journey; I remember sailing through the Bay of Biscay on Sunday morning when there was quite high winds and the ship was rolling and rocking around. But, it was so exciting, we loved every minute of the experience! Our first Port of call was Port Said, we were there and watching all the boats selling their goods. During the journey, I was employed when pay day came along paying out the weekly pay to the troops. Our next port of call was Aden – we were allowed ashore for a few hours whilst the ship was in dock for supplies and refuelling. On the move again, and waiting patiently for the next port, which was Colombo, that was where we were held up for 5 days as there was no berth available in Singapore. Our accommodation on arrival was the married quarters in Tanglin Barracks.

My new life was now going to change from here!



Singapore 1947 - 1948

Most of us on draft were about to change our trade. I was transferred to Royal Signals to be trained as a switchboard operator. It looked as though we would never be able to cope, but like all of us within weeks we were like old soldiers doing everything that was expected. We worked on shifts, as we all knew soldiers were on duty 24 hours a day. During our time in Singapore, we were allowed leave - my first was to The Cameron Highlands in Malaya. The weather there was much colder than in Singapore, but it was nice to relax and enjoy the scenery. Our life in Singapore was good, lots of places to see and lots of time spent near the beaches and picnics on the beach.

My next holiday was to Penang, the island at the other end of Singapore; this was good, most of the time we spent there on the beach or visiting The Temple which was exciting, to see and hear about its origin.

The good life ended in November 1948, when we had to pack our bags and head home on the next Troopship to enjoy our disembarkation leave and spend some time with our family.

In January 1949, I was to join Northern Command Signal Regiment in York. Whilst there, the demise of the ATS was forthcoming on 31st January 1949 and we removed our ATS Cap Badge and inserted the Women's Royal Army Corps Badge (WRAC). So, the end of one and the start of another, but none of us would forget our time as a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS).

During my time, at Northern Command I tried very hard to see if another opening would come for further travel overseas. I was later transferred to Scottish Command working at the Castle. This was also very interesting; as time went on I still wanted to travel overseas. I believed there was a chance of going back to the Far East, in 1952. But, when I arrived in Singapore, I was informed that I would be posted to Hong Kong.

When I arrived in Hong Kong, I really fell in love with the island. Shortly after we arrived we found ourselves working on the switchboard, where again it was shifts. Whilst on duty one morning the engineers told us to evacuate the switchboard as there was the beginning of a fire in the equipment room. All personnel were able to get out without accidents. True to good signals engineers we had a Field Fortress switchboard installed in 2 days. We were now located in the old Japanese underground headquarters for about 8 months while the new switchboard arrived.

The next big day we had was trying to arrange the first ever Double Wedding to be performed in Hong Kong, St. John's Cathedral, 1952. The wedding was for Miss Edna Hollyhead and Mr David Snashall. The second wedding was for Miss Irene Dyson and Mr John Jacques. The reverend for this wedding was W.G. Haig-Brown. The bridesmaids for the weddings were myself (Helen Black), Hazel Duff, Julie Ruffle and Julie Barber- we were all a part of the WRAC.



Hong Kong Double Wedding 1952 (Irene Dyson and John Jacques)



Hong Kong Double Wedding 1952 (Edna Hollyhead and Norman Snashall)

The reception was held at the Taikoo Club, Quarry Bay, 20th September 1952. It certainly was a wonderful day for all of us and the thoughts we had about that day were the old saying we now have - WRAC The Best!

During this time of upheaval, along with a colleague, I was fortunate to be able to get a cruise to Japan on the British India Steam Navigation Company. This was the highlight of my stay in Hong Kong. For the sum of £22.00 we had a 3 weeks cruise of Japan visiting Kobe, then on to Yokohama. Our next port of call was Tokyo, where we visited the Emperor's palace, then on to Kyoto the site of Mount Fuji; leaves one inspired by the beauty of Japan.

Once again, my time was drawing to a close, where we were due to be sent back to the UK in 1953.

After disembarkation leave I was posted to 2 Ack Ack Signal Regiment based in Aldershot. During this time, I had the job of working with the 'Z' Reservists who had been organised in case of further troubles.

Now that things seemed to be settling I started to seek for openings in overseas areas. One came up and I was on embarkation leave again; this time it was to Egypt. On arrival at Port Said, we disembarked and were taken by transport through the canal zone to Fayad. Our destination was Ladysmith Camp. I was attached to 3 LofC Signal Regiment. I had just settled, but after 8 months I had to pack my bags and fly to Nicosia.

On arrival, I was met by a colleague who took me to Kykko Camp Nicosia, this was approximately November 1954. I soon settled into the routine of work, for I was now attached to Royal Signals Middle East. I worked both in the Comms Centre and Switchboard. I found that the arrangement of the work made life quite interesting. On the switchboard, we had local employees working alongside us. The shift pattern was quite good, we were able to go out on picnics to the beaches at Famagusta. Indeed, we had lots of fun in Nicosia. Once the troubles increased on 30th November 1955, the Governor announced that we were now on a state of emergency. It was during this time that I met my future husband whilst working on the same shift. My life suddenly took on a different approach and we decided that we would get married on our return to the UK.

The rest may be history but fortunately for me, I still managed to travel overseas with my husband, firstly to Germany in March 1957. This is where we stayed until our first daughter was born in March 1958. However, we only stayed there for another 7 months before we were posted to Singapore in September 1958. During our stay, we had our first son in February 1961. We then once again moved to Norway in 1962. During our time there, our last child was born in July 1962. Nevertheless, we moved for the final time with our three children back to England in 1968.

MEMORIES: Annie (Atherton) Christian



My Grandmother, Annie (Atherton) Christian was a soldier in the Women's Royal Army of England. She was born July 27, 1927 in Wigan, Lancashire, England to Elizabeth Atherton. On May 31, 1949 at the age of 21 years, she enlisted into The Women's Royal Army Corps of England in Manchester. She served 2 years and 211 days. She discharged December. 24 1951 due to family reasons.

She married my grandfather (an American in the United States Navy) in March of 1952 in Dublin, Ireland. The next 3 years they would be stationed in Ireland, England, France and ending in United States in 1955. My grandmother had 7 children and 9 grandchildren. After battling lung cancer, that spread to her brain, my grandmother passed away on November 20 1985 in the Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

She told my mother (her daughter in law) how very proud she was, to have been a soldier in the Women's Royal Army Corps of England.

*Beth Christian Wells
Daughter-in-law*

***Many more stories have been received –
Thank you.***

***We will include some in forthcoming Lioness
editions, and into the forthcoming Wonderful
Women 100 book we are planning.***

RMA SANDHURST COMMANDANT'S PARADE Penny Muxworthy

On a damp 11th April, Ali Brown and I made our way to RMA Sandhurst for this year's Commandant's Parade. For those who have never attended Sandhurst, this is the final rehearsal for the full Passing Out Parade for the Officer Cadets. It is carried out exactly as if it were the final parade and the Academy Commandant, or representative, 'takes the salute'. All the cadets are in full uniform with horses, pennants and Awards being presented. We are all given Orders of Ceremony so we know who is doing what, when.

As someone who has never had the opportunity to attend this event before, I felt very honoured to be representing the Association and to seeing the pride and precision of the Officer Cadets. Whichever Regiment they ultimately got assigned to will be very lucky. The only hitch all morning was a technical one, when the damp must have gotten into the microphone / speakers – although as said, better for this than the final Passing Out Parade. I am also very grateful to Ali for explaining the various elements of the Parade to me as it was progressing.

The following photos hopefully give you a flavour of the occasion.

(I apologise to all those of you who trained / were commissioned / or served at RMA Sandhurst – I know this is all very familiar to you).





ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA FOUNDERS DAY – 7TH JUNE 2018 Penny Muxworthy

Founder's Day is the highlight of the Royal Hospital Chelsea's calendar, an event attended by all the Chelsea Pensioners, which celebrates the founding of the Royal Hospital by King Charles II. The event has taken place almost every year since the Royal Hospital opened in 1692, and to this day the hospital celebrates its history with this very British ceremony.

Founder's Day is also known as Oak Apple Day and is always held on a date close to 29th May (Charles II's birthday and the date of his restoration as King in 1660). The Oak reference commemorates the escape of the future King Charles II after the Battle of Worcester (1651) when he hid in an oak tree to avoid capture by the Parliamentary forces, and is expressed through all Chelsea Pensioners wearing oak leaves on their famous scarlet uniforms. All invited guests are also given an oak leaf to wear for the day.

The gold statue of Charles II, that stands in the centre of Figure Court, is also adorned in oak leaves for the occasion. Over the years this has varied from a large wreath at the base to a wreath worn on the head, and from total covering where the statue is not even visible to a discreet skirt of oak branches around the base.

A member of the Royal Family attends the ceremony each year – Her Majesty the Queen has reviewed the parade four times. This year it was the Duke of Kent making a return visit.

Since the Association has some in-pensioners we are always lucky enough to receive a few invites to the Day – parade and refreshments. Ali Brown, myself and a couple of other Members attended this year – a beautiful, sunny (if hot) day that showed the Hospital off to it's best. Hopefully this selection of photos gives you a flavour of the day and proceedings.





WRAC LIONRSSES 6TH ANNIVERSARY 10K RUN NORWICH 2018 Wendy Hooton

As our previous Annual 10k runs had been in the North and South of the country I decided to go East to the City of Norwich in Norfolk. With the Medieval Cathedral, Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Theatres and the award-winning Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich has a wonderful cultural offering. It also has Norwich City Football Club!! There were plenty of courtyards and alleys with bars and restaurants, so everyone was catered for.

Friday was upon us and the WRAC Lionesses were arriving at the hotels. The Nelson Premier Inn overlooking the River Wensum was where most stayed, conveniently located opposite the railway station. It had a lovely terrace where we sat with our light refreshments watching people passing by on the "pub & paddle" canoes and boats (hired from a pub further upstream) and waiting for other Lionesses to arrive. As always, the chatting was nonstop, filled with the usual banter and military humour only we understand!

On Saturday we met in the hotel bar where t-shirts were collected. Thanks to Sue "Stick" Elksnis and Jan "TC" Rees for helping me with the admin, and Sandy Stanford-Barclay for selling the remainder of Wyn Carnegie's hand knitted bedsocks, and a fleece donated by Sandy Cawley, raising more funds for the WRAC Association. After a short briefing, lots more chatting, reminiscing and laughter we retired to bed. No fire alarm went off in the early hours this year!

Sunday was upon us, and after breakfast we all made our way to the City Council Offices by the Start line for a group photograph. The WRAC Lionesses Banner (gifted by Annette Jackson and Pam Malcolm) was tied to the railings at the Finish line.

My heartfelt thanks to Heather Gaughran, Rosie Garrison and photographer-in-training Marilyn Preece for being with us each year providing brilliant photographs and action shots. They really do highlight what a great time we ALL have, runners, walkers and supporters.

As is tradition, on the day the sun was shining – really, really brightly, it was a scorcher!! Another 30+ degrees. Water was provided and a much-welcomed cold shower enroute.

Our supporters were fabulous, cheering us on at every bend and hill (!) and at the finish. Thanks so much - WE NEED YOU! It was absolutely fabulous to see a “Go Lionesses” and Corps Badge placard in Jo Myer’s front garden, how brilliant was that? This year we have been given a new bear from our Chelsea Pensioner Jean Simmons. We have called her Chelsea Bear and she will be looked after by the supporters. Thanks very much Jean we love her. Our mascot Mo Bear (named after the late Maureen Deeley, our National Standard Bearer) completed another run and was carried by Diane Walsh this year. Mo wasn’t led astray too much, so was promoted to SSGT - Congratulations Mo Bear.

We had one sub hour runner this year, Andrea Mills, 56:56mins. Helen Meades-Davies was very close behind at 1:1:04. Congratulations. Well done to everyone for completing the 10k in that heat. You are all amazing. Special mention to Pauline Marr who did her first event last year and has gone from strength to strength completing this year’s in 1:07:18. Pauline is a regular runner at the Saturday Park runs and has been encouraged, in particular, by Betty Gash. Well done Pauline, you are an inspiration to many.

After the run, once everyone was accounted for, we went to the Charity Village in Chapelfield Gardens, where we had another group photograph with our medals and supporters. Thank you to Pat “Budgie” Rosewell who then took us through post run stretches.

Our Sunday evening meal was booked for 62 of us at the Riverside Chinese Buffet. The staff were brilliant and very accommodating. The food was excellent, amazing choice and the Teppanyaki Bar was very popular.

Another year over and we said our farewells. I was able to announce next year’s venue and date, so everyone is looking forward to YORK, SUNDAY 4th AUGUST 2019 - we will be celebrating the Centenary of the WRAC Association. My aim is to get 100 women (men are allowed too) to enter the 10k run to celebrate 100 years of the WRAC Association, each raising a minimum of £100 each for the WRAC Association. If we could get 100 supporters too, that would be awesome. Next year we will have new t-shirts with the Centenary logo, its going to be amazing. Please contact me for more information, wendyhootonski@aol.com, Wendy Hooton on Facebook or text/call me on 07775505326.

All that is left to do now is to collect in the remainder of the sponsor money. At the time of writing this our total is £8538.68 without Gift Aid for the WRAC Association. Thank you so much to the London Metal Exchange for their generous donation of £500 through Annette Jackson. Thank you to everyone who has donated so generously online or sponsored us and to all the runners/walkers & supporters who have fundraised for us, you have done brilliantly.

My grateful thanks, as always, to the facebook groups WRAC/ATS, Women’s Royal Army Corps (WRAC), WRAC/ATS ((Women who have Served or Serve in the Army) and the Branch Facebook Groups who allow us to promote our Annual Fundraising Event. We have our own Facebook group if you would like to join, it is called the WRAC LIONESSES FUNDRAISING GROUP. It is not

a chat site, just one to promote our fundraising events.

I look forward to more of you joining us next year, YORK, SUNDAY 4th AUGUST 2019 for what promises to be a memorable event. Ask those who have been to previous events. The Sunday evening meal will be very special for our WRAC ASSOCIATION Centenary. DON’T MISS OUT! Husbands, Wives, Family and Friends all welcome.

SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO SERVED







WRAC LIONESSES 7th ANNUAL 10k Run

**Next year the WRAC
Association will be
celebrating its CENTENARY!**



**100 WOMEN (FOR 100 YEARS)
EACH COMMITTING TO RAISING
£100 FOR THE ASSOCIATION.**

**EVENT: 10k RUN / WALK / JOG / CRAWL!
PLACE: YORK
DATE: SUNDAY 4th AUGUST 2019**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN
THE WRAC LIONESS'
AND BE PART OF THIS MEMORABLE
OCCASION
AS AN ENTRANT OR SUPPORTER
(Just as important),
PLEASE CONTACT:-**

**WENDY HOOTON
Email: Wendyhootonski@aol.com
Mobile: 07775-505326
Facebook/Messenger: Wendy Hooton
Facebook Group: WRAC LIONESSES
FUNDRAISING GROUP
Or HQ WRAC Association 0300 400 1992**

**“SUPPORTING WOMEN
WHO SERVED”**

100 MILE NORFOLK WALKING CHALLENGE 2018

Marg Davies

I wanted to thank you all so much for your support for my recent 100 Mile Walking Challenge which I completed on 12th May 2018. This year I was walking in Norfolk to commemorate and thank the women of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (A.T.S.). I finished in Great Yarmouth at the site where 26 A.T.S. women lost their lives on 11th May 1943. I was raising money for my two charities, the Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven and the Women's Royal Army Corps Association, and yet again I have been astounded by the generosity and support that I have received.

It took me six days to walk the 103 miles starting at Swaffham on the Peddars Way and then turning east at the coast to follow the Norfolk Coastal Path to finish at Great Yarmouth. It was a part of Britain that I didn't know at all, and it was a real eye-opener and pleasure to find out how varied and beautiful it was. From the rolling farmland (who said Norfolk was flat?) of the Peddars Way; past the dunes, shingle, marshland and wildlife of the North Norfolk Coast; and culminating in the battered and ravaged cliffs & dunes of the coast bordering the Broads - each area with its own beauty and highlights.

As well as the scenery and wildlife I will remember the kindness and generosity of people who donated & supported me; those who knew me and total strangers; people who gave me beautiful things to raffle as well as those who I seemed to be constantly “mugging”!!

The best moments of my walk? On Day 1, the hottest May Bank Holiday since records began, the shady patch of lush grass where I stopped for lunch. My lobster ‘snack’ on Day 2, eaten in the shade overlooking the tidal creeks and accompanied by the calls of flocks of seabirds. The stunning TakeAway crab salad from the car park wagon at Blakeney on Day 3. Meeting the volunteers of the National Coastwatch Charity who keep watch over the North Norfolk coastline. The carpet of bluebells at Cromer on Day 4. The stunning weather that, for the 5th year running, I enjoyed for the whole week.

The least favourite moments of my walk? Having a car “aimed” at me whilst walking the Peddars Way. Walking on eroding cliffs where the marked path was less than a metre from the edge when the official notices said “Keep at least 6 metres from the edge”!!

I normally have at least one “Ooops!” moment during my walks, often bordering on the ridiculous, but this year it all was a bit serious!! There was the time on Day 5 when I was battling against sand, wind, time & tide when I realised that I was the wrong side of the wooden sea-defence with the tide coming in. The only sensible way out was to re-trace my steps over a quarter of a mile to climb the steps and then continue the walk back and onwards on the correct side. Sensible . . . but longer . . . over half a mile longer . . . and time was ticking. So, I chose the least sensible route . . . climbing the eight-foot slippery, wooden banked barrier to its apex, then scrambling over and jumping/dropping the eight feet onto the beach behind!! OK - maybe not the best decision - but I survived!!

As I write this my fundraising has reached an amazing £3,507 (£4,014 including Gift Aid) and still rising. Thank you all so much for your kindness and support. It almost makes the sore feet worthwhile! If you'd like to know more please read my Online Blog at: <https://margdaviesswalks.blogspot.co.uk>



Day 1 At the Start

Day 1 - The Start!



Day 1 'Flat' Norfolk

The Flat (!) Norfolk



Day 2 Nearing the End of Day Stop

Nearly there

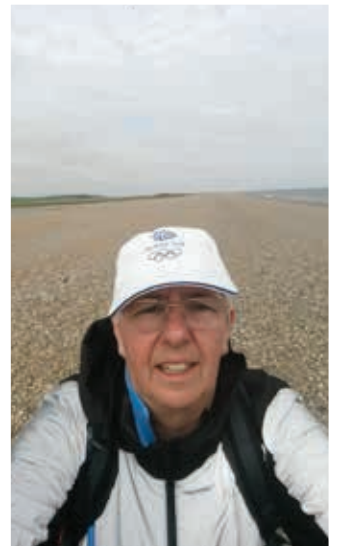


Day 2 My Lobster Snack View

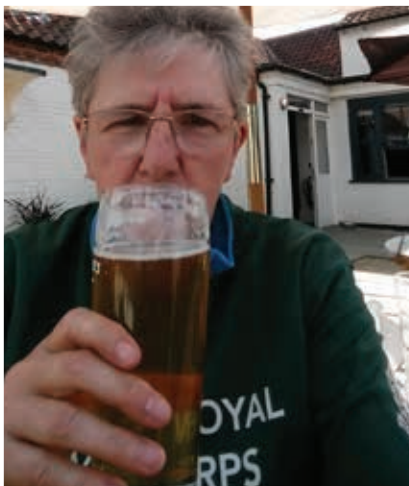
Day 2 - Lobster snack view



Stop!



Day 4 - Weather All change



Slaking thirst



Day 4 - Flat Norfolk



Day 3 Beach Lookouts at Wells next the Sea

Day 3 - Beach lookouts



*Day 4
- Flatter Norfolk*



Day 5 begins



Day 5 - Cliff erosion



Day 5 - Cliff erosion



Day 6 begins



*Day 6 - Almost there!
Gt Yarmouth promenade*



Day 5 - Day's end, at ATS memorial in Gt Yarmouth

A Poem about the Korean War

Absent Veterans

Would that you could wander still
Through grassy fields, by wooded hill
When morning bird-song fills the air
And yet another spring is here.

If only you could still feel sun
Upon your face when winter's done,
And small sweet scented flowers fair
When yet another summer's here.

But Fate decided otherwise
And you, beneath Korean skies,
A gallant band of comrades lies,
Your duty done, your merit high.

No changing seasons can erase
That once familiar name, that face
Which comes and lingers in each thought
Of those with whom we lived and fought.

D.U.R. Lidstone (b. 1920)
Private, The Gloucestershire Regiment
Korea 1950/51
(Sent in by his wife, Diane M Lidstone
ATS, REME)

EVENTS DIARY

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	DETAILS
2018			
NOVEMBER 8 TH	Remembrance: Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey	
10 TH	'A Concert for Peace'	G-Live, Guildford	Afternoon of events followed by a concert – see details under 'Remembrances'
10 TH	Festival of Remembrance	Royal Albert Hall	Televised; organised by The Royal British Legion
11 TH	Remembrance Parade	Cenotaph, Whitehall	Limited, veteran-only tickets available. Organised by RBL
11 TH	Service of Remembrance & wreathlaying	Castle Grounds, Guildford	Support the Association's "home" city and attend the Remembrance events at Guildford. Various events commencing 06.00 and concluding 19.05. Main Act of Remembrance commences 09.20
	Service for Armistice Day	National Memorial Arboretum	
2019			
FEBRUARY 1 ST	Attended Evensong	Guildford Cathedral	Service to commemorate 70th anniversary of WRAC formation, and to launch WRAC Association Centenary celebrations
MARCH	Marg Davies 100-mile walk	Surrey to Southampton	All details still TBC
22 ND - 24 TH	Grand Reunion (including AGM)	Southampton	
JUNE 29 TH	National Armed Forces Day	Salisbury	
JULY 7 TH	WRAC Association Commemoration Day	National Memorial Arboretum	
AUGUST 4 TH	Lionesses Annual 10k Run	York	Take part! Be one of the 100, to mark 100 years of the WRAC Association
NOVEMBER 7 TH	Remembrance: Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey	
9 TH	Lord Mayor's Show	City of London	
9 TH	Festival of Remembrance	On TV, from Royal Albert Hall	
10 TH	Remembrance Parade	Cenotaph, Whitehall	
10 TH	Act of Remembrance	Guildford, Surrey	
2020			
MARCH	A.G.M		Including end of Centenary Celebrations

WRAC ASSOCIATION CENTENARY & GRAND REUNION

GENERAL

This builds upon the Paper shared at 2018 Council meeting and complements the 'Events Diary', which will be updated as we go along and will appear on our website and in the Lioness. The Events Diary will grow to include Area and Branch events held to specifically honour / celebrate the Centenary (even if in name only – ie if your usual Summer Outing is re-named Centenary Summer Outing, let us know and we will include it in the Diary).

THEMES

EDUCATION

Discussions with the National Army Museum will resume in the Autumn to further explore the viability of mounting a WRAC/ Association Display, utilising some of the material we have archived with them.

- Local Exhibitions – perhaps based on current Areas
- AGC Museum
- REME 'HERstory' exhibition
- Link into existing authors – History of the WAAC

ARMY

Engagement with the Army continues to be problematic. However, recent links have continued to suggest that modern-day female recruits would welcome the opportunity to join and link-up with other females who have served or who now serve – whether as a 'buddy' and/or 'role model'.

Filming has taken place at RMA Sandhurst, towards the documentary film, which included 6 female officer-cadets. Thanks to Sue Hatton for acting as a facilitator with this.

COMMEMORATION

National church service – Attended Evensong at Guildford Cathedral, 1st February 2019 (70th anniversary of WRAC formation).

Updating of NMA plinth being discussed with the NMA. An Act of Commemoration / Re-dedication to be held Sunday 7th July.

Armed Forces Day 2019 – National event in Salisbury, 29th June. Will be represented

Representation at 2019 National Events of Remembrance

– Guildford, Cenotaph, Festival of Remembrance, Women's Service Monument in Whitehall, Lord Mayor's Show – all being worked on and further details will be next Lioness

Commemorative booklet – 'Wonderful Women 100' being worked on. We need your stories, photos, memories, experiences, etc. so that we can represent the whole 100 years as broadly as possible.

Branch events and Area Reunions – Think of ways you can get involved to promote your branch, Area and the Association; and what can be offered and what it stands for.

Commemorative DVD – filming at various locations and with a selection of veterans and serving ladies has taken place and been completed. Looking to launch it later this year. A small number of 'shorts' will be posted on our social media feeds. The 'shorts' and full documentary will be made available to media if requested.

Memorabilia – see page within this Lioness. A selection of items have been commissioned with the Centenary branding and will be available for a limited time only. Some of these items are new to the memorabilia collection.

WRAC Association Permanent Memorial – In discussion with Guildford Cathedral about small commemorative plaque above Books of Remembrance. Updates will come as known.

PUBLICITY/MEDIA

National media coverage – hopefully TV, radio and printed press Other Communications. Branches and Areas consider how you/ they might interact with local media (including 'shout-outs' on local radio programmes, 'What's on's' in local press, etc).

Branch/Area Promotion - A5 leaflets and posters still available from HQ for Branches to promote themselves.

100 Ways to celebrate – see separate list in this edition. This is NOT exhaustive, just some ideas we have come up with to promote WRAC Association, all it stands for and offers.

CELEBRATE

Launch event – 1 Feb 2018 – Guildford Cathedral

Grand Reunion – March 22 – 24 2019

New Inscription on plinth for Centenary, NMA – July 7 2019

Permanent memorial plaque at Guildford Cathedral - TBC

All Area Reunions and Branches consider how you/they can celebrate

CENTENARY LOGO: In order to help all of us appropriately celebrate next year, a special Centenary logo has been designed. This will be used throughout next year and on Centenary Memorabilia. If you would like to use this in your branch and/or Area, please contact the Association office.



CENTENARY EVENTS To Celebrate and Commemorate

2019 is a very important year for the WRAC Association (as many of you will be aware). It is 70 years since the formation of the Women's Royal Army Corps and 100 since the charitable Association was formed, as the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps Old Comrades Association.

Since 1949 the WRAC saw huge changes for women in the army – from being primarily in supportive roles, where getting married meant having to leave the army, to later years when having a child meant leaving the army, to more recent years when a woman could serve whilst married and having children, and in almost any role.

Since 1992, when the WRAC was disbanded, and integrated into the wider British Army and its Regiments and Corps, the role of women has continued to be forged forward, to the current position where women are fully integrated and can undertake any role.

Each part of the Association (WAAC, QMAAC, ATS and WRAC) have built upon the hard and good work of those who went before them – proving that women could, and would, do anything that was required of them. Women played, and continue to play, an important role in the safeguarding of our country and its people.

December 1919 is the date when the Association will be 100 years old. The first [QMAAC] 'Old Comrades Association Gazette' [July 1920] records

"The history of the Association up to date is briefly as follows:

A preliminary meeting was held at the Connaught Club in December [1919] when about seven hundred officials and members attended and it was agreed amid much enthusiasm to form the Association. A committee consisting of an equal number of officials and members were elected, with power to add to the number. This committee holds office for a year only. The names will be found in another column. The articles of association have already been circulated to all members.

The O.C.A. has been most fortunate in being allowed the use of excellent offices at the Duke of York's Headquarters. These rooms have been comfortably furnished, and here the Secretary is to be found every day. Members are assured of a hearty welcome and any advice and help which it is in the power of the Association to give.

Up to the present it has been inevitable that the main activities of the committee should be confined to London, but the intention is to start as many local branches as possible, and to decentralize the work. Edinburgh and Liverpool are already setting an excellent example in local government."

The same, first, Gazette also confirms "QMAAC Benevolent Fund. This fund is now administered by the Old Comrades' Association, and a special sub-committee has been elected to make recommendations. The fund is a very small one, and is rapidly dwindling, while at present there are no apparent means of increasing it. As far as it will go however, it is available for cases of distress among ex-members who cannot be helped by any other means."

Therefore, it is this centenary that we will be celebrating next year, while also commemorating all those who have gone before. In addition to the Grand Reunion, which next year coincides with the Association Centenary, we currently have two other special events planned:

FEBRUARY 1ST 2019 – Attended Evensong, 17.30, Guildford Cathedral.

Guildford Cathedral, the Association's 'Mother Church' has invited us to attend Choral Evensong on the 70th anniversary date of the formation of the WRAC – Friday 1st February 2019. The service commences at 17.30 and will include the Cathedral Choir; it is open to all. There will be some Association involvement in the service itself, including Rev. Sue Wing, although final details are still being discussed with the Cathedral.

LAUNCH OF 'WRAC ASSOCIATION WONDERFUL WOMEN' FILM

This will take place on February 1st, at Guildford Cathedral, following the service. As you will have seen elsewhere, this film (and it's associated 'shorts') celebrates and honours all those women who have served along with interviewing some of the army's future female officers.

We will be inviting some guests to join us for both Evensong and the film's launch, and hosting a small reception afterwards in the Cathedral Café – for which there will be a nominal charge of £10 per Member (£12.50 per non-member).

While tickets are not required for the service, we will need an indication of those wishing to join us for the film launch and reception, so an 'Attendance Indication' form is enclosed in the booklet.

MARCH 22 – 24TH 2019 Grand Reunion, Southampton

See separate information

JULY 7TH 2019 Act of Re-dedication, National Memorial Arboretum

We are in the process of getting the Association Plinth re-engraved to acknowledge the Association's Centenary. The re-dedication of the plinth has been booked for Sunday 7th July at the NMA – probably 14.00 start (as this year's ATS event). Afternoon tea will follow in the (by then) newly opened Events Centre.

As with the ATS event this July, we extend our invitation to as many of you as can make the day. We will have a short Act of Re-dedication, and hopefully as many of our Standards as possible will help make the day memorable. More details and a Booking Form will be included in the 2019#1 Lioness, so keep your eyes peeled in next February.

**Come along and support us as we
"Support Women Who Served".**



Women Remember And Care, Always (Women's Royal Army Corps Association)

100 Ideas, Suggestions and Thoughts on how to celebrate, remember and honour 100 years of the WRAC Association

As An Individual

Attend Grand Reunion 2019	Tell local press you are attending ... and why
Attend July 2019 NMA Commemoration	Tell local press you are attending ... and why
Tell local press if you, or someone in your branch, is 'taking part' (stewarding, Standard processing, reading, etc)	
Make a celebration cake	Make celebration muffins / biscuits
Attend Guildford Remembrance events ... and tell local press you are attending	Attend Cenotaph events ... and tell local press you are attending
Attend Field of Remembrance event, Westminster ... and tell local press you are attending	Tell local press if you are 'participating'
Invite a non-Association Member friend / ex-colleague to join the Association	Share your Lioness with a Non-member
Join a local Branch	Join an Association Social Media Group/branch (Facebook or Twitter)
Start a new Branch, if you don't have a local one already	Attend Area AGM, Reunion or event
Try and find someone, or more, that you served with (from Training School, Bases, Courses, etc)	Meet up with someone that you served with (whether Assoc. Members or not)
Tell someone 'your' service story	Tell someone about the Ben Fund
Run/walk with the Lionesses in 2019 (York)	Support the Lionesses in their run/walk
Contribute to the Lioness – article, photo, letter	Get onto a TV quiz show (eg Pointless?)
Wear your WRAC Association brooch with pride	Wear your ATS or WRAC badge with pride
Party like it's 1919, 1938 or 1949!	Buy Centenary memorabilia items
Buy a book (or more) of GR'19 Raffle Tickets	Write a letter to your local newspaper – seeking colleagues and friends

As A Branch

Hold a 'celebri-TEA' and invite non-Members	Hold a 'celebri-TEA' and invite another Branch(s)
Hold a 'celebri-TEA' and invite Association Officers (Area and National)	Hold a 'celebri-TEA' and invite other Services (eg WRNS, RAFA)
Hold a 'celebri-TEA' and invite other similar organisations (eg WI, Age UK,)	Hold a 'celebri-TEA' and invite other military-support organisations (eg RBL, SSAFA, local Breakfast Club)
Buddy-up with other similar organisations (eg WI)	Promote Assoc. to / through similar organisations (eg WI)
Get a quiz team (or individual) onto a TV show (eg Eggheads?)	Set up a Supper (or Lunch) Club
Organise a 1919, 1938 or 1949-themed party	Cook a 1919-, 1938- or 1949-themed dish or meal – and share through Lioness
Adopt an ATS bench for a year (or longer) ... and tell the press	Repair and paint an ATS bench for a year
Find your local "Thankful (or Doubly Thankful) Village" and see if any ATS served and returned (*)	Research your local village / town for ladies who fought (and died) in WW1
Research your local village / town for ladies who fought (and died) in WW2	Get mentioned on your local radio station
Dedicate your Branch event on local BBC and/or independent radio	Identify Members 'with stories to tell'
Tell your local BBC and independent radio stations about events you are attending (eg Grand Reunion)	Tell your local BBC and independent radio stations about events you are organising (eg summer chaos)
Invite your local BBC and/or independent radio stations to meet you all	Tell your local BBC and/or ITV television stations about events you are attending
Tell your local BBC and/or ITV television stations about events you are organising	Offer to meet, or organise a Branch visit to, your local BBC or ITV stations
Tell your local paper(s) about events you are attending and/or organising	Offer to meet your local paper(s)
Organise Branch event to visit local newspaper/magazine offices	Take a stand at your local Armed Forces Day – promote your branch and the Ben Fund ... and tell everyone you are doing so
Make a Branch banner	
Invite a non-Association Member friend / ex-colleague to join the Association	Invite new members to Branch events (see separate ideas page)
Organise visit to National Army Museum and include WRAC Association museum pieces and archive	Organise visit to National Memorial Arboretum and include WRAC Association Plot

As A Branch (continued)

Honour ATS at The Lady statue	View WRAC and ATS pavement plaques at NMA
Tell ex-ATS and ex-WRAC ladies about the Ben. Fund	Try and find people that you served with
Organise a special get-together event to meet up with some that you served with	Run/walk with the Lionesses in 2019 (York)
Support the Lionesses in their run/walk	Contribute to the Lioness – article, photo, letter
Set up a Supper (or Lunch) Club	Tell HQ what you are up to – so it can go on the website
Order and sell some Grand Reunion Raffle Tickets (on behalf of Assoc.)	Write a letter to your local newspaper – seeking colleagues and friends

As An Area

Encourage new Branches to set up (based on location, age, interests, etc)	Encourage Social-media Groups to affiliate with HQ Office
Attend Area AGM or event	Organise visit to National Army Museum
View WRAC Association museum pieces and archive	Organise visit to National Memorial Arboretum
Visit WRAC Association Plot	Honour ATS at The Lady statue
View WRAC pavement plaque at NMA	View ATS pavement plaque at NMA
Contribute to the Lioness – article, photo, letter	Buddy-up with other similar organisations (eg WI)
Promote Assoc. to / through similar organisations (eg WI)	Get a quiz team (or individual) onto a TV show (eg Eggheads?)
Tell HQ office what you are planning/organising and it can be promoted on the website	

All / General / As Association

Send card to a non-Association Member ex-WRAC for 1st February (WRAC formation anniversary)
Send an Invitation to Join card to a non-Association Member ex-ATS or WRAC – to celebrate Associations' 100th anniversary
Send congratulations card to WRAC Association for 100th Anniversary – as individual
Send congratulations card to WRAC Association for 100th Anniversary – as Branch
Send congratulations card to WRAC Association for 100th Anniversary – as Area/Region
Send a postcard from Grand Reunion to a non-attending friend
Send a postcard from Grand Reunion to a non-attending ex-colleague

What ideas have you got?

Tell us – and we'll share your ideas

What legacy will you leave the world from your service time?

Supporting Women Who Served

(of all ages, service history and length, rank, Service, Corps or Regiment.
All locations are, or can be, covered.)

(*) Villages and communities where all those that went to WW1 (and WW2) returned home alive.

Searching for former REME Ladies!

The relocation of the REME Museum from Arborfield to Lyneham has offered the opportunity for a series of temporary exhibitions. In 2019, an exhibition is being planned to tell the story of female soldiers and officers in the REME –

the working title for the 2019 exhibition is 'REME HERstory' (intended on a play on words of REME History).

While the stories of those currently serving can easily be gathered, the stories of those who previously served with the REME are harder to find.

The Corps Colonel, Clare Phillips, is seeking to contact those ladies who previously served with the REME, including those who were members of the WRAC serving within REME units whose roles were effectively REME roles. If anyone would like to have the opportunity to tell their story, either in person or by email, or if anyone has any photographs that they would like to offer for display then please get in touch at clare.phillips933@mod.gov.uk

Anyone interested in finding out more about the REME today can find some useful information at www.remecharity.org and www.rememuseum.org.uk. Any former REME officers may wish to attend the REME Retired Officers' Dinner (the 2018 one was on Fri 14 Sep 18) in the Princess Marina Officers' Mess in Lyneham – more information is at <https://remerodinner2018.eventbrite.co.uk>

WRAC ASSOCIATION GRAND REUNION 2019

(incorporating QMAAC and ATS Comrades Association)

Friday 22 March - Sunday 24 March 2019

The Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton, SO15 1AG



Southampton 2019

For the Association's Centenary Year, the Grand Reunion is being held in Southampton, and promises to be yet another memorable and highly enjoyable weekend. In recognition of the Association's Centenary, and its very close links with both the City and Cathedral of Guildford, we are pleased to be holding a formal Reception in the Cathedral to start the whole weekend. We very much hope you will be able to attend.

The occasion not only provides a wonderful opportunity to meet up with old friends but also gives the chance to make new ones; remember – "There are no strangers here, only friends you haven't yet met". Southampton is one of the largest cities on the south coast and now home to a bustling and busy cruise-ship port. It also has a huge selection of shops, cafes and restaurants, along with its long maritime history. We have made sure there is plenty of time for you to get retail therapy and explore.

Provisional Programme

Using the Grand Harbour Hotel as our event centre the weekend will follow a familiar formula. The programme is as follows:

Friday 22 March

- Morning arrival
- 10.00 Association Welcome Desk opens (and staffed to 12.45)
- 13.00 approx. Coaches leave for Guildford Cathedral
- 15.00/30 Coaches arrive at Guildford Cathedral
- 15.30 All guests to have arrived Guildford Cathedral
- 15.45 VIP guests arrive Guildford Cathedral
- 16.00 Reception commences, Guildford Cathedral, with VVIP guests, to mark the Association's Centenary
- 17.30/18.00 Return coaches leave for Southampton
- 20.30 Buffet Dinner with fancy dress ('Wonderful Women' – this is NOT mandatory) and disco
- 01.00 Disco ends and bar closes

Saturday 23 Mar

- 14.00 AGM
- 17.00 approx. Beating Retreat by The Yorkshire Military Band (at the Grand Harbour Hotel) prior to Gala Dinner
- 18.30 Pre Dinner Drinks
- 19.30 Gala Dinner with invited VIP Guests

Sunday 24 Mar (morning)

- 10.30 Drumhead Service (in Grand Harbour Hotel)
- Parade

Friday: Guildford Cathedral Reception

In order to cement our relationship with Guildford and its Cathedral, as the Association's 'Mother city and church', we will be holding a Canapes Reception in the Nave of Guildford Cathedral to start the whole weekend off in style. We are pleased to confirm that we will welcome VVIP guests to this late afternoon Reception.

It is for this reason that we are laying on coach transport from Southampton to Guildford, and back, and the timings are such that we get everyone to Guildford in plenty of time for the Reception, and then back to the hotel for dinner etc.

You are welcome to join the weekend at the Cathedral, but you will need to make your own way onto Southampton at the Reception's conclusion. Additionally, if you are only able to join us for the Reception that will be wonderful, at £25 per Association Member (£30 per Non-member), including refreshments but not transport.

Transport

You are responsible for making your own way to and from Southampton. The Grand Harbour Hotel is under a mile from Southampton Central railway station.

However, we are providing coach transport Friday afternoon/evening to take you from Southampton to Guildford Cathedral and back. We are also working with a Hampshire community project to provide accessible transport, if you require it – so please let us know on the Booking Form.

If you wish to join the Reunion at Guildford Cathedral, that is fine, but you will need to make your own way onto Southampton when the Reception ends.

The Grand Harbour Hotel

Members are responsible for making their own accommodation arrangements and bookings, wherever that may be.

The Grand Harbour Hotel is offering the following nightly rates, subject to availability:

Single Occupancy room **from £109 including breakfast**

Double/Twin Occupancy Room **from £120 including breakfast**

To Book the Grand Harbour Hotel, call direct on 023 8063 3033. Bookings open 22nd October.

Go to their website www.grandharbourhotel.co.uk for more information on the hotel.

Alternative Accommodation

If you are unable to book a room at the Grand Harbour Hotel, do not wish to pay the advertised room rates, or would rather make your own arrangements, please do not let this put you off attending the Grand Reunion. Southampton has a very wide selection of alternative accommodation available. Nearby accommodation providers include: Holiday Inn, Premier Inn, Travelodge and Ibis. There is also a range of local B&Bs. For further details contact the Southampton Tourist Information Centre via discoversouthampton.co.uk/visit/accommodation or phone 02380-221106.

Saturday: will follow the usual Grand Reunion programme schedule of:

Morning –	for you to relax, enjoy ‘retail’ (or other) therapy, or visit historic Southampton
Afternoon –	Annual General Meeting
Evening –	Beating Retreat
	Pre-dinner drinks
	Gala Dinner
	Dancing to the Yorkshire Military Band

Seating Plan

The dining room will be laid out with tables of 10. There is space on the application form to indicate your seating preference, please do not delay your application if you are not yet sure who you wish to sit with. Final seating requests can be submitted up until **Mon 18 February 2019**

Grand Draw

Yet again we will be running a Grand Draw with some fabulous cash prizes to be won, tickets are £1 each. You should have received a book of 5 tickets with this copy of Lioness.

Don't forget to include payment for any tickets purchased with your Grand Reunion payment.

You don't need to be attending the Grand Reunion to take part in the Draw, anyone can participate in the Grand Draw and if you are successful we will post your prize to you.

If you would like to purchase more tickets you can do so via HQ WRAC Association by post, phone (0300 400 1992) or online at www.wracassociation.org.uk/shop.

(Fundraising

Please note that the Grand Reunion does not provide the opportunity to fundraise for individual Branches, nor are Draw prizes required.)

Cost

The cost of the weekend is £65 per person (WRAC Association members only). This includes;

- Friday late afternoon Canape Reception, Guildford Cathedral
- Coach transport to:from Southampton and Guildford Cathedral
- Friday evening themed Buffet Dinner with entertainment and limited wine on the table;
- Saturday afternoon AGM
- Saturday evening Beating Retreat
- Gala Dinner - pre dinner drinks, 3-course dinner, decorations and limited wine on the table, entertainment
- Sunday morning Drumhead service and Parade

The full weekend's rate is a flat rate charge which cannot be reduced.

However, if you plan to attend just the **Friday evening Cathedral Reception** there is a separate price of **£25.00 (£30 for Non-members)** (including drinks and canapes, but not transport or accommodation).

This year, as a first, if you are not an Association Member you can apply to attend the Grand Reunion. However, places are limited and will be allocated to Members first.

Prices for Non-members are: **Guildford Cathedral Reception only £30.**
Full weekend £130

Applications

To attend the Grand Reunion please complete the application form (in the separate booklet) and return, with the appropriate fee, by 04 January 2019. Alternatively, you can apply and pay online via www.wracassociation.org.uk

Cancellation Policy

Full Weekend and Guildford Cathedral Reception-only ticket:

- If you cancel -
- up to, and including, 31 January 2019 – Full refund of sums paid to HQ WRAC Association
- between 01 February 2019 and 28 February 2019 - 50% refund per person
- on or after 01 March 2019 - No refund for cancellations.

Accommodation

Individuals are responsible for their own accommodation booking, payment and any associated cancellation charges. Check your accommodation providers cancellation policy before you book

It may be worth you considering taking out travel insurance if you are concerned about possibly cancelling the Event and/or Accommodation.

ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund - Making A Difference

The ATS & WRAC Association Benevolent Fund awards one-off and recurring financial grants to purchase specific goods, services or facilities for eligible servicewomen, or their dependents, who are in need. The charity also provides annual maintenance grants to former servicewomen who are elderly, alone, living on low incomes and in poor health, and makes contributions to top-up care home fees.

During the first three quarters of the financial year 1 October 2017 - 30 September 2018 the Benevolent Fund processed 167 applications for assistance: 35 from former ATS and 132 from former WRAC servicewomen. This totalled £136,852 awarded in funds of which nearly £11,300 was to help towards the cost of nursing home fees, £13,500 was awarded for funeral expenses and nearly £12,700 for general needs.

A further £48,832 was awarded in the form of Princess Royal's Memorial Fund (PRMF) maintenance grants to 25 beneficiaries. At the Council and Trustee Meeting in February it was agreed that the annual maintenance grant awarded under the PRMF be increased from £36 to £40 per week with an increase in the Christmas Bonus from £60 to £70.

At the beginning of the year a new beneficiaries database, Salesforce, was introduced to the Benevolent Fund. This will enable the charity to refine its grant giving processes, reduce the amount of manual data inputting and provide enhanced business information for Trustees therefore leading to even more efficient processes.

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 am writing to thank you for the £36 per week that you have awarded to me. I'd like you to know how much this award means to me. Although I receive housing benefit it doesn't cover the cost of my rent and I have to use my pension to make up the shortfall. Pension credit allows me to pay my bills. With what little is left over and now this award I can buy food and don't have to visit the food bank. So, thank you again. Life is easier and brighter'. £36 per week PRMF annual maintenance payment.



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 adaptations
electrically powered vehicles
electric wheelchairs
riser-recliner chairs
stairlifts
disability aids including electric beds
annual maintenance grants
care home fee top-ups
general needs
respite breaks
travel and transport

house repairs
central heating/boilers
carpets and flooring
clothing
furniture
white goods
removal expenses
rent, deposits and bonds
funeral expenses
priority debt
food vouchers

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.

"Just a small token of our gratitude for your very generous donation towards the new boiler and shower unit in the bathroom . You will have my wife's undying gratitude every time she walks into the shower unit rather than having to struggle to climb over the side of the bath". £2010 new boiler and shower unit.

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 once 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.

"I am writing to thank you for the very generous donation from the Benevolent Fund so I could bury my beautiful wife of 50 years who served in the WRAC. I will always be grateful to the Fund for their assistance at a difficult time." £1,793.00 towards funeral expenses.

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

Centre for Veterans' Health Pain Management Programme



King Edward VII's Hospital is inviting participants for their next Veterans' Pain Management Programme (PMP). The PMP is designed to help veterans with on-going pain to improve the quality of their lives; it is not based on trying to provide a cure, the overall aims being;

- To improve physical functioning and ability
- To improve the person's understanding and beliefs about their pain condition
- To reduce pain related distress
- To review and reduce medication with debilitating side effects
- To develop ways to manage pain flare-ups

If selected, there will be an interdisciplinary assessment followed by a 5-day residential programme in London, plus a further 5 days of compulsory single programme appointments.

King Edward VII's Hospital will provide the medical treatment for free as well as the travel costs, accommodation and meals. Residential accommodation is based on twin-room sharing.

This Programme is suitable for: Veterans suffering from persistent pain, motivated to actively engage in a group-based Pain Management Programme.

Applications/Enquiries:

To apply and enquire email:

veteranshealth@kingedwardvii.co.uk

Please note, proof of service will be required before forms can be sent to you.

A GP Referral will be required.

**Centre for Veterans' Health
King Edward VII's Hospital
Weymouth Street, London, W1G 6NX
KEVII charity no: 208944**



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? More information can be found inside back cover. Donations can also be made online via the Association website or by phone 0300-400-1992. Whatever you decide to do, PLEASE make sure that we have a Gift Aid form from you - if you pay tax, we can reclaim the tax and the government 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. Since the Association is no longer an active Corps (regiment) Stable belts and forage caps should NOT be worn. 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. (See Medals & Badges etiquette below for further information).

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* magazine is available as an audio version. 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 30th November 2018. 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)! Additionally if you are able to give names to people in a photo that would be helpful, and we will try and include.

Medals and Badges Etiquette. Etiquette rules for wearing medals only allow the wearing of official awards. The WRAC Association badge and the Veterans badge may be worn on the left lapel by the position of the buttonhole.

- 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).
- Unofficial medals, or badges, other than the WRAC Association badge/pin and Veterans badge, should not be worn when representing the WRAC Association.
- Unofficial purchased medals and foreign medals which do not have the Sovereign's permission to be worn are not allowed.

Memorabilia. We have a selection of Association Memorabilia and, new from this month, Centenary Memorabilia available to purchase online via the website, by post (prices include P&P) or by phone. See page 89 for details.

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.

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 08 Nov 2018 Field of Remembrance, Westminster Abbey
Sun 11 Nov 2018 Cenotaph Parade – Ticket applications have closed for 2018.

Please note that the RBL have changed the criteria for this Parade, along with reducing the number of tickets available. 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 11 Nov 2018 Guildford Borough Remembrance events – see separate info

Sun 11 Nov 2018 Westminster Abbey Service - Ticket requests to be made to the office ASAP, by email (office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk) or letter only.

If demand exceeds supply a ballot will take place, as with all events.

Guildford – Places are available each year at the Service of Remembrance in Guildford (the 'mother' city of the WRAC Association). If you are unsuccessful with tickets for the London Cenotaph and/or would like to attend the Guildford ceremony please apply to the Association Office (office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk) or letter only

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

Subscriptions. Annual Members are reminded that subscriptions (£10.00) are due as at 01 October. Subscriptions can be paid via your Branch, online, by phone (0300 400 1992) or by post with a cheque/postal order (sterling only) payable to WRAC Association.

For your convenience, we now offer multiple-year (3, 6 or 10 years) subscriptions (after your initial first year of Membership). See Member Log-in area of the Association website or telephone HQ office manager on 0300-400-1992. (No discounts apply).

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 24th November 2018 at The Victory Services Club. For more details email wracofficersdc@gmail.com or visit the Facebook Closed Group 'WRAC Officers' Dining Club'.

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST **Sharon Bingham**

Southern and Southwest Area branches still meet on a regular occasion but struggling with numbers. Many ladies meet socially and informally and this seems to be the way forward for many of the branches in our area.

I myself this past 6 months have attended Bristol, Southampton and Torquay Branches. This has been informally, branch meeting and luncheon. I send out regular updates of upcoming events, feedback from committee meetings and request for information.

As for Branches themselves, Plymouth Branch attended Armed Forces Day and were sent posters, flyers and postcards from myself to help them promote the Association. Winchester Branch continues to meet and sends out a newsletter every month. New Milton is no longer able to maintain numbers due to age and ill health. Bath Branch does meet but recently Sylvia Musgrave has been unwell and unable to meet but, as always, stills manages to promote the Association. Southampton are arranging to have a stall at an event to promote themselves.

As an area we have had 8 ladies who attended the celebrations of the ATS at the NMA on the 8th July.

BOURNEMOUTH **Val Wright**

Bournemouth Branch has continued with its successful programme of quarterly lunches, which are greatly enjoyed by those who are still able to get to them. Sadly, many of our ATS members are no longer able to get out and about, and three now live outside the area, but have retained their membership.

We said the last farewell to Merville Pidgeon in March this year, see Obituaries.

Lois Taylor is our most active member, having represented the branch on various occasions. Lois, who was known as Lou Angell when she was serving in the Pay Corps, is shown third left in the middle row after the Armed Forces Week Flag Raising Ceremony in Bournemouth.



**Lois Taylor, third left middle row, at Bournemouth AFD
Raising the Flag ceremony**

BRISTOL **Judith Stinchcombe**

Bristol Branch are at the beginning of a new chapter by building on the foundations built over the past 19 years by Jackie Naysmith MBE and her team. We all recognise the hard work that has gone into building the branch and want to wish Jackie all the best for a well-earned rest.

There have been a number of activities over the summer months where the branch continues to be represented around the country at both formal and inform events. From laying wreaths to honour the fallen, to supporting different venues for Armed Forces day. Our fun lunch days alternating between Bristol and Weston-super-Mare have been successful, where a couple of husbands have joined us also.

We have taken a trip down memory lane visiting the Hidden Treasures in Bristol, whereby taking some of us back to our childhood, which was a bit of a shock for some!

We support the local Veterans Breakfast Clubs in various locations, which is always good for a 'bit of banter'.

A small group of us drove to the National Arboretum for the 80th Anniversary and Re-dedication service of the statue to honour the ATS. We were fortunate to be able to join the cream tea held in the marquee and where we were able to speak to some extraordinary pioneer ATS ladies, which was such a privilege!



At the NMA

We are a diverse group of ladies who are proud to have served. The group has an open-door attitude to new and visiting members. If you are in the area, please feel free to come and share your story.

Contact details: wracbristolbranch@mail.com -
mobile: 07837 455352

PLYMOUTH

Jean Cundy-Borge

I do hope everyone is surviving this hot weather. Three of us did get into Dingles this month in the hope of meeting with other members, but sadly it was just Evon and Ruth who met me to enjoy a coffee. We will soon have to think about where else we could meet when Dingles closes. Please contact us if you have any preferences.

Sadly, family problems stopped us attending the Armed Forces Day on the Plymouth Hoe. We have also had to change the date of our visit to Buckfast Abbey from the 15th to the 22nd September. So, we are booked for lunch at Buckfast Abbey on Saturday 22nd September at 12noon.

Our June visit to the Tamar View Nurseries was very successful, 12 of us met up for a very good lunch and a happy shopping trip around the store. We are now looking forward to our next Tamar View trip on Saturday 24th November with lunch at 12noon and then a browse through the Christmas Decorations afterwards.

A group of us will also be travelling together to the WRAC Dinner Club in October, and we will attend the Remembrance Festival at The Pavilions Theatre, Plymouth on Friday 10th November.

Finally, our Christmas Lunch is booked for Friday 14th December at 12 for 12.30pm.

We wish you all a happy Christmas.

PORTSMOUTH

Sally Watson & Phyllis Price

This year has seen a few changes. Our Chair Person resigned and as yet we have not been able to replace her. We hope at the coming AGM someone will step up to the plate. At this present time our Secretary, Mrs Sally Watson, & Treasurer, Mrs. Phyllis Price, are holding the fort.

We paraded our Standard and laid a wreath at the Armistice Parade held at the Guildhall, once again the weather was kind to us and then enjoyed a wonderful lunch.

Twelve attended the Christmas lunch at The Royal Maritime Club, too much was eaten, and several wines consumed! This lunch was paid for with the bequest left to us by our previous long serving Secretary, Miss Teddy Bray.

We were kindly invited to join a WRNS Association meeting. As you may imagine their association is vast - of course this is a Naval City!

We enjoyed a lovely trip to a superb garden centre where we had an equally enjoyable lunch - got lost on the way, but all part of the 'fun'!

A trip to Bletchley has been organised for September which we are most looking forward to.

Our meeting venue has changed and is now at The Maritime Club, Queens Street at 10.30am on the first Saturday on each month.

Cheerio for now.



SOUTHAMPTON

Jean Doe

Hello Everyone

Here we are at the end of July and a grateful day of rain!! Generally speaking we have done pretty well. A return trip to Rosebourne Garden Centre – the bus returned to Eastleigh well laden.

We also had a trip to Dorchester, again much enjoyed; members are talking about leaving very early so that they can catch the baker with his very fresh bread!!

Armed Forces Day - due to the hot weather, was a bit low for us, plus unable to get our bus. Babs and myself went to Gang Warily, near Fawley; very well attended and various activities finally ending with an overhead spitfire flying over. Being quite near you soon understand the lovely sound of the plane.

We also had an evening said with a few members going down the Solent on the Alison McGregor.

Doreen Bridle asked Jean Houghton and myself if we would join her by going to Alrewas for the day to attend the Rededication of the [ATS] memorial – a truly wonderful day despite being very hot. Really a stay overnight would be great as there is so very much to see.

At one of our meetings the brother of a member held a photo quiz of his holidays abroad – concentration levels were very high, so much so that you could hear a pin drop!! And he is joining us again in October!

Tomorrow (July) we have one of our favourites to give us a talk, so everyone is looking forward to it.

We also have a trip to Tangmere lined up in the next couple of months, and yes, we did attend the AGM in March – much enjoyed; the driver of the bus was a very good lady, she was fantastic.

So, in all yes, we have been a bit busy!!

To you all, keep well and fit and though very early, 'a good Christmas and New Year'!

SWINDON **Sharon Bingham**

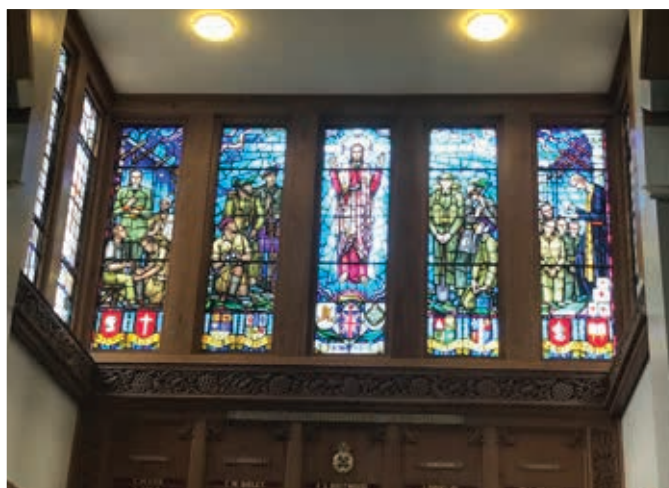
Swindon Branch continues to meet up throughout the year; although we are only a small group of ladies and welcome others. We meet on occasions whether through a Christmas meal, summer get togethers or other outings that are arranged. We held 2 events this year so far and opened this up to other Branches.

Our first event was our Annual Summer Get Together which was held in Weston-Super-Mare with free access to the Sea Life Centre, and with 2 of our members gaining access to the Sand Sculptures. We all managed to use our Defence Discount Cards to get free access or money off! We then went to lunch at Tiffany's Restaurant on the Pier and even managed to build a sandcastle with the sun shining.

Recently we arranged a visit to Amport House, which is the home of the Army Chaplaincy Museum. With the sun blazing we received a private tour around the house, gardens and museum. We were also privileged to have a chaplain who is still serving at Andover talk to us about his role in the army and his calling. This was an extra treat for us as not on our itinerary. Unfortunately, after all the fun we had no photos taken of us as a group but those of us that attended where Sharon Bingham (myself), Lydia Lynn, Sandy Crawley (Winchester Branch), Pauline Marr (Torquay Branch), Bobbie and her husband Steve Coelho (Southampton Branch). A fantastic day had by all and we look forward to visiting again.



Sharon Bingham, Phyll Blackwood, Margaret Bryant, Brenda Goodfellow, Lydia Lynn, Nina Smith, Pat Kirby, Em Clay and Angela Matthews



Amport House - home of the Army Chaplaincy

WINCHESTER **Herme Emary**

I managed to miss the last Lioness deadline so if you are reading this life at home is a little easier.

We were supposed to meet at the Golden Lion for the branch AGM on Thursday 7 Sept 2017. As it turned out 10 members said they were coming on Wednesday, so I booked a table for 10, by the time I got to the pub only 5 (inc. me) managed to turn up. Those of us that were there at the AGM had a very nice meal and

a good chat. Lack of returns on the feedback I requested meant that we chose where and when we will have meetings next year. Except for the January meal at the Winchester Hotel, where a booking and deposit is required, I have decided not to book any more tables. We can see how that works out over the year. On Thursday 10th Nov 2017 8 of us, Herme, Lynn, Kim, JJ, Jane M, Sandy, Margaret and Ray met at ASK for lunch. I arrived late (surprise) so things were underway when I arrived. Everyone seemed to enjoy their meals; I enjoyed my olives.



Lunch at Winchester Hotel



Tea at Winchester Hotel

On 18 Jan 2018 we meet at the Winchester Hotel for lunch. We all gathered in the bar for a pre-lunch drink. Lynn as ever managed to collect the outstanding payments and also pay the bill. The menu this year was once again excellent, and I hope that everyone enjoyed their meal. I did not have any room available for supper - don't know if that was the burger or the ice cream. The new Association Secretary, Penny, joined us for lunch - I hope everyone had a chance to speak with her. We also welcomed Roz, who we hope to see again. Unfortunately, problems with last minute cancellations means that next year we will not be going to the Winchester Hotel for our January meal, having to keep changing the numbers and deposits paid is just too much hassle.

On 15th March 6 of us were supposed to meet at Cote in Winchester for lunch. Unfortunately, only 4 turned up. Don't know if this because you don't actually like Cote (I don't, which is why I did not go). We can give it a miss next year.

As some members have complained that they are unable to get to lunch time meetings due to work commitments, it was decided to hold an afternoon tea. Only 4 of us attended, which was a shame because the tea was very nice - there was so much that we had to ask for doggie bags. I don't know about the other 3, but I did not bother with supper. We will have to do it again next year with hopefully more people attending. I guess May was the wrong month as I know a few of you were on holiday.

I was never able to visit the Tower of London Poppies, so when I was offered the chance of visiting Fort Nelson to see a small display I jumped at the chance and was not disappointed. Well worth it if they are coming to a venue near you.



Wave of poppies, Fort Nelson

LONDON & SOUTH EAST

CANTERBURY Jenny Smith

What a year it has been for me. After returning from a month visiting family in New Zealand, I then moved in with my daughter and her family, and took on an allotment at the same time, which has been great fun. Especially being able to help look after my now 2-year-old grandson, who is, as you can imagine, constantly on the go.

I must apologise for missing to put in our contribution for the last edition, but time is running away from me and my days are turning into weeks before I realise what is happening, but enough excuses from me, let me update you on our branch news.

GREATER LONDON Chrissie Mills

So far this year our members attendance has been very low due to illness, accidents and other commitments. Unfortunately, three members have passed away and will be sadly missed by everyone.

As April is our first meeting of the year, it is always good to catch up with everyone and share ideas for the rest of the year.

June was a busy month and started off with a very lively and interesting talk from Fiona about her service in the WRAC and being the first female Master Photographer, thank you Fiona.

The month ended with a delicious afternoon strawberry cream tea hosted by Sharon, in blazing sun shine in her delightful garden. Sadly, attendance was low, but we tried our best to eat as many sandwiches, scones, cakes and strawberries as we could and we all had a lovely time. Many thanks Sharon.



At our July meeting our Chair, Rev Susan Wing, talked about her day at the Act of Commemoration and Re-Dedication to Mark 80 years of the ATS, 1938 – 1949, held at the Arboretum. As her mother was in the ATS she was filled with pride and enjoyed talking to everyone, sharing and listening to their stories. The day was very well attended and although the temperature was 30 degrees outside they were looked after very well by the volunteers. Thank you, Susan.

On the 5th September we have our annual outing and this year we are going on the Grove Ferry boat trip followed by refreshments at the pub, let's hope the weather holds for us.

It's our AGM in October.

We are already planning our Christmas meal at the Miller's Arms in Canterbury. As it falls on the 5th December this year, we will have to book early.

I hope everyone is coping with this hot weather, just keep drinking the water ladies, it will soon be Christmas and you can swap it for wine.

The year began with the sad news that Capt Eileen Carter MBE TD had passed away three days after her 90th birthday which was on Christmas Day. She had been our Vice Chairman, and the Area Chairman for London and the South East, for several years and even though she moved to Wales around nine years ago she still took a very keen interest in the branch and in everything to do with the Corps. We miss her wise counsel and invaluable support. An event was held in London in May to celebrate her life and it was lovely to see and meet again so many who had served with her when she was OC WRAC of 31 Signal Regiment (V).

Fifteen of us attended the Association AGM in March at the Victory Services Club and we were pleased to be joined by Val Gaff, our former secretary, for only the second time since she stood down and we hope she will once more be a familiar face in future.

One of our ex ATS ladies, Connie Evans, moved into the Royal Hospital Chelsea in February and she is obviously enjoying her new life there. In fact, some of us are thinking of following her and sharing in the splendid facilities and all the social activities!

Pauline Milnes and Pat (Budgie) Rosewell have been invited to become ambassadors for the Association and they recently went to Winchester for media training. Congratulations girls, we're sure you'll do us proud.

Instead of a summer lunch this year we have had a summer afternoon tea in a smart restaurant near the Royal Hospital Chelsea. It was a most enjoyable occasion made all the better with lots of cream cakes and free Prosecco! We were joined by friends, including two gentlemen In Pensioners, and we've a feeling we'll be seeing them more often at our other events.



Connie Evans on the left, Pat Rosewell in the centre and Mary Guldiron on the right



Greater London branch at national AGM



Greater London branch afternoon tea

INVICTA (KENT) Karen Radford (aka Radders)

In 2016 Eve Carroll started up an informal Facebook page in Kent to enable ex-WRAC ladies to get together for a monthly lunch. Over time the numbers of the group began to swell and on the 10th February 2018 the "WRAC Invicta Branch" was born. Our first AGM was held at Maidstone Police Station and saw myself, Karen Radford, voted as Chair, Jackie Elliman as Secretary and Eve Carroll as Treasurer.

Those that attended the AGM were treated to a tour of Maidstone Police Station and thankfully all were able to leave, however Eve Carroll should have remained in the Custody Suite, but she managed to escape, and our Chelsea Pensioner Jean Simmons was glad to be on the right side of the law.



Nina Smith and Eve Carroll at Maidstone Police Station



LtoR front - Jacky Elliman, Sadie Kemp, Jean Simmons, Kay Styles, Karen Radford, Amanda Tillotson; LtoR back - Margaret Ahmed Mohamed, Mac Knight, Amanda Joynson, Eve Carroll, Joyce Head, Nina Smith (London and SE Area Chair), Janette Brook, Mandy Cox.

On Royal Wedding Day ladies met at Jacky Elliman's house for a planned BBQ and soiree. The weather was beautiful and a few of the girls cooking skills were brought to the table. Of course, this was greatly received.



LtoR - Joyce Head, Eve Carroll, Amanda Joynson, Karen Radford, Tricia Wright, Kay Styles, Jacky Elliman

July 13th saw a few of us attend an evening at one of the Rochester Castle summer outdoor concerts. The venue is incredible as it is in the grounds of the Castle with the Cathedral outside the castle walls behind. The weather was amazing and UB40 put on a fabulous show. Thankfully it was loud enough to drown out our dulcet tones, but we did manage to have a fabulous evening and dance the night away.

We have a number of Armed Forces Champions in our Branch each within their own respective employment. Mandy Cox - Swale Council, Eve Carroll and Tia Gregory - Kent County Council, and Karen Radford and Gina Spacey - Kent Police. We are all working hard within our roles and with partner agencies to support ex and current military serving personnel. Gina and Eve attended the Kent & Medway civilian Military Covenant Conference in June and were trusted to handle weapons. Now that was a worrying thought!



LtoR - Eve Carroll and Gina Spacey at Kent & Medway civilian Military Covenant Conference



**NMA Re-Dedication of the ATS statue:
LtoR - Fi Mac, Jacky Elliman, Margaret Ahmed
Mohamed, Dame Kelly Holmes, Karen Radford,
Kay styles.**



**Lunch time
catch up: LtoR -
Chris Cross,
Bea Bennison,
Tia Gregory,
Jacky Elliman,
Sharon
McQuade
Walker,
May Knight,
Annette Erskin,
Eve Carroll,
Kay Styles,
Joyce Head,
Amanda
Joynson**

Since our creation our ladies have had some wonderful lunches out, a visit to the NMA for the re-dedication of the ATS Statue, and more recently assisted out Dartford SAAFA lead Mary Walker with assembling and running her stand at the Dartford festival. Eve Carroll is soon to be a trained caseworker for SAAFA covering the Sevenoaks area, so good luck to her in this new venture.

Many of our ladies are new to the idea of the WRAC Association and the benefits that being a member can bring, so they are all looking forward for an opportunity to march at the Cenotaph this November and to attend next year's Grand Reunion.

The future, well, we have plans to visit Ypres, some are attending the Dinner Club in October and hopefully we will have a visit to RMA Sandhurst in the not too distant future. Overall as a new Branch on the block we are doing very well and with any luck we will continue to grow and have great fun along the way.

Already we are at a healthy 61 members and we continue to meet up on the 4th Saturday of every month for a lunch somewhere in the Garden of England, as is Kent. We are planning to have our next Branch meeting at the end of September. Most of our shenanigans can be found on our Facebook page – WRAC Invicta Branch. Please feel free to attend any of our events; it would be lovely to see you.

WORTHING Jackie Bentley

Well it's been yet another good year for us in Worthing. We are still very much alive and kicking! We've welcomed several new members to the branch and they've all settled in very well.

During our annual Christmas lunch we presented Janet McKechnie and her sister Maggie Costan (aka the Fauvell sisters) with poppy earrings as a token of our appreciation for all they do to make the Christmas lunch very special by dressing the tables so beautifully using their natural artistic flair, and also their delicious home baked cakes for our monthly meetings.



The Fauvell sisters being given poppy ear-rings

In May we took a day trip to the Kennet and Avon Canal on a horse drawn barge with afternoon tea, scones and cakes included. A lovely relaxing day and glorious weather.

We also had a special 90th birthday celebration lunch for Sheila Clements, who is ex-WRAF, and one of our honorary members. Sheila contributes so much to the branch, including her tireless work helping out on the tombola stall on Armed Forces Day, which was an unexpected great success this year. A huge thank you goes to all members who gave their time so freely on the day - well done everyone!

A special mention must go to our friend Edna Bye, who works on our stall every year in memory of her late sister Dorothy who was ex-ATS and a well loved member of our branch.

And last but not least, we send big love and thanks to Carolyn Hill and Greta Carlisle for organising our lovely trips and birthday gatherings!



Birthday celebrations!



Armed Forces Day stall

WALES & WEST **Babs Anderson**

Our Area seems to be going from strength to strength. New Branches in Oxfordshire, Gloucester and Colwyn Bay are starting to establish themselves, whilst the stalwarts of Birmingham, Hereford, Marches and Mid Wales, Phoenix, Tamworth and Shropshire keep on keeping on and getting involved in all sorts of shenanigans.

We held our Area Reunion in the Mayor's Parlour, Hereford at the end of May and saw a pretty decent turnout, including 3 of our ATS ladies, Vera, Betty and Mary. The Mayor of Hereford made us all feel very welcome and the surroundings were lovely.



Wales & West AGM with Mayor of Hereford

The next Area gathering will be hosted by Marches and Mid Wales, probably in Newport but this time in September to avoid clashes with other big events and the lambing season.

The hawk-eyed amongst you will have noticed that we have reverted to our previous incarnation and disposed of the 'West Midlands' tag. Nothing else has changed though. We are still enjoying Esprit de Corps and having a lovely time.

BIRMINGHAM **Babs Anderson**

Goodness, how time flies! It only seems like six months since we were discussing the goings on here in Brum Branch. I hope you have a fresh mug of tea in front of you, as I have so much to tell you.

First of all, I bear the sad news that one of our dear ATS ladies has left us on her final tour of duty. Win Hammerton had been a regular at our meetings until ill health caused her to pick up her small kit and get bedded down in The Royal Star and Garter Home in Solihull. A number of us were able to escort her on her final journey and as usual, it was much appreciated by the family. The vicar was especially happy to see us and insisted on having her photo taken with us.



Win Hammerton - RIP our ATS sister

On a happier note, we have welcomed a few new members to our Branch; Rita Bramham, Maureen Hutchinson, Annie Box, Peggy Britton (QA), Denise Clarke and Marjorie Hopwood. Get stuck in ladies.

As expected, our Christmas Jumper Bash was the usual raucous affair, with comical knitwear and equally comical tales of purchases made at the Birmingham Christmas Market. We were pleased to welcome members of Shropshire, Tamworth, Hereford and Cardiff Branches. They appeared to have a good time and enjoyed Santa's scratch cards, as they produced several winners.



Christmas Jumper Bash



Visitors to our Christmas Jumper Bash: Theresa Campbell, Jane Griffin-Ash, Joyce Nicholls and Miriam Unwin (just getting her shoulder into the shot)

Our annual trip to the pantomime gave us all aching ribs in January, whilst Sing A-Long-a Sound of Music in March resulted in sore throats and ringing ears. Hundreds of people screeching along to The Sound of Music is one of the funniest things imaginable.

Several of our Branch attended the WRAC Association's AGM in London in the middle of March. It's always lovely to meet up with friends; then it doesn't matter if some serious stuff has to happen too. I refer, of course, to the serious business of ploughing through a lovely high tea. I have observed that most of us are anybody's for a cream scone!

The Wales and the West Area's AGM and Reunion was held on 27 May in the Mayor's Parlour, Hereford. A few of our members were able to attend, despite the distance and it being Whitsun weekend. It was another very pleasant get together with friends from other Branches in our Area.

In June, a big group of us travelled to Shrewsbury to join Shropshire Branch for their Race Day. Race Day hats were worn and judged for effort and looks. Brum Branch did not win the hat competition, but we managed to back a few likely nags and only lost a little bit of our pensions.

On 8 July many of our members gathered at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to celebrate the Rededication of the ATS Statue and see her safely positioned in the WRAC Association's plot. It was an emotional service on an especially hot day. We were proud to field 4 of our ATS sisters, Betty Wood, Betty Webb, Marcelle Stevenson and Margaret Walkeden. Betty Webb did a fine job of reading out the Royal Assent to form the ATS in 1938 at the Service of Commemoration. It was a very special day, topped off with an extraordinary afternoon tea. We all staggered home satisfied and happy after such a joyous occasion.

6 members of Brum Branch will have plodded round the streets of Norwich in the annual 10K fundraiser for the WRAC Association by the time you read this. Hopefully, there won't be too many injuries. Our Lionesses have a nasty habit of falling down holes and breaking bones or tearing muscles. And ... breathe.

As always, we send our best wishes to all our friends, far and wide. Be happy, be safe and remember, you can count on Brum Branch, we have an abacus.

CARDIFF **Debbie Amphlett**

Cardiff Branch was three years old in August, and we have seen a number of new members attend our monthly get togethers this year from far and wide.

Our Christmas meal was held at our usual meeting place in February, as this was the first date our very busy members were able to get together. It was well attended with 14 members joining the party.

In July we had our very competitive ten pin bowling competition and this year we changed venues to Tenpin, Nantgarw (just of the M4) with a meal before bowling at Frankie & Benny's. We were slightly depleted in numbers due to sickness, but still managed two lanes of five bowlers plus four enthusiastic cheerleaders. It fell on the night of the England v Croatia World Cup semi-final, which thanks to the venue we were able to watch, on our own

screen between our two lanes, and later in the bar. I think the bowling was a lot more competitive than the football match, and for Mary Woollard, who won the prizes for top bowler this year, a lot more successful.



Christmas meal



Ten-pin bowling night



Mary Woollard, top bowler!

The Cardiff branch meets on the second Wednesday of each month and is attended by between 6 and 10 members, some of whom meet prior to the meetings for a meal. The meetings are held at the Toby Carvery in Whitchurch, Cardiff just off the M4 unless there is a special event arranged such as the bowling night or Christmas Dinner. All new members are very welcome. If you would like to join us please feel free to contact me either by email on wrac.cardiff.branch@gmail.com or via the WRAC Cardiff Branch Facebook page which is a closed group.

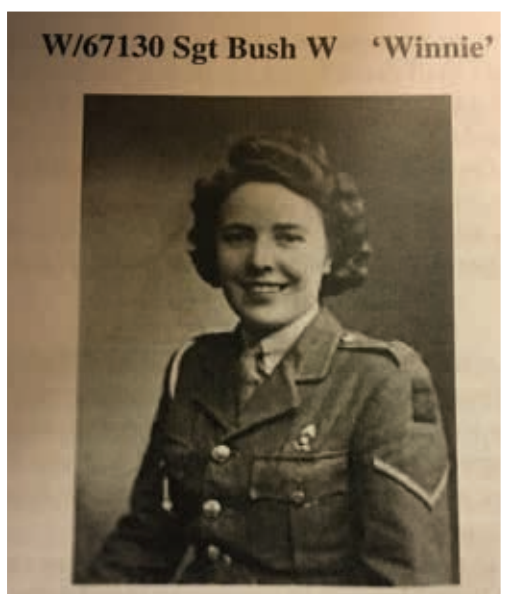
HEREFORD **Lynda Armstrong**

Goodness, how time flies! It only seems like six months since we were discussing the goings on here in Brum Branch. I hope you have a fresh mug of tea in front of you, as I have so much to tell you.



Christmas lunch

First of all, I bear the sad news that one of our dear ATS ladies has left us on her final tour of duty. Win Hammerton had been a regular at our meetings until ill health caused her to pick up her small kit and get bedded down in The Royal Star and Garter Home in Solihull. A number of us were able to escort her on her final journey and as usual, it was much appreciated by the family. The vicar was especially happy to see us and insisted on having her photo taken with us.



Win Burt

In March myself and Mary Woollard joined the ladies of Birmingham Branch on one of their night outs to a 'Sing Along a Sound of Music' and what a great fun we all had.

The 'Poppies' came to Hereford Cathedral in March, they were only there for a few weeks but they were such a lovely sight to see.

A few of our ladies attended the AGM at the Victory Services Club in London, where after all the serious business was completed, we all sat down to enjoy a lovely afternoon tea.

At the end of March, Alison Brown, Mary Woollard and I, took up the kind offer of attending the Worcester and Sherwood Forresters annual dinner. We were sat with some lovely gentlemen that were more than happy to inform us of their military exploits, we are hoping to return the favour and have them attend one of our Branch lunches in the near future.

May soon came around and 5 members of the Branch jumped on planes and headed off to Benidorm. We had the most AMAZING time, so fabulously organised by Melanie Howells. The excursions she arranged for us all were simply wonderful.



The Poppies at Hereford Cathedral



Mary Woollard copying Usain Bolt in Birmingham



Ali, Lynda, Barbara & Heather at Sherwood Forresters



Wales & West AGM with Mayor of Hereford

In May, Hereford Branch hosted Wales and the West Midlands AGM at Hereford Town Hall. Anna Toon, Annabelle Massey and Joyce Nicholls did an outstanding job of organising the venue and lunch. The day went well and we received a visit from the Mayor, who joined us for the lunch and gave us the opportunity to view the Official Parlour, which many of us happily accepted.

In June, the ladies of the Branch attended a service at The Violette Zsabo museum in Wormelow, to celebrate the life of this amazing lady. In WW2, Violette was an SOE field operative and courier, but was sadly captured, interrogated and eventually executed aged just 23, at Ravensbruck Concentration Camp, Germany. Violette was posthumously awarded the George Cross for bravery in 1947.



July took us to the NMA for the Re-dedication of the Statue of the ATS lady to the WRAC Association plot. The weather was very kind to us and we all had the most amazing day.

We at Hereford Branch, look forward to next year's centenary celebrations.

OXFORDSHIRE Christine Townsend

Oxfordshire and Area went to Bletchley Park for the day. 8 of us had a lovely day looking round and trying to stay dry. We ended the day by having supper together back in Bicester.

Mary Wright modelled the ATS cap looking very smart, while I modelled the hard hat. Jean and Angie enjoyed solving some of the codes while Midge Flo and Jan discovered how it all worked



Outside Bletchley Park



Trying to solve the codes!



Mary Wright modelling the ATS cap



Christine Townsend modelling the hard hat

PHOENIX Sheila Johnson

The membership of the branch continues to increase, the most recent additions being Sandy and Angie Stanford-Barclay plus Brenda Adams. Welcome ladies, and hopefully Phoenix's summer and Christmas lunches on 01 September and 15 December 2018, respectively, will enable you to meet up with more of our members.

The Act of Commemoration and Re-dedication to mark 80 years of the ATS took place on 8 July 2018 at the National Memorial Arboretum. Those attending from Phoenix capitalised on the run of glorious hot summer sunshine, hence the plethora of brollies posing as parasols!



At the Act of Commemoration, NMA in July



Branch AGM at Telford

The branch's AGM was held at The Euston Way, Telford, on 21 July 2018. Eleven members attended and when business concluded, enjoyed tasty lunches. At this point a member's husband joined the diners, and all present were successful recipients of a raffle prize.

SHROPSHIRE Ali McGowan

Greetings from the Shire,
I am happy to report that Shropshire Branch goes from strength to strength and we have been able to maintain our numbers at our monthly Branch meetings.

We kicked off our annual events with our own post-Christmas lunch which was held at the Beaconsfield Club, Shrewsbury. This was very well attended with both members of our own Branch and their families and friends but by other Branches as well. We were 65 in total and we all agreed that the food was excellent, and it had been a very enjoyable day. At the following branch meeting it was decided that the Beaconsfield Club would become the venue for most of our Branch Functions.

On Saturday 28th April, Edith Spragg, Sue Jackson, Sheila Murphy, Sheila Johnson, Debbie Wilson and Chris Powell and myself attended the Oakengates Theatre, Telford for the Matinee performance of Made in Dagenham performed by Telford and District Light Operatic Players and starring our very own member, Shirley Gladwin. What a brilliant performance it was too.

May saw the return of the ever-popular Benidorm Babes (4), and Shropshire Branch was very well represented by Chris Powell, Maggie Purkis, Sheila Johnson, Sue Jackson, Sheila Murphy, myself and, for the very first time, Debbie Wilson (I think we ought to get a discount for bulk booking). As ever it was a very enjoyable break and a great chance to get to know members of other Branches. Many thanks to Mel Howell and Ann Oldfield.

In June, the Branch held our Biannual Race Day at the Beaconsfield Club. Many attendees entered into the spirit and sported hats which were then judged by an independent source (the barman!) and presented the winner, Mel Howell, with her prize. A buffet lunch was provided and Chris Powell, Mel Howell and myself personally oversaw the choosing of the cakes. It is always a brilliant day, but it involves a lot of hard work which is why we now do it every other year.



Mel Howell, winner of Best Hat, Race Day



Race day, June 2018

On the 8th July, the Branch sent many representatives to the NMA to mark the rededication of the ATS Statue, due to its resiting onto the WRAC Association Plot, as well as to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the founding of the ATS in 1938. We were delighted that our own ATS member, Annie (Nancy) Tipton was able to attend, and she was interviewed as well.



Nancy Tipton and Edith at NMA, July 2018

That is a brief synopsis of the Shropshire Branch's activities so far this year. We still have plenty of events in the pipeline and will update you in the next edition of the Lioness, but if you would like to join us please contact either Chris Powell or myself, or just turn up at one of our meetings which are held on the first Wednesday evening of the month, details in the Branch Meetings Section.

TAMWORTH **Marie Smedley**

We hope you are all enjoying this wonderful weather. Tamworth & District Branch started the year with our Annual General Meeting and we welcomed to the Chairwoman's post the lovely Pat Williams, who will no doubt steer us towards a wonderful future.

Sunday 27th May saw Tammy Kirkwood, Ann Gwynne and Marie Smedley visit Hereford Town Hall for the Wales & West AGM, a lovely meal with great company, with the Town Mayor in attendance.



Hereford AGM

Wednesday 13th June, Marie and Ann joined the Ladies of Birmingham Branch for Pizza, another night of fun and laughter, we can't wait for the next one.

Saturday 30th June, Pat, Lesley Wallace, Ann and Marie represented the WRAC Association at the Armed Forces Weekend at the National Memorial Arboretum. We attended a moving service at the foot of the main Armed Forces Memorial, watched the Signals Band play amazingly, despite their thick uniforms in the sweltering heat, enjoyed the food and drink stalls (especially the single cask, single malt whiskey - Hic!), as well as a walk around the NMA paying our respects at various monuments. A wonderful day out as always.



NMA, July 2018



Sunday 8th July saw the Branch attending the National Memorial Arboretum for the 80th Anniversary of the formation of the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the rededication of the ATS Lady at the WRAC plot. Pat, Nicola, Ann, Marie and Lesley spent a very hot day making new friends and reinforcing old ones. It was amazing to meet so many ATS Ladies and hear their stories. Thank you, HQ and Tanya-Jane for organizing the day and Cathy Munro MBE for the constant supply of water ensuring we didn't dehydrate.

Tamworth & District Branch would like to wish you all a wonderful summer. If you are visiting the National Memorial Arboretum or the local area, please get in contact and we can meet up - we do love tea and cake!

EAST MIDLANDS **Dot Ryder**

Not a lot has changed of late. I have attended Lincoln & District meetings, had lunch with Derby & District ladies and have been to Leicester & Nottingham and Peterborough & District branches. I also attended AFC at Peterborough.

Some good news is that The Grantham Girls wish to become a Branch of the Association – all details that are being passed to Cathy, but there will be Secretary or Point of Contact and an Events Organiser.

I also frequent the Grantham Breakfast Club.

Area Reunion is on 8th September 2018 at Devonshire Place in Leicester.

GRANTHAM **Chris Corker**

After numerous monthly evening meals and great comradeship, it was decided in June that 'Grantham Girls' would become Grantham Branch. We thought that with 15 members we could now step up and be counted. Our resident poet, Val Odell, will no doubt be writing a poem as I type, to mark this auspicious occasion.

It is always nice to find a volunteer or two and in that respect we have been lucky enough to have Lou Davies as Secretary and Sue Goodes as Events Organiser. We meet once a month usually on a Thursday for a meal, poem and much laughter. Several of us also attend the twice monthly Grantham Veterans Breakfast Club (second and last Saturday of the month) at the Tollemache Inn, St Peter's Hill.



Sue Goodes, Elaine Frampton, Val Odell, Christine Edwards, Dot Ryder, Chris Corker, Sue Taylor, Jen Shepherd, Ella Reast and Lou Davies

The Secretary, Lou, can be contacted on her email tonymitzy1@hotmail.co.uk and if you are ever in Grantham please come and see us.

LEICESTERSHIRE & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE **Sue Slattery**

2017 December ended with our Christmas lunch at Devonshire Place attended by 26 members and 9 guests.

2018 Our meeting in January always starts with a Nibble and Natter to catch up on the forthcoming years programme. Our Chairman wished all our members a healthy new year. We still have 5 of our ladies who are not well enough to attend monthly meetings and we wish them a speedy recovery. Rose Barbour has been told she is now clear of her cancer and we are all so pleased for her as the last 6 months have been very tough for her and her family.

We were all very saddened by the news of the sudden death of Joan De-Vall on the 26th of this month, who despite her 92 years continued to be very active and one the first to volunteer on behalf of the branch to attend local, national and overseas events. It is so difficult to describe this lady, but all of those that knew her will understand what we mean Joan will be missed, not only by our branch but also the Association.

Birthday cards were sent to Lilian Hollis on her 91st and Teresa Neal on her 94th.

February Sandra Smith and Doris Doswell organised a Beetle Drive which was a lot of fun and Lilian was the winner.

Joan's funeral on the 16th was attended by Ali Brown, Sharon Baker-Joyce (our National Standard Bearer), 24 branch ladies and numerous other Association ladies. There were many other of Joan's friends present including RBL and Veterans. Many tributes were paid to Joan, including one by our Vice President and numerous other individuals.

Birthday cards were sent to Jenny Hearsey on her 80th, Joan Ford 94th and Joan Plummer 95th.

March Our bring and buy raised £90 for our funds. We welcomed a new member, Debbie Kenney (the lady with pink hair), she cannot wait to be involved with the branch activities.

3 ladies attended a service for the commonwealth at the Leicester Cathedral. A birthday card was sent to Vi Rawlins on her 92nd. This was an unusually quiet month for the branch.

April We were joined this month by our Area Chairman and Secretary Dot and Chris. Lyn brought cakes to share with us following her 70th birthday which was the day before the meeting. Our Standard, carried by Lyn, plus 7 ladies attended an Act Of Remembrance for the 100th Anniversary of the RAF. This took place at an old cemetery where a number of airmen are buried. Afterwards we all returned to the visitors centre where, to our surprise, we were served cake by Lady Gretton the Lord LT of Leics.



100th anniversary of RAF. Tea and cakes served by Lord Lt of Leics (Lady Gretton) to Lyn Wenham, Carol Morris & Sue Slattery



Lyn and Standard at RAF 100

May Jessie organised the quiz at today's meeting which proved to be easier for some than others! Vera's son brought cakes on behalf of his mother for her 96th birthday on the 5th of this month, because unfortunately she was unable to be with us. Please hurry back Vera we all miss you. 13 ladies enjoyed lunch at our local Wetherspoons.

June Angela Beresford, a local fire-fighter, gave us an interesting talk on her current service and explained about the different incidents they are called out to including rescue of dogs, cats, trapped children and the more serious side of road traffic accidents and fires. She also explained about her 6 years spent in the Army - new Association member soon to be!!

We welcomed back Margaret Jephson, following her falls and broken bones resulting in time spent in a care home.

Our Standard, carried by Lyn, plus Debbie attended the Normandy Vets. Association service at their memorial stone. Lyn again carried our Standard at the Armed Forces Day flag raising at County Hall joined by 3 other ladies. A service at Leicester Cathedral, followed by a parade in the city centre, was attended by 7 ladies; on this occasion our Standard was carried by Carol Morris.



Ladies and Doug on Armed Forces Day, 23 June



Carol, Deputy Standard Bearer, ready for Armed Forces Day parade in Leicester

On the 19th 26 members boarded a narrowboat at Loughborough for a cruise, and we stopped off at a pub for lunch, which was very enjoyable. We were blessed with another very hot day - our thanks to Carol for her hard work in organizing our great day.



Narrowboat outing and lunch trip, Loughborough

A get well card was sent to Joyce Freer after her stay in hospital; a birthday card and flowers were sent to our Chairman Doris White on her 95th, and a birthday card to Ann Atkinson on her 91st.

July We all brought our old photographs from our service days. We all laughed at how we had all changed since those days when we were young and carefree - did we look better in black and white than colour (!!?) looking back for some over 70 years ago. It was nice to have Vera back with us this month.

On the 8th our Standard and 16 ladies had a fabulous day at the NMA where we joined around 200 other Association ladies for the Act of Commemoration and Re-Dedication to mark 80 years of the ATS. The day was very hot for all of us; we were so proud to be part of this event. A truly memorable afternoon followed by a mouth-watering afternoon tea and all our thanks to HQ for all their hard work.



Branch ladies and Gus at NMA

Finally this month, Sue and Carol attended a summer evening buffet reception at Beaumanor Hall hosted by the Chairman of the City Council.

We still have good numbers at our meetings and outings, partly due to very kind ladies who pick up our less able members to whom we say a big thank you.

May we take this opportunity to send best wishes and good health to you all.

LINCOLN & DISTRICT

Jo Worsdall

Our members continue to meet each month in Lincoln in our new venue, next to Lincoln Rail Station, please drop in if you are nearby, you would be very welcome to join us for lunch, cuppa and a chat. It has been a quiet few months for this Branch, however most manage to meet each month and catch up with everyone.

We met for an Anniversary Lunch at Branston Hall in April, the food and company were lovely as ever and a lovely afternoon was had by all!

We continue to meet monthly in Lincoln, (third Tuesday of the month 1200-1400hrs) please pop in if you are nearby it would be lovely to see you. We have a new venue from January: St Mary-le-Wigford Church Hall, St Mary's Street, Lincoln, LN5 7EQ



Anniversary Lunch at Branston Hall

[Editor's note: The photo showing 'Nora Jones & Marilyn 'West' in the previous edition, should have read 'Nora Jones & Marilyn 'Shaw'; Marilyn was on the left, drinking tea]

PETERBOROUGH & DISTRICT

Cathy Munro

Peterborough and District Branch has had a quiet year, whilst membership has remained at a steady state, attendance to some of our local meetings have seen a noticeable decline in numbers, primarily due to work and family commitments. We have, however, continued to send representation to some of the bigger national events. Maj (Rtd) Dot Ryder and Mrs Christine Corker have continued to tirelessly put their best foot forward and made sure we have a presence within the East Midlands Area on a regular basis.

Key events this year have been the Armed Forces Day 2018 held in Peterborough, the truly wonderful Sue Akehurst and her Slimming World Friendly cake stall in aid of local military charities. It has to be said, not only were they delicious but they would truly give Mary Berry a run for her money. When Sue said she had to pack up at the end of the day, there was almost a riot in the town. I for one was very grateful for the cakes being sent my way to my Women In War 100 Military Memorabilia Stall. I was also grateful to the Peterborough and Grantham Girls who kept visitors to my stall amused with their delightful laughter as they tried on the various items of uniform. Peterborough and District are hoping we can encourage more to attend next year, not only to support the local stalls but also to have representation on the Veteran's Parade.

Other events included a fabulous surprise birthday party for our Secretary, Pam Sussex. Having thought she was going for a quiet family meal, she was most surprised to see so many of the Branch in attendance. Planning by family and friends, worthy of any SOE, and the look of complete shock as Pam walked into that room told its' own story – I am not sure if she has completely forgiven us yet.

Our fund-raising events continue in earnest, with the amazing Lorraine Weights, tirelessly campaigning to bring Veterans Charities to the forefront - 2017 and 18 showing Lorraine take on the huge challenge of The Forces March – a challenge many of her male counterparts shy away from. 5 marathon marches in 5 days, no wonder her feet hurt. A huge thank you for flying our Flag Lorri – you continue to do us proud.



*Women in War 100 memorabilia stand,
Peterborough AFD*



Pam Susse enjoying birthday liquid refreshments



*Lorraine Weights
post- The Forces
March*



Elaine Frampton in WRAC Forage Cap



Lorraine Weights post- The Forces March



Cathy Munro wing-walking

And talk about flying the flag – how about at 2,000 feet and beyond – all I can say is thank you to everyone who did not talk me out of strapping myself to the top of a plane and putting complete faith in what can only be described as a crazy pilot. Maybe next year we can convince Pauline Mason to bungee jump from a hot air balloon....

Peterborough continue to encourage new members, and some have been found in the most unlikely of places, not least The Greyhound Track in Peterborough itself. A wonderful evening out (we truly had gone to the dogs), much merriment, fabulous food and an array of winning bets made for a truly wonderful evening. The Grantham Girls have gone from strength to strength and now have enough members to form a Branch in their own right; something we are delighted with, especially as they invite us to their events too



At the greyhounds

Finally, the last word must go to the extended support we continue to receive from outside the Branch. We are lucky to have the support of hundreds from the various Facebook groups. Recent appeals for support have resulted in some fabulous fund raising for the Association. I have been completely overwhelmed with the support given to all our members. Hopefully many of you will be able to join us as we plan our future events, you will be made most welcome.

Next key event will be the AGM in September. Nominations for Chairman, Secretary and Events Secretary are still being accepted. For details please email me cathy.munro@wracassociation.org.uk

EASTERN Wendy Hooton

WANTED - New members for Eastern Region Branches. Eastern Area Branches continue to meet up, some more than others. Not all meetings are formal, sometimes it's a meet up of a few for coffee, lunch or a few beers. It's what you want it to be.

CAMBRIDGE have had no Branch meetings recently but have met up individually for lunch or the theatre.

If you are in the Cambridge area please contact the Branch or myself Wendy Hooton.

The more the merrier!

CHELMSFORD are still having the occasional meeting under the very able Secretary Gina Shadrack. The Branch is winding down at the moment as there is no one to take over. IF YOU LIVE IN THE CHELMSFORD AREA AND WOULD BE HAPPY TO ORGANISE SOME SOCIAL GATHERINGS ETC PLEASE CONTACT GINA – see Branch Meetings listing or contact myself, Wendy Hooton, or through HQ.

COLCHESTER said goodbye to their Secretary Vinnie Vincent and thanked her for all she had done helping the Chairman Kerry Kobs Warnes start up the Branch, (the dynamic duo!). They welcomed Jenni Pizzuto who has taken over the role and wished her well.

They have regular meetings and their annual "Seaside Havoc" event at Clacton on Sea is a great success. It's fun for all - volleyball, competitive tug-of-war, sandcastle competitions, fish & chips and much more.

New members always welcome.

HERTS/BUCKS/BEDS continue to meet for lunches every 3 months. They take it in turns to organise a lunch and meet in different towns and villages depending on who organises it. If you organise it, you choose the venue... Come and join us.

SUFFOLK

With the sudden passing of the Secretary Sheelagh Wilson, Liz Ives has taken over as the contact for the Branch. They are getting back on their feet and still meeting regularly.

The Chairman Sylvia Johnson, ATS, is in fine form and would welcome new members who live in the Suffolk area.

NORFOLK

Lyn Hatch has resurrected the Branch as Chairman, with Liz Winter as Secretary. They have had several successful varied outings, a trip on the Norfolk Broads, a picnic at Blickling Hall and pub lunches.

Please contact the Branch if you live in the Norfolk area.

AREA AGM

The 2018 area AGM took place on Saturday 1st September at the Pegasus Club, Merville Barracks, Colchester @ 1pm. Home of 16 Air Assault Brigade.

COLCHESTER & DISTRICT Kerry Warnes

We ended 2017 with our Xmas Dinner held at The Best Western Claydon Country House hotel near Ipswich on 2nd December, to which I threw down the gauntlet for Christmas themed dress. Gone was the Christmas jumper and hello to the Christmas suit! We enjoyed another fantastic 3 course dinner, hilarious party game, raffle and finished off with a boogie on the dancefloor.



Christmas Dinner

So far it has been very quiet for our meetings due to various events like my best mate Prince Henry getting hitched, and the world cup (it nearly came home).

Our annual trip to Clacton beach, known as 'Seaside Havoc', took place on Sunday 22nd July. A fantastic day was had by all who attended, and tourists alike. We kept them all entertained with the games of Volleyball, Tug of War and Badminton. I won the challenge of getting a free hotdog from the neighbouring beach hut, in fact they gave us 5 hotdogs for keeping them amused. I would like to thank Vinnie Vincent and Jenny for supplying us with a beach hut and the equipment for the day.

We were once again blessed with a glorious hot sunny day, and I'm sure that I wasn't the only one to go home with some 'white bits'. It was great to see some new faces attending for the 1st time, hopefully we haven't put them off, and we will see them returning for our future events. Once again thank you to all who attended Roar!!



Seaside Havoc 2018

Our next events are: Area AGM hosted by Wendy Hooton at Colchester Garrison 1st September; a BBQ to be held at the Ancient Britton 2nd September; and finally, our Xmas Dinner 8th December, once again at The Best Western Claydon Country House Hotel, Ipswich.

Well done to Jenni Pizzuto on becoming our new Branch Secretary, and I would like to thank Dawn Amey and Vinnie Vincent for helping Jenni in her new role.

Wishing everyone (dare I say it in July) a Very Merry Xmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.

PS: I (Kerry) have started a fb group called 'WRAC VETERANS CARAVAN CAMPING and MOTORHOME' group.

NORFOLK Lyn Hatch

After a quiet few winter months we had our first get together in February where it was decided to make Norfolk an official branch again. There's been very few changes - it is still mainly run as a Facebook page with casual meetings to which everyone is invited. It was a busy lunch with proposals and suggestions of things to do and places to visit for the forth-coming summer months.

In May a few of us attended the Burlington Hotel, Great Yarmouth to support the members of the ATS to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 26 ATS who lost their lives when their accommodation block took a direct hit by a bomb dropped by a German plane. With the sun shining brightly, and the presence of our National Standard bearer Sharon Barker-Joyce, it made for a memorable morning, especially for the members of the ATS who made the trip to Great Yarmouth for the last time. I would like to thank everyone concerned for their help and support it was a wonderful day.



Norfolk branch at ATS commemoration at Gt Yarmouth

BURY & ROCHDALE Kathleen Kirtley

We have had a few busy months at the Bury Branch. In May eight members went for Afternoon Tea at Annies in Manchester; this is owned by Fiz from Coronation Street. It was a very enjoyable afternoon of Tea and Cakes. Unfortunately, upon leaving we stepped out into a substantial downpour.



Susan Feeney, Kath Kirtley, Yvonne Dunbar, Pat Oldham, Elaine Brooks, Lynda Stringer, Renee Burlinson, Elsa McGhee enjoying afternoon tea

On the 7th of June, five members of the branch went to the NFA Garden Party, which was attended by HRH Princess Royal who is the Patron. A total of 2,500 attended the event. Sprinkled in were many famous celebrities - Alfie Boe and Dame Shirley Bassey to name but two. Walking through the Palace Forecourt into the

garden was amazing. It was an unforgettable day with High Tea in a Marquee while the Band of the Royal Marines played in the background. The Band Beat the Retreat at 5pm, which is when the weary ladies made their way back to Manchester. They all had an amazing day.



*Renee Burlinson, Lynda Stringer, Yvonne Dunbar, Pat Oldham, Elsa McGhee
at Buckingham Palace NFA Garden Party*

CHESTER Pat Sanders

I hope everyone is coping with the hot weather, hopefully it will last for a while longer.

What another great year we have had so far with our trips out with our sisters from the Wirral Branch - outings to the Royal Signals Lunch, Arboretum for the ATS Rededication, Royal Signals canal trip, Llangollen on to the steam train with afternoon tea, and a trip to Shropshire to their Race Day, to name a few. We still have plenty of outings to look forward to.

We have also had a change of Chairman; Brenda Parry has stepped down and Sheila Brown has taken on the position. Brenda has been a great Chairman, she is not leaving the Branch just stepping down. Everyone in the Branch wishes her all the best.

Sheila has taken on the role and we are sure she will do a great job. Sadly we lost 2 of our ATS ladies, Frances Rimmer and Ellen Roscoe - both ladies will be missed by everyone in the Branch. Sadly, we have lost most of our ATS ladies now, but we still have the terrible twins Audrey McDermott and Dot Garnett, both ladies are the first to put their hands up for the outings.

Well that is all from the Chester Branch, we hope everyone has a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and we will see you at the Grand Reunion next March.



CLEVELAND Hazel Adamson

Where does the time go, its flying by this year. Since our last report we have had our Christmas lunch at the 6 medals pub, which was very nice and enjoyed by everyone. We still hold our meetings once a month; on a good day we have about 15 ladies attending.



Christmas lunch

March this year we held our annual auction - we try to raise a few pounds for our funds. We didn't do too badly this year, it really depends on how many turn up.

This year we are going to host the Northern Area AGM. A few of us visited a pub in Stockton which is devoted to all things forces. It is an amazing place, just the place for the AGM. Spoke to the landlady and booked a date for the event. Julie (landlady) has stuck a million poppies on the ceiling; it has taken her 5 years to complete and its really something. The date for this event is Saturday September 22nd at the Don Bar, Stockton. Anyone wishing to come along get in touch with me via the phone number in the Lioness, or 07804492793.

In April, Anna Orlinski and a few other ladies from Leeds Branch visited us to give us some tips on getting things organised for the AGM. We had a nice lunch, chat and afternoon.

Our Standard Bearer, Anne Mahoney, has had a busy half year; she attends many Military Funerals in the area. The RAFA invited her to a Dinner to celebrate the 100yrs of the RAF for all the time she spends attending.

In July, 7 members attended the ATS Commemoration/Statue Rededication Service at the Arboretum. We all had a lovely day, even if the weather was rather hot. Our poor standard bearer looked a bit worse for wear after the Service with standing for a good while in the heat. But she soon made a good recovery after lovely afternoon tea.

We are now looking forward to our summer outing in August; we are going to Whitby for a lovely fish and chip lunch.

Audrey Grainge is taking a break from being our reporter, so regards



At ATS Commemoration & Rededication, at NMA

GRIMSBY Gail Davy

In September most Grimsby Branch members had an outing to Hornsea, visiting the Freeport centre for shopping with a fish and chip lunch enjoyed by all (picture 62). Unfortunately, during this month our president Audrey Porter was moved to a new residential Home able to deal with her dementia.



Grimsby enjoying fish & chips at Hornsea

In October some members attended a 1940 Sausage and Mash supper in support of the Poppy Appeal. The entertainer was very good, singing the old songs we all knew and could sing along with.

October was also our AGM and all officers were voted in again.

In November 3 members attended the Military Tattoo in Birmingham, this was a splendid event with bands from around this country and Europe. Several Children's Dance Schools took part, with spectacular dance routines to entertain us. After our Branch meeting we celebrated the 45th birthday of our treasurer, with cake and wine. (picture 63). The end of November we held our Christmas Lunch, once again at the Golf Club. Ali Brown attended, and we all enjoyed a splendid meal with good company and excellent service.

December meeting, we had a special Christmas raffle, and celebrated 2 special birthdays with cake.

January, we were visited by Anna Orlinski, the Northern area chairman. She told of the area she covered and the work she does. We ended the meeting with a buffet to celebrate the New Year. (picture 64, Anna at rear of the table in centre).

At the February meeting we discussed outings for the year and some members attended a talent show organised by the secretary for her local church group.

The March meeting was once again a celebratory event as Betty Beeby was 75 and again we had cake and wine.

In May we had a trip out to the York Dungeons, including a visit to a garden centre on the way home for refreshments. After our monthly meeting we again had a special birthday celebration for Pat Altoft at 85 years.



Grimsby celebrating Treasurer's birthday



Grimsby with Area Chairman



Grimsby at York Dungeons

June was the 80th birthday of committee member Maisie Wilson, celebrated in the usual style.

In July there was a trip to the Royal British Legion Break Centre in Bridlington. It was a lovely hot day and we were made very welcome by all the staff at the centre, which is like a 4star hotel. Before our meeting 14 of us attended a fish and chip lunch at our favourite restaurant.

We look forward to our activities for the rest of the year and our fun packed monthly meetings.

LEEDS Helen Aitken

The Leeds Branch have had a very productive 6 months. We have recruited new members to the Branch which has been great as they are all active members. We added a meet up on the 2nd Saturday of each month for people who are still working and could not attend the Wednesday meetings; this has turned out to be very successful, long may it continue.

The Branch has held several ladies' lunches with great turn outs - thanks to Ann Sykes for organising these lunches and locating venues. The Remembrance Day Lunch in November is the next get together.

On Armed Forces Day we had a brilliant day sharing tables with Leeds RBL. Our tombola went down a storm, the weather was very kind to us on the day, and Leeds did us proud with the set up. Looking forward to next years Armed Forces Day. A big thank you to the RBL for helping us out enormously with posters and flyers - we actually did get approached by a few ex serving ladies, which was great.

I would just like to thank my predecessor, Pat Harpin, who I took over from at the end of 2016. Pat successfully ran the Branch for a very long time and kept the spirit of the corps going. Pat did a fantastic job and has stepped down to spend a bit more time with her family; we wish her all the best and hope to see her soon - Thank you Pat for all your hard work.



The recent visit to the Arboretum for the moving of the ATS statue was very moving. We only managed to have one of our ATS ladies attend, Mrs Elizabeth Bustard; she thoroughly enjoyed the day. A very pleasant day even though it was red hot.

Looking forward to the next 6 months.

WIRRAL Andrea Jenkins

Another crazy 6 months for the ladies of Wirral. Our usual trips and meals have had us laughing and giggling - it's true that laughter is the best medicine.

The highlight of the year so far has to be our trip to Buckingham Palace where we attended a garden party held by the Not Forgotten Association. The food was amazing, and some of us might have had seconds. Celebrities all over the place, what's not to love.

As we had cakes we had to exercise the calories off, Wayne Sleep offered to take the class with the ladies. As we spotted Shayne Ward at the end of the garden we sent in our sprinter Kath Harrison, who legged it across the lawn and rugby tackled him into submission.

We even managed to convince Sheila into letting us have a pic with her and the boys she met.. still can't take her anywhere...



Arriving at Buckingham Palace



Dancing with Wayne Sleep



Some very special ladies and gentlemen

SCOTLAND & N IRELAND Jo Young

In May we had our Area Committee meeting to organise the Area AGM which will be taking place on Sat Sep 29 in Perth. We are delighted that Ali will be joining us on that day. We will also be having a guest speaker from the Erskine Homes. You will be aware that we have several ATS and WRAC ladies in Erskine Homes throughout Scotland. The Scottish Area used to support these ladies with Christmas gifts, but this has now passed to the Benevolent Fund for which we are very grateful. It was mentioned at the Area Committee meeting that members may not be fully aware of the work of Erskine, hence our request for speaker to come and talk. We look forward to that with interest.

Area Branches both formal and informal continue to meet. I am aware of issues in Glasgow and am in contact with the Branch Chair, who I know has given my details to all concerned. I would be more than happy to assist. I am also aware that Aberdeen might be about to lose its Chair. These are ongoing niggles, however there will be a way to sort them out as and when the time arrives.

My focus for the past months has been the ongoing work at Gargunnoch House, which is going to be the home for WRAC artefacts currently in the possession of Lady Martha Bruce. The Landmark Trust now own Gargunnoch, but it used to be the home of Viola Stirling who formed the first ATS TA Bn in Stirling in 1938 and who went on to be the Deputy Controller WRAC TA in Scotland. Her military career lasted from 1938 to 1948 and she retired with a CBE and TD. Things are at long last moving apace and as we sit here we have an Aberdeen University Museums Studies student, Blair Fleming, doing his 4/5-week work placement on how the artefacts are to be displayed, writing story boards and researching the artefacts in consultation with Lady Martha and Sir James Stirling, Viola's distant cousin. This has taken a long time. There have been numerous meetings and Joyce Steele, the Chair of Glasgow Branch, has been brilliant providing expertise from her day job as RHF Museum Development Officer. I am beginning to feel that the end could well be in sight and I look forward to bringing news of completion, hopefully at the next meeting.

DUMFRIESSHIRE

Susan Marcroft BEM

It seems ages since we put anything into the Lioness Magazine so I thought I should rectify this immediately. Let everyone know that our Branch is still active.

However, the last part of 2017 and beginning of 2018 has been a sad one for us as we have lost four of our members. Firstly, in December, Kay Harries, ex WRAF, who was a long term 'honouree' Branch member. Kay had enjoyed our Branch Christmas Lunch a few days prior to her demise. Secondly, Jenifer Lindsay, ex WRAC, who on the 30th December lost her battle of life. Her sister Nancy (Lyn), also a member of our Branch, will be submitting a separate obituary article about her sister. Thirdly, in March this year Alexa Machar, one of our founder members, who lived in Edinburgh but still attended all of our Branch functions, till ill health prevented the journeys down to Dumfries. Last, but by no means least, Dorah Mundell, again a founder member and our Branch Secretary for over 30 years till health reasons meant her going into a care home in Moffat. All these ladies will be sadly missed, but they I am sure will be pleased to know that we who are left are still meeting and enjoying lunches, afternoon teas etc.

We are pleased to welcome a new member, Sally Willison who joined us in February this year for our first event which was a Spring Lunch. We have five other lunches booked for the rest of the year. Yes, food plays a big part in our lives. Gone are the days when we used to hire a coach (and fill it) and visit country estates to enjoy their gardens, we are of an age regretfully that means the most walking we do is from the car to the restaurant. But hey ho, as long as we can do that we are not complaining.

GLASGOW

Liz MacDonald

After a few years of not contributing to The Lioness with Branch news we are now in a position to do so. Our meetings take place on a bi-monthly basis in Wetherspoons, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. We meet for lunch at 1pm on usually the first Monday of every second month.

At the moment there are approximately 12 - 14 of us, although due to circumstances some are not always present.

The last time we were all together was at our Christmas lunch in December and a good time was had by all.

We are planning outings in the near future and hopefully they will be well attended. Although some of our Ladies do not keep in good health they do try and attend as many meetings as they possibly can (We are also getting older). It would be so good if we could recruit younger members to the Branch to keep the Esprit De Corps alive.

Thinking of you all and I hope this finds you all in good spirits.

ULSTER

Joan McCabe

What a fantastic Summer we have been enjoying. For the Ulster Branch it has been a quiet year, but some members met on 10th February for afternoon tea at a lovely venue called Cafe Parisean in Belfast.



Afternoon tea in Cafe Parisean, Belfast

I thought it would be good to dedicate this entry to two of our Long Term Ladies who both served in the ATS between 1943-1949. We are very proud to have them in our Branch.

Robina (Binnie) Crothers was born on 8th August 1923; she was conscripted to the ATS on 14th February 1943. Binnie's first posting was in Oswestry to 7 Lines Gunnery, she then was posted to Kent (Thames Estuary) and worked on the 3.7 & 4.5 guns and her job was then known as an A Predictor.



Robina (Binnie) Crothers

It took 2 or three men to load the ammunition into the guns (ladies weren't allowed to do this as it was too heavy). She had to line up the German aircraft and when she got them in her sights she had to give the Fire command to her comrades. Binnie's team took down 7 enemy planes. In July 1946 Binnie was demobbed at Fulford Barracks in Yorkshire, where she returned to her job on the railways, and discovered five of her male colleagues had been Killed in Action. Binnie still attends our meetings with her niece Gloria.

Mary Wilson was born on 16th January 1928 and this year celebrated her 90th Birthday. Up until last year Mary was our Branch Chairperson and is still very actively involved in our Branch meetings. Mary joined the NAAFI in 1944 at the age of 16. The NAAFI was in an Army Base In East Belfast which is now the George Best Belfast City Airport. In September 1945 she joined the ATS; she was in the Pay Corps and her duties included processing wages and General Accounting duties. Mary was posted to RAF Aldergrove attached to the US Airforce - her discharge testimonial states that she was "trustworthy, honest, reliable, with a very pleasant manner with Good Conduct". Mary left the army in 1949.



Mary Wilson as a young service-woman and at 90

Our Branch are meeting for Afternoon Tea at Parliament Buildings on Wednesday 1st August, and in September we will be holding our AGM. I hope everyone enjoys the rest of the Summer.

NATIONAL & OVERSEAS

BAND Ann Jones

Hello all members.

I am so sorry I have not heard from many of you as for some reason my last entry was not printed.

There is news of Carol Tupling, who has again been awarded recognition from Humberside Police for her long service as a volunteer and constant work for them. I think there must be many police forces who would welcome you veterans in to their ranks as volunteers, perhaps even doing the interesting job of proof reading documents for forthcoming murders cases. There again I believe the Royal British Legion are desperate for people to train as visitors, just an idea if you have time to be bored when retired.

I am finding it very boring to be getting old, so restricting when the body gives up but I think my brain is still active, or so I hope.

I would like to warn you of the rotten so and so's who are very sly at getting into bank accounts. I was very unfortunate to have this happen and it is so depressing as it took 9 months for the police and ombudsman to sort it out for me. I am so grateful for all the work they did. All I can say is be extra careful.

I am also very sorry but I have to tell you for certain that I am resigning as your Branch Secretary as from 31st December 2018. I have tried very hard to find someone to take over and sorry to say the accounts are in the red, table sales have lost out to the pound shops I am afraid, but I will help the best I can if there is one of you who would like the job, it is very rewarding and you are such a marvellous groups of "girls".

GRIFFIN Cathy Munro MBE

WRAC Griffin Branch is a virtual group initially designed to unite those ex members of the WRAC who did not belong to the Association or those who do not have a physical branch to attend within their Area. Our aim has always been to support the WRAC Association as well as the wider WRAC Community.

When we started this experiment of having an official "Virtual Branch" actually affiliated to the Association we had no idea how far we would come. We launched a little over two years ago with a handful of Facebook "Die Hards" and a desire to bring people together. No mean feat when you consider the vast amount of "WRAC" Facebook groups already in existence, we counted 67 before we had even launched, so why would this group be any different or any more successful? It was a case of wait and see.

With full approval of WRAC Council, we decided to give it a go, after all, what was the worst that could happen? We wanted to offer a "try before you buy" option to those who were not yet sure if they were ready to part with their cash and actually join the Association. The key observations raised for people being reluctant to join were – "I won't know anyone", "I can't attend branch meetings because I work", "No point me attending because I cannot bring my kids to events". Griffin Branch has changed that perception in many and I am thrilled to announce that not only were the Griffins boosting existing branches but also several new branches and mini reunions were indeed being created off the back the camaraderie found through joining this network.

It was a success and "Virtual" friends became real friends and people started to meet up for coffee, for cake (and so much more). Having found out that it was easy to do, individuals started to ask about joining in with the main stream Association events. Our membership has now reached over 400, and I anticipate it growing even more well into the future. We have found our starting block and have become a fabulous noticeboard directing individuals to where they need to go. The tag team of Area and Branch Chair / Secretaries ensure we are able to make individuals feel welcome. Hopefully that will also continue to encourage more to join the Association, but as always getting people through the door is always a starting point.

If you would like further information on how to make use of our fabulous network, (advertising your event / giving information about your meet up etc) then please contact Cathy – cathy.munro@wracassociation.org.uk



Mary Wilson as a young service-woman and at 90

Thank you one and all for your contributions – they make great reading, and it is wonderful to see you all so active, busy and living up to Comradeship and Esprit de Corps. I love seeing (and reading) all your reports, and the photos, but could I just ask that you send your photos separate to your report text (preferably as attachments to the report email) – I struggle to copy some of the photos when they have been kindly inserted into a Word document report.

Editor

HOW TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS TO THE WRAC ASSOCIATION / YOUR BRANCH

(This article originally appeared in WI Life, the membership magazine of the WI, and I thought some suggestions may transfer to the WRAC Association).

YOU know that being a member of the WRAC Association is rewarding, supportive and bags of fun, but how do you get the message out and let others know? Coming up with ways to inspire members of the ex-ATS and WRAC (along with post-1992 female army) communities to join can be tough. Here's ten suggestions to help your 2019 recruitment drive.

Share your programme

Giving people an idea of what your Branch does can help persuade potential members to join. Tell everyone what you have coming up – put onto social media and tell HQ, so we can put onto the Association website, so potential members can see what's coming and help them decide if they would like to join. If you are unsure how to do social media, ask among your branch to see if someone else does know (grandchildren are a great resource!).

Plan an open meeting / get-together

Some Branches have invited other veteran organisations to join them for meetings, days out, get-togethers to showcase some of what they do and who belongs. Perhaps, try each Branch doing a presentation (oral or visual) at Area AGMs to showcase their activities.

Publicise your Branch

Make full use of community noticeboards, libraries, local radio channels, local printed media and social media. Keep your local media up to date with your schedule of activities, as local veteran and serving women may be inspired to come along to a particular event and experience the WRAC Association in action at branch level. Don't forget, HQ have some publicity leaflets that you can use.

Get involved with local events

One of the best ways to get your Branch's name out into the community is attending local events, such as Armed Forces Day, Remembrance-tide events, fetes and festivals. Get in touch with the organisers to let them know that you're interested in having a stall, or even volunteering on the day. The more women see your Branch, and the Association, the more likely they are to think about getting involved.

Spread the message

Women (veterans and serving) who have recently moved into your local area may not be aware of the WRAC Association, what it does ("Supporting Women Who Served"), or what benefits being a member may bring. Look for potential members at new housing estates, mothers' and community groups making sure to put across how easy it is to join – particularly if you live, or are based, in an area that has strong military links (past, current or future).

Have your say in activities

Giving members the chance to have a say in everything your Branch does – speakers, activities, fundraising – will help keep it relevant to everyone. Ask for ideas or set up a suggestions box. The more fun, interesting and relevant your Branch is the more likely ladies will want to join.

Branch swap

Share recruitment ideas with fellow Branches to find out what worked for them – locally, regionally and nationally. Share meetings, days-out, etc with other local branches. 'Buddy up', and share events, with other similar organisations – the WI, Townswomen's Guild, other veterans' associations, etc.

Word of mouth

Obvious maybe, but a great way to attract new members is through word of mouth. An enthusiastic, active member promotes the WRAC Association and her Branch without even realising it just by keeping friends, family and colleagues up-to-date with activities she's taking part in as part of her Branch. Encourage all members to spread the word: they and you are your best ambassadors!

Make it inclusive

Retaining members is as important as recruiting new ones. Making sure all members can take part in meetings no matter what their circumstances demonstrates that the WRAC Association, and your Branch, is for all types of women who served, from all types of backgrounds, and it's this inclusive nature that helps attract new members. Arrange for a member to 'host' new members when they come to their first meeting.

Ask HQ

Take a look at the Association Website, ask your Area Co-ordinator or HQ, for some ideas and resources to help you in attracting new members. The Lioness also has tips and tricks of what other Branches have done, under Branch News.

The original of this article originally appeared in WI Life, the membership magazine of the WI, March 2018. To find out more, visit nfw.org.uk, [facebook.com/thewi](https://www.facebook.com/thewi), or follow WI Life on Twitter: @WILifemagazine. Words by Charlotte McIntyre

What next?

Membership enquires should be handled quickly and efficiently. Enquiries to HQ about Branch membership are referred to the relevant Branch contact so they can follow them up. Naturally, you probably have some of your own ideas, that worked (or otherwise). Share your success stories with WRAC Association Office, and we will share with all our other branches.

Share your ideas and success stories with other Branches, through Lioness and HQ. HQ may be able to help in some ways – we certainly have A5 leaflets and larger posters available that you can use to promote your branch locally.

WHAT DOES BEING A MEMBER OF A BRANCH MEAN?



This was a question asked by myself at the Council meeting in July 2017. The answers received were diverse and varied. Much of belonging to a Branch is variable and intangible so I thought it would be interesting to publish some of the replies I received to share them with you.

If you read this and like the sound of it, all you have to do is join a Branch. Branches are now formal, informal or on Facebook. All of these are an integral part of the WRAC Association.

"I certainly see Branch membership as a much-valued part of the life of the Association; especially for those ladies who are on their own. It gives them a sense of belonging and interest, so they look forward to every meeting as for many it is a key part of their social life. It gives them a network of people from a common background who look after each other in sickness and in health, and there is a bond of friendship which becomes stronger with age. The Branch network can provide an individual with friendship, companionship and care with likeminded people who have shared experiences, and can provide them with a sense of belonging and opportunities for fun, laughter and social interaction".

"I think being in a Branch rekindles the comradeship experienced during service and provides for the meeting of old and possibly new friends. Members are offered friendship, advice and generally look after each other. This works whether the Branch is formal or informal".

"It is the uniqueness of belonging to a really special group that you cannot buy your way into. The Armed Forces, as a whole, is a unique family. If someone is wearing a military badge there is always a conversation to be had. All service is important, irrespective of length or type, and we all have memories we wish to share and celebrate".

"The advantages of belonging to a Branch are many and varied. To name a few - knowing someone is always nearby for you night and day; that feeling a warm personal welcome gives you; forming the kind of friendships you have not made since your service days; being able to share the up and downs of your life with friends; and the pride one gets from turning out for events with fellow Branch members. Members go home from our meetings feeling happy, loved and wanted. Being a member of a Branch gives us the additional joy of belonging".

Ali Brown

HQ BRANCH MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION YOUR BRANCH NETWORK NEEDS YOU



FACT Of the 2,850 members of the WRAC Association, just under 50%, 1,300, are listed as HQ Branch members. This means just 1,550 are members with/through a 'geographical branch'.

The WRAC Association has a long standing network of Branches, divided into Areas. It is these branches that epitomise our esprit de Corps, and support network, for many years.

Membership of a Branch provides for many things including access to regular Branch meetings and social activities, participation in local events and many opportunities to meet up with the wider community of those who have served in the ATS and WRAC. Some event invitations received by HQ office are easiest handled by offering through the branch network.

In order to reflect their members better, some branches have become 'unofficial', and/or changed their meeting arrangements, and many now have active social media groups for the sharing of Service memories. There are many examples of old friendships being renewed, and new friendships being made. But some Branches are still struggling to attract new members and numbers are dwindling.

There may be a Branch near you – we have a network that covers the whole UK and some parts Europe. All of the Branches are listed in the Lioness along with contact details of the Secretaries. If there is no Branch near you then why not start one? This is very easy to do and we will provide any advice you may need.

We are hoping that all individual branches will get involved in some way in celebrating the 80th anniversary of the ATS's formation (2018) and the joint 70th and 100th anniversaries of the formation of the WRAC and the WRAC Association in 2019. So joining your local branch, or starting one, would be an ideal way for each Member to feel personally involved in the celebrations.

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

Ali Brown



Branch Meetings

All Branch details are correct at time of going to press. 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 & SOUTH WEST

Area Co-ordinator: Sharon Bingham
Email: slbingham1@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 01793 703687

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: Judith Stinchcombe Tel: 07837 455352

Email: wracbristolbranch@mail.com

Isle of Wight (Informal Branch)

For details of when and where please contact:

Tracy Biddlecombe, IW WRAC/ATS Informal Group

Leader. Tel: 07980673402 mobile

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: 10.30 1st Saturday of the month

Where: The Maritime Club, Queen's Street, Portsmouth

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: Pauline Marr Tel: 07787763779, alternatively email paulinemarr55@gmail.com.

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

LONDON & SOUTH EAST

Area Co-ordinator: Nina Smith

Email: wracnina@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07771 834 730

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

Invicta (Kent)

When: 4th Saturday of each month

Where: Various (contact Karen Radford or view Facebook/WRAC Invicta Branch)

Contact: Karen Radford (Chair)

email: mousemole@msn.com, or Jackie Elliman (Sec)

Greater London

When: 14.00 on a Saturday in March, May, July and September

Where: Hyde Park Barracks, Knightsbridge, London

Contact: Chrissie Mills Tel: 020 8578 2715

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

WALES & WEST

Area Co-ordinator: Barbara Anderson

Email: babs.blay@gmail.com Tel: 07921 832094

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: The Irish Centre, 14-20 High Street Deritend, Birmingham B12 0LN

Contact: Babs Anderson Tel 07921 832094

Cardiff

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month
Where: Toby Carvery, Tyn-Y-Parc Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 6BH (Please check via email or facebook before attending in case date or venue has changed)
Contact: Debbie Amphlett on wrac.cardiff.branch@gmail.com or the WRAC Cardiff Branch Facebook page

Colwyn Bay (Informal Branch)

When: Every Wednesday
Where: 22 Station Road, Colwyn Bay for lunch
Contact: Linda Goodier Tel: 07392729387;
Email: goodierlynda@yahoo.co.uk

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/Where: Meetings held monthly, location varies, contact for more details
Contact: Mrs Pat Williams (Chairman) on pat@williams.cx, or Marie Smedley (Secretary) on marie.tamworth.branch@gmail.com

EAST MIDLANDS

Area Co-ordinator: Cathy Munro MBE
email: cathmunro@hotmail.com Tel: 07786 260988

Derby (Informal Branch)

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

Doncaster

Contact: Veronica Hanson Tel: 01226 714575

Grantham

When: Monthly (usually a Thursday)
Contact: Lou Davies at tonymitzy1@hotmail.co.uk

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: St Mary-le-Wigford Church Hall, St Mary's Street, Lincoln, LN5 7EQ
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 & Wigginton Methodist Church Hall, Haxby, York, YO32 2JJ
www.haxbyandwiggintonmethodistchurch.org.uk
Contact: Feona Dixon Tel: 01904 633438

EASTERN

Area Co-ordinator: Wendy Hooton
Email: wendyhootonski@aol.com Tel: 07775 505326

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.

Herts/Bucks/Beds (Social group)

If you are interested in joining them please
Contact: Chris Barrett Tel: 01799-526671

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: Liz Ives

NORTHERN

Area Co-ordinator: Anna Orlinski

Email: annaorlinski@gmail.com Tel: 07714 950219

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

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

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) and 2nd Saturday of each month

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 724 5966 (Please note new number - Editor)

Oldham

When: 19.00/19.15 on 3rd Wednesday of the month

Where: Different restaurants – phone for details

Contact: Kath Kirtley 07910925070 kathleenkirtley@gmail.com or Susan Feeney 07813313508

susan4michael@yahoo.co.uk

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

SCOTLAND & N IRELAND

Contact: Andrea Jenkins Tel: 07808 648509 or email andrea-jenkins1@hotmail.com

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: Allnarpark Hotel, 20 Allnarpark, 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, joan.mccabe24@gmail.com

West of Scotland

Based in / around Glasgow area

Contact: Cathy Philip Email: catriona223@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.

Contact: Cathy Munro MBE cathmunro@hotmail.com.

Tel: 01733 201231 (working hours)

Mobile: 07786 260988

Facebook page: WRAC Griffin Branch

Mediterranean

When: At least every 6 months or more - 2nd Wednesday of each month (from 12 September 2017)

Where: Albir Arms, Albir

Contact: Melanie Howell melphil@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

'Escaping the Ordinary'

by **Lorna Almonds-Windmill (Assoc. Member)**

Little has been written about Britain in the Horn of Africa, Malaya or West Africa. This book recounts post-war unreported military and police operations in those theatres - through the story of one man. He had left school at fourteen with no qualifications but had become a founder of the SAS.

When 1st SAS disbands in October 1945, thirty-two year-old Captain 'Gentleman Jim' Almonds, MM and Bar, Croix de Guerre 'L' Detachment, 1st SAS, tries to return to an ordinary civilian job. But after helping found the SAS with David Stirling life as a bobby on the beat lacks a certain excitement. Twice a great escaper, he decides he will never settle for an ordinary job. Re-joining the army, he serves as a military advisor to Emperor Haile Selassie in the British Military Mission to Ethiopia, before becoming Second-in-Command of the Eritrea Police Field Force - a British paramilitary organization. This unusual bandit-chasing outfit of soldiers and policeman faces a blood-stained race against time to catch terrorists (who feature in 'Wanted' posters with prices on their heads) in time for Britain to implement a UN Resolution federating Ethiopia and Eritrea under the Ethiopian Crown. The highly dangerous active service requires all British combatants to be volunteers. Much of the man-hunting is on foot but Almonds also flies around in his private

Auster aircraft. During the Malayan Emergency, volunteers again for active service again, re-joining the newly reformed SAS and parachuting into the jungle to clear it of terrorists. Britain's success in clearing Communist terrorists out of Malaya (compared with US bungling in Viet Nam) remains largely unsung. In Singapore and Ghana, he designs and hand-builds boats (no power tools), sailing his 32-foot ketch, out into mid-Atlantic and back to England. The story is set in the dog days of the British Empire, with snap-shot detail of the many countries in which Almonds served and the ports he visited during his three-month sea voyage. At a personal level, it reveals more of the enigma of this quiet-spoken Special Forces hero and the kind of family life experienced my brother, my sister and me, as we grew up in an SAS family.

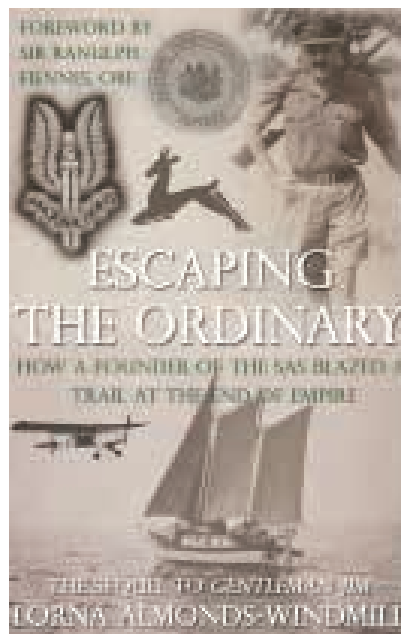
Lorna Almonds-Windmill is the daughter of the subject of this book, 'Gentleman Jim' Almonds, who was a founder of the SAS with David Stirling. After resigning her Regular Army commission, Lorna was a Whitehall career civil servant. While serving in HM Treasury, she won the European Union of Women/IBM Award for European Woman of Achievement.

Lorna has a BA with First Class Honours in Politics, Philosophy and History (PPH) from the University of London.

Lorna is still in touch with women with whom she did basic training in 1963(!) before embarking on Officer cadet training, prior to Commissioning in August 1964.

Her first book, 'Gentleman Jim: the Wartime Story of a Founder of the SAS', was published in hardback by Constable Publishing in July 2001, followed by the paperback in June 2002. Her second book, 'A British Achilles: the Story of George, Second Earl Jellicoe' was published in January 2006 and appeared in paperback in 2008. 'Gentleman Jim' reappeared as a revised edition in 2011.

'Escaping The Ordinary: How a Founder of the SAS Blazed a Trail at the End of Empire' was published on 18 January 2018.



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 55 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 2019 Diary

£5.00

Get organised with the WRAC Association 2018 Diary, week to two pages



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 Keyring

£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 Wristband

£2.00

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



WRAC Association Notepad

£10.00

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



WRAC Association Paperweight

£15.00

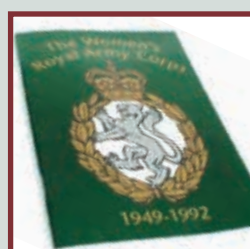
A beautiful 4 inch diameter paperweight crafted from Bristol Blue glass (includes display stand)



WRAC Association Ballpoint Pen

£5.00

High quality WRAC Association branded ballpoint pen in dark green



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

See separate insert for special centenary memorabilia items and order form

WRAC STAFF BAND REUNION: Eastern Area Reunion Wendy Hooton



Eastern Area Reunion

The Area Reunion was held at the Pegasus Club in Colchester [on 1st September]. My grateful thanks to George Lazenby and Paul Duffield for making this possible. It was our pleasure to welcome the WRAC Association Vice President Ali Brown to our lunch. After a brief update on the Branches in our Area, Ali kindly gave an informative update on the WRAC Association.

Leona Barr Jones then spoke about the Army Cadet Force and how they are celebrating 40 years of women in the ACF. If you would like more information about the ACF go to www.armycadets.com and if you are interested contact Leona by email 636barrjo@armymail.mod.uk. Your military experience and knowledge is invaluable to the ACF. Let's help to get the young ones on the right path for a fulfilling adult life.

After a lovely lunch, much chatting and laughter it was time to leave. Thank you to those who could join us, and for those who couldn't hopefully you will be able to join us next year. Best wishes to all those with health issues. I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

"SUPPORTING WOMEN WHO SERVED"

BENIDORM BABES 4 Debbie Wilson

Shropshire and Mediterranean Branch

Hi, I was asked to write this review because compared to the majority attending, I was a first timer! I'd never been to Spain before, I hadn't even been on a plane without my hubby of 32 years, but it didn't matter because I knew my Benidorm Babes' family were waiting for me. I'm so glad I was able to go as it was too good an event to miss.

The get together was held between 7th and 11th May, such is the reputation of having a good time that the majority of ladies start arriving early and departing late.

I must admit prior to my trip I had an image of Benidorm in my mind, not helped by the T.V. series and/or the media coverage

of the traditional hen and stag parties for that matter. However, as I flew over the Bay of Biscay and the mountain range of the Pyrenees I couldn't help but feel excited.

A coach collected myself, Budgie and Sue from the airport to be welcomed by Mel and Chris outside Porky's. Yes, that really is the name of the bar, located on one of the many interesting streets not far from The Brasil Hotel. Never worry about getting lost in Benidorm as the accommodation is opposite the Federal Police Station! Fortunately, I never needed to meet them ha, ha, but as soon as I walked through the entrance of the Brasil, I was met with a hug and hand-shake from a man! It was only later that I was told he was the manager – the Spanish are a very friendly race!

Accommodation was basic, consisting of an en-suite, twin beds, bedside cabinets, wardrobe, dressing table and a Spanish talking television! However, you couldn't fault the cleanliness and the genuinely friendly staff. I shared with Chris Whitworth and we were both chuffed to have a balcony overlooking the pool (rather than the Police!). The newly decorated dining room (I knew this because I looked it up on Trip Advisor), was spacious and light and food was plentiful. However, if you want variety then there are ample restaurants and bars offering meals.

Over the next couple of days, the rest of the Babes arrived and come Tuesday, we set off for Ann's beautiful home in Rellou for the Mediterranean Branch AGM and BBQ. Here we met Phil and the wonderful David, who later in the week I was going to see completely transformed beyond recognition as Miss Shape. The buffet and BBQ was impressive with plenty for everyone and could literally feed an army. A huge thank you to Ann for allowing us the use of her home; we were all made so welcome and we really appreciated all the hard work that made the occasion so much fun. As the sky darkened overhead and the thunder began to roll, we just managed to get through the minutes of the meeting before we were all literally singing in the rain. At last I can say I've finally attended my first meeting!

During the week Mel had organised an itinerary of outings. On Wednesday we travelled by coach to the beautiful mountain village of Guadalest via Jalon. What can I say except it was love at first sight for me. The white buildings and cobbled streets with their variety of souvenir and craft shops set against the blue sky were stunning, overlooking the turquoise reservoirs.

If you want an entertaining evening filled with hilarity and innuendos, then you can't go wrong with visiting the famous Rich Bitch Show Bar starring Dave (Miss Shape) and Gary (Jordon Rivers) performed their Drag Show. I must add that this was my first time, (apart from watching Danny La Rue on T.V.) but it was the most amazing and fabulous evening. However, I don't recommend wearing mascara unless you want it streaming down your face from laughing. Prior to this we enjoyed a meal and cocktails in The Loft.

We had an exhilarating coach trip through the mountains to Val de Ebo to visit Cherry Valley on Thursday. The journey presented fantastic opportunities to take photographs of the incredible scenery as well as see and buy cherries. Radders slowly turned green as we descended down the mountains through the hairpin bends, I'm so glad the driver told us it was his first time driving the route once we had reached the bottom!



Valencia on the Friday was a city filled with a mixture of modern and historical buildings, but a visit to the Central Market (Mercado Central) was an experience to remember. As soon as you walked through the entrance you were faced with an amazing presence due to the architecture, with its huge framework of iron, innovative domes and inclined surfaces, the perimeter walls were adorned with ceramic tiles. The air was full of the bustling sounds of the market stalls selling a huge range of fresh food which we couldn't resist sampling.

Later we headed to Albufeira for lunch and a boat trip on Albufeira lake. Situated in a protected area close to the rice fields we enjoyed observing the herons and other migratory birds as well as the variety of flora and fauna. No worries about feeling sea sick as the water was very calm. What the wildlife thought about a boatload of excited women was something else! Here we hungrily consumed a traditional paella before stepping onto our boat. I particularly enjoyed seeing the Barraca cottages at the edge of the banks. I learned that they dated back hundreds of years and were originally used by fishermen and farmers. Their high-peaked thatched roofs and shape made them very picturesque.

We didn't get a lie-in on Saturday morning because Mel had organised a coach to Albir. We looked forward to joining the members of the Alfaz branch of the Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club at the Albir Arms. Everyone was so welcoming, the food was excellent and we were soon fitting in like locals!

And so, I come to the end of my review. What a fantastic week that was and one that I hope to experience again in the future, whenever that might be. I look forward to when I can see these wonderful ladies that I consider my friends, again. Thank you Mel and Chris for such a memorable week, one I will never forget.

WRAC Statue at National Memorial Arboretum

A decision was made at Council that we investigate the possibility of installing a WRAC Statue in the WRAC Association plot at the NMA in Staffordshire.

- **What do you think?**
- **Do you have any thoughts about her appearance?**

Please contact Babs Anderson on babs.anderson@wracassociation.org.uk if you have any comments.

****Save the Date****
GUILDFORD
Annual Service of
Remembrance,
Sunday 11 November, 9.15am
to 12noon approximately

We have been sent notification from Guildford Borough Council that Invitations will be following shortly for this year's Annual Service of Remembrance and Parade.

This extended Service and parade will commemorate 100 years since the end of World War One and will remember all those who died in military service in this and all conflicts since; we are expecting a significant increase in attendance by members of the public this year.

New arrangements will be in place for this years' service, especially during the service/wreath laying element at the Castle Grounds, hence the earlier start time of 9.45am. Full details will be included in the invitation, but approximate timings are laid out below:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 9.20am | Flowers laid at VC Stones in Tunsgate (Mayor/VIP)
Cadets to stand guard at VC Stones |
| 9.30am | Civic Procession from Guildhall to Holy Trinity Church |
| 9.45am | Service at Holy Trinity Church |
| 10.15am | Service ends |
| 10.20am | Parade forms up and goes to Castle Grounds |
| 10.50am | VIPs, parade and choir take their place on the Bowling Green |
| 11.00am | Maroon from The Mount, silence, bugler |
| 11.05am | Service continues in the Castle Grounds (Poem by Colonel Patrick Crowley)
Wreath-laying ceremony (simultaneously at each memorial) |
| | Procession forms up and goes to Guildhall
Refreshments at the Guildhall |

With numbers so restricted at the Cenotaph, we actively encourage as many of you as possible to attend this event in Guildford, 'home' of the ATS and WRAC. Please let the office know if you are interested in attending so we can ensure you get a copy of the formal invitation, when it arrives with us.



REMEMBRANCE

weekend at the Cathedral

As we mark the centenary of World War One, Guildford Cathedral, working with Surrey County Council, the Surrey Lieutenancy, the Royal British Legion and Guildford Borough Council, invite you to join them at one or all of their events to remember those lost in World War One and all conflicts since then.

10 AND 11 NOVEMBER

VISIT
www.guildford-cathedral.org



SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER

FROM 1PM

Come along to a military themed interactive afternoon, including military vehicles and other activities.

5PM

At the end of the afternoon join the Cathedral Choir, accompanied by The Almac Bisley Brass Band, for an Evensong for Remembrance.

As Evensong concludes all will exit to see a projection of falling poppies illuminating the outside West End and South Side of the Cathedral.

IN SEASONS CAFÉ • KITCHEN

Join us for a fundraising Poppy Dinner for the Royal British Legion, with dishes chosen from years gone by. During the Dinner there will be an auction and raffle. £20 per person – tickets and further details from <https://www.guildford-cathedral.org/events/boxoffice>

SUNDAY 11 NOVEMBER

6AM • BATTLE'S O'ER

1000 individual Pipers across the United Kingdom and countries around the world commence the day's commemorations with the traditional Scottish lament played at the end of battle – Battle's O'er.

The Lord Lieutenant and the Mayor of Guildford accompany the Bishop of Guildford and Dean of Guildford at the top of the Cathedral Tower where the Piper will play.

You are welcome to gather at the South Steps to hear this.

FROM 6.30AM

Hot coffee and bacon rolls can be purchased in Seasons Café • Kitchen.

10AM • THE COUNTY SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE

Attended by the Lord Lieutenant, the Chairman of the County, other Surrey and Military dignitaries and also the Surrey Yeomanry, commemorates 100 years since the end of World War One, and all conflicts since then. This service culminates with a gun salute and two minutes silence.

6.55PM • THE LAST POST

1000 individual Buglers sound this historic tribute as WWI Beacons of Light are lit at locations across the Nation and UK Overseas Territories.

7PM • WWI BEACONS OF LIGHT

Over 1000 Beacons of Light symbolising an end to the darkness of war and a return to the light of peace.

7.05PM • RINGING OUT FOR PEACE

1000 Cathedral and Church Bells ring out across the Nation, and beyond, in celebration of Peace.

7.05PM • A CRY FOR PEACE AROUND THE WORLD

100 Town Criers throughout the United Kingdom and other countries around the World join together in an International Cry for Peace around the World.

8PM • BRITTEN'S WAR REQUIEM

Guildford Choral and the Cathedral Choir sing Britten's War Requiem. Further details and tickets available from www.guildfordchoral.org/events/concerts/

www.guildford-cathedral.org

/GuildCath

/GuildfordCathedral

A CONCERT FOR PEACE

MARKING 100 YEARS SINCE
THE END OF THE GREAT WAR

**Dame
Penelope Keith**

**Vivace Chorus,
Friary
Brass Band**

**In aid of the
Royal British
Legion**

**Vivace
Chorus**

**Saturday
10th Nov 2018
7.30 pm**

Tickets: £20.

U18, serving and retired armed forces personnel: £10
(all prices inclusive of GLive booking fee)

Book online GLive.co.uk or phone GLive 01483 369350



Guildford's state-of-the-art
entertainment venue



vivacechorus.org

Registered Charity No. 1026337

A CONCERT FOR PEACE

Saturday, 10th November 2018 - 7.30 pm - GLive

As the nation commemorates the end of the Great War, Guildford is playing its part in honouring those who served, sacrificed and changed our world, in this, and all conflicts.

At the heart of the Borough's commemoration programme, GUILDFORD REMEMBERS, Vivace Chorus is promoting A Concert for Peace at GLive, the focus for our local community. Vivace will be joined by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, Dame Penelope Keith, the Friary Brass Band and a range of military and civic organisations together with representatives from the Royal British Legion, for which there will be a collection.

The evening concert will feature music and readings, with a colour parade, and culminate with a spectacular poppy drop. There will also be a wide range of events throughout the day, providing the perfect way for the Guildford community to come together to remember the fallen, the sacrifices and the lessons they have taught us all.

This information is correct at the time of going to print but please visit vivacechorus.org and GLive.co.uk for the latest updates.

What's happening on 10th November?

During the afternoon in the foyer at GLive:

- Guildford in the Great War - a 'Circle 8' film
- Gordon's School Pipe and Drum Band
- WWI Re-enactment Group
- Reed's School Drum Corps
- Display of artwork and poetry from local schools

GLive auditorium 7.30 pm - A Concert for Peace

Readings from:

Thomas Hardy

Wilfred Owen

'The Wipers Times'

Letters from the trenches

The Last Post and Reveille

(Bugler from The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment)

Spirituals from A Child of our Time Tippett

Excerpts from:

The Armed Man Karl Jenkins

The Planets Gustav Holst

The Enigma Variations Edward Elgar

Requiem Gabriel Fauré

Abide with me, You'll never walk alone

First World War songs

For your diary - coming events in our 2018-2019 season:

- 16 Dec 2018 Mayor of Guildford's Carol Concert - Holy Trinity Church
- 26 Jan 2019 Come and Sing Vaughan Williams Sea Symphony - Normandy Village Hall
- 10 Mar 2019 Vaughan Williams Sea Symphony and Britten Four Sea Interludes - Guildford Cathedral
- 25 May 2019 Mozart: Clarinet Concerto (soloist Michael Collins) and Requiem - GLive

Vivace Chorus gratefully acknowledges support from the following sponsors for this concert on this special 'Guildford Remembers' weekend.



NORFOLK REMEMBERS THE ATS GIRLS

Joan Awbery

This year marked the 24th return of Norfolk ATS Members of the Association to Great Yarmouth to hold a service in memory of the 26 ATS girls who lost their life in 1943. As only three former ATS were able to attend the service this year, with two others joining us for lunch afterwards, it was wonderful to have the presence of many former-WRAC members supporting us, some of them for the first time. We were proud to have the presence of the Association's National Standard Bearer Sharon Baker-Joyce at the service.

Prayers and a short account of the incident were spoken by the Padre of the Yarmouth Branch of the RBL who organised the service.

We now leave it to former members of the WRAC and WRAC Association and the Royal British Legion to keep on this tradition and to remember those who lost their lives while in the service of their country and that their names will be forever remembered.





EDITH CAVELL'S GRAVE



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION GRAND PILGRIMAGE 90 Ali Brown

A decade after the end of World War 1, veterans and war widows visited the battlefields of the Somme and Ypres before marching to the Menin Gate in Ypres on 8th August 1928.

Exactly 90 years later, the Royal British Legion organised a recreation of this Grand Pilgrimage and invited Regimental Associations to join their own Standard Bearers and Wreath Bearers at a Ceremony at the Menin Gate to take place on 8th August 2018. The aim was to have over 1,000 Standards on Parade from across the world to commemorate the last 100 days of the Great War and thus represent an entire generation that Served while defending their country.

Thus it was that Sharon Baker-Joyce and myself found ourselves, rather bleary eyed, at St Pancras International Station to catch the Eurostar to Lille at 0600 on the morning of 8th August. The journey went as planned and amid lots of glances our way (Sharon was in full uniform carrying the National Standard over her shoulder) we found the coach to Ypres at Lille Station. Arriving in Lille we eventually got to the right place to register and awaited the formation of the Parade. The Womens' Services were well represented with the Standard Bearer of the Association of WRNS being on parade too.

Once we had formed up, it became clear that there really were over 1,000 Standards on Parade along with about a 1,000 wreath bearers. The excitement grew as we waited and finally we began the Parade through the streets of Ypres, led by the Band of the

Royal Marines. The crowds lining the streets were brilliant and I was blown away by the noise of the cheering as we passed through. My view was of the tall buildings along the route and of the Standard tops weaving left and right as we moved forward.

Once we reached the Menin Gate we about turned and I was delighted to find myself right at the front of the wreath bearers directly in front of the Menin Gate and with a clear view of all of the proceedings. A short Service took place with various readings from the Services represented and the National Wreaths were laid. The time had now come to lay the WRAC Association wreath and I was in the first line to do this. I proudly stepped forward and laid the wreath right in the centre of the Menin Gate – a very proud moment.

Once all the wreaths has been laid the Standards marched through the Menin Gate back toward the town centre. This was a truly amazing sight as 1,100 Standards passed us; it seemed to go on for ever. The Parade was then dismissed.

A fantastic day and one for Sharon and I to remember. We were so proud to be able to be there to commemorate all those women who Served during World War 1.



Sharon Baker-Joyce and Ali Brown in Ypres



Sharon Baker-Joyce and two other female Standard Bearers



1,000+ Standard Bearers at the Menin Gate, Ypres



We Remember Them



Just some of the 1,000+ wreaths laid at the Menin Gate

WAAC REMEMBRANCE SERVICE ABBEVILLE

Dr Samantha Philo-Gill

On the night of 29 to 30 May 1918, three aerial torpedoes were dropped on WAAC Camp 1 in Abbeville. One of the torpedoes made a direct hit on a covered trench in which women were sheltering. Eight women died at the scene: Mary McLachlan Blaikley; Beatrice V. Campbell; Margaret Selina Caswell; Catherine Connor; Jeanie Grant; Annie Elizabeth Moores; Ethel Francis Mary Parker and Alice Thomasson. A further WAAC - Jeanie H.L. Watson - was taken to No 2 Stationary Hospital but died of her injuries.

The nine WAACs were the first women in the British military to die on active service. They were buried on 31 May 1918 in Abbeville Communal Extension Cemetery and given full military honours. Their coffins were carried on gun carriages from No 2 Stationary Hospital with members of the WAAC forming a cortège. The RAF flew overhead and soldiers, lining the route, saluted as the coffins passed by. At the burial, soldiers fired a salute and the Last Post was sounded.

Three WAACs received the Military Medal for their actions during the fatal raid: Assistant Administrator Elizabeth Cross, Forewoman Ethel Grace Cartledge and Dr Phoebe Chapple. Elizabeth Cross was knocked down but immediately got up and assisted Dr Chapple as the raid continued. Ethel Cartledge lost both her shoes and was wounded in one foot, but she carried out her duties and kept the workers steady.

On 30 May 2018, my husband and I visited the cemetery in order to lay a wreath at the women's graves. Whilst there, we were approached by Monsieur André Demaret - a senior member of a number of French veteran's societies. He invited us to a commemorative service for the women later that day. He explained that several years ago he had researched the names on all the war memorials in Abbeville and then turned his attention to the cemetery. When he realised that the nine WAACs died on the same day he carried out more detailed research and after approaching the Mayor, they held a remembrance service in 2012. Subsequently every year he has taken school children to the cemetery and always shows them the graves of the women and tells their story. The Mayor agreed that a further service should take place to mark the centenary.



We returned that afternoon for the service. Attendees followed a flag procession led by a female piper to the graves. There were several readings to explain the significance of the event. Local dignitaries and members of the fire service and Red Cross laid flowers at each grave. Both national anthems were played, which was incredibly emotional. We then moved round to the Cross of Sacrifice where more flowers were laid. I was asked to take part in this part of the service, which I thought was very kind of them. I am grateful to the people of Abbeville who have taken these women to their hearts.

[More information on one of the ladies (Ethel Frances Mary Parker) can be found online at: <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/canterbury/news/courageous-woman-who-made-her-mark-183925/>]



'There but not there' Tommy at Royal Hospital Chelsea to mark 100th anniversary of end of World War One



SERVICE AND/OR MEDAL RECORDS

We often get enquiries into HQ office about finding service and/or medal records, army pensions, and benevolence support. As our Benevolence pages explain, the WRAC Benevolence Fund is open to any lady who served in any part of the ATS or WRAC, even for just a day, before 1992, whether a WRAC Association Member or not. All requests for possible assistance should start by contacting The Royal British Legion and/or SSAFA, who will provide case workers to work alongside you. Below is some information on 'Veterans Gateway' and 'Veterans UK', which both provide very good, general information on various service records and support.

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.

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 11 Basepoint, Winnall Valley Road, Winchester SO23 0LD.

**PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR
OLD POST CODE.**

Review of Information on Societal Trends Influencing the Strategic Direction of the WRAC Association July 2018: Executive Summary

[Editor: Monica Jones was tasked by your Trustees and Council to provide the following report on Societal Trends. This builds on the last one completed 4-5 years ago and brings us more up-to-date with what is happening in our society now, and what might happen in the future].

Background - This review has concentrated on themes that will have the most impact on the Strategic Direction of the WRAC Association in the future namely: demographics, changes in family structures and social needs; reform of care and support for the elderly and disabled; volunteering; digital technology; the economy and the age of austerity. From this analysis, we can derive planning assumptions on which to refresh our five-year business plan and review our investment and financial strategies. The full report can be accessed from our website www.wracassociation.org.uk

Aging population - Whilst the age structure of the UK population will continue to become older over the next 30 years there has been a slowing of life expectancy. This is now 79.2 years for males and 82.9 years for females. Older women outnumber older men as life expectancy is better for women than for men although the gap is closing. This is most pronounced in the very old age group of 90+. Older women are more likely to live alone and this % increases with age mainly as a result of the difference in life expectancy. Family members provide the majority of social care in the community.

The Royal British Legion (RBL) has also refreshed its survey of the ex-service community (original survey was in 2005 and referenced in our previous review) in 2014. The key findings for us are:

- The research suggests that there are around 6.2 million people within the ex-Service community in the UK
- Nearly half of the adult ex-Service community are over the age of 75
- Around 630,000 members of the adult ex-Service community are likely to be experiencing problems getting around outside the home
- Large numbers (around 720,000) experience problems with self-care, including exhaustion and pain or difficulty looking after themselves. Mobility and self-care difficulties peak among those aged 75 or over
- Depression affects around 480,000 members of the adult ex-Service community, around 370,000 report feeling lonely, and around 350,000 are recently bereaved

Economy - Economic forecasts vary but there is agreement that in the medium term the UK faces considerable challenges and the current decade is one of fiscal consolidation, debt reduction, weak economic recovery, higher taxes, marginal growth in incomes and deteriorating delivery of public service due to major restraints on public spending. We are currently in this age of austerity with uncertainty, complex risk and vulnerability. We now know that the Government did not meet its deficit reduction targets and cuts in departmental budgets have continued. We will have to see how predictions will continue particularly post Brexit. The government has acknowledged that underfunding of the NHS has taken its toll. Recent announcement of £20bn funding will still only keep up with inflation on a 3.7 % level.

Pension - In 2016 there were a number of changes made to the State Pension and there are more changes planned. From 2019, the State Pension age will increase for both men and women to reach 66 by October 2020. The Government is planning further increases to raise the State Pension age from 66 to 67 between 2026 and 2028. This will affect our ex WRAC community the most.

Digital - The internet has changed the way people go about their daily lives. Its use decreases with age and increases with income. ONS statistics in 2018 show that:

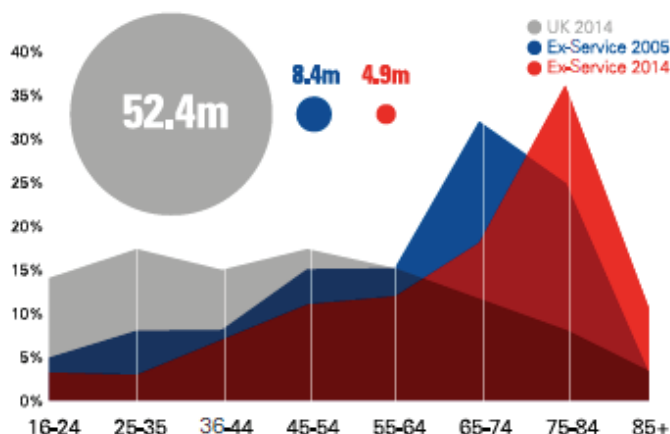
- In 2018, 90% of adults in the UK were recent internet users, up from 89% in 2017
- 8.4% of adults had never used the internet in 2018, down from 9.2% in 2017
- 20% of disabled adults had never used the internet in 2018, down from 22% in 2017

Women aged 65 to 74 years showed the highest percentage point increase in recent internet use when compared with other age groups, rising from 47% in 2011 to 79% in 2018.

Planning Assumptions derived from the updated Societal Trend Analysis

1. Based on our veterans living to 90 (slightly reduced average life expectancy in 2018) we still need to provide support to them for another ~ 50 years albeit on a reducing scale in the later years of this period as the number of beneficiaries' declines.
2. Increase in 65+ Age group and particularly over 85s i.e. those most likely to require residential care and increase in dementia again often resulting in specialist residential care in later years. This may lead to a rise in the number of beneficiaries

AN AGEING AND DECLINING ADULT EX-SERVICE POPULATION



46% OF THE EX-SERVICE COMMUNITY ARE NOW AGED 75+

-> **COMPARED WITH 28% IN 2005**

-> **COMPARED WITH 10% OF THE GENERAL POPULATION**

seeking help with care home costs particularly where families are not able to support them. This has been evidenced from the grant applications coming through.

3. Continued economic hardship particularly for the elderly, disabled and jobless working age and continued limited state support for the elderly, disable and jobless of working age. For the foreseeable future.

4. Needs of the 65+ veteran age group will remain the same at least until 2023 and will be reflected in the needs of our beneficiaries. These needs will focus on care, mobility, house and garden maintenance, depression, loneliness, bereavement and financial difficulties. Social contact provided by the WRAC Association continues to be important.

5. Many of those over 65 do not use the internet therefore digitisation and lack of enough contact with family and friends will continue to make many of this age group feel lonely and isolated. Although this is improving. Many of the under 65 age group will access information through the web and will be familiar and in many cases use social media.

6. Inflation to remain at current levels for next few years and interest rises will be gradual and not exceed 5%. Inflation is higher for elderly and disabled people than the rest of the population and any increase in awards based on inflation must take this into account.

7. Volunteering seems to be increasing and for the younger age groups this means fitting with their busy lifestyles and a preference for giving informal assistance rather belonging to an organisation. Although formal charity work continues to be important.

8. The scope of the digital world will increase making every day activities easier to fit in with busy lives, less time consuming and done on the move.

Association Policies

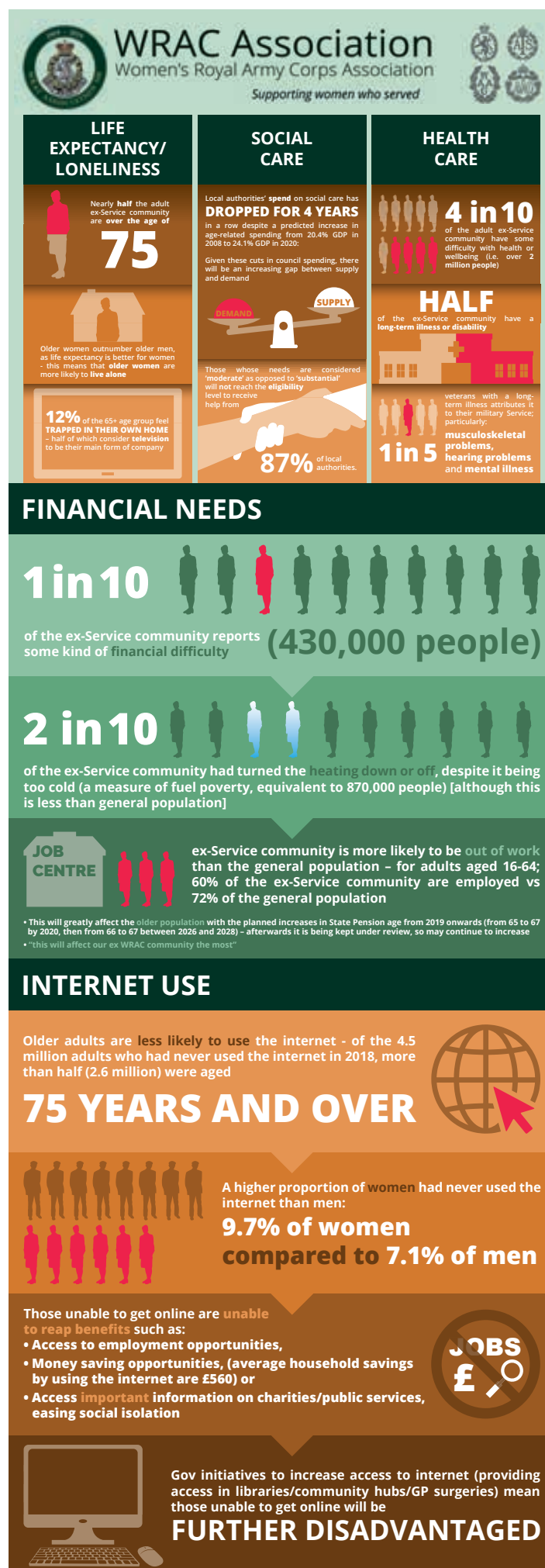
By way of reminder to all Members that we comply with all various statutory regulations, requirements and sector 'best practice', we regularly produce, review and update the various Policies and Procedures we have in place. These include:

Anti-discrimination
Business Continuity
Data Protection – updated Privacy Statement and the advice note to Branches published here
Expenses
Health & Safety
Internal Controls
Investments
Staff Handbook

We also hold, and your Trustees continually review, a Risk Register.

Each staff member also has Desk Procedures in place to assist with their work.

As Members will be aware, the Executive & Finance Committee and Board of Trustees also regularly review the Association's Governing Documents, including Constitution, and make recommendations for any changes as necessary and appropriate.



WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE VICTORY SERVICES CLUB, LONDON SATURDAY 17th MARCH 2018

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks. The Chairman started the meeting by thanking everyone for making the journey to London for this AGM. She started by outlining the Purpose of the AGM, namely: This being the Trustees' opportunity to brief Members on the activities of the Association, and to brief Members on the governance, finances and investments. As Trustees and Council, they are responsible to Members for all of these. The Chairman pointed out that a copy of the Annual Report, submitted to the Charity Commission, was on the tables. Just as importantly, the AGM is the Members' opportunity to raise any issues and ask any questions, which can be done following the circulation of the Agenda for the AGM in the Lioness, direct to the Association or through the Area Chairmen. Each Member has a Vote on any issues brought to the AGM.

The Chairman introduced the support team of:

Lt Col Rowena Griffiths MBE	Chairman of the Executive & Finance Committee
Col (Retd) Isabel McCord	Chairman of the Ben Fund Grants Committee
Penny Muxworthy	Association Secretary & Editor Lioness
Julia Doig	Finance Officer
and Tanya-Jayne Park	Office Manager

Also: Maj (Retd) Barbara Davies Honorary Treasurer
and Maj (Retd) Gabi Shanahan Benevolent Fund Secretary & Finance Officer

who were unable to attend the meeting.

The Chairman highlighted the notable events of 2017 - all to celebrate '100 years of Women in the Army'. There were local celebrations as well as National events and the latter included:
a Reception with our Patron at the Army & Navy Club;
an RBL hosted summer event at the National Memorial Arboretum with the Royal Navy and the RAF;
a Dinner Night at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, for women past, present and future;
Representation at the Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall, complete with the National Standard;
and a fantastic Parade at the Cenotaph where we were placed at the front of our column.

When you add all this to the TV and radio coverage with programmes like '100 Years of Service', which included Dame Kelly Holmes, it was quite a year.

The Chairman moved on to thank:

Fund Raising and Donations - We are hugely grateful to all those who have raised funds or donated to the Association. Following an appeal in the Lioness the donations and fund raising have continued to rise on previous years. It is always difficult to single people out but the Chairman particularly thanked Marg Davies for her annual walks; Wendy Hooton for the annual 10km Run, which effectively paid for the recent WRAC Association Plot renovations at the NMA; CJ Johnston for arranging the annual Scottish event; and Mel Howell for the annual trip to Benidorm; also, the WRAC Dinner Club for all of their fund raising efforts. There are others, and we are hugely

grateful to all of you. There are some great things going on all over the UK and into Europe where women who served are meeting up and sharing their memories and experiences.

Branch Officers - The Chairman paid tribute to all the Branch Secretaries and thanked them for their hard work and support pointing out that this is really appreciated, not just by Association HQ but by each one of their members. Every Secretary is part of a significant team which includes the Chairman and Treasurer and together they underpin the crucial Branch network. The Chairman was pleased to report that we have new Branches opening. Also mentioned were the various Informal and FaceBook Groups. We now have a population of about 5,000 ex-WRAC using social media in various forms. They may not all be Members of the Association, but they are meeting up and sharing memories and friendship. So, "thank you" to all of the administrators of these Groups. And, spread the word!!!! Our Branch network and our Members will always be at the heart of this Association, and any opportunity to meet up is a good thing.

HQ Team - The Chairman thanked Penny, Julia, Gabi and Tanya for all their work and support throughout the year.

Also, the National Standard Bearer - Thanks to Sharon Baker-Joyce for all of the appearances she made in 2017 and will make in 2018.

The Chairman updated Members on Association Membership, which now stands at 2,850. This is a fairly steady figure and compares well with other Regimental Associations. However, given the fact that over 149,000 women served in the WRAC between 1949 and 1992, there are clearly a lot of ex-WRAC out there to aim for. We acknowledge there is a problem with knowing about the Association and past low-level recruiting (ie postcards and posters) has met with only limited success. So, the Association is trying something new - we are entering into a commercial partnership with a firm called CURIOUS PR. The aim of this partnership is two-fold - firstly, to get to those women who served and sell the advantages of the Association to them; and secondly, to advertise the existence of the Benevolence Fund, including what the funds can be used for and the process to be used when applying for them. The time is right to do this now; it is the Association's Centenary next year and this will be the focus for the publicity campaign. With the help of Curious PR we will be able to target local and national media. One of the key ways will be to use your stories to be the core of the publicity campaign, once we have your permission. The Chairman concluded by really hoping that the Association enters our Centenary year with an increased membership and increased applications for financial assistance.

The Chairman read out a **Message from the Patron** of the Association thanking all Members for their Loyal Greetings and support; and also read out a **Message from the President** of the Association thanking all members for their Loyal Greetings to mark her 85th birthday on 22nd February 2018.

2. Apologies for Absence. Apologies were received from the following Life Vice Presidents, Trustees and members of Council: Jo Young (Area Chair Scotland & N.Ireland), Rev Sue Wing, Monica Jones, Sue Westlake, Audrey Smith and Barbara Davies, along with a number of individual Members and Branch Secretaries. 87 were present at the meeting.

3. Confirmation of Minutes. The Minutes of the previous meeting had been published in Lioness 2017/2, no comments had been received.

Proposal: It was proposed that the Chairman sign the minutes of the 2017 AGM as a true record.

Proposed: Maggie Purkis **Seconded:** Chris Corker

Agreed: All

They were signed as correct by the Chairman.

4. Business Arising from the Previous Minutes.

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

5. Chairman of Trustees & Council Report. Trustees had met three times and Council twice since the 2017 AGM. In addition, an Area Chairman's Forum meets before each Council. The main items of interest were:

Life Vice President: Welcome to Audrey Smith, after serving as Chair of the Ben Fund for many years.

Newly elected Trustees: Welcome to Amanda Hassell, who's biography is in the Lioness

Area Chairman: Welcome to Nina Smith who volunteered to take on London and the South East, who's biography is also in the Lioness.

The Chairman highlighted that we are always going to need volunteers as Trustees and Area Chairman – if you are interested please do let us know.

Board of Trustees: As a Board, the Trustees focus on the financial and governance aspects of the Association ensuring that all of the requirements of the Charity Commission are met. These requirements have increased dramatically in the last 18 months, as many of you will know, and will continue to do so.

Council: Council focuses on the regimental aspects of the Association. This includes the Branch network, the Membership and the representational aspects of the Association.

All of the year's activities are covered in more detail in the Annual Report. Please take a moment to have a read. If anyone ever asks you what the Association does this is where it tells you.

6. Financial Report. The Chairman presented the Annual Report and Accounts for 2016/17 on behalf of the Honorary Treasurer.

Our Auditors, Rothmans, have found the accounts for 2017 to be in good order in every respect and there are no outstanding actions to be taken.

The total value of funds (Association and Benevolent Fund combined) as at 30 September 2017 was just under £7m, an increase of £609,836 (8.9%) from the Annual Report 2016. This continues the upward momentum.

Funds are divided between 'Restricted Funds' (Benevolent Funds), 'Unrestricted Funds' (Association Funds) and 'Designated Funds' (Life Subscription Funds). The value of the Benevolent Funds was £6,098,257 and the combined Unrestricted and Designated Funds (the Association) was £751,997. Members were also asked to note that this Annual Report was 12 months not 11 months, as per FY16/17, and therefore are not entirely comparable.

The really good news - 2017 was the first year in a while that the Association finished in the black, with overall income exceeding expenditure by £36,310.

Obviously, the Association is very grateful for the substantial and generous donations and legacies of £165k; they are making a tangible difference to the longevity of the Association. However, the Association was, and still is, in need of funds in order to continue its work into the future. Thank you very much indeed to all donors and those leaving legacies.

Due to the addition of extra income since the Annual Report we have been able to invest a further £135k into the Benevolent Fund Investment Fund with Brewin Dolphin. Investment and Deposit Interest returns for 16/17 were £223k (see pp.9 &24).

During the year, and on the advice of our Investment Managers at Brewin Dolphin, the Trustees approved a change of risk asset allocation from level 7 to level 6 on the Benevolent Fund investments. This means that we have reduced the level of risk volatility and is thought to be the optimal way to meet as much of our income requirements from generated income as is feasible. It is expected that we will have to work harder for returns. 'Easy money' is a thing of the past and our situation requires careful monitoring. No-one can accurately predict how markets will perform. The best way to protect the Association from any potential stock market turbulence is to ensure we have a properly balanced and diversified portfolio. Risk cannot be avoided; the key is how it is managed.

Investment Policy - The IP has been revised based on Charity Commission guidelines and with guidance from Brewin Dolphin. The main changes were the removal of actual figures, which were liable to be unrealistic or susceptible to economic changes. There is mounting pressure on UK charities to deliver the services they provide under increasingly difficult circumstances. We have to navigate through an increasingly complex and regulatory landscape and this is why the Investment Policy and the Annual Report are important documents. Having the right long-term policy in place is therefore key to our continued success.

Expenses Policy - Last revised in July 2016, a new amended version for 2018 was approved by the Trustees in February 2018. In essence the policy remains the same, but amendments have been made to some rates.

The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ending 30 September 2017 will be published in Lioness edition 2018/2.

Last, but not least, thanks were extended to our Finance Officer Julia, for her hard work and due diligence, not only in the preparation for the Audit and Annual Report, but also in her every day duties that she carries out so well on behalf of the Trustees and our Members.

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

Proposed: Cathy Munro **Seconded:** Barbara Johnson

Agreed: All

7. Report of the Editor of the Association Journal.

The Lioness editor reported that since starting at the Association last June she has overseen 2 issues whose features were: September focused on the Women at War 100 celebrations – events that had happened and forthcoming ones; and February focused on Women at War 100 events and Remembrance-tide.

We distributed: 2,800 copies in September and 3,000 in February. In line with advice given and decisions made in 2015 and 2016, we now send current copies to Ben. Fund beneficiaries for two editions. They will also get two letters – the first explaining why they have received the Lioness; the second encouraging Membership, to continue receiving Lioness.

We continue the 'talking' version of Lioness, with Winchester Talking Newspapers - all of whom are volunteers and love reading about the exploits of our Members, both now and in the past.

We are currently working on a project to improve online accessibility to the Lioness archives through the Members portal of the website. This is a large and ongoing piece of work and we will update everyone upon its completion.

The Editor reminded everyone that this, your (the Member's),

magazine and is a prime benefit of your Membership. It enables Members:

- to keep in touch with friends and colleagues, far and wide
 - to find out what other Members and branches have been up to
 - to find out what events have taken place
 - to find out what events are up and coming
 - provides a resource for how to attend events, access Benevolence, 'comings and goings', re-connect with past colleagues and friends, buy Association memorabilia (diaries, fleeces, etc, etc)
 - to find out what is going on in the Association
- It is also a good way of introducing new Members and show them what they too can get involved in.

The Editor reminded everyone to 'keep the articles and photos coming', particularly for the September 2018 edition which will celebrate the ATS 80th anniversary, and start celebrating our 'Wonderful Women'.

8. Reports of Committees.

a. Executive & Finance Committee. The EFC had met three times and during that time welcomed Monica Jones as Deputy EFC Chair and Barbara Davies as the new Hon. Treasurer. Thank were extended to Audrey Smith for her services. In addition to overseeing a lot of the 'governance' work of the Association (eg policies reviews), other matters of particular note:

Risks – highest risk is long term absence of a member of staff. Mitigation – have budgeted funds to employ temporary cover.

Ben Fund Database Replacement - now in place

Salaried Staff Review – carried out and resulted in re-allocation of division of funding according to tasks undertaken.

Review of Societal Trends – underway by Monica Jones, who will present to Trustees in July 2018

Constitution rewrite – will be due 2020

Trustee Skills audit: Part of measuring Trustee Effectiveness, carried out every 2 years. Some new trustees have been recruited to fill skills' gaps – but Members asked to consider if they might have a particular skill that they could volunteer.

b. Benevolent Fund Grants Committee. Isabel McCord presented a report starting with thanks to Audrey Smith and Gabi Shanahan for managing the Fund and Committee so well; to Helen Merrington-Rust for agreeing to be Committee Deputy Chair; Monica Jones for her IT expertise, particularly with the new database; and all the other charities with whom we work and who support us (eg SSAFA and their case-workers, RBL, ABF, etc).

Funds are allocated according to financial need and in line with the published criteria, remembering that any lady who served for even just one day in the ATS or WRAC qualifies for consideration. The Ben. Fund 'offers a help up, not a hand-out'. Full details of how funds are spent appear in the Lioness and will appear on the website in the future.

2017 expenditure was up 31% on previous year (to £192,224), but the grants were issued to fewer recipients. 2017 also saw a 23.4% increase in support for nursing home fees – in line with general society. The PMRF fund allocated £57k, up 25% on previous year due to an increase in the number of eligible applications (who receive an annual grant).

The sort of things the Fund supports are certain debts (not general ones), Annual grants, Funeral expenses, top-ups for nursing home fees and electric vehicles (eg electric buggies).

The new database is in place and being populated with back-information. Further developments will make it more efficient and information more detailed.

Looking forward, the Committee are going to review the Grant Giving Criteria – considering how other charities operate, Societal Trends, and how to get to the maximum number of people.

Members were reminded that if they know of anyone in need, get them to apply in line with the criteria – and 'Spread the Word'!

9. Resolutions.

a. Trustee Resolutions – there were none.

b. Branch Proposals – there were none.

c. Election of Honorary Treasurer. The AGM is required to ratify the appointment of Honorary Treasurer on an annual basis.

Proposal: To ratify Barbara Davies as Honorary Treasurer.

Proposed: Linda Armstrong **Seconded:** Jane Griffin-Ash

Agreed: All

10. Any Other Business.

a. ATS 80th Anniversary. The Association Secretary reminded everyone of this important anniversary and highlighted the 'Act of Commemoration and Re-dedication' scheduled for Sunday 8th July 2018 at the National Memorial Arboretum. The event starts at 14.00 and will be followed by afternoon tea. Free to Association Members

b. 2019 events. The Association Secretary reminded everyone that 2019 is the 70th anniversary for the formation of the Womens Royal Army Corps and the 100th anniversary of the WRAC Association. A series of events are being planned, namely:

1st February – Attended Evensong, 17.30, Guildford Cathedral

22nd – 24 March – Grand Reunion, Southampton, including:

Friday evening Formal Reception at Guildford Cathedral

Saturday AGM and Formal Dinner

Sunday Service and Parade

(although a venue has been booked details are not yet available until room-rates etc. have been finalised – full details and booking form will be in the 2018/2 Lioness)

7th July – NMA event, including unveiling of updated Memorial Stone

10th November – Service of Remembrance and Parade at Guildford Castle Grounds

All Areas and Branches are asked to consider how they may mark these anniversaries as well.

c. Marketing/PR Campaign – Curious PR (Hannah Kapff and Francesca Crutchfield) have been brought onboard for their expertise and skills in this area.

1st meeting, a Workshop, has been held including representatives from Trustees, Area Chairs and Staff

Principle aims are to: increase awareness of the Association and

Ben Fund

increase Assoc. Membership

increase applications to Ben. Fund

Additional ideas and initial thoughts to help promote and celebrate include '100 ...'-things (ie Wonderful Women, events, etc), a Centenary logo and special Centenary memorabilia – more details will be shared over the summer and in next Lioness.

d. Fundraising raffle – Marg Davies drew a raffle, for a hand-made blanket in WRAC Association colours. The winner was Shirley Taper.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting. The 2019 AGM will be held at the Grand Reunion, on Saturday 23rd March 2019 in Southampton.

Signed as a true record.

Chairman:

Date:

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

	Notes	Unrestricted		Restricted	Total Funds Year Ended 30.09.17	Total Funds Period 01.11.15 to 30.09.16
		General Funds £	Designated Funds £	Funds £	£	£
INCOME FROM:						
Donations and legacies	1	97,511	-	116,270	213,781	38,663
Charitable activities	2	11,723	-	-	11,723	571
Investments	3	23,217	-	199,774	222,991	178,937
Other income	4	11,544	-	313	11,857	7,188
TOTAL INCOME		143,995	-	316,357	460,352	225,359
EXPENDITURE ON:						
Raising funds	6	4,257	-	31,011	35,268	30,164
Charitable activities	7	86,956	-	301,818	388,774	311,344
Total Expenditure		91,213	-	332,829	424,042	341,508
Net Gains / (losses) on investments	10	57,684	-	515,842	573,526	436,856
NET INCOME / (EXPENDITURE)		110,466	-	499,370	609,836	320,707
Transfers between funds	16	2,467	(2,467)	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		112,933	(2,467)	499,370	609,836	320,707
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:						
Total Funds brought forward	19	618,113	23,398	5,598,887	6,240,398	5,919,691
Total funds carried forward		731,046	20,931	6,098,257	6,850,234	6,240,398

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 20 to 37 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

	Notes	2017 £	2016 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Intangible assets	8	14,739	-
Tangible assets	9	3,757	3,072
Investments	10	6,716,036	6,175,591
		6,734,532	6,178,663
CURRENT ASSETS			
Stock	11	1,782	2,429
Debtors	12	15,259	11,039
Cash at bank and in hand	13	139,342	65,300
		156,383	78,768
LIABILITIES			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	14	40,681	17,033
NET CURRENT ASSETS		115,702	61,735
TOTAL NET ASSETS		6,850,234	6,240,398
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY			
Restricted Funds:			
The Benevolent Funds	15	5,164,869	4,700,451
The Princess Royal's Memorial Fund	18	933,388	898,436
Unrestricted funds:			
General Funds	19	731,046	618,113
Designated funds:			
Membership life subscription fund	16	20,931	23,398
TOTAL FUNDS	19	6,850,234	6,240,398

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 6 Feb 18 and were signed on its behalf by:


 Colonel (Retired) Alison Brown, Chairman

The notes on pages 20 to 37 form part of these financial statements.

Mention in WRAC Dispatches

Mrs Penny Bailey Southampton Branch

Penny was a true member of the ATS and also served during WW2. Since joining the Association she has held a position as a committee member of Southampton Branch for many years. She has always been a very busy person and despite having an eyesight problem continues to strive forward.

She brings an excellent and strong attitude to each meeting she attends, even at the age of 96. She has raised many funds for the branch through being responsible for branch raffles. She is a very important member of the branch and we would like to see her rewarded for all that she has done.

*Jean Dow
Southampton Branch*

As Area Chairman, I support this nomination as I feel that owe our ladies of this age a huge debt of gratitude in keeping our branches, moral and comradeship going. Even though she has not held a position of Secretary, Treasurer or Area Chair, I still feel that this is just a small token of appreciation for all she has done.

*Sharon Bingham
Southern & South West Area Chairman*

Mrs Feona Dixon York Branch

Feona joined the ATS 31 October 1945 at Aldershot, completed her basic training at Honiton Signal School in Devon and became a Teleprinter Operator. Due to a shortage of switchboard operators, and having had experience of a small board at a London office where she worked during the war, she continued as a switchboard operator for most of her service. Her service took her to the south coast of Fareham, Folkstone, Lydd and Shornccliffe (for Dover Castle).

Eventually Feona went to live in York and after she was widowed wanted interests to keep her going and found the Association magazine. She joined the Association in 1998 and found herself on the Committee of York Branch as events co-ordinator. When the then Secretary became ill Feona stepped in and took over this post and has continued doing so since the late '90's. She is now in her 90's and has kept York branch going with great enthusiasm. She fully deserves this recognition in WRAC Association Mentioned in Dispatches.

Dot Ryder

Sarah Morris Winchester Branch / Internal Auditor

Sarah Morris kindly agreed to act as Internal Auditor whilst working full time as RAO ATR Winchester in 2015. It is admirable that whilst holding down a busy job she found the time to voluntarily conduct the Internal Audit of the WRAC Association and Benevolent Funds. This has involved 2 - 3 half day visits to Association HQ and the time taken to write up the report afterwards each year.

This was a new role and as such Sarah decided on the method to follow, which has proved very thorough and found highly satisfactory by our External Auditors, Rothmans LLP. Fortunately for the Association Sarah has found everything to be in good order but the charity has benefited from her advice and recommendations to better our processes.

Since retiring and enjoying more time sailing with her little dog, Sarah offered immediately to continue in this voluntary role as Internal Auditor, for which Association HQ and Trustees and very grateful.

It is for Sarah's willingness to give of her own time to serve the WRAC Association and Benevolent Fund that she is nominated for a Mention in Despatches.

Legacies & Donations

Grateful thanks to the following for their kind donations:

IN MEMORIAM

Since 1 October 2017 kind donations were made by individuals and Branches in memory of the following personnel:

The Late M Foulds

The Late Betty Metcalfe MBE

The Late Eileen Proctor MBE TD

The Late Merville Mary Pidgeon

The Late Phyllis Maude Ellen Beames

The Late Margaret Alice Gallafent

The Late Sheelagh Wilson

LEGACIES

Since 1 October 2017 the following personnel have very generously left a legacy:

The Late Dorothy Mary Nuttall

The Late Frances Green

The Late Frances Cook

The Late Alice Walton

The Late Violet (Vicky) Tunbridge

The Late Hazel Powell



Mrs Vicky H Tunbridge, Buonvino Died 6th February 2018

I left school at 14, in 1938, and was working in an office in the West End of London when the war started. I left that job to work at Crown Agents for the Colonies at Millbank. At times when ships were sunk, we were asked to work overtime to get things to the Colonies and were able to stay overnight, sleeping in the basement. Sometimes getting to work was difficult because of the bombing, with bus timetables being interrupted. However, it was a lovely atmosphere – everyone helped everyone else.

I was anxious to join one of the services. My father wasn't keen on the idea, so I had to wait until I was 18½ to join without his consent. I tried the RAF but was twice refused as they hadn't any secretarial vacancies, and I wanted to keep up my shorthand and typing skills. I was therefore thrilled when accepted by the Army.

My posting came through in March 1943 and I was sent to Pontefract for initial training. After three weeks I was posted to HQ RA Training Establishments at Windsor. I was secretary to three officers, and sometimes the General who often had to go to the War Office – when he would take me with him, as he preferred the ATS to civilian girls.

We had some idea that things were moving when our drivers at Windsor were taken to help in delivering transport to coastal areas, and then we got news on the radio of the invasion. The only bubbly we had to celebrate was a tin of Andrew's [Liver Salts]!

When we knew that members were needed for overseas, one of my friends and I decided to put in our applications and got selected for the Allied Commission in Vienna, Austria. We were posted to Hammersmith; billeted in flats at Barons Court. It was quite exciting being in at the start of the formation of the Allied Commission. When our turn came to leave we were sent to Liverpool to join the troopship SS Orontes. We were nearing the Bay of Naples when news came through that the war had ended. Listening to the news on the radio of the celebrations in London made me very homesick and a little tearful. On arrival at Naples we boarded open trucks for Rome, going via Cassino (so we were able to see some of the results of the fighting). It was very hot in May 1945 in Rome.

Within a few months we were off to Vienna. I was accompanied to the airport by two male officers and a male sergeant, where we boarded a small converted fighter. The male sergeant sat in the turret, the officers on the tail and I was on the step leading into the cockpit – this was my first flight; not exactly luxurious!

In Vienna we were given rather nice quarters next to Schonbrunn barracks. Vienna was badly bombed, and it was divided into zones – Russian, French, English and American – and we had special passes in all languages. We weren't allowed out unless in twos, and not in the evenings unless accompanied. Our place of work was in Schonbrunn Palace.

My friend and I were busy in the Secretariat, often having to carry on working into the evening typing minutes of the four-power meetings. As the electricity went off most evenings, this had to be done by the light of hurricane lamps, and as there was no heating we made use of our greatcoats. It was quite eerie being in the dark in a large palace.

After leaving the ATS in 1947 I joined the Territorials with two of the girls I had been with in Vienna. We chose somewhere we could all get to without too much trouble – this was an HAA unit in Harrow, and we used to go to weekend and other camps.

Vicky Tunbridge

Merville Mary Pidgeon (née Collinson) 8 December 1921 – 11 March 2018



Merville was born on 8 December 1921. She had an older sister and two younger brothers. Her ambition was to be a teacher, but she had to leave school at 14 to begin working, and continued her studies at evening classes for three years.

At the age of 16, she represented herself in court (standing on an orange box so she could be seen) against her employer, who had disappeared owing her a week's wages. She won the case; the Judge awarding her two weeks wages plus expenses!

In 1942 Merville joined the ATS and served in Northern Ireland, Normandy, Brussels, Holland and Potsdam. She was Mentioned in Despatches for her work in food distribution in Holland.

She was demobbed in 1946, and in 1948 she married her husband, Paddy. They were married for 55 years until Paddy's death in 2003. During this time her daughters Tricia and Geraldine, and son Robert were born. Merville started married life in London, moving to Gosport and then finally to Bournemouth in 1964.

During these years she held many important positions in the Catholic Women's League (CWL) and in 1973 she was presented with the 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice' for her Diocesan and CLW work – the highest Papal award the laity can receive in the Church. Her other various charitable works included welcoming and helping Vietnamese and Kosovan refugees.

Her family life was very important, and her family still fondly remember the family camping holidays and picnics in the New Forest. She was always proud of the achievements of her children, and later, grandchildren.

Most recently, as a Normandy Veteran she was presented with a special French Commemorative Medal. The President of the Normandy Landings and Normandy Remembers Committees, Admiral Christian Brac de la Perrière and his Chief of Staff Madame Liliane Bouillon-Pasquet wanted to honour those who were not in France for the International Commemorations. The presentation took place at Christchurch Civic Offices on the 70th Anniversary of D-Day.

Merville was a very supportive member of the Bournemouth Branch of the WRAC Association and enjoyed the branch meetings until she became too frail to attend. Her funeral Mass was strongly attended by her family, friends and a large congregation.

*Val Wright
Bournemouth*

Sheelagh Wilson 1950 – 2018



It is with deep regret that I have to report the death of Sheelagh Wilson. Sheelagh was the Secretary and Treasurer of Suffolk Branch for the past ten years.

Her death was totally unexpected, one minute in this world, the next departed. Life really is just a passing shadow. The cause of death was Pulmonary Thrombosis – blood clot.

Sheelagh was born in Perth, Scotland in 1950 and was always very proud of her heritage. At 17 1/2yrs she joined the Army following in her older sister's footsteps. After her initial training in Catterick she was posted to HQ Southern Command in Wilton. Sheelagh met her future husband Frank here and they married in 1970. Sheelagh left the Army and joined her husband. They enjoyed postings to Germany, Hong Kong and Canada (her favourite) leaving in 1988. They had 2 children and both retired in 2002.

This was when Sheelagh began her involvement with the local branch of the WRAC Association in Ipswich. She became Secretary and Treasurer. She was always very proud to lay a wreath at Christchurch Park in Ipswich for Remembrance.

Sheelagh will be missed by all the Branch members, and remembered for organising the fun quizzes, lively debates and regular lunches. Sheelagh was a very strong character; the optimum of 'Keep Calm and Carry on' along with being a kind, caring lady with a down to earth personality. She would say it as it was, so you knew where you stood! She will be greatly missed by us all. On a personal level, I have lost a Dear and Treasured Friend, whose passing has left a hole in my life which will never be re-filled.

Sheelagh's ashes have been scattered in the grounds of Blair Castle. Sleep tight among the heather, Sheelagh, in your Granny's Highland Home. Condolences to her husband Frank and the family.

*S. Johnson & Wendy Hooton
Branch Chairman & Area Chairman*

Tribute to Sheelagh Wilson - Suffolk Branch

She was just a common soldier and
Her ranks are growing thin.
But her presence should remind us
We may need her like again.
For when countries are in conflict,
Then we find the soldier's part
Is to clean up all the troubles
That the Politicians start.
If we cannot do her honour while
She's here to hear the praise
Then at least let's give her homage
At the ending of her days.
Perhaps just a simple headline
In the papers – that might say! –
"Our Country is in mourning,
For a Soldier died today".

Margaret (Marge) Barton (nee Edwards), ATS 8.5.26 – 17.2.18

Marge was born in Twickenham on 8th May 1926. She was educated locally, yet any prospect of a normal upbringing for Marge's generation would be shattered by the onset of the Second World War when she was just 13 years old. Like so many young women of that time, Marge wanted to be a part in the fight for a free world. So as soon as she was of age she enlisted in the ATS.

The end of the war didn't end Marge's military adventure, the post war world was an uncertain place with this nation. So, Marge found herself posted out to exotic Egypt, soon to become a flashpoint in its own right with the Suez Crisis. It was during her posting that Marge met the young man who was to become her husband. Scouser Andy served with the Rifle Corps during the war and was part of the British Army of Occupation after the war. They were duly married in Feltham 3.1.48. They had two children, Wendy and Andrew, and they returned to Liverpool.

As the children grew and began to lead independent lives, Marge rekindled her interest in the armed forces by joining the Women's Royal Army Corps Association which succeeded the ATS Comrades Association. The Liverpool branch met at Rodney Street British Legion to support former service personnel and ensure their contribution continued to be recognised. Their objectives were certainly successful. During the years Marge met the Queen Mother at St James' Palace garden party and laid wreaths in our city on Remembrance Days. The contribution Marge made in her years of service in the ATS and to the WRAC Association were recognised both in Long Service Certificates and most importantly when she was made an Honorary Life Member.

Personally, I remember her when I first joined the Association in the mid 70's, she was Secretary and made me very welcome.

Unfortunately, in 1995 she fell seriously ill and it was feared the family would lose her. She did recover but never really continued to attend meetings. She sadly passed away on 19 May 2018 and will be greatly missed by her family and army comrades. We salute you Marge, rest in peace.

*Pat Brown
Secretary, Liverpool branch*

Margaret Gallafent, WO2 (W444275) 18 June 1947 – 12 June 2018



Desiring a change in her lifestyle, Margaret joined the WRAC in 1972. She loved the travel, new friends and the range of interests it gave her. She remained a loyal and active member of the Corps to her very end.

Margaret joined as a fully qualified secretary/PA and passed her Army courses with ease, allowing her to rise through the ranks on accelerated promotion. She was given a number of prestigious jobs. In Rheindalen she worked for the Commandant in the Big

House. She worked for the Governor of Gibraltar in the Convent, and then moved to HMS Tamar, Hong Kong, as PA to the Commander of British Forces. Other postings included home bases in the Midlands and MoD London. She loved everything she did - the work, the social side and being in the various Messes.

Margaret always said 'she burnt the candle at both ends' and this may be true as during her posting in Beaconsfield, whilst in a Military Hospital, she suffered a major brain haemorrhage. She was in a coma for over three weeks, transferred to the National Hospital London, and then underwent three years of intensive rehabilitation at Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Woolwich, and Headley Court. Unfortunately, Margaret, now quite disabled, found her duties at Guildford too arduous and resigned from the WRAC in 1985.

She re-trained and held a few jobs but in the end accepted defeat and retired on a War Pension. To keep herself active Margaret joined the London Association Branch. She transferred to the Medway Association Branch and became the Chairman until that had to close, so attended meetings in Canterbury and a Joint Service Club in Rochester.

As a founder member of the WRAC Dinner Club, Margaret was looking forward to the next weekend in October as well as the big WRAC event early next year.

Margaret coped well with her disabilities, then received devastating news. She had cancer of the oesophagus. Life became very difficult, but she managed to fulfil some of her dreams. She remained positive and strong, laughed and smiled, but in the end her body had to give way to the pneumonia that had set in. Margaret fought to the bitter end – my sister, a brave and beautiful lady. Very proud to say – She was a WRAC.

*Barbara Gallafent
Ex-WRAC and sister*

Joan Margaret Holloway **4th May 1923 – 12 March 2018**



We in Southampton are very proud to have a mother and daughter in the Branch. Joan was a very happy lady, very loyal to the Branch and also a strong British Legion member – a former Standard Bearer and Parade Marshall.

Unfortunately Joan has spent the last few years in a nursing home, which her daughters regularly visited – but having such a happy disposition, was very popular with staff and other residents.

Whilst we have lost 'Mum', we are fortunate to still have the 'daughter'.

*Jean Dow
Southampton*

Doreen Arnell **9th January 2018**



Sadly, Doreen died on 9th January. She was a member of the WRAC Staff Band and played the Cornet and Euphonium. Doreen took up playing the cornet on doctors' advice. She always suffered with breathing problems and the doctor told her to go and join the Salvation Army as they will give you a Cornet and teach you to play it and that will strengthen your lungs. She did this and a few years later she joined the WRAC Staff Band.

Doreen was always brilliant fun to be around. Doreen always suffered with bad health but having a new kidney four years ago gave her a new lease of life and was still great fun. Unfortunately, she died suddenly and unexpectedly just before her 70th birthday. Her lungs finally gave out.

Brenda Bailey (O'Rourke)

Mabel (Peggy) Bell **18th December 1921 - 3rd March 2018**



My mother Mabel Bell, known as Peggy, sadly died on the 3rd March 2018. She was still attending her Veterans meetings in Norwich on a regular basis until 2016, when unfortunately her health deteriorated and she went into residential care in September 2017.

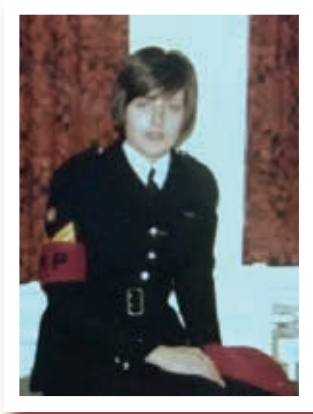
Mabel, always known, as Peggy was born on 18th December 1921. She joined the ATS October 1942, after my father became a Prisoner Of War in the Far East. She worked on a mixed AKAK Unit, and left the service in August 1945. Mum loved her time in ATS and looked forward to her regular meetings with the veterans.

Whilst I have been sorting through Mum's things I found your magazine asking for photos about their time in the ATS. I have enclosed some photos for you.

[Editor – these will be collated for the Wonderful Women 100 book].

*Kathleen Hopewell
(daughter)*

**Shirley Ann Berry
(W/ 432589 Staff Sergeant)
2 October 1949 – 8 April 2018**



Shirley joined the WRAC as a young recruit in September 1967. Later that same year, having completed training as WRAC Provost, her first posting was to Catterick Garrison. She served there until January 1970. Shirley's next posting was to Singapore, where she served until September 1971, and was photographed during a Royal visit (left of photograph). Thank you Bob Eggleston ex RMP for the photograph. This is probably when the British Army left Singapore



**Cpl Berry (1st left), Singapore 1970
(Bob Eggleston ex RMP for the photograph)**

From the warm rains of Singapore Shirley's next posting was to the cold rain at Guildford as a Training NCO from October 1971 to July 1973. This is probably where Shirley had the biggest impact on new recruits and where most people will remember her from; not only for her personality and good humour but for her immaculate turn out. Shirley really stood out with her red hat.

In July 1973 Shirley was posted to Northern Ireland, 181 Provost Company. She served in Aldergrove and Armagh. January 1975 saw Shirley serving at 102 Provost Company in Rheindahlen. She left the WRAC with the rank of Staff Sergeant in October 1977.

However, Shirley reenlisted as a Recruiter in March 1979. With amalgamation Shirley was then moved, on paper, and rebadged to The Adjutant Generals Corps and continued as a Recruiter serving in both Bournemouth and Salisbury until her discharge in January 1996 with an acting rank of CSM. In total Shirley served for 27 years and 38 days.

Shirley will be sadly missed by all her friends and the many people she came into contact with, but none more so than Babs Hyndman her partner of almost 25 years. After Shirley retired from the Service she settled in Northampton with Babs and they entered a Civil Partnership in June 2006. Babs also served in the WRAC Provost, leaving to join the civilian Police. When she also retired they bought a camper van and travelled extensively throughout Europe and the United Kingdom in their little home from home. They also travelled to many other countries on long

haul holidays. They were never still for more than a week or so before itchy feet took them off again.

Many of you will remember "pulling up a sandbag" with Shirl and over a glass of wine or six talking about the "old days". The scrapes we got into, the trouble we got into and the things we got away with! Some of the funniest were when Shirl caught many of us out, we would take our "punishment" then all go for a beer or pizza. We will all have laughed at the near misses we had as well. Lots of happy memories for so many.

Shirley's death was sudden and unexpected. Shirley being Shirley though had made plans for such an event to try to ease the way ahead for Babs. As was her wish, Shirley made her last journey alone on Thursday 19 April 2018. She was cremated, and her ashes scattered with her parents near High Wycombe. She also left instructions that she wanted a party for her friends and comrades.

Stand Down Shirl, my friend, your duty is done.

Cheryl Noble

**Joy Balmain
21st December 1926 – 20th March 2018**

Joy (Mum) was born on Tuesday 21st December 1926 to Emma and Percy Green at their farm in Warwick, where her early years were spent with her two sisters. Mum helped out by doing her share of chores and a milk round. After leaving school her first job was as a telephonist for the Post Office – skills that she never forgot.

Mum joined the ATS during the Second World War; after completing her training she became a driver, chauffeuring officers around. During a very long shift late one night she fell asleep at the wheel, hitting a rut and nearly going off the road. The officer in the back of the car shouted to her "are you alright Green", to which Mum replied as quick as a flash "Cat in the road sir". Mum was very proud of her army driving career because she was the first woman in Warwick with a bus-driver's licence.

Mum married Arthur in 1946; they started a family, having Robert and a few years later Andrew; and moved to Bermuda for my father's job. In the summer of 1958 my mother and brothers returned to England so that she could have me, all returning to Bermuda a few months later, ultimately leaving Bermuda in December 1960, settling back to life in our home town of Warwick.

My parents subsequently went their separate ways and my mother later met Bruce Balmain. Bruce had served in the Navy; he was tall, kind and very hardworking; they married on Saturday 24th February 1968 in Warwick.

Mum went to Solihull College on a tailoring course, and after completing the course with flying colours she returned to teach an evening class. She worked in a variety of roles around child care restrictions, eventually getting a job at Shire Hall in Warwick working for the local authority. Mum and her friend Carol both moved to the Road Construction Unit, a Department at the Ministry of Transport, based in Royal Leamington Spa. Many happy times were had there.

In the summer of 1969 Joy and Bruce bought a newsagent's shop near the central station in Bournemouth. A couple of years later we were on the move again, this time to a new adventure at St Edwards Hotel, Shaftesbury, Dorset. Mum did all the catering, Bruce did all the waiting at tables and I did a lot of washing up! Mum completed a City and Guilds course in Advanced Confectionary and Cake Decoration in Salisbury and as a side line made wedding and christening cakes.

From there to Stourcastle Lodge in Sturminster Newton, working tremendously hard to get the place ship shape and running as a re-launched B&B. After several years they sold the business and moved to Exeter, followed by Birkenhead, Christchurch and finally

Southbourne, always buying somewhere with potential, that needed doing up and doing most of the work themselves. Mum was always very creative, painting, knitting and sewing, and even took up spinning her own wool too.

Over the years they had many, many happy times spent with their eight granddaughters, three great grandsons and two great granddaughters. Mum was always on hand to help. She loved to travel - Canada, Florida, Cyprus, Crete, Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco and Jamaica. They also toured the UK spending time in the Scottish highlands, Ireland, Yorkshire, Wales and Cornwall. They could often be found house-sitting for family, friends or associates in various parts of the country.

Mum and Bruce were both very proud to have served in the armed forces and in later years were instrumental in setting up reunions for their respective associations. Bruce became Life President of the Fisgard Association, and Mum Chairman of the ATS Dinner Club. They both travelled the length and breadth of the country to attend functions, for many years supporting each other. I was unaware of this part of their lives until I attended the last lunch of the ATS Dinner Club, where I was amazed by my mother carrying out her duties as chairman. I watched intently as she addressed a hall full of army dignitaries, the press, a regimental band and the ATS members delivering the final speech and thanks to all the supporters.

In January 2013 Mum while still driving her vision deteriorated very suddenly. She was diagnosed with Giant Cell Arthritis, which was a devastating blow for Mum who by now was Bruce's carer. She was given a white cane and a few lessons and typically got out there and tried to carry on.

Bruce passed away in June 2013 leaving Mum dreadfully lonely. She decided to move closer to me and eventually moved in with me and I became her full-time carer. I took Mum along to the Good Neighbour scheme lunch club, where she made new friends and soon settled in to her new way of life in London. Blind Veterans UK were absolutely amazing, inviting Mum to their Brighton centre for rehabilitation and respite stays, they also provided her with fantastic gadgets to make her life easier, including a large print scrabble board with which we had hours of fun. Our last game was just two weeks before she died and yet again she beat me!

She loved watching the sea and the seagulls whizzing past the camera on the Bournemouth seafront webcam and reminisced about all the walks along the seafront. She made me laugh almost every day. God bless you Mum, what a journey! Rest in peace.

*Julia Jackson
(daughter)*

Sybil Constance Cushen **14th January 1922 – 9th June 2018**

A service to celebrate the life of Sybil was held on 19th June at the Beetham Hall Crematorium Chapel, conducted by Helen Coonan. The service included:

Entry music - "Lass of Richmond Hill",
'Tribute' – by Cathy Randord
Reflective music – "I vow to thee my country"

Poem – 'Kindness during Life'
I would rather have one little rose
From the garden of a friend,
Than to have the choicest flowers
When my stay on earth must end

I would rather have one pleasant word
In kindness said to me,
Than flattery when my heart is still
And life has ceased to be.

I would rather have a loving smile
From friends I know are true,
Than tears shed round my casket
When this world I've bid adieu.

Bring me all your flowers today –
Whether pink, or white, or red:
I'd rather have one blossom now
Than a truck-load when I'm dead.

Words of Encouragement – by Helen Coonan
Poem – 'Peace'
The Lord's Prayer
Farewell
Committal and Dismissal
Closing music - "Greensleeves"

Ena Forster **1952 - 2018**



Major Ena Forster was Director of Music of the WRAC Staff Band from 1984-1992. Born in 1952, she joined the Staff Band in 1971 after having played in the East Sussex Youth Orchestra. Ten years later she went to The Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall to study on the Student Bandmaster Course. She was awarded the Prize for Conducting and came second in the Ministry of Defence examinations. In 1984, she succeeded Major Lynette Hopkin, (who died in 2016), as Director of Music.

The fourth, and last, of the four female directors of the Staff Band, she passed the examination from Kneller Hall known as "passed school of music", in 1989. Major Forster was the only female director to have done so. When the Staff Band was disbanded in 1992 she decided to retire after a very successful musical career of 21 years.

In 1984, the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum commissioned two paintings of the WRAC Staff Band as part of its programme of artistic records of the contemporary work and life of members of the armed forces. They were painted in oils by the well known artist Maggi Hambling. (See report in the Lioness, No. 1. 1985.)

One depicts 12 members of the Band performing with Major Forster conducting and the other is a portrait of Major Forster on her own. Originally, the paintings were displayed in the Museum's Duxford Branch, near Cambridge, where I saw them in 1998. They are both very colourful and striking providing a fascinating record of the Band in the 1980s and Major Forster in particular.

*Jane Smith
(Formerly W/425499 Sgt Stark P.J., WRAC Staff Band, 1965-69)*

Cynthia Briscoe (nee Iles)
14 April 1942 – 31 May 2018



Cynthia was born to Percy and Winifred Iles on the 14th of April 1942, in Hitchin, Hertford. Percy, her father, being stationed there in the army.

Mum was very interested in music and started playing a brass cornet at a young age. Salvation Army taught, Cynthia played with various local bands in North Nottinghamshire including Huthwaite, Kirkby and Blidworth before progressing to play the tenor horn for the National Youth Brass Band for several years.

Cynthia's love of banding continued, and at 17, she auditioned as French horn player with the WRAC band. Whilst mum passed the audition, she was disappointed to learn that there were no French horn places currently available and would have to wait for a place in the band. They did, however, offer her a position on the trombone. Whilst Cynthia had never played a trombone before, she assured them she could play the trombone and a short while later, after many late nights learning the trombone slide positions, she was playing in London on the Lord Mayor's Parade.

Mum used to tell the story of how she came to play the euphonium - there was no band practice on Sunday afternoon and you could get different instruments from the army stores. One Sunday mum decided to play the euphonium. The bandmaster at the time heard mum playing and called mum to her office. Mum thought she was on a charge for doing something wrong, but the bandmaster wanted to know who was playing the euphonium so well and explained the current euphonium player was due to leave; mum would be the principle euphonium from then on.

Mum had a great time in the WRAC band and would often talk and recall the happy times and places she visited during her time with the band.

Cynthia, a devoted mum, leaves her brother Patrick, my brother Roy and myself Peter, and her four grandchildren, Katie, Darren, John and Sean.

Peter Briscoe

Eva Fraser (nee Middleton)
19 February 1921 – 20 June 2018

It is with a sad heart that I advise you that my mother, Mrs Eva Fraser, nee Middleton, passed away on the 20th June 2018. She was blessed in reaching the grand age of 97 years and was active till the end. She was L/Corporal W/183031. She was a Life Member of the Association. She was a member of the ATS serving overseas in the war. (Her most recent address was Tasmania, Australia).

Anne Burdon
(daughter)

Jenifer Lindsay (W/410303)
18/03/1943 – 30/12/2017

WRAC Provost:
7th January 1961 – 6th April 1964

It was my privilege to be 'big sister' to Jenifer - I was nine and a half years old when she arrived into our family - a much wanted and greatly loved daughter and sister. I happily helped my mother care for Jen, who was a happy, smiling child. When she was two the family was blessed with another daughter and Jen soon showed a very caring and protective nature towards her little sister, something that developed as she grew up to become a very caring person, concerned about others.

Jen saw her big brother, George, go off to do his National Service in 1948 as a Military Policeman, and then in 1951 I went off and joined the WRAC to become a Military Policewoman. Jen's other big brother, Andrew, joined the Military Police in 1954, so it was no surprise to anyone when, in 1961, Jen joined the WRAC and became a Redcap! At that time I was a WPC in Berkshire Constabulary but I wanted more out of life and re-joined WRAC Provost as a Sgt a few months after Jen and eventually found myself i/c 140 Provost Section in Cyprus - where Jen was already serving. Jen was posted to the section in Tripoli and I visited her there in November 1963, where we were photographed for an article in the Newbury Weekly News with the headline "Sisters in Law"! My parents were living in Newbury at that time and were delighted to see their daughters looking so well.

When Jen left the WRAC in 1964 she wanted to become a Probation Officer and worked for a time at Holloway Prison. She then decided on a change of employment and moved to Scotland Yard as a trainee fingerprint officer. To her great credit, Jen became a Principal Fingerprint Officer, greatly admired and respected by her colleague, and was working with Thames Valley Police in Oxford when she retired. Jen went to Seattle on attachment so she could pass on her expertise and was offered a permanent job there which she declined, preferring to live and work in the U.K.

Jen was diagnosed with Dementia in 2012 and came to live near me in Scotland that year and coped with help in her home. When she realised she could no longer cope in her own home, she moved into a nearby Care Home and soon became a favourite with the staff. Jen had a lovely smile and when she lost the ability to walk and talk, she smiled her way through life. Her passing on 30 December 2017 was pain free and peaceful. God Bless you Jen - you are sadly missed.

W/371778 Lyn Lindsay

Dawn Missen
01 January 1970 – 19 June 2018

Our beautiful mum gained wings on the 19th of June 2018. 5 years ago she was awarded the Campaign Service Medal for her service in Singapore when the Borneo conflict was happening. Me and my brother Ray were so proud of our mum.

Laura Missen
(daughter)

Ann Kitchen
(Served WRAC 1952 – 1974)

It is with regret that I have to inform you that Ann Kitchen sadly passed away last week [3rd week August]. Ann served in the WRAC between 1952 and 1974 and although a good all-rounder was best remembered for her cricketing skills. She, and her twin sister Shirley, represented the Army for many years. After she retired, Ann worked as Chief Clerk at the Army Sports Control Board in Aldershot.

Ann's funeral was held at the Aldershot Crematorium on Thursday 13th September at 15.45hrs. Sue Barker and I will be attending and would be happy to see any others from our PT family.

So sorry to be the bearer of sad news, but look forward to seeing some of you at our Reunion.

Kate Bettison

**Jessie Low (nee Dunsmore)
ATS/WRAC W/2049
26 January 1920 - 24 June 2018**



Jessie enlisted in the ATS three days before World War 2 was declared. She was based at Queen's Barracks in Perth with the Black Watch. She was also in charge of the ATS ladies housed at Balhousie Castle. In 1942, by this time a CSM, she was assigned to Anti-Aircraft Artillery at various sites in England and Wales.

After the war she volunteered for overseas and was posted to Klagenfurt in Austria. After two years she returned to Scotland, and on a training course at Cultybraggan Camp she met and married Andrew Low, a colour sergeant in the Black Watch. He was CQMS at Cultybraggan and their daughter Shelagh remembers when she was three her mother "acquiring" an Army blanket which she dyed red and made into a duffel coat for her. Jessie finished her service in uniform as an RSM.

In civilian life Jessie was Captain of the local Girl Guides, and her guides complained (I think with pride) that she insisted on their marching to various activities.

Her local Branch of the WRAC Association, Fife and Tayside, held her in great affection. She continued to attend Branch and Area meetings, never hesitating to use her RSM's voice to bellow QUIET! when the noise level rose too high.

Latterly Shelagh stood in for her mother at the Branch Christmas lunch and she will always be welcome when she manages to attend.

At Jessie's funeral the service ended with singing the following set to The Last Post:

Day is done, gone the sun
From the lake, from the sky.
All is well, safely rest:
God is nigh

*Isobel Gordon
Chair Fife & Tayside*

**Mrs Josephine Shelley (ne Hardicre)
16 August 1920 – 20 August 2018**



I regret to inform you of the sad news that my Mother, Mrs Josephine Shelley (nee Hardicre), passed away peacefully on 20th August 2018, (4 days after her 98th birthday), at Oaklands Home for the Elderly in Royton, Oldham, Greater Manchester.

Her Army No. was : W/12933CSM - 71st Search Light Regiment 3rd East Lancs. Company ATS (462 & 463 Battery) and she was a Life Member of The Women's Royal Army Corps Association.

Josephine was an active member of the Rochdale group until, sadly, Vascular Dementia took over in 2009.

*Rosemary Jackson
(daughter)*

**JOYCE ELSPETH SEWARD
(nee WINTER) - W353908
11 December 1928 - 30 August 2017
British Auxiliary Territorial Service
(later WRAC)**



Joyce was born in Greenwich, UK.

Date enlisted: 03/02/1949
Place: Queens Barracks Guildford Surrey England
Date discharged: 02/02/1955
Place: Nairobi Kenya
Rank: S/Sgt
Awarded General Service Medal (Middle East Land Forces)

Married: Deric George Seward 23/04/1955

Place: Kenya Nairobi

Children: Jeremy 1956
 Martin 1957
 Timothy 1962

Grandchildren: 4

Great-grandchildren: 4

Joyce trained at Driver's & Clerks Training school Wrexford, North Wales; on completion she was posted back to centre at Guildford. She began as a company clerk (private) and worked her way up to medical officer clerk, to chief clerk for Battalion (sergeant), before being posted to M.E.L.F (Middle East Land Force) zone in Egypt. During this time they were heading to the Abrogation of Treaty between England & Egypt referring to the Suez Canal.

Returned to UK to appear before selection board for Officer Training, but failed. Had arranged prior to departure to UK, that if she had failed selection board she would complete her tour of duty in the MELF but in Kenya. Worked in Nairobi as Chief Clerk in charge of Field Records Office – recording all native troops in Kenya, Tanganika, Uganda. There were twenty office staff made up of Europeans, Goons, Indians, Africans and Polish.

Released from the army in Nairobi February 1955 and married Deric April 23 1955. During this time Joyce was employed in the Directorate Manpower as a Government officer. Moved to England September 1955. Returned to Kenya (Mombasa) 1956, with Deric (husband) who had extended his service with Police force (Kenya).

Left Kenya 1958 and moved back to England, South Norwood. 1963 moved to Canvey Island, Essex. Emigrated to Australia in April 1967, and settled in Rockingham, Western Australia.

Joyce always said that she preferred voluntary work to paid work. This was evident throughout her life as an active member in many groups; attending their meetings, organising events, doing accounts etc. One of her voluntary causes was the Naval Cadet Association Cadets for many years of which Joyce and her husband Deric were tireless workers. The association has continued for many years until recently when the association was disbanded.

Joyce formed the Perth WA branch of the ATS/WRAC many years ago and nurtured all its members then and since. She met with other ex-service women at the Returned & Services League, Perth branch, or other places for lunch to remember about the good old days in the army.

Joyce had a deep affection for her days in the Women's Royal Army Corps, and was proud of her service. Her last instructions requested the playing of the WRAC Regimental March at her funeral service. Fortunately it was possible to hear "Greensleeves" and "The Lass of Richmond Hill" that day. This would have made her very happy indeed.

All members of the Perth WA branch of the ATS/WRAC were sad at her passing, and she will be greatly missed.

*Ann Page
Secretary, Perth, Australia branch*

Margaret (Margo) Rose Collins (nee Insall)

**13th October 1940 - 14th November
2017**

Women's Royal Army Corps W399951

Margaret (Margo) Rose Insall was born in Middlesborough, UK on 13th October 1940. She was the eldest of four children, three of whom still live near to Middlesborough, where they grew up.

She was educated at a Catholic primary school in Ormesby, and later at a convent nearby for high school. She developed a

passion for travel at high school and spent time studying Spanish at Barcelona University in 1957. At age 18, Margo joined the WRAC. Thanks to previously acquired secretarial skills, she was posted to the War Office, where she perfected her lifelong skills for orderliness.

By 1964 Sergeant Margo Insall found herself posted to BRIXMIS – the acronym for the British Commanders' in Chief Mission to the Soviet Forces in Germany, based in Berlin. She was appointed Personal Assistant to the Chief of Staff – a role she excelled in, and enjoyed enormously. Soon after her arrival in Berlin, Margo met her husband-to-be, Sergeant David Collins. After a brief courtship, they were married, holding their wedding reception in the RMP Sergeant's Mess in Berlin.



Margo modelling the new WRAC Lovat Green uniform whilst working at the War Office in London in 1962 (approx).

Margo left the Army on marriage, and she and David were transferred to Aden, Yemen. Their first child, Sara was born in 1967. As the Middle East was a dangerous place for families at the time, Margo and Sara were evacuated to the UK. Later David was posted back to Berlin and the family were reunited. Their second child, Annie was born in Hanover in 1970.

In 1974 the family emigrated to Perth, Western Australia. They chose to live in Rockingham and Margo took work as the school secretary at a local primary school. She later returned to study History & English at university. Having won a place, she chose not to pursue completing the degree.

Margo loved singing and was active in the local church choir and numerous other parish activities. Hymns sung at her funeral service very much reflected her great passion for music and life.

She and David travelled in Europe a number of times after his retirement. Margo joined the Perth branch of the Women's Royal Army Corps Association, and also (with David) the Western Australian branch of the Royal Military Police Association. After David's death in 2013, she joined the local British Ex-Services Association.

Margo was an effervescent, curious, devout and friendly character, who would talk to anyone and everyone. She was a spirited, independent and loving lady, whose presence will be greatly missed by not only her family, but her fellow parishioners and her many ex UK military friends.

Ann Page

JOAN DE VALL 15 August 1925 – 26 January 2018



Joan joined the ATS in 1943 from a military family, with her father serving in the Leicestershire Regiment from 1914 to 1945. Having completed training Joan was posted as a Finder and Predictor Operator in an Ack Ack Battery. During her Service she was based in Falmouth, Plymouth and finally Greenford in Middlesex. Joan was operational throughout her Service until she was demobbed from Guildford in 1946.

Joan had many strands to her Service life including being an active member of the Normandy Veterans Association and making regular trips to Normandy. Joan was a member of the WRAC Association for over 25 years and a key member of Leicester and Nottingham Branch.

I got to know Joan over the last 3 years and she epitomised all that the WRAC Association stands for. She was a regular sight, glorious in her ATS uniform, at many national events including most recently the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall - Joan was one of the 100 women who paraded to celebrate the Centenary of Women in the Forces. I know that those who were with her for that weekend will carry memories of Joan hanging out in the Green Room with Alfie Bow, Mel C and Lesley Garrett. My abiding memory of Joan will be marching alongside her at the Cenotaph last November; a very proud moment. I thought I would include a short verse written for the ATS.

Their Country called them
So they came
Obedient to the call
To serve with a willing heart and hand
In camp and field and hall

All of the members of the WRAC Association will miss Joan and I salute her.

Ali Brown

Joan had been a member of Leicester and Notts branch for a number of years, always cheerful and a willing member. She was a committee member and undertook the register collection at the beginning of our meetings, and early this year covered the welfare of sick members.

For a number of years, she along with a small number of members, attended many invitations from other Associations in support of our Standard, at home or abroad. On occasion, Joan was interviewed on TV and also met various members of the Royal Family. She also represented the WRAC (Association) at last year's Remembrance Service at the Royal Albert Hall. Over the past year, there have been many events in respect of WW1 and WW2 and Joan was able to attend many of them, representing the best of the WRAC (Association). She was always immaculately dressed in uniform or civilian clothes and enjoyed socialising with members and ensuring that the role of the ATS and WRAC was promoted far and wide. She will be remembered with affection and respect.

*Lilian Hollis Ex ATS
Leicester & Notts Branch*

HAZEL POWELL 5 December 1927 – 14 February 2018

Born in Darwen, Lancashire, on 5 December 1927, Hazel was the only child of Edith and Henry Powell. Prior to the war, her family moved to Luton where she passed her 11+ and attended Luton High School excelling in Maths. During that time the family house was bombed, and Hazel recalled how they stood in the sitting room looking up to the open sky. As the family were homeless, they returned to Lancashire and at the age of 18, she called in at the Army Recruiting office one day, signed up, and later wasn't quite sure what she had done! She spent her early service life teaching with the Royal Army Educational Corps, reaching the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1 and was posted to Germany, Cyprus, Kenya, and Egypt. She was Commissioned into the WRAC in 1957 and retired from the Army as a Colonel in the early 1980's. During the latter part of her service, she served as the senior WRAC officer in Western Command Chester, as the Adjutant of the WRAC Training Centre in Guildford and then she became the senior WRAC officer in Headquarters South East District based in Aldershot. Many will recall her serving in the appointment that followed as she was responsible for the career planning and postings of all WRAC Officers.

During her Army career Hazel was very well known as a sportswoman. She played Hockey, Tennis and Cricket at Army level and represented the Army in the Interservice Competitions in all 3 sports. She played cricket with the then England Cricket Captain Major Myrtle McLagan and was very proud of this fact. A fine hockey player, she played at County level. When she became the Chairman of Army Women's Hockey whilst serving in Aldershot she could occasionally be persuaded to take up a hockey stick in training sessions with the Army team. It was clear to all, that her tactical ability and stick skills had not left her!

She retired to Haxby in York and lived there for the rest of her life, but enjoyed travelling widely, her favourite destination being the Isles of Scilly. She kept in touch with her service friends through the WRAC Association, particularly enjoying their gatherings and reunions. In retirement, she was never idle as she had many hobbies such as making tapestries, woodworking, and gardening. She made some beautiful furniture and grew wonderful fruit and vegetables.

A committed member of Haxby & Wigginton Methodist Church, she was active in many aspects of church life. She was a pastoral visitor with particular concern for retired ministers but her most unusual assistance to the church was helping with the rebuilding of the organ. She touched many lives in her local community and this was reflected by many people attending her funeral.

Audrey Smith & Rowena Patrick



LAST POST

BALMAIN, nee Green, Mrs Joy of Barnett, London, on 30th March 2018 (ATS)
BARRINGTON-WARD, Anna nee Barcroft of Isle of Wight, on 8th June 2018 (WRAC)
BARTON, Margaret of Liverpool, on 17th January 2018 (ATS)
BEAMES, Phyllis of Beeston Rylands, Nottingham on 5th May 2018 (ATS & WRAC)
BELL, Mrs Mabel of Norwich, on 3rd march 2018 (ATS)
BERRY, Ms Shirley of Brixworth, Northamptonshire on 7th April 2018 (WRAC)
BERRY, Winifred of Clevedon, Somerset, on 19th June 2018 (WRAC)
BRETT, Mary of Ovingdean, East Sussex, on 12th November 2017 (ATS)
BREWER, Irene (nee Garrett), of Hythe, Kent in August 2018 (ATS)
BRISCOE, Cynthia (nee Iles), of Mansfield, Notts on 31st May 2018 (WRAC)
BUTCHER, Beryl, of Lincoln, on 21 November 2017 (WRAC)
COLE, Sylvia R, of Southampton on 7 April 2018, (WRAC)
COLLINS, Margo (Margaret), of Waikiki, Australia, on 14th November 2017 (WRAC)
CUSHEN, Sybil nee Farmer, of Isle of Man, on 9th June 2018 (ATS)
DANN, Hazel, of Cleveland, on 22nd January 2018 (ATS)
DAVEY, Margaret, of Ontario, Canada, on 27th June 2018 (WRAC)
EXLEY, Cecilia (Shelly), of Chichester, West Sussex, in April 2018 (WRAC)
FOSSEY, Pamela, of Rugby, on 9th March 2018 (WRAC)
FRASER, Eva nee Middleton, of Tasmania, Australia on 20th June 2018 (ATS)
GARDINER, Sybil, of Morecombe, Lancashire, on 9 June 2018 (WRAC)
GUEST, Dora of Exeter, Devon on 15th November 2017 (WRAC)
JARVIS, Ida, of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, on 24th December 2017 (ATS)
JOHNSON, Gwendoline, of New Milton, Hampshire on 30th January 2018 (ATS)
KELLY, Jean of Bristol, on 24th December 2017 (WRAC)
KERR, Dorothy (nee Brewer), on 20th June 2018, aged 98
KNIGHT, Mrs Shirley (Mandy), nee Mandeville of Shoeburyness on 14 July 2018 (WRAC)
MACHAR Mrs Alexandra, of Edinburgh on 8th March 2018 (WRAC)
MACKENZIE, Joan, of Chelmsford, on 2nd July 2018 (ATS)
MISSEN (nee Potter), Mrs dawn, of Liverpool, on 19th June 2018 (WRAC)
MUNDELL, Miss Dorah, of Moffat, Dumfries, on 13th March 2018 (ATS)
OLIVER (nee Flower), Mrs Oliver, of Birmingham in April 2017 (WRAC)
POPE Ms Georgina, of Hounslow on 18th September 2018 (ATS)
PIDGEON (nee Collinson), Mrs Merville Mary of Bournemouth on 11th march 2018 (ATS)
RETTTER, Jeanne (nee Vincent), on 12th December 2017 (ATS)
ROGERS, Valerie, of Loughborough on 12th June 2018 (WRAC)
SEABROOK, Mrs Edith (nee Doughty), of Darlington, on 26th August 2018 (WRAC band)
SEABROOK, Mrs Ivy of Plymouth on 22nd July 2018
SCHULTE, Joyce Gladys, late of Royal Hospital Chelsea, on 18 July 2018 (ATS)
SMITH, Mary (nee Cameron), on 1st April 2018 (ATS)
WILLIAMS, (nee Buttery), Mrs Doris of Liverpool, on 13 March 2018 (ATS)

WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS ASSOCIATION LEGACY & DONATIONS FORM

Leaving a Legacy donation to the WRAC Association is an extremely tax efficient way of supporting the Association (which is a registered charity) into the future.

The key facts:

- * A legacy costs NOTHING in your lifetime.
- * You can make a gift of any size: there is no minimum or maximum amount.
- * Even a modest gift will have a huge impact.
- * You do not have to be a millionaire or wealthy to leave a legacy.
- * A gift can be a specified amount or a percentage of the residue of your estate, after you have provided for family and friends.
- * You can specify where you want your money to be directed.
- * A legacy can reduce the inheritance tax liability on your estate.
- * You can change your mind at any point.

Whilst there is no requirement to do so, it would be helpful to the Association if you would complete the form below giving details of your intended legacy/donation and return it to the Association Secretary. This would be for information purposes only and will be treated with total discretion.

I wish to give the sum of £ _____, or _____% of my residual estate, to the WRAC Association (Registered Charity Number 206184).

FROM :

Your Full Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____ Telephone: _____

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE ENSURE YOU SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR SOLICITOR.

Making a Donation to the WRAC Association is a simple and easy way of showing additional support for the Association. Donations are invaluable in enabling the Association to do all it does in 'Supporting Women Who Served'.

If you wish to make a donation (whether regular or one-off) you can do so by using this form, or going to our website
(Website: www.wracassociation.org.uk)

DONATION and CHARITY GIFT AID DECLARATION

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ _____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to:
WRAC Association Charity Number 206184

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details: Title _____ First name or initial(s) _____ Surname _____

Full Home address _____

Postcode _____ Email address _____ Date _____

To make a regular monthly or annual donation please either visit our website or your Bank to arrange a Direct Debit, using the prefix DON and your surname as a reference.

Please notify the WRAC Association if you:

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

If you are a non-UK tax payer or do not wish to sign this declaration it would still be good to hear from you. If this is the case please complete name and address above and tick below:

☐ I do not wish to complete this Gift Aid Declaration and/or

I am a non UK tax payer or do not pay enough Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax to make it worthwhile.

Return to: The Association Secretary, WRAC Association, Unit 11 Basepoint, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, Hants, SO23 0LD

Tel: 0300-400-1992 Email: office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk



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



WRAC Association, Unit 11, Basepoint Business Centre, 1 Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LD
Tel: 0300 400 1992 (local rate call, including mobiles) Email: office.manager@wracassociation.org.uk
Benevolence: benfund@wracassociation.org.uk Lioness: editor@wracassociation.org.uk
Website: www.wracassociation.org.uk

